



# Simple, Compound, Complex and Compound-Complex Sentences

# Clauses

- A main (independent) clause contains a subject and predicate and can stand alone

Ex. Houston plays baseball.

- A subordinate (dependent) clause contains a subject and predicate but is not a complete thought; it begins with a subordinating conjunction

Ex. Because we won the game

# What is a sentence?

- A sentence must contain both a **subject** and a **verb** and express a complete thought.
- A subject is who or what is doing the action.
- The verb is the action. The verb is also called the **predicate**.

# Subjects & Predicates

- Subject- one subject doing the action

Ex. **Susie** called her friend on the phone.

- Compound subject- more than one subject

Ex. **Susie and Joan** jumped rope at recess.

- Predicate- one action

Ex. Josh **swam** laps in the pool.

- Compound predicate- two or more actions

Ex. Josh **rode** his bike and **skated** this weekend.

# Simple Subject & Complete Subject

- Simple subject- just the subject, no descriptors

Ex: The young **students** enjoyed the game.

- Complete subject- the subject and descriptors

Ex. **The young students** enjoyed the game.

# Simple Predicate & Complete Predicate

- Simple predicate- the verb or verb phrase

Ex. Many students **cheered** wildly.

Ex. Jane **will finish** the test after school.

- Complete predicate- the action word plus descriptors

Ex. Many students **cheered wildly**.

Ex. Jane **will finish the test after school**.

# Simple Sentences

- A **simple sentence** is a basic sentence that expresses a complete thought. It contains:

1. A subject
2. A verb
3. A complete thought

Ex. The train was late.

Mary and Maggie took the bus.

# Compound Sentences

- A **compound sentence** contains *two* main clauses joined by a comma and a coordinating conjunction or a semi-colon.
- Compound sentences connect two simple sentences, but they often do not show a clear relationship between the two parts.

Ex. I waited for the bus, but it was late.

↑  
Independent clause

↑  
Independent clause



# Complex Sentences

- A **complex sentence** contains a main clause and one or more dependent clauses.
- If the dependent clause comes *before* the independent clause, add a comma after the dependent clause. If the main clause comes first, no comma is needed between the two.
- Complex sentences can show a more specific relationship between the parts of the sentence than a compound sentence.

# Complex Sentence Examples

- Independent clause first:

We won the game because we worked together as a team.

- Dependent clause first:

Although I broke my arm, I still cheered for my team from the sidelines.

# Compound-Complex Sentences

- A **compound-complex sentence** contains two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause.
- This is the most sophisticated type of sentence you can use.

Ex.

*Though Jack prefers watching comedy films, he rented the latest spy thriller, and he enjoyed it very much.*

# Identify the type of sentence

1. Our coach will host a pizza party when we win our first game.
2. Olivia and Caroline went to the movies.
3. James grilled burgers, and Patrick made a salad.
4. Since I made the honor roll, my parents let me have a friend spend the night.
5. Before Alice called me, she called her mom, and her mom asked her to babysit her brother.

## Sentence Types:

### Simple, Compound, Complex, and Compound-Complex

#### Simple Sentences

- A simple sentence contains a subject and a verb.
- It expresses a single complete thought that can stand on its own.

#### **Examples:**

1. The baby cried for food.  
^There is a subject and a verb that expresses a complete thought.
2. Professor Maple's intelligent students completed and turned in their homework.  
^ A simple sentence does not necessarily have to be short. It can have adjectives. In this case, there are two verbs "completed" and "turned in." However, the sentence expresses one complete thought and therefore is a simple sentence.
3. Megan and Ron ate too much and felt sick.  
^Although there are two subjects and two verbs, it is still a simple sentence because both verbs share the same subjects and express one complete thought.

#### Compound Sentences

- A compound sentence has two independent clauses. An independent clause is a part of a sentence that can stand alone because it contains a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought.
- Basically, a compound contains two simple sentences.
- These independent clauses are joined by a conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).

#### **Examples:**

1. The shoplifter had stolen clothes, **so** he ran once he saw the police.  
^Both sides of the conjunction "so" are complete sentences. "The shoplifter had stolen clothes" can stand alone and so can "he ran once he saw the police." Therefore, this is a compound sentence.
2. They spoke to him in Spanish, **but** he responded in English.  
^This is also a compound sentence that uses a conjunction to separate two individual clauses.

#### Complex Sentences

- A complex sentence is an independent clause joined by one or more dependent clauses. A dependent clause either lacks a subject or a verb or has both a subject and a verb that does not express a complete thought.
- A complex sentence always has a subordinator (as, because, since, after, although, when) or relative pronouns (who, that, which).

#### **Examples:**

1. **After** eating lunch at The Cheesecake Factory, Tim went to the gym to exercise.  
^ The independent clause is "Tim went to the gym to exercise." The subordinating clause before it is dependent on the main, independent clause. If one were to say "after eating lunch at The Cheesecake Factory," it would be an incomplete thought.
2. Opinionated women are given disadvantages in societies **that** privilege male accomplishments.

^ The subject is “opinionated women” and the verb is “are given.” The first part of the sentence “opinionated women are given disadvantages in societies” is an independent clause that expresses a complete thought. The following “that privilege male accomplishments” is a relative clause that describes which types of societies.

3. The woman **who** taught Art History 210 was fired for stealing school supplies.

^ The dependent clause in this sentence is “who taught Art History 210” because if removed, the rest of the sentence would stand as an independent clause. “Who taught Art History 210” is an adjective clause that provides necessary details about the subject, woman.

### Compound-Complex Sentences

- A compound-complex sentence has two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause.

#### **Examples:**

1. **After** the two soccer players lost their game, they joined their other teammates for lunch, and they went to the movies.

^ If we remove the dependent clause “after the two soccer players lost their game,” we have a compound sentence. The dependent clause makes this sentence compound-complex.

2. The man believed in the system, and he knew that justice would prevail **after** the murderer was sent to jail.

#### **Practice:**

Identify whether the sentences are simple, complex, compound or compound-complex. Please underline dependent clauses where it applies.

1. *Vampires Dairies* is my favorite television show, but I also love *True Blood*.
2. The student wiped the white board that was filthy with last week’s notes.
3. The trendy fashion designer released her new line on Wednesday.
4. Trina and Hareem went to a bar in Hollywood to celebrate their anniversary.
5. Wicked Regina cast a spell on the entire city, so the citizens decided to rebel.
6. While waiting for the paint to dry, Angela went to Home Depot, and Martin organized the kitchen appliances.
7. After listening to the Kanye West CD, I have new respect for his music.
8. After the teacher chose groups, John and Sara were selected as partners for a project, yet Sarah did most of the work.

## SECTION

## 2

## Simple, Compound, Complex, and Compound-Complex Sentences

Sentences are categorized according to the number and types of clauses they contain. The names of the four types of sentences are **simple**, **compound**, **complex**, and **compound-complex**. You need to be familiar with these sentence patterns for a number of reasons:

1. **Variety.** Varying your sentence patterns creates interest and avoids monotony. Repeating a sentence pattern endlessly will bore even your most interested reader.
2. **Emphasis.** You can use these sentence patterns to emphasize the ideas that you think are more important than others.
3. **Grammar.** A knowledge of the basic sentence patterns of English will help you avoid the major sentence structure errors discussed in Section Three.

Being able to recognize and use these sentence patterns will help you control your writing and thus express your ideas more effectively.

### The Simple Sentence

The introduction to this chapter points out that a sentence must contain at least one main clause. A sentence that contains only one main clause and no other clauses is called a **simple sentence**. However, a simple sentence is not necessarily an uncomplicated or short sentence because, in addition to its one main clause, it may contain a variety of phrases and modifiers.

The basic pattern for the simple sentence is subject–verb (SV). This pattern may vary in several ways:

#### EXAMPLES

S      V

*subject–verb (SV):* The plane flew over the stadium.

V              S

*verb–subject (VS):* Over the stadium flew the plane.

S                      S      V

*subject–subject–verb (SSV):* The plane and the helicopter flew over the stadium.

S      V                              V

*subject–verb–verb (SVV):* The plane flew over the stadium and turned north.







Below is a list of the most commonly used transitional words and phrases. Do not confuse these words or phrases with coordinating conjunctions or subordinating conjunctions.

accordingly	hence	next	thus
also	however	nonetheless	undoubtedly
besides	instead	otherwise	for instance
consequently	meanwhile	similarly	for example
finally	moreover	still	on the other hand
further	namely	then	that is
furthermore	nevertheless	therefore	

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**PRACTICE**

Write compound sentences of your own according to the instructions.

1. A compound sentence that uses a comma and *but* to join two main clauses:

*I was very hungry after the game, but I decided not  
to eat anything.*

2. A compound sentence that joins two main clauses with a semicolon:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. A compound sentence that joins two main clauses with a semicolon and an appropriate transitional word or phrase followed by a comma:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. A compound sentence that joins two main clauses with a comma and *yet*.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. A compound sentence that joins two main clauses with a semicolon followed by the transitional word *however* or *therefore*:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## PRACTICE

In the following sentences, write S above each subject and V above each verb. Then, in the spaces provided, identify each sentence as either **simple** or **compound**.

- S V

1. Some of the earliest forms of writing appeared around  
3500 B.C.E. simple
2. The Sumerians needed to keep track of food, grain, and other materials used in trade, so they made pictures of the items on clay tablets. \_\_\_\_\_
3. These pictures were the first form of writing. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The clay tablets were baked in a kiln; as a result, thousands of them have lasted throughout the centuries. \_\_\_\_\_
5. The pictures were created with a wedge-shaped instrument; this type of writing is called *cuneiform*. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Gradually, these pictures came to represent the syllables of the Sumerian language. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Rather than clay, ancient Egyptians recorded their writing on leather or on a more fragile material. \_\_\_\_\_
8. This fragile material was papyrus, and it later came to be called paper. \_\_\_\_\_
9. About eighteen hundred years ago, a Chinese inventor made paper from bark and rags. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Chinese books were soon written on paper, but the knowledge of paper-making did not reach Europe for a thousand years. \_\_\_\_\_

## The Complex Sentence

The **complex sentence** has the same subject–verb pattern (SV/SV) as the compound sentence. However, the complex sentence features only one main clause and always contains at least one subordinate clause and sometimes more than one. The subordinate clauses in a complex sentence may occur at any place in the sentence.

### EXAMPLES

Before a main clause: <sup>S</sup> <sup>V</sup> After he retired from the Army, <sup>S</sup> <sup>V</sup> Eisenhower ran for president.

After a main clause: <sup>S</sup> <sup>V</sup> Rugby is a sport <sup>S</sup> <sup>V</sup> that I have played only once.

Interrupting a main clause: <sup>S</sup> <sup>S</sup> <sup>V</sup> Emilio's grandfather, who fought in World  
<sup>V</sup> War II, told him about his experiences during the war.

Before and after a main clause: <sup>S</sup> <sup>V</sup> When the pianist sat down at the piano,  
<sup>S</sup> <sup>V</sup> <sup>S</sup> <sup>V</sup> she played a melody that she had written recently.

### PRACTICE

Write complex sentences of your own according to the instructions.

1. A complex sentence that includes an adjective clause using the relative pronoun *who*:

*Zelda searched for three days to find the*

*person who had lost the German shepherd.*

2. A complex sentence that ends with an adverb clause:

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3. A complex sentence that contains an adjective clause using the relative pronoun *which*:

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4. A complex sentence that begins with an adverb clause:

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5. A complex sentence that contains an adjective clause that uses the word *where*:

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## The Compound-Complex Sentence

The **compound-complex sentence** is a combination of the compound and the complex sentence patterns. It is made up of two or more main clauses and one or more subordinate clauses. Therefore, it must contain a minimum of three sets of subjects and verbs (at least two main clauses and at least one subordinate clause).

### EXAMPLES

main clause                      sub. clause

[On the day-long bicycle trip, Ophelia ate the food] [that she had packed,]

main clause

[but Henry had forgotten to bring anything to eat.]

sub. clause                      main clause

[Although he was exhausted,] [Ernesto cooked dinner for his mother,]

main clause

[and after dinner he cleaned the kitchen.]

main clause                      sub. clause

[The travelers were excited] [when they arrived in Paris;]

main clause

[they wanted to go sightseeing immediately.]

**PRACTICE**

Write compound-complex sentences of your own according to the instructions.

1. A compound-complex sentence that contains two main clauses joined by *and* and one adjective clause beginning with *who*:

*Murphy, who works at the Mazda dealership, sold ten Miatas*

*last month, and this month he plans to sell even more.*

2. A compound-complex sentence that contains two main clauses and an adverb clause. Use *or* to join the two main clauses.

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3. A compound-complex sentence that contains two main clauses and an adjective clause. Use a semicolon and a transitional word or phrase to join the two main clauses.

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4. A compound-complex sentence that contains two main clauses and two adverb clauses:

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5. A compound-complex sentence with a pattern of your own choice:

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 PRACTICE

In the following sentences, write S above each subject and V above each verb. Then, in the spaces provided, identify the sentences as simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex.

- S*      *V*
1. *Cinderella* is a European fairy tale with over five hundred versions. simple
  2. The oldest versions are from the ninth century; those early stories do not give Cinderella glass slippers. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. The glass slippers appeared when a French version of the story was translated incorrectly. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. In older versions, Cinderella's shoes were made of a rare metal or some other valuable covering. \_\_\_\_\_
  5. The French story used white squirrel fur for the slippers, but the French word that meant *fur* was similar to the word that meant *glass*. \_\_\_\_\_
  6. Charles Perrault, who translated the story in 1697, was the first person to describe the slippers as glass. \_\_\_\_\_
  7. Almost all later versions of the story depict Cinderella as wearing glass slippers. \_\_\_\_\_
  8. In most of the stories, Cinderella is helped by her fairy godmother; however, some versions use other characters. \_\_\_\_\_
  9. Although Cinderella's mother is dead, she magically appears in one story, and she takes the place of the fairy godmother. \_\_\_\_\_
  10. Sometimes cows or goats assist Cinderella, but in the Disney version mice come to her aid. \_\_\_\_\_

## Section Two Review

1. A **simple sentence** contains only one main clause and no other clauses.
2. A **compound sentence** contains two or more main clauses that are joined by a comma and a coordinating conjunction or a semicolon or a semicolon and a transitional word or phrase.
3. A **complex sentence** contains only one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses.
4. A **compound-complex sentence** contains two or more main clauses and one or more subordinate clauses.



## Exercise 2A

In the spaces provided, identify the following sentences as simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex.

1. Alex was the name of a famous African gray parrot. simple
2. Irene Pepperberg, who is a comparative psychologist, bought Alex from a pet shop in 1977. \_\_\_\_\_
3. For twenty-two years, Dr. Pepperberg taught Alex to do tasks that only a few nonhuman species can do. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Alex seemed to use words creatively. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Alex's speech was not just imitation; instead, it suggested reasoning and choice. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Dr. Pepperberg used a novel approach to teach Alex. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Another trainer competed with Alex for a reward, and Alex would learn by watching the other trainer. \_\_\_\_\_
8. When Alex was shown a blue paper triangle, he could identify the color, the shape, and the material. \_\_\_\_\_
9. He had not simply memorized the colors that go with objects; he also identified the correct colors of new objects. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Alex could identify fifty different objects, recognize quantities up to six, distinguish seven colors and five shapes, understand "bigger," "smaller," "same," and "different," and was learning the concepts of "over" and "under." \_\_\_\_\_
11. If Dr. Pepperberg asked Alex to identify the object that was orange and three-cornered, he would choose the right one. \_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise 2A**

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*continued*

- 12. Sometimes Alex would grow tired of the questions, so he would ask to go back to his cage. \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. Although many researchers dispute Dr. Pepperberg’s claims, others believe Alex demonstrated the intelligence of a five-year-old human. \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. According to some scientists, Alex expressed conscious thoughts and feelings. \_\_\_\_\_
- 15. African gray parrots often live for fifty years, but Alex died unexpectedly during the night in 2009 when he was less than thirty years old. \_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise 2B

A. Combine each set of sentences to create the sentence type asked for. You may need to delete or change some words.

1. A simple sentence with the pattern verb–subject:
  - a. The ship was in the harbor.
  - b. The ship was a nineteenth-century three-masted schooner.

*In the harbor was a nineteenth-century three-masted schooner.*

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2. A compound sentence:
  - a. Lance Armstrong had retired from racing.
  - b. He decided to return for one more Tour de France.

3. A complex sentence:
  - a. Hogart would not go to the dance.
  - b. Sheba changed her dress.

4. A simple sentence:
  - a. I plan to mow my lawn this morning.
  - b. I also plan to take a nap this afternoon.

5. A complex sentence:
  - a. Josh had not done his homework.
  - b. He could not go to the movie with his friends.

## Exercise 2B

*continued*

6. A simple sentence:
- The spider saw the little girl.
  - The spider sat down beside her.

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7. A compound sentence:
- The drought had lasted for three years.
  - No one was allowed to water lawns or wash cars.

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8. A compound-complex sentence:
- The Subreality Cafe is a dark and gloomy place.
  - It appeals to people who wear black clothing and dark makeup.
  - It is one of the most popular cafes in the city.

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9. A compound-complex sentence:
- “Richard Cory” is a song composed by Paul Simon.
  - It is included in Simon and Garfunkel’s album *Sounds of Silence*.
  - It is originally a poem composed by Edwin Arlington Robinson.

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**B.** Following the instructions, construct sentences of your own.

10. A compound-complex sentence that uses a semicolon:

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**Exercise 2B**

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*continued*

**11.** A complex sentence that includes an adjective clause:

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**12.** A compound sentence that uses a semicolon and a transitional word:

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**13.** A simple sentence:

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**14.** A complex sentence that includes an adverb clause at the beginning of the sentence:

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**15.** A compound-complex sentence that does not use a semicolon:

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## Exercise 2C

Identify the sentences as simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex.

1. After dark, the shore near my cabin is a mysterious place where the absence of light creates a new reality. complex
2. As I was walking along the beach one night recently, I surprised a snow crab in the beam of my flashlight. \_\_\_\_\_
3. He lay in a pit just above the surface as if he were watching the sea and waiting. \_\_\_\_\_
4. When I turned off the flashlight, I could feel the darkness around me, and I felt alone with the snow crab. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I could hear nothing but the elemental sounds of wind blowing over sand and water and waves crashing on the beach. \_\_\_\_\_
6. When I am on that beach at night, time seems suspended, and I feel alone with the creatures of the shore. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Those creatures, like the sea anemones and the shore birds, have been there since the dawn of time. \_\_\_\_\_
8. As my eyes accustom themselves to the dark, the gulls and sanderlings become shadows. \_\_\_\_\_
9. When I am surrounded by those sights, sounds, and smells, I feel transported into another, older world before humankind. \_\_\_\_\_
10. The rhythm of the sea becomes the rhythm of the whole world, and the smell becomes a fundamental smell. \_\_\_\_\_
11. On that recent night, I sat near that snow crab and watched the sea with him. \_\_\_\_\_
12. Hidden beneath the water before me were patches of bright coral that were the home for blood-red starfish and green sea cucumbers. \_\_\_\_\_
13. All seemed peaceful then, but on the shore the battle for survival rages incessantly. \_\_\_\_\_
14. The largest shark and the smallest plankton must search constantly for the food that sustains them. \_\_\_\_\_
15. In the dim light I saw several hermit crabs scurrying across the sand, and I turned from the dark shore toward the lights of my home. \_\_\_\_\_

## Simple, Compound, Complex Sentence Practice 4

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

A **simple sentence** is an independent clause that has a subject and a predicate.

A **compound sentence** has two independent clauses and it is joined by a coordinating conjunction and a comma or just a semi-colon to replace the FANBOYS and comma.

A **complex sentence** has an independent clause joined by one or more dependent clauses.

### Examples:

She plays piano. *Simple*

Tim loves basketball, but Tom would rather play football. *Compound*

Joe ate his Cheerios while Jill packed his lunch. *Complex*

### What type of a sentence is this? (Circle the correct answer)

- 1) **Mark became very sick later in the afternoon.**  
Simple            Compound            Complex
- 2) **Jim rode the new school bus, and Tully slowly walked home.**  
Simple            Compound            Complex
- 3) **She was a good player, yet she wasn't a top scorer.**  
Simple            Compound            Complex
- 4) **Paul said that we were all sore losers because we complained about the game.**  
Simple            Compound            Complex
- 5) **Since Jake, Chris, and Vanessa studied so hard, they received great test scores.**  
Simple            Compound            Complex
- 6) **We were extremely sad when the party was over.**  
Simple            Compound            Complex
- 7) **We are always late to everything.**  
Simple            Compound            Complex
- 8) **The car slowed at the corner; however, it ran the stop sign.**  
Simple            Compound            Complex
- 9) **We stayed at home while our parents went to dinner.**  
Simple            Compound            Complex
- 10) **People will only be sorry if they live their life with regrets.**  
Simple            Compound            Complex