

# Simple Sentences and Compound Sentences

## Simple Sentences

**7a.** A **simple sentence** contains one independent clause and no subordinate clauses.

An independent clause has a subject and a verb. An independent clause expresses a complete thought and can stand alone as a sentence.

**S**            **V**

**EXAMPLES** That **sweater has been** his trademark. [The entire sentence is an independent clause. *Sweater* is the subject, and *has been* is the verb, and the word group expresses a complete thought.]

**V**            **S**

**Is** that **film** a classic? [The entire sentence is an independent clause. *Film* is the subject, and *Is* is the verb, and the word group expresses a complete thought.]

**EXERCISE A** Draw one line under the subject and two lines under the verb in each of the following simple sentences. Remember to include helping verbs such as *has*, *have*, and *can* when underlining verbs.

**Example 1.** Will you answer the phone, please? [The subject is *you*, and the verb is *Will answer*.]

1. Tiny, colorful stalls lined the street. [Which word is the subject? Which word is the verb?]
2. Hadn't he ever been to a play before?
3. The sound system was not working.
4. The CDs in that music store were all on sale.
5. Could you pour me a glass of water?

A simple sentence may have a compound subject, a compound verb, or both.

**S**            **S**            **V**

**EXAMPLES** **Desks and chairs were stacked** in the hallway. [*Desks* and *chairs* make up the compound subject in this sentence.]

**S**            **V**                            **V**            **V**

**They cleaned** the walls but **haven't painted** them yet. [*Cleaned* and *have painted* make up the compound verb in this sentence.]

**S**            **S** **V**                            **V**            **V**

**He and I had** not **seen** or **heard** of it. [*He* and *I* make up the compound subject. *Had seen* and *heard* make up the compound verb.]

**EXERCISE B** Draw one line under the subject and two lines under the verb in each of the following sentences. Hint: Some sentences have a compound subject, a compound verb, or both.

**Example 1.** A few stones and mortar had become a magnificent fireplace. [*Stones* and *mortar* make up the compound subject. *Had become* is the verb.]

6. Jane took the sheet of paper and wrote her address on it. [Which word or words make up the subject? Which word or words make up the verb?]
7. Suddenly, the horse saw the visitors and galloped away.
8. Red and yellow catch the eye and would be great colors for the cover of our yearbook.
9. Would San Francisco or Los Angeles be the better site for a convention?
10. The spectators cheered and waved at the team.

## Compound Sentences

**7b.** A **compound sentence** contains two or more independent clauses and no subordinate clauses.

The independent clauses of a compound sentence are usually joined together by a comma and a connecting word (*and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, *so*, or *yet*). The independent clauses of a compound sentence may be connected by a semicolon (;). When a semicolon joins together two independent clauses, no connecting word is needed.

**EXAMPLES**      **S**   **V**                      **S**   **V**  
 Lou plays the guitar, **and** Mary plays the drums. [This compound sentence contains two independent clauses. The two clauses are joined by a comma and the coordinating conjunction *and*.]

**S**   **V**                      **S**   **V**  
 Lou plays the guitar; Mary plays the drums. [This compound sentence contains two independent clauses. The two clauses are joined by a semicolon.]

**EXERCISE C** Identify each of the following word groups as a simple sentence or a compound sentence. Write *S* for *simple sentence* and *C* for *compound sentence* on the line provided. Hint: Look out for simple sentences with compound subjects or verbs.

**Example**   *S*   1. The guests were not there yet but would arrive soon. [This word group contains one independent clause. The subject is *guests*, and the compound verb is *were* and *would arrive*. Therefore, the word group is a simple sentence.]

- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. “Sharon’s Party” is the title of my story. [How many independent clauses are there in this sentence? ]
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. The puzzle seemed easy; however, it was tricky.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Matthew, please get me a disk; this one is full.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. We entered the word *Africa* into the search engine and waited for the results.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Either Rolando and I will give a speech, or we will hand in a ten-page paper.

# Complex Sentences and Compound-Complex Sentences

## Complex Sentences

**7c.** A **complex sentence** contains one independent clause and at least one subordinate clause.

An independent clause is a word group that has a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought. A subordinate clause also has a subject and a verb, but it does not express a complete thought. Subordinate clauses are connected to independent clauses with words such as *after, as, before, because, if, since, that, when, which, who, and whom*.

**S V S V**

**COMPLEX SENTENCE** When it snows, I play outside with my friends. [This complex sentence has one independent clause, *I play outside with my friends*, and one subordinate clause, *When it snows*. The subordinate clause begins with the connecting word *When*.]

**EXERCISE A** Draw one line under the independent clause in each of the following sentences. Then, draw two lines under the subordinate clause. Hint: Some sentences may contain more than one subordinate clause.

**Examples** 1. Joseph planted the cactus in sandy soil so that it has good drainage. [This complex sentence has one independent clause and one subordinate clause.]

2. After the storm ended, we noticed that branches had fallen all over the yard. [This complex sentence has one independent clause and two subordinate clauses.]

1. Are there any toys here that would be suitable for a two-year-old? [Which word group is an independent clause? Which word group is a subordinate clause?]
2. The plant has operated more safely since the new design has been in place. [Which word group is an independent clause? Which word group is a subordinate clause?]
3. Some scientists argue that the earth once had only one land mass, which later broke apart.
4. The cardinals were particularly cautious because their nest was nearby.
5. You can become someone whom people look up to and admire.
6. That student sings well although he is only a five-year-old.
7. When the world was young, dinosaurs roamed the earth.
8. The Omaha, whose lands centered in Nebraska's northeast quarter, have much in common with the Ponca.
9. Unless there is a cancellation, the earliest appointment is February 12 at 10:30 A.M.
10. People who live in Algeria use a unit of currency that is known as the centime.

## Compound-Complex Sentences

**7d.** A **compound-complex sentence** contains two or more independent clauses and at least one subordinate clause.

In the following examples, independent clauses are underlined once. Subordinate clauses are underlined twice.

**EXAMPLES** When it snows, I play outside, but my brother reads. [This compound-complex sentence has two independent clauses and one subordinate clause.]

After the concrete is poured, you must not step on the sidewalk until it has dried, or the finish will be ruined. [This compound-complex sentence has two independent clauses and two subordinate clauses.]

**EXERCISE B** Identify each of the following sentences. Write *CX* for a *complex sentence* or *CD-CX* for a *compound-complex sentence* on the line provided. Hint: You may want to underline the independent clauses once and subordinate clauses twice before you identify each sentence.

**Example** CD-CX 1. When the news first broke, everyone was surprised; however, today no one is concerned. [This sentence has two independent clauses, *everyone was surprised* and *today no one is concerned*, and one subordinate clause, *When the news first broke*. Therefore, this is a compound-complex sentence.]

- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Even scientists cannot always agree; there will be some who maintain different views.  
[How many independent clauses are there in this sentence?]
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Be careful while you handle these slides. [How many independent clauses are there in this sentence?]
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. The winner of the 1962 Nobel Peace Prize was Linus Pauling, whose fame endures for his work on vitamin C.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Are you certain that this formula will work, or should we continue our research?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Have you read the story that our teacher assigned, or are you waiting until the weekend?