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Noun Clauses

Definition

A **noun clause** is a dependent clause that functions as a noun in a sentence. Like single nouns, noun clauses can serve as subjects, direct objects, indirect objects, objects of prepositions, or predicate nominatives. These clauses typically begin with words like that, what, whatever, who, whom, which, whose, when, where, whether, why, or how.

Example

Function	Example	Role in Sentence
Subject	"What she said surprised everyone."	Acts as the subject of the verb "surprised"
Direct object	"I know that he arrived safely."	Receives the action of the verb "know"
Object of preposition	"Pay attention to whatever the teacher says."	Completes the prepositional phrase "to"
Predicate nominative	"The question is whether we should proceed."	Renames or describes the subject "question"
Indirect object	"Give whoever finishes first a prize."	Indicates to whom the direct object "prize" is given

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PART 1: Identifying Noun Clauses

Underline the noun clause in each sentence and identify its function as subject, direct object, indirect object, object of preposition, or predicate nominative.

1. Historians debate whether the Hanging Gardens of Babylon actually existed.

Function: _____

2. What archaeologists have discovered suggests the gardens were built on tiered platforms.

Function: _____

3. King Nebuchadnezzar gave whoever designed the gardens special recognition.

Function: _____

4. The mystery is how ancient engineers created such an advanced irrigation system.

Function: _____

5. Scholars have written extensively about what made the gardens one of the Seven Wonders.

Function: _____

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PART 2: Multiple Choice - Identifying Noun Clause Functions

Choose the correct function of the underlined noun clause in each sentence.

1. That the gardens were built for Queen Amytis is mentioned in several ancient texts.

- a) subject
- b) direct object
- c) indirect object
- d) object of preposition

2. Ancient Babylonians marveled at how the water reached the highest garden levels.

- a) subject
- b) direct object
- c) indirect object
- d) predicate nominative

3. The ancient texts describe what materials were used to waterproof the terraces.

- a) subject
- b) direct object
- c) object of preposition
- d) predicate nominative

4. Historians have given whoever finds new evidence about the gardens immediate recognition.

- a) subject
- b) direct object
- c) indirect object
- d) object of preposition

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PART 3: Completing Sentences with Noun Clauses

Complete each sentence by adding an appropriate noun clause.

1. The Babylonian engineers understood _____.

(direct object)

2. _____ remains debated among historians today.

(subject)

3. King Nebuchadnezzar was proud of _____.

(object of preposition)

4. The ancient wonder is _____.

(predicate nominative)

5. Archaeologists will award a special prize to _____.

(indirect object)

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PART 4: Creating Sentences with Noun Clauses

Write original sentences about the Hanging Gardens of Babylon using a noun clause in the function indicated.

1. (Noun clause as subject)
2. (Noun clause as direct object)
3. (Noun clause as predicate nominative)
4. (Noun clause as object of preposition)
5. (Noun clause as indirect object)

PART 5: Identifying Noun Clause Introducers

Choose the word that introduces the noun clause in each sentence.

1. No one knows exactly when the Hanging Gardens were constructed.
a) no
b) exactly
c) when
d) were
2. Archaeologists investigate why the gardens were considered an engineering marvel.
a) investigate
b) why
c) were
d) an

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3. The ancient accounts describe how the water wheels transported water upward.

- a) accounts
- b) describe
- c) how
- d) transported

4. Historians wonder whether the terraced structure was truly located in Babylon.

- a) wonder
- b) whether
- c) was
- d) located

5. Ancient texts reveal that special waterproofing techniques prevented water leakage.

- a) reveal
- b) that
- c) special
- d) prevented

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Noun Clauses – Answer Key

PART 1: Identifying Noun Clauses

1. whether the Hanging Gardens of Babylon actually existed (direct object)
2. What archaeologists have discovered (subject)
3. whoever designed the gardens (indirect object)
4. how ancient engineers created such an advanced irrigation system (predicate nominative)
5. what made the gardens one of the Seven Wonders (object of preposition)

PART 2: Multiple Choice - Identifying Noun Clause Functions

1. a) subject
2. b) direct object
3. b) direct object
4. c) indirect object

PART 3: Completing Sentences with Noun Clauses (Sample answers - other appropriate noun clauses are acceptable)

1. how the complex irrigation system worked (direct object)
2. Whether the Hanging Gardens truly existed at all (subject)
3. what his architects had accomplished with the gardens (object of preposition)
4. what many consider the most impressive irrigation feat of the ancient world (predicate nominative)
5. whoever discovers conclusive evidence about the gardens' location (indirect object)

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Noun Clauses – Answer Key

PART 4: Creating Sentences with Noun Clauses

(Sample answers - other appropriate sentences are acceptable)

1. What the ancient Babylonians accomplished with their irrigation system was remarkable.
2. Archaeologists wonder whether the gardens were actually in Nineveh instead of Babylon.
3. The greatest mystery about the gardens is how water was transported to the highest levels.
4. Scholars have written extensively about what techniques were used to waterproof the terraces.
5. King Nebuchadnezzar gave whoever engineered the water system special recognition.

PART 5: Identifying Noun Clause Introducers

1. c) when
2. b) why
3. c) how
4. b) whether
5. b) that