



Academic Support Center
Writing Center

Sentence Forms

Resources: *The LB Brief Handbook*, 5th edition; Middle Tennessee State University; and *The Complete Writer's Workout Book*

There are four types of sentences, and using all four types throughout your paper will add variety and keep your reader's attention. The four types of sentences are **simple**, **compound**, **complex**, and **compound-complex**. All of these sentence types are made up of combinations of independent and dependent clauses. An *independent clause* can stand on its own as a complete sentence, but a **dependent clause** must be attached to another sentence.

Examples:

- *Independent clause: The whale swam out to the open sea.* (Italics will be used to indicate independent clauses throughout this handout).
- **Dependent clause: Before I go to work.** (Bold will be used to indicate dependent clauses throughout this handout).

Dependent clauses must be connected to an *independent clause* because they depend on an *independent clause* to complete their meaning. **Dependent clauses** normally start with subordinating conjunctions (because, although, after, before, when, etc.) or relative pronouns (which, who, & that).

Types of Sentences

Simple Sentence: A simple sentence consists of one *independent clause* and no **dependent clauses**.

- *My dog had puppies.*
- *The unusually hot summer weather made farming quite difficult.*

Compound Sentence: A compound sentence connects at least two *independent clauses* but contains no **dependent clauses**. There are two ways to connect two *independent clauses*: 1) a comma and a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) or 2) a semicolon and a conjunctive adverb (THINTIC: therefore, however, indeed, nevertheless, then, in fact, consequently).

- *The boys created a new game, but the girls did not want to play.*
(Two *independent clauses* linked by a comma and the coordinating conjunction 'but')
- *The boys created a new game; however, the girls did not want to play.*
(A semicolon and the conjunctive adverb 'however' link the two *independent clauses* together.)

Complex Sentence: A complex sentence contains one *independent clause* and at least one **dependent clause**.

- **Because I was late for school, I hurried out the door.**
- *We had to leave the school **when it started storming**.*

Compound-Complex Sentence: A compound-complex sentence contains at least two *independent clauses* and at least one **dependent clause**.

- *I really like my boss, but he doesn't seem to like me **even though I try hard at work**.*
- **Because I was late to school yesterday, I missed my English test, but my teacher let me take it today.**