

## Chapter 4

# The Clause

### Independent and Subordinate Clauses

Like a phrase, a clause is a word group used as a part of a sentence. The difference is that a clause contains a verb and its subject, while a phrase does not.

4a. A **clause** is a group of words that contains a verb and its subject and is used as part of a sentence.

Although every clause has a subject and verb, not all clauses express a complete thought. Those that do are called *independent clauses*. Such clauses could be written as separate sentences. We think of them as clauses when they are joined with one or more additional clauses in a single larger sentence. Clauses that do not make complete sense by themselves are called *subordinate clauses*. Subordinate clauses do the job of nouns, adjectives, or adverbs just as phrases do. In this chapter you will become better acquainted with both kinds of clauses.

### KINDS OF CLAUSES

4b. An **independent** (or **main**) **clause** expresses a complete thought and can stand by itself.

We said that an independent clause could be written as a separate sentence. To see how this works out, consider the following example, in which the independent clauses are underlined:

EXAMPLE      Ms. Torres cut pieces of stained glass with a diamond wheel, and her partner put the pieces together with wax and lead.

Each clause has its own subject and verb and expresses a complete thought. In this example, the clauses are joined by a comma and the coordinating conjunction *and*. They could also be written with a semicolon between them:

Ms. Torres cut pieces of stained glass with a diamond wheel; her partner put the pieces together with wax and lead.

or as separate sentences:

Ms. Torres cut pieces of stained glass with a diamond wheel. Her partner put the pieces together with wax and lead.

4c. A **subordinate** (or **dependent**) **clause** does not express a complete thought and cannot stand alone.

*Subordinate* means “lesser in rank or importance.” Subordinate clauses (also called *dependent* clauses) are so described because they need an independent clause to complete their meaning.

**SUBORDINATE CLAUSES**    before you know it  
   because I told him  
   after the show is over

These clauses sound incomplete to our ears because we know the subordinate part they play in sentences. Notice that the reason they sound incomplete is not that something is missing in the clause. Just the reverse is true, for by omitting the first word we can make each of these subordinate clauses into a complete sentence: *before you know it* becomes *You know it*. Most subordinate clauses are introduced by a word like *when*, *if*, *until*, or *because* that makes them subordinate. When we hear a clause that starts with one of these words, we know that there has to be at least one more clause in the sentence, and that at least one of the other clauses must be an independent clause.

**EXERCISE 1.** Number your paper 1-10. Identify each -clause in italics by writing either independent or subordinate after the corresponding number.

1. *When my family went to New York last summer*, we visited the Theodore Roosevelt museum.
2. *The museum has been established in the house* where Roosevelt was born.
3. It is located on the basement floor of Roosevelt’s birthplace, *which is on East Twentieth Street*.
4. *The museum contains books, letters, and documents* that pertain to Roosevelt’s public life.
5. There are mounted heads of animals, a stuffed lion, and zebra skins from the days *when Roosevelt was big-game hunting-in Africa*.
6. *Because Roosevelt was once a cowboy*, there are also branding irons and chaps.
7. Before Theodore Roosevelt became President, *he gained fame in the Spanish-American War*.
8. During that war he led the Rough Riders, *who made the famous charge up San Juan Hill*.
9. Trophies *that Roosevelt received during his life* are on exhibit in the museum.

10. *The Roosevelt Memorial Association*, which established the museum, *charges a nominal admission fee to visitors.*

## THE USES OF SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

Subordinate clauses, like phrases, function in sentences as single parts of speech. A subordinate clause can be used as an adjective, an adverb, or a noun, thus enabling us to express ideas that are difficult or impossible to state with single-word nouns and modifiers alone.

### The Adjective Clause

**4d. An adjective clause** is a subordinate clause used as an adjective to modify a noun or pronoun.

In the following sentences the arrow points to the noun or pronoun that each adjective clause modifies.

**EXAMPLES**      In the case at school is the trophy that Patsy won.



Smog, which is fog and smoke, filled the sky.



The adjective clause follows the word it modifies, and it is sometimes set off by commas and sometimes not. Commas should be used unless the clause answers the question “Which one?” in which case no commas are used. In the first example, the clause *that Patsy won* tells which trophy; no comma is used. In the second example, the clause *which is fog and smoke* does not tell *which* smog. It merely describes smog. The clause is therefore set off by commas. (See *Mechanics*, Rule 20i.)

### Relative Pronouns

Adjective clauses are generally introduced by *relative pronouns*. The relative pronouns are *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, and *that*. They are called relative because they *relate* the adjective clause to the word that the clause modifies. In Chapter 1, you learned that the noun to which a pronoun refers is the *antecedent* of the pronoun. The noun or pronoun modified by the adjective clause, then, is the antecedent of the relative pronoun that introduces the clause.

Besides introducing the adjective clause, the relative pronoun has a function in the clause.

**EXAMPLES**      Yvonne, who lives in Iowa, quickly learned Southern customs.

[The relative pronoun *who* relates the adjective clause to *Yvonne*. *Who* is used as the subject of the adjective clause.]

Mrs. Daly recommended the book **that I am reading**. [*Book*, the word that the clause modifies, is the antecedent of the relative pronoun *that*. The pronoun is used as the direct object in the adjective clause.]

Here is the letter **for which I have been searching**. [The relative pronoun *which* is the object of the preposition *for* and relates the adjective clause to the pronoun's antecedent, *letter*.]

The reporter visited the family **whose house had been shown in the movie**. [The relative pronoun *whose* shows the relationship of the clause to *family*. *Family* is the antecedent of *whose*.]

Frequently the relative pronoun in the clause will be omitted. The pronoun is understood and will still have a function in the clause.

**EXAMPLE** This is the dress **I want**. [The relative pronoun *that* is understood. This is the dress *that* I want. The pronoun relates the adjective clause to *dress* and is used as the direct object in the adjective clause.]

Occasionally an adjective clause will be introduced by the words *where* or *when*.

**EXAMPLES** Across the street is the house **where I was born**.

Midnight is the hour **when ghosts walk abroad**.

**EXERCISE 2.** After the proper number on your paper, list the adjective clause from the corresponding sentence, underlining the relative pronoun that introduces the clause. Then list the antecedent of the relative pronoun after the clause.

**EXAMPLE** 1. People who want to learn languages must discipline themselves to study every day.

1. who want to learn languages — *People*

1. Doctors who study the nervous system are called *neurologists*.

2. Some of the dinosaurs that existed 120 million years ago weighed over five tons.

3. Mercury, who served as the messenger for the gods, wore a pair of winged

sandals.

4. The author whom we have been studying wrote under a pen name.
5. Can any country whose resources are limited afford the luxury of being wasteful?

**EXERCISE 3.** Number your paper 1-5. Follow the directions for Exercise 2.

1. Galileo is usually remembered as the scientist who invented the telescope.
2. The telescope helped to prove the theory of Copernicus, who believed the sun, not the earth, to be the center of the solar system.
3. With the telescope Galileo studied the Milky Way and discovered a fact that startled many people: the Milky Way is made up of millions of stars.
4. Galileo's discovery threatened the thinking of those people who believed the earth to be the center of the universe.
5. After his discovery was made known, many of those whom Galileo had considered his friends avoided him.

**EXERCISE 4.** Write ten sentences using subordinate clauses as adjectives.

Draw an arrow from each adjective clause to the noun or pronoun it modifies.

**EXERCISE 5.** Rewrite each of the following sentences by substituting an adjective clause for each italicized adjective. Underline the adjective clause in your sentence. Try to write clauses which add interest to each sentence.

**EXAMPLES**

1. The *angry* citizens gathered in front of City Hall.  
1. *The citizens, who were furious over the recent tax increase, gathered in front of City Hall.*
2. The *old* history books lay on the shelf.  
2. *The history books, which were yellow and tattered from many years of use, lay on the shelf.*
1. The *colorful* painting caught our attention at the gallery.
2. The *patient* photographer sat on a small ledge all day.
3. The two parties argued all week over the *important* contract.
4. We decided on a camping expedition to the top of the *high* peak.
5. During class this morning, Lenora made a *surprising* remark.
6. Edgar and his friends cautiously entered the *dark* cave.
7. *Trustworthy* Mrs. Jackson easily won her first political campaign.
8. The trainer used a tight leash for the *disobedient* dog.
9. Dodging to his left, Manuel scored the *winning* goal.
10. Near the stable, Pamela walked sadly with her *lame* horse.

**The Adverb Clause**

4e. An **adverb clause** is a subordinate clause that modifies a verb, an adjective, or an adverb.

An adverb clause tells how, when, where, why, how much, to what extent, or under what condition the action of the main verb takes place.

**EXAMPLES**      Before the game started, Bryan and I ate lunch in the stadium. [The adverb clause *Before the game started* tells when Bryan and I ate lunch.]  
Because she felt dizzy, Paula sat down for a while. [*Because she felt dizzy* tells why Paula sat down.]  
I will attend the wedding if it takes place on Saturday. [*If it takes place on Saturday* tells under what condition I will attend the wedding.]

The adverb clauses in the examples above modify verbs. Adverb clauses may also modify adjectives or adverbs.

**EXAMPLES**      His pitching arm is stronger today than it ever was. [The adverb clause modifies the adjective *stronger*, telling *to what extent* his arm is stronger.]  
My sister awoke earlier than I did. [The adverb clause modifies the adverb *earlier*, telling *how much* earlier my sister awoke.]

### Subordinating Conjunctions

Adverb clauses are introduced by *subordinating conjunctions*. Become familiar with these words.

#### *Subordinating Conjunctions*

after	before	unless
although	if	until
as	in order that	when
as if	since	whenever
as long as	so that	where
as soon as	than	wherever
because	though	while

• **NOTE** Remember that *after*, *before*, *since*, *until*, and *as* may also be used as prepositions.

**EXERCISE 6.** After numbering 1-10, write the subordinating conjunction and

the last word of each adverb clause in the following sentences; then write what the clause tells: *when, where, how, why, how much, under what condition?* A sentence may have more than one adverb clause. (Notice that introductory adverb clauses are usually set off by commas.)

**EXAMPLES**

1. If you will take my advice, you can be the death of a party.  
1. *If – advice      under what condition*
2. You can easily follow my instructions because they are clear and simple.  
2. *because – simple      why*

1. If you wish to be the death of a party, do these things.
2. When other people are speaking, interrupt them.
3. As soon as they start telling jokes, you can steal their thunder by giving away the punch lines.
4. You can then act as if the jokes weren't funny.
5. Later you can change the subject so that you can brag about yourself.
6. While you are talking about your heroic deeds or keen intelligence, emphasize many uninteresting details.
7. Before you describe saving a child's life, make yourself out to be nobler than anyone else is.
8. Whenever the occasion arises, you should complain to your host and criticize the guests.
9. Unless you monopolize every conversation, you won't be a professional "party pooper."
10. Enjoy yourself as you crowd others off the floor, because you will probably never be invited again.

**EXERCISE 7.** Write ten sentences of your own, using the following subordinate clauses as adverbs.

**EXAMPLE**

1. as the strangers talked  
1. *As the strangers talked, the icy distance between them gradually melted.*

1. although I am one of Barbara Walters' fans
2. while he was honking the horn impatiently
3. as soon as we had finished eating
4. although she hit two home runs
5. unless my aunt changes her mind
6. so that it will be a complete surprise

7. if the concrete has too much water in it
8. as if he had just seen a monster from Mars
9. after you add the eggs to the mixture
10. when she was leaving the theater

## The Noun Clause

4f. A **noun clause** is a subordinate clause used as a noun.

A noun clause may be used as a subject, a complement (predicate nominative, direct object, indirect object), or the object of a preposition.

Study the structure of the following sentences.

### NOUNS

*Subject* Her **words** surprised me.

*Predicate nominative* The champion will be the best **fighter**.

*Direct object* She knows our **secret**.

*Indirect object* They give **each arrival** a name tag.

*Object of preposition* He often sends flowers to sick **people**.

### NOUN CLAUSES

**What she said** surprised me.

The champion will **be whoever fights best**.

She knows **what our secret is**.

They give **whoever comes** a name tag.

He often sends flowers to **whoever is sick**.

Noun clauses are usually introduced by that, what, whatever, who, whoever, whom, and whomever.

### EXAMPLES

We could not tell **who she was**. [The introductory word *who* is the predicate nominative in the noun clause – *she was who*.]

Tell us **whom you saw**. [The introductory word is the direct object of the noun clause – *you saw whom*.]

She thought **that** I knew. [The introductory word *that* has no other function in the clause.]

**EXERCISE 8.** List on your paper the first and the last word of each noun clause in these sentences. Then tell how the noun clause is used: *subject*, *predicate nominative*, *direct object*, *indirect object*, or *object of a preposition*. (You will not find noun clauses in every sentence.)

### EXAMPLE

1. You can never accurately predict what will happen at a rodeo.

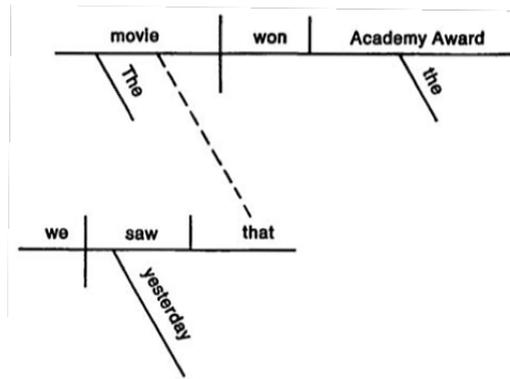
1. *What – rodeo*      *direct object*

1. What I like at a rodeo is the excitement.
2. My cousin Maria often tells stories about what she has done at rodeos.
3. She will give 'whoever is interested an exciting account of her adventures.
4. In Arizona all the other riders knew that "Five Minutes till Midnight" was too dangerous a horse to ride.
5. That she had the courage to ride the wild horse was what Maria wanted to prove to everyone.
6. The tense crowd watched Maria as she jumped upon the back of the horse that no rider had ever ridden before.
7. She won the prize money for what she did; she stayed on the bucking horse until the whistle blew.
8. Upon hearing the whistle, Maria knew that she had won.
9. The second that Maria relaxed, however, the angry stallion tossed her high into the air.
10. Whoever saw Maria sail through space that day will never forget how she turned a flip in midair and then landed safely on her feet.

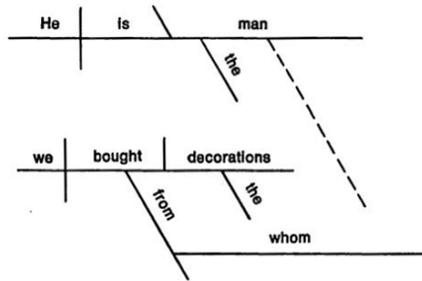
### Diagramming Subordinate Clause

In a diagram, an adjective clause is joined to the word it modifies by a broken line leading from the relative pronoun to the modified word -that is, to the antecedent of the relative pronoun.

**EXAMPLES**      The movie that we saw yesterday won the Academy Award.

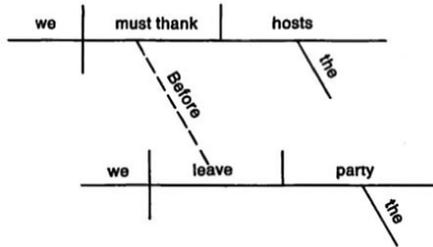


He is the man from whom we bought the decorations.



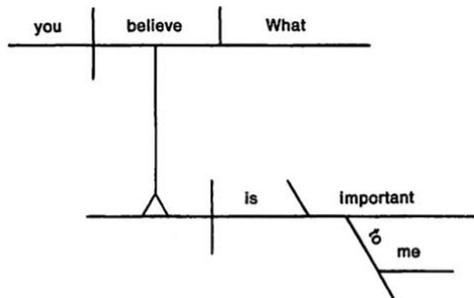
In diagramming an adverb clause, place the subordinating conjunction that introduces the clause on a broken line leading from the verb in the adverb clause to the word the clause modifies.

**EXAMPLES**      Before we leave the party, we must thank the hosts.

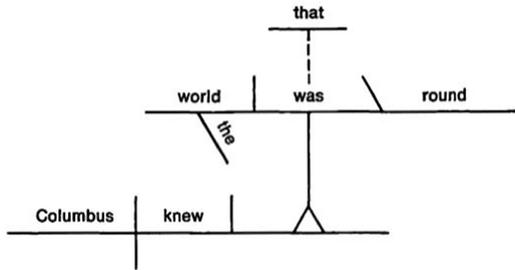


How a noun clause is diagrammed depends upon its use in the sentence. It also depends on whether or not the introductory word has a specific function in the noun clause. Study the following examples.

**EXAMPLES**      What you believe is important to me. [The noun clause is used as the subject of the independent clause. The introductory word *what* is the direct object in the noun clause.]



Columbus knew that the world was round. [The noun clause is the direct object of the independent clause. The word *that* has no function in the noun clause except as an introductory word.]



**EXERCISE 9.** Diagram the following sentences.

1. What Catherine saw at Monticello was extremely interesting to all of us.
2. Monticello, which was the home of Thomas Jefferson, is located near Charlottesville, Virginia.
3. If you visit Monticello, you will see many fascinating devices that Jefferson invented.
4. The inventions that particularly interested Catherine were two dumbwaiters that ran between the dining room and the cellar.
5. If I ever visit my cousin who lives in Virginia, I know that we will go to Monticello.

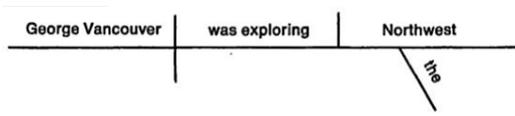
## SENTENCES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO STRUCTURE

In Chapter 2 you learned that sentences are classified according to *type* as declarative, imperative, interrogative, or exclamatory. Sentences may also be classified according to *structure*.

**4g. Classified according to structure, there are four kinds of sentences: *simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex*.**

(1) A ***simple sentence*** has one independent clause and no subordinate clauses. It has only one subject and one verb, although both may be compound.

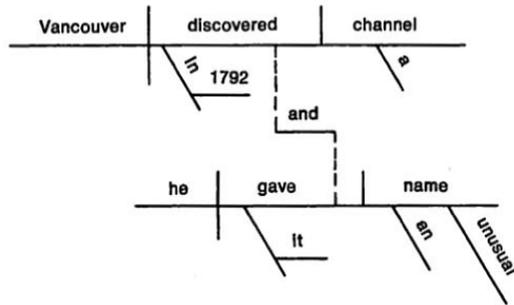
**EXAMPLE** George Vancouver was exploring the Northwest.



(2) A **compound sentence** has two or more independent clauses but no subordinate clauses.

In effect, a compound sentence consists of two or more simple sentences joined by a comma and a coordinating conjunction or by a semicolon.

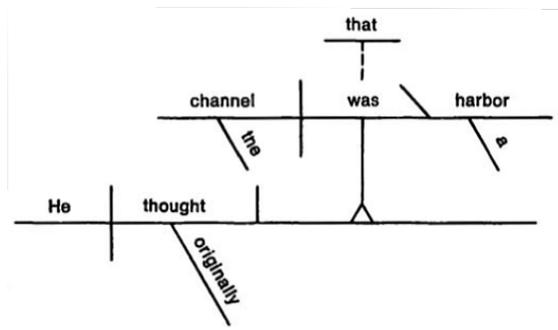
**EXAMPLE** In 1792 Vancouver discovered a channel, and he gave it an unusual name.



• **NOTE** If the compound sentence has a semicolon and no conjunction, place a straight broken line between the two verbs.

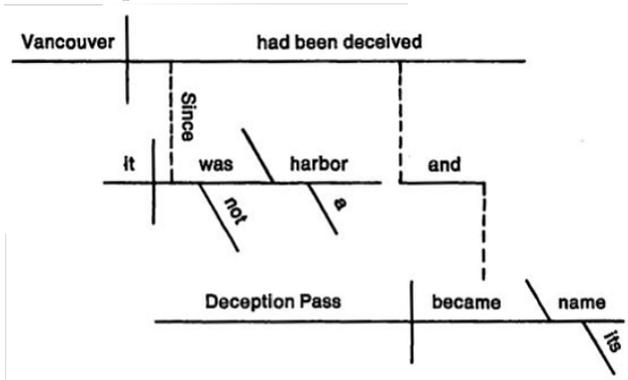
(3) A **complex sentence** has one independent clause and at least one subordinate clause.

**EXAMPLE** He originally thought that the channel was a harbor. [Here the subordinate clause is the direct object of the independent clause.]



(4) A **compound-complex** sentence contains two or more independent clauses and at least one subordinate clause.

**EXAMPLE** Since it was not a harbor, Vancouver had been deceived, and Deception Pass became its name.



**EXERCISE 10.** Number your paper 1-10. Classify each of the following sentences according to its structure. Next to each number, write *simple*, *compound*, *complex*, or *compound-complex*. Be sure that you can identify all subordinate and independent clauses.

1. Since President Franklin Roosevelt appointed Frances Perkins as Secretary of Labor in 1933, several other women have been cabinet members.
2. Oveta Culp Hobby was the first head of the Women's Army Corps, and later she became Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare.
3. When Carla Anderson Hills was appointed by President Ford to be Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, she became the third woman to hold a cabinet position.
4. In 1977 President Carter appointed Patricia Roberts Harris as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and thus the United States had its first black woman cabinet member.
5. The fifth woman to achieve cabinet rank was Juanita M. Kreps, President Carter's first Secretary of Commerce.
6. How many women have been appointed to cabinet positions in the 1980s?
7. In 1924 two women, Miriam Wallace Ferguson of Texas and Nellie Taylor of Wyoming, became state governors; each was elected following the death of her governor husband.

8. Ella Tambussi Grasso of Connecticut was the first woman in the nation's history to be elected a state governor who did not follow her husband into office.
9. Although she had never run for political office before, Dixie Lee Ray became the first woman governor of the state of Washington.
10. We know that women will continue to hold such high positions as cabinet member and governor, but when will a woman win the Presidency?

**EXERCISE 11.** Diagram the following sentences.

1. Tonight I am going to a concert with my parents, but I would prefer to play chess with you.
2. When she saw the accident, she looked for help and then telephoned the police.
3. Twenty seniors in the graduating class will be attending college, and twelve of them have received scholarships.
4. Leaving for school, I knew that it would rain today; yet I did not carry my umbrella.
5. When my sister practices her singing lessons, Muff curls up on the piano bench and purrs; but when I play my trumpet, that cat yowls and hides under the sofa.

**REVIEW EXERCISE A.** Number your paper 1-10. Decide whether each numbered and italicized clause below functions as an adjective, an adverb, or a noun, and write *adjective*, *adverb*, or *noun* after the proper number. Be prepared to explain your answers.

(1) *As we left the courtroom*, we did not feel very sorry for the men (2) *who had been on trial*. (3) *Although they had not committed a serious crime*, they had broken the law. The law says (4) *that removing sand from a beach is illegal*. They were caught (5) *because they could not move their truck*, (6) *which had become stuck in the sand*. (7) *After the judge read the law to them*, the men claimed (8) *that they had never heard of it*. The judge, (9) *who did not believe this*, fined each man twenty-five dollars. The men promised (10) *that they would not steal any more beach sand*.

**REVIEW EXERCISE B.** Number your paper 1-10. If the subordinate clause in each of the following sentences is used as an adjective or an adverb, write the word the clause modifies. If the clause is used as a noun, write *subj.* for subject, *d.o.* for direct object, *i.o.* for indirect object, *p.n.* for predicate

nominative, or *o.p.* for object of a preposition.

**EXAMPLE** 1. When our science book described insect-eating plants, we were amazed.

1. *were amazed*

1. Plants that eat flies and other insects usually live in swampy areas.
2. Because the soil in these regions lacks nitrogen, these plants do not get enough nitrogen through their roots.
3. The nitrogen that these plants need must come from the protein in insects.
4. How these plants catch their food makes them interesting.
5. A pitcher plant's sweet scent attracts whatever insect is nearby.
6. The insect thinks that it will find food inside the plant.
7. What happens instead is the insect's drowning in the plant's digestive juices.
8. The Venus' flytrap has what looks like small bear traps at the ends of its stalks.
9. When a trap is open, an insect can easily fit inside it.
10. An insect is digested by the plant in a slow process that takes several days.

**REVIEW EXERCISE C.** Write your own sentences according to the following guidelines.

1. A simple sentence with a compound verb
2. A complex sentence with an adjective clause
3. A compound-complex sentence
4. A compound sentence with two independent clauses joined by the conjunction *but*
5. A complex sentence with a noun clause used as a subject

**REVIEW EXERCISE D.** Diagram the following sentences.

1. Do you know who Alan Shepard is?
2. This astronaut wrote an exciting article that appears in our literature book.
3. He described the historic flight, which was the first trip into space by an American.
4. Because he had trained beforehand, the flight seemed familiar.
5. At one point the capsule in which Shepard was riding began to vibrate.
6. Shepard knew what caused the vibration.
7. It occurred when the capsule passed through the zone of maximum

pressure.

8. The vibration was somewhat heavier than Shepard had expected.
9. Finally it stopped, and the flight continued on schedule.
10. Shepard said that he felt fine after the flight, and he praised the many hard-working people who had contributed to its outstanding success.