Embedded Clauses

A clause beginning with a subordinating conjunction (if, when) can combine with the main clause to:

- **Modify**
  
  Kids don’t go to school *if it is snowing*. (Adverb)
  The town *where I grew up* has grown up itself. (Adjective)

- **Complement** (an object of a verb)
  
  She can do *whatever she sets her mind to*.

“That” is by far the most used “complementizer,” so much so that often you can omit it.

- **Using “that”**
  
  I think *that she is beautiful*.

- **Omit “that”**
  
  She thinks *I am the “cat’s meow.”*

Other complementizers are “question words” such as when, why, where, when (“wh” words)

- **Use them for questions**
  
  Why does my heart go on beating?

- **As a complement**
  
  I am grateful when I realize my heart goes on beating.

From these examples, we can make a few **key observations**:

- The same word can have a different grammatical function in a different context.
- Not all **embedded clauses** begin with a complementizer.
- Not all sentences that contain question words are actually questions.
- The word order of direct questions is different from that of **indirect questions** or **reported speech**.