

Four Types of Sentences

There are four different types of sentences: Simple, Compound, Complex, and Compound-Complex.

Sentences are made of CLAUSES –

Independent Clause: can stand on its own as a complete sentence

Subordinate (Dependent) Clause: cannot stand on its own as a complete sentence; it does the job of another part of speech in a sentence (noun, adjective, or adverb)

All clauses have a subject and a predicate (which makes them different from a phrase).

SIMPLE SENTENCE

A simple sentence has ONE INDEPENDENT CLAUSE. It has one complete subject and one complete predicate.

Larry and Joe walked to the store down the street in the snowstorm. (Subject = Larry, Joe; Predicate = walked)

My father built me a new dresser for all my clothes. (Subject = father; Predicate = built)

After the game, we congratulated the other team on their win. (Subject = we; Predicate = congratulated)

COMPOUND SENTENCE

A compound sentence has TWO OR MORE INDEPENDENT CLAUSES that are joined by:

COORDINATING CONJUNCTION (FANBOYS – for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so – always with a comma before)

CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTION (pairs – either/or, neither/nor, not only/but also)

SEMICOLON (;)

CONJUNCTIVE ADVERB (however, therefore, nevertheless, furthermore – they always have a semicolon before and a comma after - ; however,)

Each independent clause has its own separate complete subject and complete predicate.

Larry walked to the store, **but** Joe decided to stay home.

(Subject 1 = Larry; Predicate 1 = walked; Subject 2 = Joe; Predicate 2 = decided)

Larry walked to the store. (complete sentence) Joe decided to stay home. (complete sentence)

My father built me a new dresser; **however**, it did not fit in my room.

(Subject 1 = father; Predicate 1 = built; Subject 2 = it; Predicate 2 = did fit)

My father built me a new dresser. (complete sentence) It did not fit in my room. (complete sentence)

After the game, we congratulated the other team; they appreciated our sportsmanship.

(Subject 1 = we; Predicate 1 = congratulated; Subject 2 = they; Predicate 2 = appreciated)

After the game, we congratulated the other team. (complete sentence) They appreciated our sportsmanship. (complete sentence)

Not only did we shovel the stairs, **but** we **also** cleared the snow off the driveway.

(Subject 1 = we; Predicate 1 = did shovel; Subject 2 = we; Predicate 2 = cleared)

We did shovel the stairs. (complete sentence) We cleared the snow off the driveway. (complete sentence)

COMPLEX SENTENCE (also see complex sentence notes)

A complex sentence has ONE INDEPENDENT CLAUSE and ONE OR MORE SUBORDINATE (DEPENDENT) CLAUSE(S).

There are three types of subordinate clauses: adjective, adverb, and noun.

ADJECTIVE Clauses are introduced by RELATIVE PRONOUNS:

that	who	whose	what
which	whom	whoever	

Also may start with:

how	when
why	where

Adjective clauses are found *directly after* the noun or pronoun they modify.

The student [who transferred from Hawaii] has never seen snow.

The trash barrel [that belongs to my neighbor] blew down the street in the high wind.

We gave our grandfather a party [that celebrated his retirement.]

ADVERB Clauses are introduced by SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS:

after	as long as	before	since	unless	where
although	as soon as	even though	so that	until	wherever
as	as though	if	than	when	while
as if	because	in order that	though	whenever	

Adverb clauses can be found *anywhere* in the sentence. A clause that starts a sentence and is set off with a comma is almost always an adverb clause.

[Since she loves to travel,] Sally bought fancy new luggage.

I started my homework [as soon as I got home from school.]

Bob was so hungry [that he ate his whole meal in seconds.]

We will leave the party [after the birthday girl opens her gifts.]

NOUN Clauses are introduced by the following words:

who	that	when	whoever
whom	if	where	whatever
whose	whether	how	whenever
which	what	why	wherever

Noun clauses function as a noun in a sentence – as a subject, predicate nominative, direct object, indirect object, or an object of a preposition.

[What the cashier put in the shopping bag] is a surprise for my best friend. (Subject)

The winner of the contest will be [whoever writes the best essay about clauses.] (Predicate Nominative)

Bob painted [whichever rooms had the peeling paint.] (Direct Object)

Mary told [whoever sits next to her in math class] the answers on the test. (Indirect Object)

Before her trip, Sally read a book about [what she should visit in Australia.] (Object of Preposition)

COMPOUND-COMPLEX SENTENCES

A compound-complex sentence has TWO OR MORE INDEPENDENT CLAUSES and ONE OR MORE SUBORDINATE CLAUSE(S).

To determine if a sentence is compound-complex:

1. First find any clue in the sentence to signal that it is compound (FANBOYS, semicolon, etc.)
2. Second, look at the independent clauses on either side of the conjunction. If there is a dependent clause in either of them, the sentence is compound-complex.

[Because she had forgotten her wallet at home,] Sally could not pay for her groceries, **but** the lady in line behind her gave her the money.

1. The sentence has the coordinating conjunction **BUT** – it is compound
2. There is also a dependent clause [Because she had forgotten her wallet at home] – it is also complex

It rained yesterday; **however**, the grass[that had just been cut] already needs more water.

1. The sentence has the conjunctive adverb **HOWEVER** – it is compound
2. There is also a dependent clause [that had just been cut] – it is also complex

[How we will solve the puzzle] seems impossible, **yet** we work at the solution every day.

1. The sentence has the coordinating conjunction **BUT** – it is compound
2. There is also a dependent clause [How we will solve the puzzle] – it is also complex