

SENTENCE TYPES

Sentences are classified, according to form, as *simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex*. The two main elements of a sentence are the subject and verb. A group of words with a subject and verb is called a *clause*. Complete statements are *independent clauses*; incomplete statements are *dependent clauses*.

NOTE: Notice the punctuation of these sentence types.

A SIMPLE SENTENCE has only one subject and one verb and makes a complete thought. An independent clause is the same as a simple sentence.

Good students work hard.

A COMPOUND SENTENCE consists of two or more independent clauses joined by a connecting word.

Students work hard, and they succeed.

NOTE: A comma followed by a coordinating conjunction joins the two clauses in the sentence above. The only coordinating conjunctions are: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*.

A COMPLEX SENTENCE consists of one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses.

When students work hard, they succeed.
(dependent clause followed by an independent clause)

Students succeed when they work hard.
(independent clause followed by a dependent clause)

A COMPOUND-COMPLEX SENTENCE consists of two independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses.

If he is motivated, a student will work hard, and he will succeed.

Practice Exercises: Look at the following sentences and determine the sentence classification. (*Answers on back.*)

1. When Mother turned to tell the boys her answer, they were asleep.
2. Her smile was bright, and it brought an answering smile from Andrew.
3. When I lost my passport, I ordered a new one, but I did not worry about it.
4. It beat against the windshield with a light, prickling sound.
5. The driving snow that had whirled furiously now turned into tiny flakes.

TYPES OF CONNECTIVE WORDS IN SENTENCES

The following words introduce dependent clauses. A clause beginning with one of these words, even though it contains a subject and verb, **is not a complete sentence**.

after	even though	that	whenever	while
although	if	though	where	who
as	in order that	unless	wherever	whom
because	since	until	whether	whose
before	so that	when	which	

Two independent clauses may be joined by a coordinating conjunction and a comma. Be sure there is a subject and a verb on each side of the connective word.

- ✓ *We worked late,* *and* *the bus came early.*
independent clause independent clause
- ✓ *Mr. Smith likes* *but* *Mrs. Smith prefers the*
films, *theater.*
independent clause independent clause
- ✗ *We worked late* *and* *missed the bus.*
independent clause dependent clause

NOTE: There is only one subject – "we" – so no comma is used.

Some words often join main clauses but require a semicolon because they are **not** coordinating conjunctions. The words below are adverbs, not conjunctions.

consequently	however	indeed	on the other hand	then
for example	in addition	moreover	otherwise	therefore
furthermore	in fact	nevertheless	still	thus

We worked late; therefore, we missed the bus.
Mr. Smith likes films; however, his wife prefers the theater.

Mr. Smith likes films. His wife, however, prefers the theater.

Only one subject and verb in the sentence with "however," so no semicolon is used.

Answers to exercises:

1. complex
2. compound
3. compound-complex
4. simple
5. complex (restrictive clause, no comma needed)