

TYPES OF SENTENCES

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ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC SUPPORT

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Categories of Sentences:

1. Simple Sentences
2. Compound Sentences
3. Complex Sentences
4. Compound-Complex Sentences

Simple sentences are used:

- To state information
- To ask a question
- To give instructions or to make requests
- To express an opinion or an emotion

1. SIMPLE SENTENCES:

Contain a single independent clause.

Clause: A group of words containing both a subject and a verb.

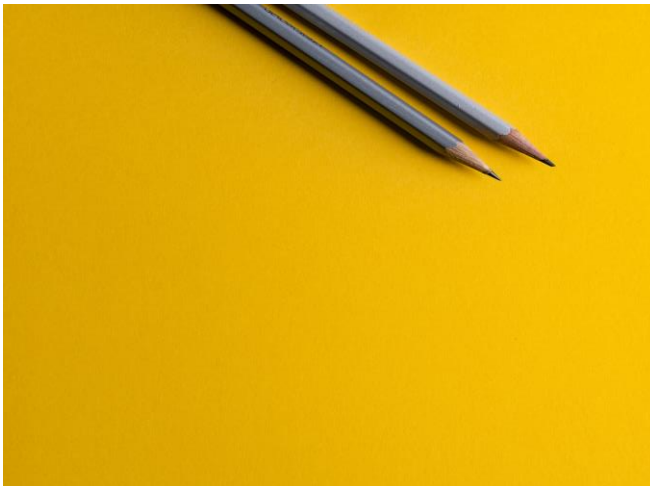
Independent clause: A clause that can stand on its own as a complete sentence.

Benjamin Franklin invented the lightning rod.

Note: Simple sentences may have more than one subject and verb.

The professor and the student had both watched the movie and read the book it was based on.

Here, “the professor and the student” are treated as a single subject (a compound subject) and “watched” and “read” function like a single verb (a compound verb).



DECLARATIVE SENTENCES:

Are used to make statements.

Animal cells have membrane-bound organelles.

The film *Shutter Island* (2010) was influenced by Alfred Hitchcock’s cinematography.

INTERROGATIVE SENTENCES:

Are used to ask questions.

Who was Sigmund Freud?

How can William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* be interpreted as an allegory for society?

IMPERATIVE SENTENCES:

Are used to give commands/make requests.

Read chapter four for next class.

Please take a seat.

EXCLAMATORY SENTENCES:

Are used to express strong feelings.

I love this song!

It is critical that the law be revised.

2. COMPOUND SENTENCES:

Contain two or more *independent* clauses. Compound sentences have at least two subjects and two verbs.

In a compound sentence, the clauses are either:

- a) joined by a coordinating conjunction:

and, or, nor, but, for, yet, so

Early depictions of Indigenous peoples in the media were wildly inaccurate, **and** they often propagated misconceptions about Native American culture.

OR by pairs of conjunctions:

either...or, neither...nor, both...and, not only...but also

The invention of the printing press **not only** facilitated the production of books, **but also**, reduced the cost of the products, making them accessible to a wider demographic.

Note: Academic sentences should not begin with conjunctions.

- b) separated by a semicolon

Cape Spear marks the most easterly point in North America; it is one of Newfoundland's most popular attractions for tourists.

Semicolons can be used with a conjunctive adverb:

however, for example, in fact, likewise, meanwhile, instead

Many gods of classical Greek mythology have Roman counterparts; **for example**, Mars is the Roman equivalent of the Greek god Ares.

Note: A comma must follow a conjunctive adverb.



3. COMPLEX SENTENCES:

Contain one independent clause and one or more dependent (or subordinate) clauses.

Dependent clause: A clause that cannot stand on its own as a grammatically complete sentence.

Dependent clauses are *part* of a sentence that *depend* on another clause (an independent clause) in order to express a complete idea.

Dependent/Subordinate clauses are introduced by subordinate conjunctions:

if, as, because, since, whenever, whereas, even though

Dependent clause:

If there is an unexpected school closure...
(Incomplete sentence)

+ Independent clause:

The exam will be moved to the following session. (Complete simple sentence)

= Complete complex sentence:

If there is an unexpected school closure, the exam will be moved to the following session.

The order of the clauses in a complex sentence is often reversible; the order of the clauses does not affect the meaning of the sentence:

Whenever he studies for tests, he begins by reviewing the textbook chapter.

He begins by reviewing the textbook chapter whenever he studies for tests.

Note: The order of the clauses *does* affect the punctuation of the sentence.

In most cases, when a dependent clause appears first in a sentence, it is followed by a comma. When the dependent clause follows the independent clause, no commas are needed to separate them. However, there are some exceptions to this rule.

The subordinate clause may also appear in the middle of the sentence, splitting up the independent clause.

His preferred study method, which he uses whenever he studies for tests, is to begin by reviewing the textbook chapter.

Note: In the example above, the italicized clause is a *nonrestrictive appositive*.

Nonrestrictive appositives are groups of words that function together as a noun to provide additional information about the noun they follow. Since the nonrestrictive appositive above appears in the middle of the sentence, it must be surrounded by a pair of commas.

Restrictive appositives on the other hand differentiate whatever they modify from other similar items. They are not offset by commas.

The British king Henry VI was the youngest monarch being crowned at a mere nine months of age.

(Here, *Henry VI* is a restrictive appositive since it distinguishes him from the others who could be referred to by the noun “British king”.)

There are three kinds of dependent clauses:

1. Noun clauses: Take the role of any noun within the sentence. Noun clauses can be introduced by subordinating conjunctions (*who, what, when, where, why, how, that, whether, if*).

The CEO wanted to know who was responsible for the drastic miscalculation.

Note: When a noun clause acts as the *subject* of a sentence, then it is an independent clause. When it acts as the *object* (as above), it is a dependent clause.

2. Adverb clauses: Function as an adverb by providing additional information about a verb in the independent clause of the sentence. Adverb clauses begin with subordinating conjunctions (*before, after, even though, because, if, as soon as*).

She submitted her homework as soon as she had finished it.

3. Adjective clauses: Or *relative clauses* function as adjectives to provide additional information about a noun. The noun can be a subject or an object. Adjective clauses begin with subordinating conjunctions (*that, which, who, whom, whose*).

The woman who wrote the poem attended a reading at a local bookstore.



COMPOUND-COMPLEX SENTENCES:

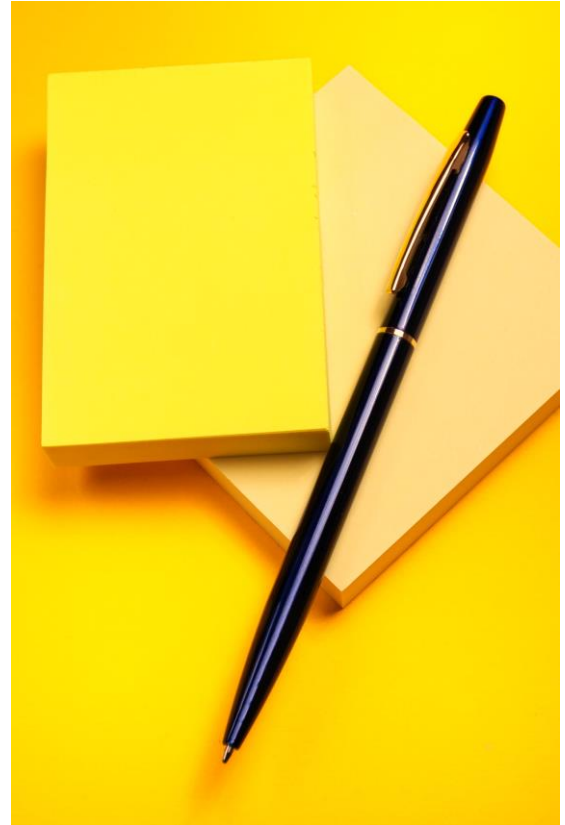
Contain two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clause. The shortest possible compound-complex sentences then, have three clauses consisting of two independent clauses and one dependent clause.

The dependent clause may appear in either of the independent clauses.

*Since many young people are not receiving adequate exercise, the government has taken strides to implement more physical education into schools, **so** they may combat the rising levels of childhood obesity.*

(Here, the dependent clause is shown in *italics*, and the coordinating conjunction joining the two independent clauses is **bolded**).

Note: The punctuation follows the same rules as those given for compound and complex sentences respectively.



Sources:(MLA 8th Edition)

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