

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.

