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**: STRUCTURE :**

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**11.0 OBJECTIVES**

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In this unit we shall;

- discuss the sentence structure and its main components,
- deduce the syntactic functions of finite and non finite clauses,
- show various usages of clauses and its sub categories, respectively.

On completing the unit you should be able to;

- identify and correct the sentence errors,
  - use the knowledge of clauses in speech,
  - apply the aforementioned clauses in two core areas of basic skills i.e. writing and speaking.
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**11.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Grammarians and linguists point out two basic units that combine words for use in sentences. *Phrases* are groups like noun phrases, prepositional phrases, verb phrases, adjective phrases, and adverbial phrases. These groups of words are used in sentences, but they do not themselves have the internal structure of sentences. A noun phrase has a noun plus all kinds of

other things—determiners, adjectives, nouns, and more. Unlike a clause, a noun phrase doesn't have a subject and predicate structure.

Traditional grammar identifies sentences based on the structure the clauses in three ways : simple, complex and compound. A clause is considered a major unit when a sentence is analysed scientifically. Clauses can be primarily divided into two : dependent and independent. The clause that can stand alone is called an independent clause and the rest are dependent clauses. *A simple sentence consists of an independent clause.*

The significance of the verb in a clause is seen not only in determining its structure in terms of the elements which constitute it, but also in identifying and defining the two types of clauses according to the form and presence of the verb in it.

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## 11.2 CLAUSE

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A clause is a string of words which expresses a proposition and it, typically, consists of at least a verb :

- *David sings.*
- *Yesterday, we visited Canterbury.*

A sentence may contain one or more clauses.

For e.g. *She retired early because she was ill.*

The aforementioned sentence contains two clauses : a matrix (main) clause *she retired early*; and a subordinate clause *because she was ill*.

In Linguistics, clauses are divided into two : finite and nonfinite. A Finite Clause usually contains a subject and a finite verb (marked for tense, person, and number). It can be either dependent or independent. In contrast, nonfinite clause is formed with a nonfinite verb, a verbal element which is not marked for tense, person, or number. Nonfinite clauses are always dependent or embedded, since a main clause must have a finite verb. A finite verb is a verb that's marked for tense, person or number while a nonfinite verb doesn't indicate any of these.

**For e.g.** *Before sleeping, you have to brush your teeth.*

**Explanation :** “**Have**” here indicates the present tense, so it is a finite verb.

In the same sentence, *sleeping*, doesn't indicate any tense, so it's considered as a nonfinite verb.

So, “*before sleeping*” is a nonfinite (subordinate) clause while “*you have to brush your teeth*” is a main clause (always finite).

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## 11.3 FINITE CLAUSE

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### 11.3.1 Definition :

“The general term ‘finite’ is related to its everyday sense of ‘limited’, a finite verb is characteristically limited with respect to person and number [marked for person and tense]. A finite clause includes a primary verb – a verb that can be inflected for tense, person and sometimes number – and

includes a subject. Finite clauses must contain a verb which shows tense. They can be main clauses or subordinate clauses. A finite clause is an independent clause, which can serve as a

- stand-alone clause (sentence),  
*e.g. Ruskin raises his hand constantly.*  
This is called the “**main clause**” or “**matrix clause**”.
- a coordinate clause,  
*e.g. He raises his hand constantly and he talks in class.*  
(underlined above is a coordinate clause)
- a subordinate clause, or  
*e.g. Ruskin raised his hand so that he could ask a question.*  
(underlined above is a subordinate finite clause)
- a supplementary clause.  
*e.g. Ruskin likes the teacher's attention, so he raises his hand constantly.*  
(underlined above is a supplementary finite clause)

### 11.3.2 Let's Make It Simpler :

Look at each of the examples given below and identify the tense :

Sentences	Examples	Explanation
I	Roger plays Tennis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Present tense verb form is <i>plays</i>.</li> <li>● It can also be changed to past tense as in <i>Roger played Tennis</i>.</li> </ul>
II	I was doing my assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The verb phrase was doing contains the past tense form <i>was</i>.</li> <li>● It can also be changed to the present tense as in <i>I am doing my assignment</i>.</li> </ul>

Aforementioned are called finite clauses because they contain finite verbs i.e. verbs in the present tense or past tense form.

### 11.3.3 Types :

A finite clause is one which has a Finite verb (which agrees with the Subject) and usually a Subject.

There are five types of finite clauses :

#### I. Simple Finite Clause :

Simple finite-clauses are most common clauses. A plain sentence consists of a single simple finite-clause.

**For e.g.** *The cricket team is travelling to India. I like desserts.*

## II. Simple Finite with Connector :

Finite clauses often function as Adjunct (a word or phrase that constitutes an optional element or is considered of secondary importance in a sentence, for example *on the table* in *we left some flowers on the table*) in a clause, specifying some circumstance of the clause. They usually have a connector at front, signalling the relation to the main clause :

For e.g. *I left because she cooks badly.*

*I like desserts because it tastes sweet.*

## III. Relative–Clause :

A relative clause appears as a post–modifier to a noun phrase (in the Qualifier slot).

For e.g. *The man that I saw*

*The car that Mary likes.*

However relative clauses differ from wh–clauses :

- They function only as a post–modifier of noun phrase, while a wh–nominal clause cannot.
- In most cases, *that* can be used instead of a wh–pronoun : *the man that came to dinner; the man who came to dinner.*

## IV. Wh–Nominal Clause :

Wh–nominal clauses generally function as Subject, Object or Complement, usually replacing reported speech or thought without explicit detail. For e.g. *What you told is wrong.* (Subject)

*I know what you told.* (Object)

*It is what he told.* (Complement)

## V. That–Clause :

A that–clause is a finite clause fronted by “that”, and which represents a fact being presented to the addressee. Most typically, they appear as Subject or Object in a verbal or mental process :

For e.g. *That she is bold is known by many.* (Subject)

*Mory told him that he was not going.* (Object)

### 11.3.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I :

<b>STATE WHETHER THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES ARE FINITE OR NON FINITE CLAUSES.</b>
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**Respective blanks :**

1. [Everybody left just after the ceremony.] \_\_\_\_\_
2. [Inviting your sister] was not a great decision. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I'll be home around ten [if my train is on time.] \_\_\_\_\_
4. [They expect Susan to do all the work.] \_\_\_\_\_
5. [Deprived of oxygen,] plants will quickly die. \_\_\_\_\_

**11.4.1 Definition :**

A non-finite clause contains a verb which does not show tense which means it does not show the time at which something happened. We usually understand the time referred to from the context of the main clause. A nonfinite clause includes a secondary verb – a verb not inflected for tense, person or number (e.g., infinitival, gerundial or past participial verb form) – and occasionally a subject (e.g., his, him for).

A nonfinite clause is a dependent clause formed with a nonfinite verb, which can serve as a

- subject,  
*e.g. Discussing in class is encouraged.*  
(underlined above is a subject)
- a verbal complement,  
*e.g. Bond likes discussing current affairs.*  
(underlined above is a verbal complement)
- a prepositional complement, or  
*e.g. Bond is used to discussing current affairs.*  
(underlined above is a prepositional complement)
- a noun complement  
*e.g. Ruskin encouraged by his friends discussed well.*  
(underlined above is a noun complement)

**11.4.2 Types :**

There are three types of nonfinite clauses.

**I. To-Infinitive Clause :**

In this clause, the verb comes after the word *to*. The to-infinitive is the base form of the verb which is preceded by to. It may also include the perfect, progressive, and passive. To-infinitive clauses are easy to recognise because they have an infinitive verb form following to.

**For e.g.** *I want to give you a present.* (Simple and Active)

*He seems to have left.* (Perfect)

*Sally appears to be doing well.* (Progressive)

*She wants to be given more responsibility.* (Passive)

**II. Present Participle Clause (-ing Clause)**

In this clause, the verb ending – *ing* is used. A nonfinite gerund clause has an –*ing* verb form (secondary verb). This structure is called a “**gerund phrase**” in traditional grammar. Gerund participle is a merged term for the –*ing* form that has multiple functions (uses).

For e.g. *Before becoming a bank robber, he was a police officer.*  
*Sitting quietly, Tina read the fictional trilogy.*  
*Kate remembers breaking the dish.*

### III. Past Participle Clause :

In this clause, the past participle form of the verb is used. A nonfinite participle clause usually has a –ed or –en verb form (secondary verb). Participle clauses mostly occur as noun complements. To recognise –ed participle clauses, we need to remember that an –ed participle form does not always end in –ed. This is because some verbs are irregular.

For e.g. *The book given to him was very valuable.*  
*The children annoyed with Bond complained to the teacher.*  
*They will replace the dish broken by Kate.*

#### 11.4.3 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II :

**IDENTIFY THE NONFINITE CLAUSE FROM THE PASSAGE GIVEN BELOW.**

Several couples hoped to marry this weekend. A hurricane pounding the East Coast changed their plans. It was impossible to hold their weddings as planned. Three couples not wanting to delay decided to marry in Central Park. They said their vows standing in the rain and undisturbed by barely anyone.

1. Several couples hoped to marry this weekend.  
The nonfinite clause is \_\_\_\_\_
3. A hurricane pounding the East Coast changed their plans.  
The nonfinite clause is \_\_\_\_\_
3. It was impossible to hold their weddings as planned.  
The nonfinite clause is \_\_\_\_\_
4. Three couples not wanting to delay decided to marry in Central Park.  
The nonfinite clause is \_\_\_\_\_
5. They said their vows standing in the rain and undisturbed by barely anyone.  
The nonfinite clause is \_\_\_\_\_

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#### 11.5 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit you have learnt :

- the functions of and difference between finite and nonfinite clauses
- types of finite clauses i.e. simple finite clause, with connector, Wh–clause, that clause and relative clause.
- types of nonfinite clauses i.e. to–infinitive, –ing participle, –ed participle (gerund phrase)
- identification and application in speech.

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**11.6 KEY WORDS**


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**Phrase** : a grammatical term refereeing to a group of words that does not include a subject and verb.

**Finite Clause** : a main clause or a subordinate clause that must have a verb to show tense.

**Non-finite Clause** : subordinate clause that is based on a to-infinitive or a participle

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**11.7 SELF EVALUATION EXERCISES**


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**PRACTICE SESSION I :**

**IDENTIFY THE VERB FORM TYPE IN BOLD IN THE SENTENCES GIVEN BELOW.**

**(Check your answers with that given at the end of the unit)**

1. Rain, rain go away. **Come** again another day. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Weather **seen** from inside a window is always worse. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Rain **falling** down makes puddles on the ground. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Everyone wants to **talk** about the weather, but nobody is willing to do anything about it. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Weather is a great metaphor for life – sometimes it's good, sometimes it's bad, and there's nothing much you can **do** about it but carry an umbrella. \_\_\_\_\_

**PRACTICE SESSION II :**

**IDENTIFY THE CLAUSE (FINITE OR NONFINITE) IN THE SENTENCES GIVEN BELOW.**

**(Check your answers with that given at the end of the unit)**

1. Bobby believes [Bless to be beautiful].
2. Tom tried [to travel to Toronto].
3. Thomas thinks [that Ron walks too fast].
4. Hamilton hopes [for Victoria to hug him].
5. Alan asked [if Pam could play longer].
6. Sammy answered [that she had to leave].

**PRACTICE SESSION III :**

**IDENTIFY THE TO-INFINITIVE FROM THE NONFINITE CLAUSES GIVEN BELOW.**

**(Check your answers with that given at the end of the unit)**

1. It only took us about twenty minutes to get here.
2. I'd be quite keen to try anything like that.
3. Does anyone else want to be nominated ?

4. To reach it on foot, you must navigate hundreds of miles across a perishing sub-zero landscape.
5. The person to make the report to at the police station was the Sergeant.

**PRACTICE SESSION IV :**

**IDENTIFY THE -ING PARTICIPLE FROM THE NONFINITE CLAUSES GIVEN BELOW.**

**(Check your answers with that given at the end of the unit)**

1. Thank you for your letter enquiring about vacancies at the Museum shop.
2. I remember being 3-2 down to Liverpool in the semi-final.
3. I hope you don't mind sleeping on the floor.
4. Overtaking a moving vehicle is more dangerous.
5. You are the only one capable of solving the problem

**PRACTICE SESSION V :**

**IDENTIFY THE -ING PARTICIPLE FROM THE NONFINITE CLAUSES GIVEN BELOW.**

**(Check your answers with that given at the end of the unit)**

1. This is a diagram of the respiratory system taken from front to back.
2. Compared with London, travel around Brussels is so amazingly hassle-free.
3. The evidence given to Cullen was monitored closely.
4. First across the line was East Germany in 1969, followed by West Germany in 1972.
5. A woman recognized as one of the hostages was found unharmed in the building.

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**11.8 BOOKS SUGGESTED**

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**Dictionaries for reference**

- *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*
- *The Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar* by Bas Aarts, Sylvia Chalker, Edmund Weiner. 2nd edition.

**Suggested Reading**

- *A Student's Introduction to English Grammar* by Rodney Huddleston, Geoffrey K. Pullum
- *The Structure of Modern English : A Linguistic Introduction, Volume I* by Laurel J. Brinton
- *English Grammar for Today : A new introduction* by Geoffrey N. Leech, Margaret Deuchar, Robert Hoogenraad.



**ANSWERS****Check Your Progress I :**

1. The bracketed clause is a matrix clause, so it must be finite. The verb left is a past tense form.
2. The bracketed clause is nonfinite, since the verb inviting is an –ing form.
3. The bracketed clause is a finite subordinate clause. The verb is is a present tense form.
4. The bracketed clause is a matrix clause, so like 1, it must be finite. It has a finite verb expect (present tense), though it does have a nonfinite subordinate clause within it (Susan to do all the work).
5. The bracketed clause is nonfinite, since the verb deprived is an –ed form.

**Check Your Progress II :**

1. “marry this weekend” (The marker “to” is analyzed as a subordinator and not an actual part of the nonfinite clause.)
2. “pounding the East Coast”
3. “hold their weddings as planned” (The marker “to” is analyzed as a subordinator and not an actual part of the nonfinite clause.)
4. “not wanting to delay”
5. “standing in the rain” and “undisturbed by barely anyone”

**Practice Session I :**

1. Plain form – “Come” is an imperative : its subject is understood, it uses “do” support, and it can be the main verb of the clause.
2. Past participle form – “seen” is the head of the nonfinite clause that modifies “weather”.
3. Gerund–participle form– “falling” is the head of the nonfinite clause that modifies “rain”.
4. Plain form (infinitival) – “talk” is the head of the nonfinite clause “talk about the weather”. The clause complements the verb “want”.
5. Plain form – “do” is the head of the nonfinite clause “do about it”. The clause complements the modal “can”. (It is also called a “bare infinitive”.)

**Practice Session II :**

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. non–finite clause | 2. non–finite clause |
| 3. finite clause     | 4. non–finite clause |
| 5. finite clause     | 6. finite clause     |

**Practice Session III :**

1. to get here.
2. to try anything like that.
3. to be nominated ?

4. To reach it on foot
5. to make the report to at the police station

**Practice Session IV :**

1. enquiring about vacancies at the Museum shop.
2. being 3–2 down to Liverpool in the semi–final.
3. sleeping on the floor.
4. Overtaking a moving vehicle
5. solving the problem

**Practice Session V :**

1. taken from front to back.
2. Compared with London
3. given to Cullen
4. followed by West Germany in 1972.
5. Recognized as one of the hostag

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