

Securing Sentence Composition Manipulating structure

5b. Alter the position of the main clause in a sentence.

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What is a main clause?

Quick-fire GPS recall

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Grammar

The main clause is the most important clause in a sentence

It should make sense by itself.

Spot the main clause:

The boys, who were all eight-years-old, ran along the busy road.

Identify the main clause

He did not play because he felt ill.

I carefully crossed the puddle even though I had wellies on.

Aldo visited the Leaning Tower Of Pisa, which is in Italy.

I dived off the boat before I lost my nerve.

Did you notice the position of the main clause in each of these sentences?

They were all at the beginning of the sentence.

Alter the position of the main clause

A main clause does not need to always be at the beginning of a sentence. In fact, to make our writing more interesting and alter the effect for the reader, we can change the order of the clauses in a sentence.

The main clause can be:

- at the beginning of a sentence
 - at the end of a sentence
- or be split into parts by a subordinate clause

Alter the position of the main clause

For example:

Heather carried on dancing, although she was exhausted.

We can move the main clause to the end of the sentence.

Although she was exhausted, Heather carried on dancing.

This has the effect of changing the emphasis of the sentence. The sentence now highlights that Heather was exhausted rather than the fact that she kept on dancing.

Practise

Read the sentences below. Pick one and alter the position of the main clause. Then explain how the effect of the sentence has changed.

Farhan plays rugby when his friends visit.

The baby fell fast asleep after he was fed breakfast.

The bitter wind blew viciously across the rail platform.

Embedded clauses

Some main clauses can be split by a subordinate clause. These are called embedded clauses.

The old lady, who had a lot of shopping bags, **was waiting for a bus.**

Lisa, as soon as she heard the bell, **rushed back to the classroom.**

Naz, even though he hated chess, **went to the tournament.**

Challenge

Watch the clip of this musical performance. Write some multi-clause sentences to reflect your response to the music. Alter the position of the main clause in two of your sentences.

