An adjective clause is a subordinate clause that modifies a noun or pronoun. Like an adjective, it tells which one or what kind. An adjective clause may be called a relative clause, and the word that introduces it is either a relative pronoun or a relative adverb. Examples of relative pronouns are who, whom, whose, that, and which. Relative adverbs include after, before, when, and where.

The color that you get by mixing yellow and blue paint is green. (Which color?)

An essential adjective clause, as in the example above, provides information that is necessary to identify the noun or pronoun it modifies. A nonessential clause provides additional, but not needed, information. Use commas to set off a nonessential clause.

Turquoise, which is my favorite color, is similar to aqua. (nonessential)

An adverb clause is a subordinate clause that modifies a verb, adjective, or adverb. Like an adverb, it tells where, when, why, how, or to what extent. Adverb clauses are usually introduced by subordinating conjunctions such as before, when, because, since, as, than, if, though, until, so that, as, as if, where, wherever.

When white light passes through a prism, a band of colors forms. (When does the band of colors form? Modifies verb)

Sometimes words in an adverb clause that repeat or almost repeat words in the main clause are not stated, but only implied. Such clauses are called elliptical.

This red is more intense than that red. (more intense than that red is intense.)

Identifying Adjective and Adverb Clauses

For items 1 through 10, underline the adjective or adverb clause that modifies the boldfaced word(s). For items 11 through 14, underline once the adjective or adverb clause and underline twice the word modified.

1. Yellow and blue, which are complementary colors, form white light when combined.
2. John, who is a painter, keeps a color wheel on his studio wall.
3. When you mix primary colors, you produce secondary colors.
4. The red apple appeared dark gray because the room was very dark.
5. You could not see the colored rings until he spun the black and white disk.
6. The discovery that white light contains all the colors was made by Isaac Newton.
7. Goethe, whose fame comes from his poetry, also developed color theories.
8. The terms that experts use to describe color are hue, saturation, and lightness.
9. Although dogs see the same objects we do, they cannot see colors.
10. Color photography, which most people use today, is based on light color theory.
11. You produce new colors whenever you blend groups of colors from the spectrum.
12. People who can see only white, gray, and black are called color blind.
13. Moise has been less sure of his sense of color since he was shown the optical illusion.
14. The object that bends white light into beautiful color is called a prism.
Adjective and Adverb Clauses

A. Identifying Adjective and Adverb Clauses and Introductory Words

In each sentence, underline the adjective or adverb clause once. Underline the word modified twice. Circle the relative pronoun or relative adverb that introduces the adjective clause, or the subordinating conjunction that introduces the adverb clause.

**EXAMPLE**  Harry won **because** he campaigned hard.

1. After you receive your diploma, shake hands with the superintendent.
2. The lute, which was popular during the Renaissance, is now rarely played.
3. We went to the movie theater where the film festival is being held.
4. Yoko executes calligraphy better than the other students.
5. Before the Lincoln penny was minted, our coins did not carry portraits.
6. The violet that survived six years in the kitchen died after a week in my bedroom.
7. Carla, who speaks Chinese, will translate the speech.
8. Brandon is as bright as his older siblings.
9. Degas is the painter whom we associate with pictures of ballet dancers.
10. The traffic department put the Yield sign where the accidents had occurred.

B. Identifying Adjective and Adverb Clauses and Elliptical Clauses

Review the sentences and your answers in Exercise A. Then, on the lines below, write the numbers of all the items that belong in each group named.

1. Adjective clauses ____________________________________________
2. Adverb clauses ____________________________________________
3. Adverb clauses that are also elliptical clauses __________________________

C. Identifying Nonessential Clauses

Underline the adjective clause in each of the following sentences. If the clause is nonessential, insert commas where they are needed.

1. Hue which is an attribute of color is determined by wavelength.
2. Albert Munsell who was a seascape painter created a system of color names.
3. Jerry painted some black signs that were difficult to see at night.
4. Purple is the color that Mandy loves most.
5. James Maxwell whose scientific work is well known made the first color photograph.
6. Steve did his report on optical illusions that make us see color in black-and-white drawings.
7. What is the name of that artist whose paintings feature stairs that go in two directions at once?
8. In synesthesia, a person who hears a sound may visualize a color in response.
A. Using Adjective and Adverb Clauses to Combine Sentences

Combine each pair of sentences into one sentence by changing one of the pair into an adjective or adverb clause. Use the introductory word given in parentheses. Use commas as needed.

1. Isaac Newton is famous for discovering gravity. He also developed color theories. (Use who.)

2. White light passes through a prism. It separates into many colors. (Use when.)

3. Red cannot be formed by combining colors. Red is called a primary color. (Use because.)

4. Stare at a colored area for 30 seconds. You will see color on a white sheet of paper. (Use if.)

5. Aristotle saw that eyes need light to see color. His explanation for this fact was incorrect. (Use although.)

6. Yellow is a primary color in paint. Yellow is not a primary color in light. (Use which)

B. Using Adjective and Adverb Clauses to Develop Sentences

Rewrite each of the following sentences, adding an adjective clause, an adverb clause, or both types of clauses. Use commas as needed.

1. There are no set rules of color harmony.

2. The prism separates white light into many colored lights.

3. Scientists measure the different wavelengths of light.

4. Brenda became an expert at mixing paint colors.

5. You can produce white light.