INTRODUCTION:
Welcome to Ten-Minute Grammar! The goal of these units is to help students build a solid understanding of grade-level grammar concepts during the first ten minutes of the class period each day. Each unit goes through a progression in which new grammatical concepts are introduced (by discovery, as much as possible), built upon, and then practiced and reviewed. In addition, the concepts in each consecutive unit build on one another logically—it might seem silly to spend time reviewing nouns and verbs with 8th graders, but it’s necessary if they’re going to understand things like gerunds and infinitives or specific types of verb phrases.

This unit includes a week and a half of daily bell-ringer activities, a quiz, and two practice worksheets.

SUGGESTED TIMELINE:
• Start the Day One bell ringer on a Monday.
• The “Practice” worksheet can be done as a class any time during the week (or it can be skipped if you feel your students don’t need it.)
• By Friday, if you feel the class is ready for it, give the unit quiz.
  o If you feel like the entire class needs additional practice to master the concept, there are three additional bell-ringer activities.
  o Differentiation: The “Alternate Quiz” included in the packet is a slightly modified quiz geared toward students with IEPs that call for such modifications.
• After the quiz, a student who clearly failed to grasp one or more of the week’s concepts should be assigned the “Extra Practice” worksheet. After completing the worksheet, the student can retake the unit quiz for an improved grade.
• Starting a unit mid-week isn’t a problem at all—don’t feel like you MUST start on a Monday!

OBJECTIVES:
1. Students should understand that...
   a. A subordinate clause contains a subject and a predicate but cannot stand alone as a complete thought.
   b. Subordinate clauses can begin with a subordinating conjunction OR a relative pronoun.
   c. Subordinate clauses and dependent clauses are the same thing.
2. Students should be able to...
   a. Identify examples of subordinate clauses and distinguish them from independent clauses.
   b. Write examples of subordinate clauses.

KEYS TO THE UNIT:
One of the important keys for this unit is to limit the scope. When you start teaching subordinate clauses, it feels natural to bring up complex sentences, run-on sentences, comma rules when dealing with dependent clauses, etc. To avoid a new-term overload for the students, focus just on getting the students to recognize and write subordinate clauses. Also, we don’t focus too much on the difference between subordinating conjunctions and relative pronouns. As longs they recognize that either one of them creates a subordinate clause, that’s enough.
I recognize that the term “subordinate clause” might seem like an unnecessarily (and annoyingly) complicated way of saying “dependent clause.” While the word “dependent” is definitely easier for students to swallow than “subordinate,” the problem I’ve run into is that “dependent” just sounds too much like “independent,” and that sometimes leads to confusion in class. I’ve found it’s easier, in the end, to just teach students the more technical term and help them get comfortable using it.

**DAILY ROUTINE:**

Have the day’s bell-ringer activity up on a projector when the students come to class each day. I have my students do the assignment on quarter-sheets of paper (I cut them up and have a stack available each day). Days Four and Six in this unit require copyediting with proofreading marks; since it takes too long for students to copy the incorrect sentences and then edit them, a page of quarter-size student answer sheets are provided for those days (see the pages after the last bell ringer.)

Students should **spend the first five minutes working silently** (use that time to take roll and then circulate around the room to keep kids on task.) After the five minutes of work time, **spend the next five minutes going over the answers.** Use the correction session each day to explain new concepts, clarify ideas, and correct misconceptions. For each question, I like to have my students turn to the person next to them and share their answer; then I ask a student to volunteer an answer. If a student answers incorrectly, find someone else who can give the correct answer. Help the class understand the concept a little better and then ask the first student a question like, “Explain why your first answer was wrong.” I’ve never had a student feel offended by this—if anything, it gives kids a chance to redeem themselves after what might have been an embarrassing moment of being wrong in front of everyone.

If you use an overhead projector, a Smart Board, or project onto a white marker board, you can **choose a student each day** to come to the front and write answers or corrections as other students volunteer them.

How you **grade** the daily bell-ringer questions is up to you. I used to give my students full credit as long as they attempted each question and then participated in the answer session. But this year, I actually stopped grading the daily practice altogether—so students are graded solely on the unit quiz (and sometimes the practice worksheet.) This has worked great. The only issue with doing it like this is that you have to make sure you don’t let kids get away with not doing the bell-ringer—I sometimes hold them during lunch if they were slacking off and didn’t do it.

The **Wordplay** at the end of each day’s questions can be a way to earn extra credit if you choose. As incentive to work quickly, I tell my students they can’t begin on the Wordplay until they’re finished with the other questions, and I always offer a piece of candy to the first student to get the answer right or the student with the best answer or most answers. (You’d be surprised what junior-high students will do for a Starburst or a Jolly Rancher!)

**LITERATURE:**

This unit contains example selections from the novel *Animal Farm* by George Orwell.
A dependent clause, also called a SUBORDINATE CLAUSE, is a group of words that has a SUBJECT and a PREDICATE but cannot stand alone.

Decide whether the underlined portion of each sentence is a SUBORDINATE CLAUSE (answer YES or NO):

1. Brian was a photographer who traveled into space to take pictures. **YES**
2. When he arrived on a new planet, he looked for a nice landscape shot. **YES**
3. Unfortunately, he discovered a giant alien monster that had massive teeth and really bad breath. **NO**
4. As soon as he got back to his spaceship, he tried to take off. **NO**
5. But the monster, which was roaring loudly, wouldn’t let the ship leave. **YES**
6. After a few seconds, the beast managed to pry the hatch open. **NO**
7. Brian closed his eyes because he didn’t want to see the inside of the alien’s stomach. **NO**
8. Luckily, it turned out that the beast just wanted to borrow his camera. **YES**

**Wordplay – Just for fun!**

- **FIXER-ROOTER:** How many words can you think of that have the same prefix, suffix, or root as the multisyllabic word below?
  
  **SUBORDINATE** – **SUB / ORDIN / ATE**
  
  (under the authority of a superior)
Most SUBORDINATE CLAUSES look almost like independent clauses except that they start with a word that makes the clause feel like an incomplete thought. These words are called SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS.

In each sentence, identify the subordinate clause that starts with a SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTION:

1. I don’t like Twinkies because they make me gain weight.
2. If you want to borrow my headphones, you’ll have to pay me a dollar.
3. Whenever I ride the bus, I’m always late for first hour.
4. I’m not talking to you again unless you tell me the truth.

Other SUBORDINATE CLAUSES start with a RELATIVE PRONOUN—like “that,” “which,” or “who.”

In each sentence, identify the subordinate clause that starts with a RELATIVE PRONOUN:

5. I want the car that Will Smith drove in I Am Legend.
6. My sister is dating a guy who just got out of prison.

Make sure the students notice the fact that the relative pronouns here is acting as the SUBJECT of this clause rather than a word tacked on before the subject. Relative pronouns can also act as a misplaced OBJECT in the clause (as in “Give me more of the candy that I really like.”)

7. The class trip, which sounds like a lot of fun, is next Friday.

Point out the fact that the subordinate clause in number 7 is actually interrupting the independent clause.

Wordplay – Just for fun!

- **EIGHT BALL**: Create as many words as you can using three or more of the letters below (at least one eight-letter word is possible):
  - R D I A I F L E
  - Airfield
In your own words...

1. How are SUBORDINATE clauses and INDEPENDENT clauses similar, and how are they different? They are similar because they both have a subject and a predicate; they are different because subordinate clauses cannot stand alone as a sentence while independent clauses can.

2. Why can’t a subordinate clause be a sentence all by itself? Because it starts with a word that makes the clause sound incomplete unless it’s connected to an independent clause.

Add your own subordinate clause to the following sentences:

**ANSWERS WILL VARY.**

3. I checked out a book **that I’m very excited to read**.

4. **If you don’t text me back**, I’m not coming to your birthday party!

5. My friends and I like to go to movies **because it is fun**.

6. The English teacher **who gives me the creeps** turned out to be a serial killer.

Wordplay – Just for fun!

- **FOUR-LETTER WORDS**: Take the four-letter word below and change one letter to make a new four-letter word (keep it clean!) Then take that word and change one letter to make a new word. Then take that word and... You get the picture.

   HEAD
Read the following excerpt from Animal Farm by George Orwell. Then answer the four questions below:

(a) They were so delighted with the song that they sang it right through five times in succession, and might have continued singing it all night if they had not been interrupted. (b) Unfortunately, the uproar awoke Mr. Jones, who sprang out of bed, making sure that there was a fox in the yard.

1. Find one subordinate clause in sentence (a)? that they sang it right through five times in succession OR if they had not been interrupted

2. Which word from sentence (a) is a subordinating conjunction: that, might, if, or not? if

3. Find one subordinate clause in sentence (b)? who sprang out of bed OR that there was a fox in the yard

4. Find one independent clause in the entire passage. They were so delight OR the uproar awoke Mr. Jones

Using the proper proofreading marks, correct the six errors in this excerpt:

While major was speaking, for large rats had crept out of their holes and were listening to him. The dogs had suddenly lost sight of them, and it was only by a swift dash for their holes that the rats saved their lives.

Wordplay – Just for fun!

➢ DESCRAMBLER: Try to sort out the five scrambled words below:

ELOS LRYEA RUPLEP NCAMEOR KESACOTH

Lose Early Purple Romance Hotcakes
REVIEW FOR TODAY’S QUIZ:

1. What is a **subordinate clause**? A group of words with a subject and a predicate that cannot stand alone as a sentence because it starts with a subordinating conjunction or a relative pronoun.

2. Which of the following word sets are **subordinating conjunctions**, and which ones are **relative pronouns**?
   a. That, which, who **relative pronouns**
   b. Because, unless, until **subordinating conjunctions**

3. Identify the subordinate clause in the following sentences:
   a. **Until the ambulance arrives**, you need to keep an eye on that guy.
   b. I know a fifth grader **who can slam dunk a basketball**.
   c. The monkeys had to find a new home **because a bunch of killer wasps moved into their tree**.

4. Add something to the following clauses to make them subordinate clauses:
   a. __________ the book was boring
   b. __________ he bought a new tie for work

5. Add a subordinate clause to the following sentences:
   a. _________________, the dog fell asleep.
   b. I have a bunch of cool posters ________________.
   c. I am scared of going into dark forests ________________.
Decide whether each example below is an INDEPENDENT clause or a SUBORDINATE clause:

1. Since the new ape arrived at the zoo **subordinate**
2. The film got terrible reviews from critics **independent**
3. Which came here from a distant planet **subordinate**
4. As soon as the genetically engineered dinosaurs escaped **subordinate**
5. His camera lens broke **independent**

Fill in the blank to complete the SUBORDINATE clause:

**ANSWERS WILL VARY.**

6. Jesse can’t go to school again **until** he starts feeling better__________.
7. **Although** I like the taste of steak________________, I still don’t eat meat.
8. My great grandpa, **who served in World War II**____________________,
died last year.
9. Derrick stepped on the spider **that bit him the night before**__________.

Wordplay – Just for fun!

- **CATALOGUE CREATOR:** The suffix “-tion / -sion” means “the act of or instance of” and sounds like “shun.” How many words can you list that contain this suffix?
Read the following excerpt from Animal Farm by George Orwell. Then answer the four questions below:

(a) As soon as the light in the bedroom went out, there was a stirring and a fluttering all through the farm buildings. (b) Word had gone round during the day that old Major had had a strange dream on the previous night.

1. What is the subordinate clause in sentence (a)? As soon as the light in the bedroom went out
2. In sentence (a), is “As soon as” a subordinating conjunction or a relative pronoun? Subordinating conjunction
3. Is the underlined portion of sentence (b) an independent clause? No, it’s a subordinate clause
4. What is the relative pronoun in sentence (b)? that

Using the proper proofreading marks, correct the six errors in this excerpt:

The two horses had just lain down when a brood of ducklings which had lost their mother, filed into the barn. They were feebly and wandering from side to side to find some place where they would not be walked on.

Wordplay – Just for fun!

Vowel Combinator: The vowel combination “oe” usually sounds like the hard “O” in “toe.” List as many words as you can that contain “oe.”
Read the following excerpt from *Animal Farm* by George Orwell. Then answer the questions below:

(a) All the animals were now present except Moses, the tame raven, who slept on a perch behind the back door. (b) When Major saw that they had all made themselves comfortable and were waiting attentively, he cleared his throat and began. (c) "Comrades, you have heard already about the strange dream that I had last night."

1. What is the subordinate clause in sentence (a)? who slept on a perch behind the back door
2. What is the subordinate clause in sentence (b)? When Major saw that they had all made themselves comfortable and were waiting attentively OR that they had all made themselves comfortable and were waiting attentively (the first answer was actually a subordinate clause within a subordinate clause)
3. What is the subordinate clause in sentence (c)? that I had last night
4. There is only one subordinating conjunction in this passage. What is it? When
5. What is the independent clause in sentence (a)? All the animals were now present except Moses, the tame raven
6. There are two predicates in sentence (a) because there are two clauses. What is one of the predicates? were now present except Moses, the tame raven OR slept on a perch behind the back door

**Wordplay – Just for fun!**

- **ANAGRAM**: Rearrange the letters in the nonsense phrase below to create new words that actually make sense.
  
  LATE SHRIVELING CAB
  
  (Hint: one of three that check and balance one another)
  
  Legislative Branch
One type of subordinate clause has a normal subject and predicate, but it starts with a SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTION—a word that makes the clause sound incomplete.

In the following sentences, the subordinate clauses are underlined. In each subordinate clause, circle the SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTION, or the word or group of words that makes the clause sound incomplete:

**EXAMPLE:** The fighter pilot had to eject after the jet engine failed.

1. **Once** the batteries had died, Jake’s new toy was basically useless.

2. Trevor worked on washing the dishes **while** his sister folded the laundry.

3. **Unless** you start paying me for gas, I’m not going to give you a ride anymore.

4. **As soon as** the pop star stepped out of her car, the photographers surrounded her.

5. I would be much too scared to climb Mt. Everest **even if** I had the best guide in the world.

Another type of subordinate clause begins with a RELATIVE PRONOUN, most often “that,” “which,” or “who.” The relative pronoun can come before a complete subject and predicate just like a subordinating conjunction, but sometimes the relative pronoun is the subject of the clause.

In the following sentences, the subordinate clauses are underlined. In each subordinate clause, circle the RELATIVE PRONOUN:

**EXAMPLE:** Millions of people went to see the latest movie **that** was based on a bestselling novel.

6. I’m really mad at the guy **who** stole my car.

7. My brand new headphones, **which** cost me a ton of money, are already broken.

8. Everyone **that** goes to the new store in the mall ends up spending a fortune.

9. I feel terrible for the family **whose** house was robbed last week.

10. The bomber pilot accidentally dropped his bombs too late, **which** caused the mission to fail.
Identify each of the words below as a subordinating conjunction (SC), a relative pronoun (RP), or neither (N):

11. __RP__ that
12. __SC__ because
13. __N__ and
14. __RP__ who
15. __N__ from
16. __RP__ whose
17. __SC__ if
18. __SC__ once
19. __SC__ when
20. __RP__ which
21. __SC__ although
22. __N__ the

In each of the following sentences, underline the SUBORDINATE CLAUSE and circle the subordinating conjunction or relative pronoun:

EXAMPLE: The engine in Uncle Bob’s car failed after he forgot to put oil in it.

23. I can’t text any of my friends anymore because Mom and Dad took away my phone.
24. The pet monkey that Mike has had for years escaped a few days ago.
25. As soon as the ninjas entered the room, the bad guys had no hope of winning.
26. I can’t get my homework done if I’m not allowed to use the computer.
27. Whenever one of her pet cats passes away, Grandma holds a big, fancy funeral.
28. I ended up with an A in English, which completely shocked my parents.
29. I’ve been so exhausted ever since we stayed up all night last weekend.
30. My dog always barks at people who he doesn’t recognize.

By itself, a subordinate clause is not a complete thought—in order to be a full sentence, the subordinate clause must be connected to an independent clause.

Add a SUBORDINATE CLAUSE to the following independent clauses:

ANSWERS WILL VARY.

31. The mutated shark started eating people who were swimming at night.
32. Even though the acting wasn’t amazing, I still thought the movie was great.
33. My little brother can’t sleep ever since he watched that scary movie.
34. The frogs that had been infected by the ooze grew to be the size of elephants.
35. Since this is my fifteenth speeding ticket, I think I’ll try to be a more careful driver.
QUIZ ANSWER KEY

1. Which of the following best defines “subordinate clause?”
   A. Contains a subject and a predicate but cannot stand alone as a complete thought
   B. Several complete thoughts combined in one sentence
   C. An incomplete sentence that is missing either a subject or a predicate or both

Match each term with a set of example words:

2. ____ C ____ Subordinating conjunctions
3. ____ A ____ Relative pronouns
   A. that, which, who
   B. and, but, or
   C. because, if, unless

Which answer correctly identifies a SUBORDINATE CLAUSE from the example sentence?

4. Whenever I try to dance, I trip over my own feet.
   A. whenever I try to dance
   B. I trip over my own feet
   C. try to dance

5. The Johnsons had to move into an apartment after their house burned down.
   A. the Johnsons had to move
   B. into an apartment
   C. after their house burned down
6. I know a man who can bend a spoon with his mind.
   A. with his mind
   B. who can bend a spoon with his mind
   C. I know a man

7. Unless the rain stops, the town will be under water by tomorrow morning.
   A. the town will be under water by tomorrow morning
   B. by tomorrow morning
   C. unless the rain stops

Add a subordinating conjunction or a relative pronoun to the following independent clauses to make them subordinate clauses. Answers will vary.

8. _____________ my dad’s car broke down
9. _____________ the ninja drew his sword
10. _____________ she bought a new dress for the dance
11. _____________ the final building collapsed

Add a subordinate clause to the following independent clauses: Answers will vary.

12. I probably won’t finish reading the book _____________

13. __________________________________________________________________

14. The new shoes ___________________________________________________________________ were very uncomfortable.
ANSWER KEY

1. Which of the following best defines “subordinate clause?”
   A. Contains a subject and predicate but cannot stand alone as a complete thought
   B. Several complete thoughts combined in one sentence

2. _____ Subordinating conjunctions
3. _____ Relative pronouns
   A. that, which, who
   B. because, if, unless

Which answer correctly identifies a SUBORDINATE CLAUSE from the example sentence?

4. Whenever I try to dance, I trip over my own feet.
   A. whenever I try to dance
   B. I trip over my own feet

5. The Johnsons had to move into an apartment after their house burned down.
   A. into an apartment
   B. after their house burned down

6. I know a man who can bend a spoon with his mind.
   A. who can bend a spoon with his mind
   B. I know a man

7. Unless the rain stops, the town will be under water by tomorrow morning.
   A. the town will be under water by tomorrow morning
   B. unless the rain stops
Which of the word options would make SUBORDINATE CLAUSES out of the following examples?

8. _____________ my dad’s car broke down
   a. Before
   b. Yesterday

9. _____________ the ninja drew his sword
   a. As soon as
   b. Finally,

10. _____________ she bought a new dress for the dance
    a. I heard
    b. that

11. _____________ the final building collapsed
    a. And then
    b. When

Add a SUBORDINATE CLAUSE to the following independent clauses:
ANSWERS WILL VARY.

12. I probably won’t finish reading the book _______________

    _________________________________________________________________________.

13. After ________________________________________________

    John’s computer stopped working.

14. The new shoes, ________________

    ________________________________________________________________________

    , were very uncomfortable.
Subordinate clauses are not independent because they begin with a word that makes them sound incomplete. Think of it like a leash on a dog. A dog can run around and do whatever it wants unless it has a leash on—the leash makes it so it can’t be independent.

The two types of words that act like “leashes” are subordinating conjunctions (like “because,” “if,” or “unless”) and a relative pronouns (like “that,” “which,” or “who.”)

In the following subordinate clauses, circle the “leash” word that makes the clause sound like it can’t stand on its own:

1. Because I don’t have enough money for the movie
2. That my mom gave me for Christmas last year
3. If you get caught stealing
4. Which burned down last year

In the following sentences, the subordinate clause is underlined. Circle the “leash” word that makes each clause sound like it can’t stand on its own:

5. You are going to end up failing math class unless you retake your final exam.
6. I met a kid who was born with four fingers on his left hand.
7. I try to be as healthy as possible, although I do enjoy a good cheeseburger now and then.
8. After she gets home from school, my little sister spends all afternoon watching cartoons.
Sometimes the “leash” word is actually more than one word. Circle the “leash” words in the following subordinate clauses:

9. I was exhausted last night. I fell asleep as soon as I hit my bed.

10. Even though he never exercises, my grandpa is amazingly healthy.

Now you find the subordinate clauses. In each sentence, underline the subordinate clause and circle the “leash” word:

11. You need to slow down before you make the next turn.

12. Even if I have nothing to say, I send text messages all day long.

13. My dog is always chasing the cat that lives down the street.

14. My dad’s car, which he spent a ton of money on, broke down last week.

15. Whenever I hear the water heater turn on downstairs, I think our house is haunted.

Now you need to make your own subordinate clauses. The following examples are all independent clauses—notice how they sound like complete sentences. Add a “leash” word to each one to make it a subordinate clause. Check your answer by making sure the clause sounds unfinished and can’t stand on its own. ANSWERS WILL VARY.

16. __________ the soldiers came home from war

17. __________ five apples fell off the tree

18. __________ I skateboarded to my best friend’s house

19. __________ she walks to school every day

20. __________ the ballerina danced

Now add a subordinate clause to the following independent clauses. The part you add must have a subject and a predicate, and it needs to start with a “leash” word:

ANSWERS WILL VARY.

21. I dance with joy ________________________________

22. ________________________________, the cotton candy was yummy.

23. The bunny ________________________________ jumped out of the bushes.

24. Star Wars is the best movie ever ________________________________.

25. ________________________________, I hate getting up in the morning.