

Syntax

Consider:

But George sat stiffly on the bank and looked at his right hand that had thrown the gun away.

— John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men*

Discuss:

1. The subordinate clause, *that had thrown the gun away*, is used as an adjective to modify the word *hand*. What effect does this have on the meaning of the sentence?
2. Compare Steinbeck's sentence with the following:

George, who had thrown the gun away, sat stiffly on the bank and looked at his right hand.

Both sentences have subordinate clauses that modify nouns, but the clauses modify different nouns. Fill out the following chart indicating the subordinate clauses, the nouns they modify, and the effect of this focus on meaning.

	Subordinate Clause	Noun	Effect on Meaning
Steinbeck's sentence			
New sentence			

Apply:

Write a subordinate clause that completes the following sentence:

Sarah gazed at the road and thought about her plans _____

Your clause should modify the word *plans* and give meaning to the sentence. Share your sentence with a partner.