

Writing Packet

You all know that a basic sentence must have a subject and a verb that matches that subject.

- Elvis **eats**.
- Martin **is** sitting on a rock.

(The underlined word functions as the subject and the bold is the conjugated verb which matches it.)

However:

- Sally sitting on the porch
- Ralph, a proud and dignified boy

are not complete sentences. Both are lacking a conjugated verb for its subject.

You will need to make sure you understand the basics behind this before you will be able to move on.

Identifying Sentences by Structure: 4 Categories

The structure of a sentence is determined by the way words, phrases, and clauses are grouped together. To understand this, you need to know what phrases and clauses are.

Phrases

Definition: A group of words that is missing either a subject or a matching verb or both. These words are connected in meaning and are not purely random groupings.

Because it is missing one of these two requirements, it is a ph-ragment. (get it? *fragment*...f=ph...work with me.)

Examples:

- the ancient oak tree (missing a verb)
- hitting the window (missing a subject and verb)
- on a jet plane (missing a subject and verb)

Remember, there are several different types of phrases. Here are a few you have already worked with:

Prepositional phrases:

On the playing field, Ralph was considered to be unstoppable.

Adjective Phrases:

Alert and focused, Ralph anticipated the next play.

Adverb phrases:

Quickly and efficiently, Ralph sprung across the line of scrimmage.

“-ing” Phrases (Participial phrases):

Springing into action, Ralph blocked his opponent.

Note: Sentences can have more than one phrase or use different phrases in combination.

Ex: *Springing into action with the strength of a lion*, Ralph blocked his opponent on the playing field.

Clauses

Definition: A group of related words that has *both a subject and a verb that matches it*. (Notice how this is similar to our definition of a sentence.) Clauses can be divided into two groups: independent clauses and dependent clauses.

- Independent clauses present complete ideas and can stand by themselves as sentences because they contain a subject and a verb that matches it.
- Dependent clauses cannot stand by themselves as sentences. Even though they contain a subject and a verb that matches it, they also have an additional word at the beginning of the clause that makes you need more information to complete the meaning.

These words at the beginning of dependent clauses are called subordinating conjunctions, and they require another independent clause in the sentence to help answer the question that they set up.

Example: After Stan went to the movies

Notice how *you went to the movies* is a complete sentence, because it contains a subject and a verb that matches it. However, the word “after” makes you need more information to complete the thought, as you wonder, “What did happen after Stan went to the movies?” Therefore, the word “after” added to the complete sentence, makes this a dependent clause.

Memory Aide: A Dependent Clause *depends* on another clause to make its meaning complete.

Some Common Subordinating Conjunctions
(Remember, these words when added to a complete sentence, make a dependent clause)

after, although, as, as if, as long as, as though, because, before, even though, if, in order that, once, provided that, since, so, so that, that, though, till, unless, until, when, where, whereas, while

*  *****Punctuation Note*****

When a Dependent Clause comes first in a sentence, there must be a comma after it!! ➡

- When my dad comes home, my dog runs around the kitchen table.
- My dog runs around the kitchen table when my dad comes home.

Sentences can be composed of different combinations of phrases and clauses. The way phrases, independent clauses, and dependent clauses are put together determines a sentence's structure.

Simple Sentence: A simple sentence consists of ONE independent clause (IC) and NO dependent clauses. It can have one or more phrases. Also, it can have more than one subject or more than one verb.

- My back aches. (1 subject, 1 verb)
- My teeth and my eyes hurt. (2 subjects, 1 verb)
- My dogs and cats are barking and meowing. (2 subjects, 2 verbs)
- I must go over the hill. (1 subject, 1 verb, 1 phrase)

Compound Sentence: A compound sentence consists of two independent clauses.(IC+IC) These clauses must be joined by a comma with a coordinating conjunction, or by a semi-colon.

- Sam plays soccer, and he also plays tennis.
- The young man sits quietly; he wants to go unnoticed.

Some Common Coordinating Conjunctions
and, but, for, or, nor, yet

*****Punctuation Note*****

When a coordinating conjunction joins two independent clauses, you must put a comma before the conjunction.



- June is a wonderful month, and we also get out of school.
[IC] [IC]
- Mary is nice and smart. ("and" joins two adjectives so there's no comma)
- Tom went to the store and bought a cola. (*bought a cola* is not an IC, so there's no comma before the "and".)

*  *****Punctuation Note*****

If you try to join to IC's without using a conjunction or a semi-colon, you have created a COMMA SPLICE! These should not occur in formal writing.

🔗 Mary walks every night, she likes it a lot. (Comma splice!)
[IC] [IC]

🔗 Mary walks every night, and she like it a lot. (Correct)
[IC] [IC]

Complex Sentence: A complex sentence consists of ONE independent clause (shown in italics) and ONE OR MORE dependent clauses (shown underlined). (IC+DC)

[DC] [IC]

After I saw the movie, *I went home*.

[IC] [DC] [DC]

I get nervous when the doctor calls my name while I am sitting in the waiting room.
(1 independent clause, 2 dependent clauses.)

*****Punctuation Note*****

Remember, when your dependent clause(s) comes first, you must put a comma after it. 📝

- When the doctor calls my name while I am sitting in the waiting room, I get nervous.

Compound Complex: A compound-complex sentence consists of TWO OR MORE independent clauses (shown in italics) and ONE OR MORE dependent clauses (shown underlined). (IC+IC+DC)

[IC] [DC] [IC]

I complimented Joe when he finished the job, *and he seemed pleased*.

*****Punctuation Note*****

[DC] ⇌ [IC] [IC]

When he finished the job, *I complimented Joe, and he seemed pleased.*