

Sentence structure - simple, compound or complex

Sentences can be simple, compound or complex. Complex sentences make your writing more interesting to the reader. They link ideas together and make your writing more readable.

Simple Sentence

A simple sentence is ONE complete idea / thought.

I like strawberry ice cream.
Tom and Harry played cricket.
They walked to the park.

Compound Sentence

A compound sentence combines two ideas / thoughts (independent clauses) with a link word (coordinating conjunction) **FANBOYS** (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)

An independent clause contains three things:

1. A subject (something or someone that the sentence is about)
2. An action (a verb - something that is being done)
3. A complete thought (there are no questions as to meaning at the end of the sentence).

Simple, complete sentence	Conjunction FANBOYS	Simple, complete sentence
Becky wishes she could be younger	, for	everyone else in the program is half her age.
Alex likes to fish	, and	he is going fishing on Friday
Tom and Harry play cricket	, but	they are not very good.
She is going to the movies	, or	she is going to the mall.
I am very tired	, yet	I don't want to stop playing.
I like strawberry ice cream	, so	I always buy one from the shop.

Complex sentence

A complex sentence combines an independent clause and a dependent clause.

An independent clause makes sense by itself.

A dependent (subordinate) clause does not make sense by itself - it needs an independent clause

Structure 1

Conjunction	dependent clause	comma	Independent clause
After	the game	,	Let's go to my house for a drink.
Although	I don't know the rules	,	I want to try for the basketball team.
As	I scored the winning basket	,	Mr Forman yelled excitedly from the bench.
Because	I broke the window	,	I am grounded for a week.
Before	the teacher came back into class	,	Tom put away his cellphone.
Even though	she had a sore foot	,	The girl carried on running the race.
If	you ask nicely	,	Mum will give us an ice cream.
Since	It is raining	,	I am not allowed out to play.
Unless	I can get a ride	,	I can't get to the movie theatre tonight.
Until	I finish my vegetables	,	I have to stay at the table.
When	I am hungry	,	I ask mum if I can have a biscuit.
Whenever	It hails	,	It makes a deafening noise on the roof.
While	the teacher talked	,	I pretended to listen to his speech.

Structure 2 NO COMMA after conjunction

Independent clause	Conjunction	dependent clause
Let's go to my house for a drink	after	the game.
I want to try for the basketball team	although	I don't know the rules.
Mr Forman yelled excitedly from the bench	as	I scored the winning basket.
I am grounded for a week	because	I broke the window..