

COMPOUND & COMPLEX SENTENCES

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

A simple sentence (independent clause) has one subject and one verb.	I hate cheese. I don't like pizza.
A compound sentence is made up of two or more simple sentences (independent clauses).	I hate cheese, so I don't like pizza. John can go to the party, or he can stay home and study.
There are several ways to join simple sentences into a compound sentence. One way is to use a comma and a coordinating conjunction .	for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so I went swimming today, for the water was beautiful. He wants to do well in school, yet he doesn't study.
The coordinating conjunction describes the relationship between the two ideas.	For – reason And – plus Nor – no alternative But – opposites Or – choice Yet – contrast So -- result
Another way to join simple sentences is to use a semicolon. A semicolon can only join two complete sentences. It cannot join a sentence and a fragment.	She packed her bags; she left the house. I hate cheese; I don't like pizza. James did his homework; Sophia did not.
A compound sentence can also be formed by using a semicolon, a transitional word or expression, and a comma . Transitional words are also referred to as conjunctive adverbs.	I hate cheese; however , I love pizza. Agatha partied all semester; consequently , her grades were poor. Vincent has a lot of money; in fact , he will pay cash for his car.
An independent clause can stand alone as a sentence. A dependent clause cannot stand alone as a sentence; it needs other words to complete its meaning. A complex sentence is made up of one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses.	We looked out the window. (independent clause) When we heard the loud noise. (dependent clause) When we heard the loud noise, we looked out the window. (complex sentence)
We can form complex sentences by joining two simple sentences with a subordinating conjunction , such as when, because, or since .	We looked out the window. We heard the loud noise. When we heard the loud noise, we looked out the window. Jim was not at school yesterday. He was sick. Jim was not at school yesterday because he was sick.
Place a comma after the dependent clause when it comes before the independent clause.	Because I hate cheese, I don't like pizza.
Do not use a comma when the dependent clause comes after the independent clause.	I don't like pizza because I hate cheese.

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LEARN MORE

Don't forget: students can always ask tutors or their teachers for an explanation of anything that's not clear.

Texts available to use in the SLC English Writing Lab:

<i>Grassroots with Readings</i> , Ninth Edition Susan Fawcett Chapters 13 and 14	<i>Evergreen, A Guide to Writing with Readings</i> , Ninth Edition, Susan Fawcett Chapter 26	<i>The Bedford Handbook</i> , Seventh Edition, Diana Hacker Pages 838-39
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Online:

[Grassroots Companion Site](#)

[Evergreen Companion Site](#)

[Sentences: Simple, Compound, and Complex](#)

[Quiz on Sentence Types](#)

[Kinds of Sentences and Their Punctuation](#)

[Review: Sentence Structure](#)

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PRACTICE

Coordinating Conjunctions

for and nor but or yet so

In the following sentences, join the two sentences with a comma and a coordinating conjunction.

1. Dave woke up late. He ran all the way to the bus.
2. Tim's joke was not funny. His girlfriend laughed anyway.
3. He walked to the store. He bought what he needed.
4. I won't go swimming here. There is no lifeguard.
5. He wants to buy a new car. He doesn't save any money.

Semicolons

Place a semicolon in the proper place in the following sentences.

1. I don't like this food it is too spicy.
2. He shouldn't have done that he knows better.
3. You are going the wrong way make a u-turn now.
4. The sky is bright and clear the mountains are spectacular.
5. The thief crept into the house he didn't make a sound.

Transitions

Choose from the transition words and phrases below to join the following pairs of sentences.

however nevertheless in addition consequently moreover

1. He arrived late for class. He missed the first half of the lecture.
2. Lulu is not very pretty. She is loved by everyone.
3. The county can't afford to build any more schools. It has to cancel plans for other government buildings.
4. His mother told him to take his umbrella. He went to work without it.
5. His girlfriend wants him to give her a beautiful ring. She expects him to buy her expensive clothing.