

Advanced 3
Unit 5: Language Focus 2
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The Functions of the Noun Clause in the Sentence

Noun Clause as the Subject of the Sentence:

Examples:

- *What you have discovered about Tom* doesn't concern me at all.
- *How the young mathematician solved the difficult problem* has surprised all the academics at the university.
- *Where the treasure was buried by the pirates* has not been revealed to anybody yet.

Point:

It is quite acceptable to use a that-clause (a noun clause which starts with the relative pronoun “that”) as the subject of the sentence and there is nothing wrong with it. But stylistically, we had better use the noun phrase “the fact” before a that-clause at the beginning of the sentence and turn the noun clause into an adjective clause. This adds to the beauty of the sentence.

That Mr. Robertson was a war veteran didn't provide him with any social benefits.

The Subject ⇒ That Mr. Robertson was a war veteran

The fact *that Mr. Robertson was a war veteran* didn't provide him with any social benefits.

The Subject ⇒ The fact

Adjective Clause ⇒ that Mr. Robertson was a war veteran

Noun Clause as the Object of the Sentence:

Examples:

- I don't like *what you have discovered about Tom*.
- We saw *how the young mathematician solved the difficult problem*.
- They didn't know *that Mr. Robertson was a war veteran*.
- Captain Williams is trying to find out *where the treasure was buried by the pirates*.
- Mary didn't know *who had left a flower on her desk*.

Noun Clause as the Object of a Preposition:

Examples:

I am not interested *in what you have discovered about Tom*.

Everybody was fond *of how the young mathematician solved the difficult problem*.

I haven't heard anything *of where the pirates have hidden the treasure*.

Noun Clause as the Subject Complement:

My priority at the moment is not what you have discovered about Tom.

The biggest surprise at the university was how the young mathematician solved the difficult problem.

Point:

The noun phrase or the adjective which follows the verb “to be” is called “subject complement”.

Noun Clause as the Adjective Complement:

That-clauses can function as adjective complements.

Examples:

It is surprising that the young mathematician solved the difficult problem in just five minutes.

It ⇒ Dummy Subject

Noun Clause ⇒ Adjective Complement

surprising ⇒ Subject Complement

The Original Sentence:

That the young mathematician solved the difficult problem in just five minutes is surprising.

Noun Clause ⇒ Subject

surprising ⇒ Subject Complement

Other Examples:

It is disappointing that Mr. Robertson has not received any social benefits.

It is very encouraging that a scholarship has been offered to the top student of the class.

Source:

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