

Grammar and Style

ADD DESCRIPTIVE DETAILS

Swift uses **subordinate clauses** to help readers visualize his fantastical lands. Subordinate clauses contain a subject and a verb but do not express a complete thought. They answer questions such as *where*, *when*, *how*, *what kind*, and *which one*. Notice Swift's description of Gulliver's arrival at Lilliput.

I lay down on the grass, which was very short and soft, where I slept sounder than ever I remember to have done in my life, and as I reckoned, above nine hours; for when I awakened, it was just daylight. (lines 1–3)

Here, which, where, than, as, and when introduce the subordinate clauses. Words like *after, as, that, while, who, and whose* can also signal subordinate clauses.

Directions: Mimic each of the following sentences by using the same signal words to form subordinate clauses. An example has been done for you.

I confess I was often tempted while they were passing backwards and forwards on my body, to seize forty or fifty of the first that came in my reach, and dash them against the ground.

I was often amused, while reading Swift's satire, to learn that politicians in his time liked to hear themselves speak just as politicians do today.

1. They made me a sign that I should throw down two hogsheads, but first warned the people below to stand out of the way, crying aloud, *Borach Mivola*, and when they saw the vessels in the air, there was a universal shout of *Hekinah Degul*.

2. When a great office is vacant either by death or disgrace (which often happens) five or six of those candidates petition the Emperor to entertain his Majesty and the court with a dance on the rope; and whoever jumps the highest without falling, succeeds in the office.

3. But the danger is much greater when the ministers themselves are commanded to show their dexterity; for, by contending to excel themselves and their fellows, they strain so far, that there is hardly one of them who hath not received a fall; and some of them two or three.
