



The Writing Centre's Guide to Sentence Structure

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WE ARE

WRITING TUTORS

Types of Sentences

- We are going to discuss three types of sentence structure.
- What are they?



SIMPLE SENTENCES

COMPOUND SENTENCES

COMPLEX SENTENCES

Simple Sentences

- Simple sentences consist of one independent clause, which may be long or short.

Examples

1 subject & 1 verb

Birds fly.

Birds fly in the winter.

1 subject and 2 verbs

Sadia washes and dries the dishes.

2 subjects and 1 verb

Jack and Dan study together

2 subjects and 2 verbs

Sadia and Ali work and live together.

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Simple Sentences

- All of the previous sentences are simple sentences because they contain one independent clause.
- Don't be confused if the sentence is longer like these



The children laughed at the penguins, ran away from the monkeys, and fed the goats.



Jimmy, a star basketball player and excellent student, lives in Windsor, Ontario, across from Detroit, Michigan.

Simple Sentences

When should I use simple sentences?



- Use simple sentences when what you want to say is a single thought.
- Without unrelated and unnecessary words and thoughts confusing the issue, your meaning will be easier for your readers to understand.
- Be careful! A long series of simple sentences will make your writing choppy and **dull** .



Compound Sentences

What is it?

- A compound sentence consists of joining two or more independent clauses (simple sentences).
- You can do this using three strategies!
 1. Semi-colon
 2. Coordinating conjunction
 3. Conjunctive adverb



Compound Sentences

Strategy #1 Semi-colons

- A semi-colon can be used like a period when connecting simple sentences.

Here are examples of simple sentences:

1. Kate passed the course. She studied hard.
2. Plastic surgery is expensive. The results are not always good.

Using semi-colons:

1. Kate passed the course; she studied hard.
2. Plastic surgery is expensive; the results are not always good.

Compound Sentences

Strategy #2 Coordinating Conjunctions

- Use a coordinating conjunction and a comma to join two simple sentences.
- What are coordinating conjunctions?

“FANBOYS”

F	or	Reason; similar to because
A	nd	Addition
N	or	Choice
B	ut	Contrast
O	r	Choice
Y	et	Contrast
S	o	Result/effect

Compound Sentences

- Kate passed the course ,for she studied hard.
- Plastic surgery is expensive ,but the results are not always good.

Compound Sentences

Strategy #3 Conjunctive adverbs

- To use this technique, insert a **semi-colon**, then the **conjunctive adverb**, and then a **comma**.

Here are some conjunctive adverbs:

Also	Finally	Likewise	On the other hand
Anyway	Furthermore	Meanwhile	Otherwise
As a result	However	Moreover	Similarly
Besides	In addition	Nevertheless	Then
Certainly	In fact	Next	Therefore
Consequently	Indeed	Now	Thus

Compound Sentences

Examples:

Kate studied hard; **consequently**, she passed the course.

Plastic surgery is expensive; **however**, the results are not always good.

Compound Sentences

The following paragraph needs punctuation to complete the coordination of compound sentences correctly. Where would you insert the proper punctuation?

Susan was asked to create an advertisement for the violin concert so she designed a flyer. She figured she needed 100 copies to post around town therefore she went to the print shop. Susan presented the flyer to the man behind the counter he determined it was suitable for reproduction. It could be reproduced on a copier or it could be reproduced on a printing press. The printing press would generate higher quality the copier however would be quicker.

Compound Sentences

The following paragraph needs punctuation to complete the coordination of compound sentences correctly. Where would you insert the proper punctuation?

Susan was asked to create an advertisement for the violin concert, so she designed a flyer. She figured she needed 100 copies to post around town; therefore, she went to the print shop. Susan presented the flyer to the man behind the counter; he determined it was suitable for reproduction. It could be reproduced on a copier, or it could be reproduced on a printing press. The printing press would generate higher quality; the copier, however, would be quicker.

Compound Sentences

How could you combine these sentences using the three strategies we have learned?

- Blue Rodeo is playing at the Air Canada Centre.
- My friend, Domenic, said he could not get tickets.

1. Blue Rodeo is playing at the Air Canada Centre; my friend, Domenic, said he could not get tickets.
2. Blue Rodeo is playing at the Air Canada Centre, **but** my friend, Domenic, said he could not get tickets.
3. Blue Rodeo is playing at the Air Canada Centre; **however**, my friend, Domenic, said he could not get tickets

Compound Sentences

When do I use compound sentences?

- We use a compound sentence to show that two ideas are related, and are of **equal** significance.
- Joining two ideas to show a relationship of **equal importance** is known as coordination.



Complex Sentences

What is it?

- A complex sentence consists of joining one independent clause (simple sentence) to one or more dependent clauses.
- It doesn't matter if the independent clause starts or ends the sentence, the meaning is the same.

What's the difference between an independent clause and a dependent clause?

Independent clause = subject + verb + complete thought

example: Dan extinguished the fire.

Dependent clause = subject + verb + incomplete thought

example: When Dan extinguished the fire.

Complex Sentences

Independent Clause

subject + verb + complete thought

example: Dan extinguished the fire.

- In this example we have a complete thought. The subject is **Dan**, the verb is **extinguished**, and we know that **the fire was put out by Dan**.

Dependent Clause

subject + verb + incomplete thought

example: When Dan extinguished the fire.

- In this example we don't have a complete thought. The subject is still **Dan**, the verb is still **extinguished**, but the word "when" causes us to question what happened after Dan extinguished the fire. This makes the thought incomplete.

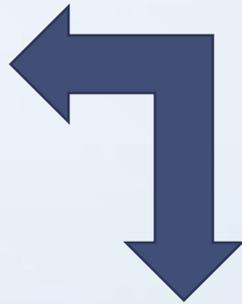
Complex Sentences

Examples:

Combine these sentences using a subordinating conjunction.

My toe hurts.

Aria stepped on it.



My toe hurts **because** Aria stepped on it.

Because Aria stepped on it, my toe hurt.

Complex Sentences

- Here are some subordinating conjunctions:

after	even if	since	whatever
although	even though	though	when
as	if	unless	whereas
because	in order that	until	while
before	as if	so that	whenever

Complex Sentences

Which clause is **independent**?

Which clause is **dependent**?

1. John sat down while his mother made dinner.
2. Since Stephen and Joanna play together every week, they are really good friends.
3. Even if you practice everyday, you will never be as good At basketball as Michael Jordan.

Complex Sentences

Which clause is **independent**?

Which clause is **dependent**?

1. **John sat down** while his mother made dinner.
2. Since Stephen and Joanna play together every week, **they are really good friends**.
3. Even if you practice everyday, **you will never be as good At basketball as Michael Jordan**.

Complex Sentences

Which clause is **independent**?

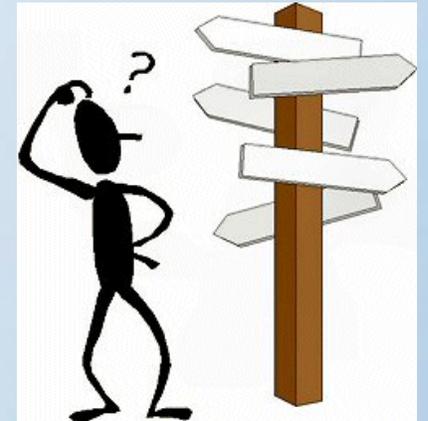
Which clause is **dependent**?

1. **John sat down** **while his mother made dinner.**
2. **Since Stephen and Joanna play together every week,** **they are really good friends.**
3. **Even if you practice everyday,** **you will never be as good At basketball as Michael Jordan.**

Complex Sentences

When do I use complex sentences?

- When you want to show a relationship between two or more ideas, one which is more important than the others.
- Be careful! Overusing complex sentences may result in confusing run-on sentences.



What we've learned:

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

Vary your sentence structure to create more interesting writing.

You're finished!

**If you found this helpful, please speak to one of our Writing Centre tutors on ways to view these slides on your own time

