

Sentences: Simple, Compound, and Complex

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the writers (Randy Rambo) for the very succinct and helpful English lesson on "Sentences: Simple, Compound and Complex). www2.ivcc.edu/rambo/eng1002/sentences.htm

Common weakness in writing is the lack of varied sentences. Becoming aware of three general types of sentences--simple, compound, and complex--can help you vary the sentences in your writing.

The most effective writing uses a variety of the sentence types explained below.

1. Simple Sentences

A **simple sentence** has the most basic elements that make it a sentence: a subject, a verb, and a completed thought.

Examples of **simple sentences** include the following:

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|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Joe waited for the train.
"Joe" = subject, "waited" = verb2. The train was late.
"The train" = subject, "was" = verb3. Mary and Samantha took the bus.
"Mary and Samantha" = compound subject, "took" = verb4. I looked for Mary and Samantha at the bus station.
"I" = subject, "looked" = verb5. Mary and Samantha arrived at the bus station early but waited until noon for the bus.
"Mary and Samantha" = compound subject, "arrived" and "waited" = compound verb | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Have you learned these sentences before, why are they called "Simple sentences"?2. How many kinds of these sentences did you learn? Write at least one sentence of each kind. |
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Tip: If you use many simple sentences in an essay, you should consider revising some of the sentences into compound or complex sentences (explained below).

The use of compound subjects, compound verbs, prepositional phrases (such as "at the bus station"), and other elements help lengthen simple

sentences, but simple sentences often are short. The use of too many simple sentences can make writing "choppy" and can prevent the writing from flowing smoothly.

A simple sentence can also be referred to as an **independent clause**. It is referred to as "independent" because, while it might be part of a compound or complex sentence, it can also stand by itself as a complete sentence.

2. Compound Sentences

A **compound sentence** refers to a sentence made up of two independent clauses (or complete sentences) connected to one another with a **coordinating conjunction**. Coordinating conjunctions are easy to remember if you think of the words "FAN BOYS":

- For
- And
- Nor
- But
- Or
- Yet
- So

Questions:

1. Have you learned these sentences before, why are they called "Compound sentences"?
2. Form-For to So-, What are their roles in compound sentences?
3. Write at least one sentence of each from, For to So.

Examples of **compound sentences** include the following:

1. Joe waited for the train, **but** the train was late.
2. I looked for Mary and Samantha at the bus station, **but** they arrived at the station before noon and left on the bus before I arrived.
3. Mary and Samantha arrived at the bus station before noon, **and** they left on the bus before I arrived.
4. Mary and Samantha left on the bus before I arrived, **so** I did not see them at the bus station.

Tip: If you rely heavily on compound sentences in an essay, you should consider revising some of them into complex sentences (explained below).

Coordinating conjunctions are useful for connecting sentences, but compound sentences often are overused. While coordinating conjunctions can indicate some type of relationship between the two independent clauses in the sentence, they sometimes do not indicate much of a relationship. The word "and," for example, only adds one independent clause to another, without indicating how the two parts of a sentence are logically related. Too many compound sentences that use "and" can weaken writing.

Clearer and more specific relationships can be established through the use of complex sentences.

3. Complex Sentences

A **complex sentence** is made up of an independent clause and one or more **dependent clauses** connected to it. A dependent clause is similar to an independent clause, or complete sentence, but it lacks one of the elements that would make it a complete sentence.

Examples of **dependent clauses** include the following:

- because Mary and Samantha arrived at the bus station before noon
- while he waited at the train station
- after they left on the bus

Dependent clauses such as those above **cannot** stand alone as a sentence, but they can be added to an independent clause to form a complex sentence.

Dependent clauses begin with **subordinating conjunctions**. Below are some of the most common subordinating conjunctions:

- although
- after
- as
- because
- before
- even though (ถึงแม้ว่า)
- if
- since
- though
- unless
- until
- when
- whenever
- whereas (แต่ว่า)
- wherever
- while

Questions:

1. Have you learned these sentences before, why are they called “Complex sentences”?
2. Form-Although to While-, What are their roles in compound sentences?
3. Write at least one sentence of each from, Although to While.

A complex sentence joins an independent clause with one or more dependent clauses.

The dependent clauses can go first in the sentence, followed by the independent clause, as in the following:

Tip: When the dependent clause comes first, a comma should be used to separate the two clauses.

1. Because Mary and Samantha arrived at the bus station before noon, I did not see them at the station.
2. While he waited at the train station, Joe realized that the train was late.
3. After they left on the bus, Mary and Samantha realized that Joe was waiting at the train station.

Conversely, the independent clauses can go first in the sentence, followed by the dependent clause, as in the following:

Tip: When the independent clause comes first, a comma should **not** be used to separate the two clauses.

1. I did not see them at the station because Mary and Samantha arrived at the bus station before noon.
2. Joe realized that the train was late while he waited at the train station.
3. Mary and Samantha realized that Joe was waiting at the train station after they left on the bus.

Complex sentences are often more effective than compound sentences because a complex sentence indicates clearer and more specific relationships between the main parts of the sentence. The word "before," for instance, tells readers that one thing occurs before another. A word such as "although" conveys a more complex relationship than a word such as "and" conveys.

The term **periodic sentence** is used to refer to a complex sentence beginning with a dependent clause and ending with an independent clause, as in "While he waited at the train station, Joe realized that the train was late."

Periodic sentences can be especially effective because the completed thought occurs at the end of it, so the first part of the sentence can build up to the meaning that comes at the end.

Beginning Sentences with "And" or "Because"

Should you begin a sentence with "and" or "but" (or one of the other coordinating conjunctions)?

The short answer is "no." You should avoid beginning a sentence with "and," "or," "but," or the other coordinating conjunctions. These words generally are used to join together parts of a sentence, not to begin a new sentence.

However, such sentences can be used effectively. Because sentences beginning with these words stand out, they are sometimes used for emphasis. If you use sentences beginning with one of the coordinating conjunctions, you should use these sentences sparingly and carefully.

Should you begin a sentence with "because"?

There is nothing wrong with beginning a sentence with "because."

Perhaps some students are told not to begin a sentence with "because" to avoid sentence fragments (something like "Because Mary and Samantha arrived at the bus station before noon" is a sentence fragment), but it is perfectly acceptable to begin a sentence with "because" as long as the

sentence is complete (as in "Because Mary and Samantha arrived at the bus station before noon, I did not see them at the station.")

Simple sentence:

1. Linda likes to eat popcorn very much.
2. Her husband always gives her a big beautiful rose on the Valentine Day.
3. Her husband always gives a big beautiful rose on the Valentine Day.
4. We celebrate the New Year 2017 on December 31, 2016.
5. Irene called me last night.
6. They are good in Mathematics.
7. She was the Ph-D student in Washington University in 2014.
8. This log bridge across the river looks too narrow to cross.
9. It is very dangerous for you to walk alone on that dark street.

Compound sentence (FANBOYS):

1. His parents went to Chiang Mai yesterday, and they will not come back until next week.
2. They are foreigners, but they come from different countries.
3. For today is Monday, I have no English class to teach.
4. Nor will the restroom repairers come, there is no classroom to teach.
5. Nor did he win this song contest, he was not good at Physics.
6. Dorothy will not have breakfast tomorrow, nor will we.
7. They would love to watch the Chinese movie "Three Kingdoms", yet they are busy with their new classes.
8. It was very noisy in Science and Technology Building, so I did my work in the library yesterday.
9. You have to do the first teaching Science in English tomorrow, or you will not have the next one.

Complex sentences:

1. Although it looked cloudy this morning, the sun is shining beautifully now.
2. After she had gone home, two students come to find her at the library.
3. As the complex sentences will help you very much in writing, you should make more practice.
4. Because yesterday was "The Teacher Day", what did you do?
5. Before I cook tonight, I will have bought eggs and soy source.
6. Before you leave home, you should have closed all the windows.

7. Before he taught at our university, he had learned the Ph-D program at Thammasat University.
 8. Even though it was not rain yesterday, the sky was dark all day.
 9. Even though he had spent much money on his outfit, it did not suit on him last night.
 10. If the temperature of water rises to 100 C, the water boils.
 11. If we eat healthy foods and do exercise every day, our body stays fit.
 12. If we help cooking dinner now, it will be done in an hour.
 13. If I stayed in Bangkok at this time, I would play Peek-a-Boo with my niece.
 14. If you had much practiced English before, you would have spoken it fluently.
- since
 - though
 - unless
 - until

I had waited here for a half hour until I found no one, so I went back to the university.

- While

This morning, while it was raining hard, I found this lovely small bird sitting on the window edge.

- Whenever

Whenever you have some free time, please come to visit us.

- whereas (แต่ที่ว่า)

I love hot noodle with fish balls, whereas he prefers rice and red chicken curry.