

# Varying Sentence Structures



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References



# How do you vary sentence structure?

You will want to use a variety of sentence structures in your writing. There are three types of sentences we will study in this lesson:

- Simple Sentence
- Compound Sentence
- Complex Sentence



# Clauses

**Clauses will have one subject and a verb (simple Predicate), but will not be a complete thought.**

## Types of Subordinate Clauses

**Adjective Clauses**—usually begin with a relative pronoun (i.e. that, who, whose, which, whom)

**\*will have a subject and verb, but no complete thought\***

**\*will modify nouns and pronouns—just as adjectives do\***

**Adverb Clauses**—usually begin with a sub-ordinate conjunction (i.e. after, therefore, as, because, if, so that, that, in order that, whenever, until, etc.)

**\*will have a subject and verb, but no complete thought\***

**\*will modify verbs, adjectives, adverbs—just as adverbs do\***



# The Simple Sentence

A simple sentence has one ***independent clause*** (one subject and a verb), and it will have a complete thought.



# The Simple Sentence (cont'd)

A simple sentence may have a compound subject, a compound verb, or both. *So, do not confuse this with a compound sentence.*

Susan and Jack live in San Francisco.

↓  
compound  
subject

Susan lives in San Francisco but works in Oakland.

↓  
verb

Compound predicate

↓  
verb

Susan and Jack live in San Francisco but work in Oakland.

↑  
compound  
subject

↓  
verb

Compound predicate

↓  
verb



# Compound Sentence

A **compound sentence** contains two or more independent clauses that are usually joined by a comma and a coordinating conjunction.

(independent clause)

comma and cc

[Melvina wrote about her mother's aunt], and

[Leroy wrote about his cousin from Jamaica].

(independent clause)



# FANBOYS

(most common coordinating conjunctions)

**One way to remember these is...**

F → **For**

A → **And**

N → **Nor**

B → **But**

O → **Or**

Y → **Yet**

S → **So**



# Coordinating Conjunctions

Logical Relationship	Coordinating Conjunction
Addition	<b><i>And</i></b>
Contrast	<b><i>But, yet</i></b>
Choice	<b><i>Or, nor</i></b>
Cause	<b><i>For</i></b>
Result	<b><i>So</i></b>





# Using a Semicolon

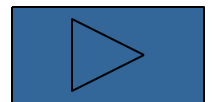
Sometimes the independent clauses of a compound sentence can be joined using a semicolon. *If a semicolon is used, you will not use a conjunction.*

(Independent Clause ; Independent Clause)

**I love living in the city ; there are so many things to do.**

Independent  
Clause

Independent  
Clause



# ***Special Note to Remember***

*If using a semicolon, be sure the two independent clauses are related in content.*

**Good Ex.** I love living in the city; there are so many things to do.

**Not-So-Good Ex.** I love living in the city; my sister is a dancer.



# Using a Transition Word

**Equation:** Subject + Predicate (ind. Clause); transition word, Subject + Predicate (ind. Clause)

I love San Francisco; **however,** I hate the traffic.

**Independent  
Clause**

**Independent  
Clause**



<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Transition</b>	
Addition	Moreover Furthermore In addition besides	
Contrast	However In contrast	On the contrary On the other hand
Result or Effect	Consequently Thus Therefore	Accordingly Hence As a result
Reinforcement/Emphasis	Indeed In fact	



# CAUTION!

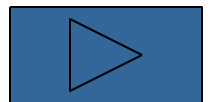
Do **NOT** use a comma every time you use the words ***for, and, nor, but, or, yet, & so***. Use a comma only when the coordinating conjunction joins two independent clauses.

## Simple Sentence

The necklace was beautiful but expensive.

Independent  
Clause

coordination conjunction w/o a  
comma because there are not  
two independent clauses



# Complex Sentences

A **complex sentence** has one independent clause and at least one dependent clause.

John cannot set up his typewriter  
(independent clause)

Independent Clause

because the wall has no outlet.

Subordinating  
Conjunction

Dependent Clause



# Complex Sentence (cont'd)

***Clauses will have a subject and verb, but no complete thought.***

She will go to school in the city

(independent clause)

**until** she finds a job.

↓  
**Subordinating  
conjunction**

↓  
**Subordinate  
(dependent)  
clause**



# Complex Sentences

Use a comma after a dependent clause if it begins the sentence.

**When I first moved to the city,**

Subordinating  
Conjunction

Use a comma if  
the dependent  
clause is the first  
part of the  
sentence.

**Independent Clause**

**I was afraid to drive the steep and narrow  
streets.**

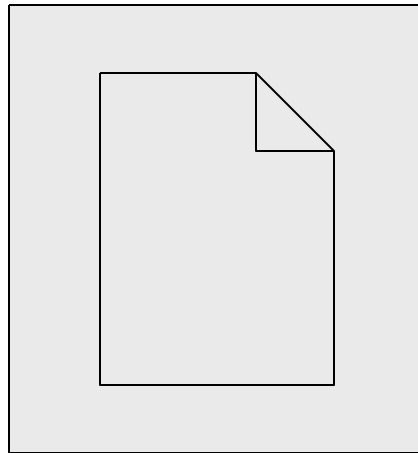




# Practice Exercises



Now you are ready to practice what you've learned. Click the link below to return to Unit D. Print and complete the Practice Exercise on adding sentence structure variety to your writing. Check your answers with a tutor.



# References

- PowerPoint Presentation by Ruth Luman: Modesto Junior College.
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