

Sentence Types and Functions

What is a sentence?

A sentence is a group of words that makes sense. It expresses a complete thought. It begins with a capital letter and ends with an appropriate terminal punctuation mark. A sentence has at least one subject and one verb. It is composed of one or more clauses.

Independent and Dependent Clauses

There are two types of clauses: independent clauses and dependent clauses. A sentence contains at least one independent clause and may contain one or more dependent clauses.

An independent clause (or main clause) is a complete thought. It can stand by itself. However, a dependent clause (or subordinate clause) is an incomplete thought. It cannot stand by itself. You can spot a dependent clause by identifying the subordinating conjunction. A subordinating conjunction creates a dependent clause that relies on the rest of the sentence for meaning.

The following list provides some examples of subordinating conjunctions: **after, as, before, if, though, while, unless, although, because, even though, since, when, until, whereas.**

Examples:

Independent clause: When I go to the movies, **I usually buy popcorn.**

Dependent clause: **When I go to the movies,** I usually buy popcorn.

Sentence Types

Sentences are divided into four categories: simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound-complex sentences.

1. Simple Sentences: A simple sentence contains one independent clause.

Examples:

- Johnny rode his bike to school.

- She ate her lunch, took a walk, and went back to work.

2. Compound Sentences: A compound sentence contains two independent clauses. A coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) often links the two independent clauses and is preceded by a comma.

Examples:

- She wanted to go on vacation, **so** she saved up her money.
- I like apples, **but** my sister loves bananas.
- Tim loves to read, and he also loves to hike.

3. Complex Sentences: A complex sentence contains one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. A complex sentence will include at least **one** subordinating conjunction.

Examples:

- She went to class **even though** she was sick.
- **As** John was arriving to work, he realized he forgot his lunch..

4. Compound-Complex Sentences: A compound-complex sentence combines complex sentence and compound sentence forms. A compound-complex sentence contains one or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses.

Examples:

- **Although** she felt guilty for missing her friend's birthday, she took her out to dinner the next day, and they had a great time.
- I try to eat healthy food, **but because** fast food is so convenient, I cannot maintain a healthy diet.

Sentence Functions

There are four types of sentences by function/meaning.

- Declarative Sentence
- Interrogative Sentence
- Imperative Sentence
- Exclamatory Sentence

1. Declarative sentence: A declarative sentence makes a statement. It always ends with a full stop or a period (.).

Examples:

- He writes a letter.
- She is eating an apple.

2. Interrogative Sentence: An interrogative sentence asks a question. It ends with a question Mark(?).

Examples:

- Are you feeling well ?
- When will he come ?

3. Imperative Sentence: An imperative sentence gives an order or makes a polite request. It can also express good wish. It ends with a period or an exclamation mark (./!)

Examples:

- Please lower your voice.
- Would you close the door please?
- Eat your lunch.

4. Exclamatory Sentence: An exclamatory sentence expresses strong feelings, great emotion or excitement. It ends with an exclamation mark.

Examples:

- Wow! That is great news!
- What an interesting story!