ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Noun Clauses Test Exercises – Multiple Choice Questions With Answers – Advanced Level 13

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Explanations

1. _____ they didn't attend this important meeting is still a mystery to us.
✔ C) Why
A noun clause can be the subject of a sentence. A **mystery** is something we can't explain, so the missing information is the reason: **Why they didn't attend ... is still a mystery to us.** Not **Because**: **because** begins an adverb clause and cannot be the subject of **is**.

2. After I went out, I suddenly realized that _____.
✔ E) I had forgotten to take the key
The noun clause after **realized that** follows the past tense of the main verb. The forgetting happened before the realizing, so we need the past perfect: **I had forgotten to take the key**. The other options use the wrong tense or make no sense in this situation.

3. He can't believe _____ easily he gave up smoking last week.
✔ E) how
How + adjective/adverb begins a noun clause that shows degree: **how easily he gave up**. The clause is the object of **believe**. Not **whether**: we don't say **believe whether**, because **believe** needs a statement, not an open question.

4. It seems _____ he won't be able to catch the last bus to the terminal.
✔ A) that
After **It seems**, we use a **that**-clause to report a statement: **It seems that he won't be able to catch the last bus. As** would need **if** or **though** (**It seems as if...**), and **why/what/when** make no sense here.

5. _____ he chose to go this summer is not known by anyone.
✔ D) Where
The noun clause is the subject of **is not known**. **Go** is intransitive and **this summer** already gives the time, so the missing information is the place: **Where he chose to go this summer is not known by anyone.** Not **What** or **Which**: these need an object, and **go** doesn't take one.

6. No one knows _____ he has finished all the necessary preparation. I will ask him tomorrow morning.
✔ B) if
If (= **whether**) begins a noun clause for a yes/no question: **No one knows if he has finished.** The clue is **I will ask him tomorrow**, which shows the answer is unknown. Not **that**: **that** would present it as a known fact, which contradicts the second sentence.

7. There is a common belief throughout human history _____.
✔ B) that the stars can tell us about our future
A noun like **belief** can be followed by a **that**-clause that gives its content (an appositive clause): **a common belief that the stars can tell us about our future**. Here **that** cannot be left out. The other options have no **that**, and **where to live** doesn't express a belief.

8. I wonder _____.
✔ E) how a person can run 100 metres in under 10 seconds
An embedded (indirect) question after **I wonder** uses statement word order: subject + verb, **how a person can run**. The other options keep question word order (**how can he be**, **what does he think**, **why is he**), which is wrong inside a noun clause.

9. What he was talking about in public _____ something he should only talk about with his intimate friends.
✔ D) is
The **what**-clause **What he was talking about in public** is the subject, and it needs a main verb. A noun clause takes a singular verb, so **is** is correct. Not **have been**: a clause subject is singular, and the sentence needs a simple present statement here.

10. _____ the speaker said next was lost in the general uproar.
✔ D) What
What means **the thing(s) that**. It begins a noun clause that is the subject: **What the speaker said next was lost in the uproar. Said** needs an object, and **what** provides it. Not **That**: a **that**-clause must be complete, but **the speaker said next** has no object.

11. I couldn't have known _____ the bus comes.
✓ **B) when**
When begins a noun clause about time and is the object of **known**: **I couldn't have known when the bus comes** (= at what time). The present **comes** is possible because it refers to a timetable. **Where** or **how** would not make sense with **comes** here.

12. I'd rather you didn't say anything _____ he proposed to you.
✓ **B) when**
When begins a time clause: **I'd rather you didn't say anything when he proposed to you**, meaning at that moment. After **I'd rather you**, a past form (**didn't say**) expresses a wish about someone else's action. **Whether** and **what** would need a different structure (e.g. **about whether...**).

13. It is very obvious _____.
✓ **C) that the internet has changed social practices**
After **It is obvious**, the real subject is a **that**-clause with statement word order: **It is very obvious that the internet has changed social practices.** The wrong options use question word order (**what did he ask**, **is it impossible**) or have a grammar error (**the one of**).

14. If a person buys something in every store _____ he enters, for instance, a therapist might teach him self-discipline by making him go to a store and leave without buying anything.
✓ **C) that**
Enter is transitive (we **enter a store**, not **enter in** it), so the relative clause needs an object pronoun: **every store that he enters**. Not **where** or **in which**: these would only work with a verb like **go in** or **shop in** (**every store in which he shops**).

15. No one could really understand _____ he left the meeting at the very beginning of the debate.
✓ **B) why**
Why begins a noun clause about a reason and is the object of **understand**: **No one could understand why he left.** Leaving at the very beginning is surprising, so people want to know the reason. **Whether** doesn't fit, because it is certain that he left.

16. Experts in psychology believe _____ for many people, money is an important symbol of strength and influence.
✓ **E) that**
After verbs of thinking such as **believe**, a statement is introduced by **that**: **Experts believe that money is an important symbol...** The clause after the gap is a complete statement, so no question word is needed.

17. _____ is supported by the results of many recent studies.
✓ **A) That regular exercise can improve our mood**
A full statement can be the subject of a sentence only as a noun clause, introduced by **That**: **That regular exercise can improve our mood is supported by many studies.** Not **Regular exercise can improve our mood**: without **that**, the sentence would have two main verbs (**can improve** and **is**).

18. The idea _____ we should go on a picnic at the weekend is to be delayed for this week.
✓ **C) that**
After nouns like **idea**, **fact** and **belief**, a **that**-clause gives the content of the noun (an appositive clause): **the idea that we should go on a picnic**. The clause is complete, so a question word like **what** or **why** cannot be used.

19. The fact _____ you have to go as soon as possible is none of my business.
✓ **B) that**
The fact that + a complete statement is a fixed pattern: **The fact that you have to go ... is none of my business. Fact** means something true, so it is followed by **that**, not by **whether** or a question word.

20. After the shoppers pass their credit cards through the machines, their orders go to a warehouse, _____ sends them the items.
✓ **B) which**
After a comma, a non-defining relative clause about a thing uses **which**. Here **which** is the subject of **sends**: **a warehouse, which sends them the items**. Not **where**: **where** cannot be the subject of a verb.

21. Videocatalogues are computers with screens _____ show pictures of products to buy.
✓ **A) that**
A defining relative clause about things uses **that** (or **which**) as the subject: **screens that show pictures of products**. Not **who**: **who** is for people.

22. What you all need for the case is _____ I forgot to give you this morning.
✓ **B) what**
What (= **the thing that**) begins a noun clause and is also the object of **give**: **is what I forgot to give you**. Not **that**: a **that**-clause must be complete, but **I forgot to give you** has no direct object.

23. I asked the lady in the front seat _____ old the little boy was.
✓ **C) how**
In an indirect question about age we use **how old**, with statement word order: **I asked ... how old the little boy was.** The verb is backshifted to **was** after the past **asked**.

24. _____ encourages him to work more efficiently.
✓ **C) His believing that he will be promoted soon**
The subject of **encourages** must be a noun phrase. **His believing that he will be promoted soon** is a gerund phrase with a **that**-clause inside it. The other options are complete sentences or a broken conditional, so they cannot be the subject of another verb.

25. Compulsive bargain hunters often buy things _____ they don't need just because they are cheap.
✓ **E) that**
A defining relative clause about things uses **that** (or **which**), here as the object of **need**: **things that they don't need**. Not **what**: **what** already means **the things that**, so it cannot follow the noun **things**.

26. Soon he will learn _____ nothing bad will happen to him if he doesn't buy anything whenever he enters a store.
✔ **B) that**
Learn + **that**-clause reports a fact someone comes to understand: **he will learn that nothing bad will happen**. The clause after the gap is a complete statement, so no question word is needed.

27. He was not supposed to have done something like that, so everyone was surprised and couldn't perceive _____ he left school.
✔ **A) why**
People were surprised by his action, so they couldn't understand the reason for it: **couldn't perceive why he left school**. **Why** begins a noun clause about a reason. **Whether/if** don't fit, because it is certain that he left.

28. I don't know _____.
✔ **D) whether he is telling the truth or not**
An indirect question after **I don't know** uses statement word order: **whether he is telling the truth or not**. The other options keep question word order (**will he do**, **did the concert start**, **does the professor recommend**), which is wrong in a noun clause.

29. It is very obvious _____.
✔ **E) that Michael Jordan is one of the most famous basketball players in history**
After **It is obvious**, the real subject is a **that**-clause with statement word order: **It is very obvious that Michael Jordan is one of the most famous players.** The wrong options use question word order, an extra **which**, or an infinitive that has no logical subject.

30. They say he doesn't even know _____ to use the computer in his office.
✔ **B) how**
How + to-infinitive means **the way to do something**: **he doesn't know how to use the computer**. The other question words don't fit **use the computer**. **What** would need an object (**what to do**).

31. _____ is accepted by many scientists.
✔ **B) That a person can learn better when he is relaxed**
A statement can be the subject of **is accepted** only as a **that**-clause: **That a person can learn better when he is relaxed is accepted by many scientists.** The other options are complete sentences without **that** (so there would be two main verbs), or a **why**-clause, which gives a reason rather than a claim that can be accepted.

32. Most of them had secretaries _____ typed, filed papers, and answered phones.
✔ **D) who**
Secretaries are people, and the pronoun is the subject of **typed**, so we use **who**: **secretaries who typed, filed papers...** Not **whom**: **whom** is an object pronoun. Not **which**: **which** is for things.

33. _____ must be taken into account.
✔ **D) That he may be telling lies**
The subject of **must be taken into account** has to be a noun clause, introduced by **That**: **That he may be telling lies must be taken into account.** Not **He may be telling lies**: without **that**, the sentence has two main verbs. Not **Owing to the fact...**: this is an adverbial phrase, not a subject.

34. _____ the play was performed efficiently or not will be questioned in the meeting tomorrow.
✔ **C) Whether**
Whether ... or not begins a noun clause for a yes/no question, and here the clause is the subject: **Whether the play was performed efficiently or not will be questioned.** The clue is **or not**, which goes with **whether**, not **if** or **that**.

35. The fact that he has come late every night _____ because he is not happy at home.
✔ **C) is**
The subject is **The fact that he has come late every night**, and it needs a main verb. **Is** + **because**-clause gives the explanation: **The fact ... is because he is not happy at home.** Not **stemmed from**: it would need a noun after it (**stems from his unhappiness**), not **because**.

36. I want to spend my holiday _____ we went last year.
✔ **D) where**
Where (= **in the place that**) refers to a place and is needed because **went** takes no object: **spend my holiday where we went last year**. Not **in which** or **at which**: they need a noun before them (**the town to which we went**).

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