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SENT. STRUCTURE L 9.8A – TEMPORAL CLAUSES

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WHAT ARE TEMPORAL CLAUSES?

Temporal clauses are subordinate clauses.

They always begin with a temporal conjunction.

Temporal clauses give information about the beginning, the end, and the duration of an action. They can also show whether two actions occur simultaneously or not.

"SEIT / SEITDEM"

Meaning: A state or an action has begun in the past and is not yet finished.

- „Ich lerne Deutsch, **seitdem** ich in Deutschland **wohne**.“
→ Both actions and state have begun at the same time and are not finished yet.
- „**Seitdem** ich einen Unfall **hatte**, **sitze** ich im Rollstuhl.“
→ When the action in the subordinate clause has already occurred, we use the past tense. The main clause always uses the present tense.

"BIS"

Meaning: "Bis" expresses the simultaneity of two actions and specifies a point in time when both will end.

- „Ich bleibe hier, **bis** ich mit meiner Arbeit fertig **bin**.“
 - „**Bis** du mit der Arbeit fertig **bist**, **sehe** ich ein bisschen **fern**.“
 - „Ich warte hier auf dich, **bis** du wieder **zurückkommst**.“
- Two actions end at the same time.

"WÄHREND"

Meaning: Two actions occur simultaneously

- „Ich gehe einkaufen, **während** du die Wohnung **aufräumst**.“
- „**Während** du Computer spielst, **lerne** ich.“

→ The actions take place at the same time.

“SOLANGE”

Meaning: Expresses simultaneity and that both actions are guaranteed to end simultaneously or within the same period of time.

- „Ich werde putzen, **solange** ihr eure Hausaufgaben **macht**.“
- „**Solange** du bei mir **bist**, **habe** ich keine Angst.“

→ Both actions end at the same time.

“NACHDEM”

Meaning: "Nachdem" expresses that something does not happen at the same time. The action in the main clause occurs after the action in the subordinate clause has already ended.

Main Clause (MC)	Subordinate Clause (SC)
Future	nachdem + Perfect/Past
Present	nachdem + Perfect/Past
Perfect/Past	nachdem + Past Perfect

A subordinate clause with "nachdem" must always be one time step before the main clause.

„Ich **werde** dir **helfen**, **nachdem** du den Müll **rausgebracht hast**.“



„Ich **helfe** dir, **nachdem** du den Müll **rausgebracht hast**.“



„Ich **habe** dir **geholfen**, **nachdem** du den Müll **rausgebracht hattest**.“



"BEVOR" / "EHE"

Meaning: "bevor"/"ehe" expresses that something does not happen at the same time. The action in the main clause needs to take place before the one in the subordinate clause.

- „Ich putze mir die Zähne, **bevor/ehe** ich schlafen **gehe**.“
- „**Bevor/ehe** du Computer spielst, **machst** du deine Hausaufgaben.“

"Bevor" is used much more often than "ehe".

"Bevor" and "ehe" are both opposites of "nachdem."

"SOBALD" / "SOWIE"

Meaning: "Sobald" and "sowie" express that something does not or did not happen at the same time. It is a sequence of two actions. The action of the subordinate clause ends when the action of the main clause begins.

Main Clause (MC)	Subordinate Clause (SC)
Future	sobald + Perfect / Simple Past
Present	sobald + Perfect / Simple Past
Perfect / Simple Past	sobald + Past Perfect

Therefore, the subordinate clause with "solange / sowie" has to be one time step before the main clause.

„Ich **werde** dir **helfen**, **sobald/sowie** du den Müll **rausgebracht hast**.“



„Ich **helfe** dir, **sobald/sowie** du den Müll **rausgebracht hast**.“



„Ich **habe** dir **geholfen**, **sobald/sowie** du den Müll **rausgebracht hattest**.“



Difference from "nachdem":

If you use "sobald/sowie", the second action starts right after the first one is finished. On the other hand, if you use "nachdem", it just happens at any point after the first action is completed.

SUMMARY

Conjunction	Meaning
während	Two simultaneous actions
solange	Two simultaneous actions starting and ending at the same time
bis	Two simultaneous actions that have the same endpoint. (point in time)
seit / seitdem	Actions that started in the past and are not yet completed.
nachdem	The action in the main clause takes place AFTER the one in the subordinate clause.
sobald / sowie	Two actions that don't occur at the same time. (The second action starts directly after the first)
bevor / ehe	The action in the main clause takes place BEFORE the one in the subordinate clause.

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