

TYPES OF SENTENCES

Choosing what types of sentences to use in an essay can be challenging for several reasons. The writer must consider the following questions: Are my ideas simple or complex? Do my ideas require shorter statements or longer explanations? How do I express my ideas clearly? This handout discusses the basic components of a sentence, the different types of sentences, and various functions of each type of sentence.

What Is a Sentence?

- A sentence is a complete set of words that conveys meaning. A sentence can communicate
 - a statement (I am studying.)
 - a command (Go away.)
 - an exclamation (I'm so excited!)
 - a question (What time is it?)
- A sentence is composed of one or more clauses. A clause contains a subject and verb.

Independent and Dependent Clauses

- There are two types of clauses: independent clauses and dependent clauses. A sentence contains at least one independent clause and may contain one or more dependent clauses.
- An independent clause (or main clause)
 - is a complete thought.
 - can stand by itself.
- A dependent clause (or subordinate clause)
 - is an incomplete thought.
 - cannot stand by itself.

You can spot a dependent clause by identifying the subordinating conjunction. A subordinating conjunction creates a dependent clause that relies on the rest of the sentence for meaning. The following list provides some examples of subordinating conjunctions:

After - as - before - if - though - while - unless - although - because - even though - since - when - until - whereas

Independent and Dependent Clauses

Independent clause: When I go to the movies, **I usually buy popcorn.**

Dependent clause: **When I go to the movies,** I usually buy popcorn.

Independent clause: **I don't like the ocean** because sharks scare me.

Dependent clause: I don't like the ocean **because sharks scare me.**

What Are the Different Types of Sentences?

Sentences are divided into four categories: simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound-complex sentences.

Simple Sentences

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Definition | A simple sentence contains one independent clause. |
| Examples | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Johnny rode his bike to school.• Who is your best friend?• She ate her lunch, took a walk, and went back to work. |

Compound Sentences

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Definition | A compound sentence contains two independent clauses. A coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) often links the two independent clauses and is preceded by a comma. |
| Examples | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• She wanted to go on vacation, so she saved up her money.• I like apples, but my sister loves bananas.• Tim loves to read, and he also loves to hike. |

Complex Sentences

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Definition | A complex sentence contains one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. A complex sentence will include at least one subordinating conjunction . |
| Examples | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• She went to class even though she was sick.• As John was arriving to work, he realized he forgot his lunch.• While I enjoy classical music, I prefer rock and roll because I play the drums. |

Compound-Complex Sentences

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Definition | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A compound-complex sentence combines complex sentence and compound sentence forms. A compound-complex sentence contains one or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses. |
| Examples | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Although she felt guilty for missing her friend's birthday, she took her out to dinner the next day, and they had a great time.• If he got the job, he would have to commute 50 miles to work, so he decided the job was not worth it. |

Activity: Identify the types of clauses by underlining independent clauses once and dependent clauses twice. Then indicate which type of sentence each one is

- a. Because it is so frequently misunderstood, the last point merits restatement.
- b. The engineers claimed that the bridge was safe. However they were still not prepared to risk crossing.
- c. The trendy fashion designer released her new line on Wednesday.
- d. I enjoy playing tennis, but I hate playing golf.
- e. While waiting for the paint to dry, Angela went to Home Depot, and Martin organized the kitchen appliances.
- f. Scientific articles are written in English.
- g. After listening to the *Kanye West* CD, I have new respect for his music.
- h. Chemistry is my favorite subject, and I also love mathematics.

ANSWER KEY

- a. Because it is so frequently misunderstood, the last point merits restatement. **Complex**
- b. The engineers claimed that the bridge was safe. However they were still not prepared to risk crossing.
Complex
- c. The trendy fashion designer released her new line on Wednesday. **Simple**
- d. I enjoy playing tennis, but I hate playing golf. **Compound**
- e. While waiting for the paint to dry, Angela went to Home Depot, and Martin organized
the kitchen appliances. **Compound-Complex**
- f. Scientific articles are written in English. **Simple**
- g. After listening to the Kanye West CD, I have new respect for his music. **Complex**
- h. Chemistry is my favorite subject, and I also love mathematics. **Compound**

