

TO THE TEACHER

Shifters

This is the first of the three lessons on types of clauses—shifters. In traditional grammar, shifter clauses are called **adverbial clauses**. They're called shifters because they can shift from the front of the sentence to the end of the sentence without changing the meaning.

FS = front shifter

ES = end shifter

Vocabulary 325 words**New-ish grammar terms**

shifter

adverbial

opposite of expectation

clause words

when, while, whenever, before, after, since (a past time), if, unless, **because**, since (because) even though, although (*When* and *because* occur the most often.)

clause

Review

trunk

comma

prepositional phrase

noun cluster (noun box)


The most difficult vocabulary is probably the shifter clause words themselves. Note that "since" has two meanings. *When* and *because* are the most common shifter clause words.

Shifters don't have to be clauses - they can be a single word, a prepositional phrase, a noun box. Yesterday, the week before last, in the middle of the street...

Possible shifter constructions

Note that the position of the shifter doesn't change the meaning of the sentence.

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noun →	<p>Yesterday it rained.</p> <p>It rained yesterday.</p>
noun cluster →	<p>Last night it rained.</p> <p>It rained last night.</p>
prepositional phrase →	<p>In the morning it rained.</p> <p>It rained in the morning.</p>
clause →	<p>After we got home, it rained.</p> <p>It rained after we got home.</p>

Commas

>Don't use a comma if the shifter is at the end.

John took his umbrella because it was starting to rain.

>Do use a comma

if a shifter clause is at the beginning

Because it was starting to rain, John took his umbrella .

if a non-clause of more than 3 words is at the beginning.

At 9 o'clock in the morning, it started to rain.

I always tell ss that a comma after a FS helps the reader's eyes find the subject.

That's why we use commas after shifter clauses and other long front shifters. I

don't know if it's true, but it helps them remember.

>The comma is optional if the front shifter is short.

At 9 it started to rain.

Rods

Rods are a good way for students to visualize shifters. In the book, I use

Orange for clauses.

Lavender for noun boxes

Yellow for prepositional phrases

In class, I use blue for TRUNKS. The ink is too expensive to use it in the book!

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Practice:

Simply give (or ask for) a sentence and have the student represent it in rods. The next student can shift the shifter and repeat the sentence. The small rods can represent commas.

I was very happy when I passed the test.
when I passed the test ., I was very happy.

Practice:

On the board, write

When I arrived in the U.S./New York/LA...

Each ss writes a TRUNK to go with it.

Or write a trunk and ask for a clause to go with it.

I get really angry.