

The Sentence Writing Strategy

The University of Kansas

Simple Sentence

A sentence that has one independent clause.

Independent Clause

A group of words that

- (1) Makes a complete statement
- (2) Has a subject and a predicate

The Subject of a Sentence

The **Subject** is the

person	—	
place		
thing		
quality		Nouns
or		
idea	—	

that the sentence is about. (The subject is who or what the sentence is about)

Examples:

John went for a walk.	(Person)
Towns are quiet after snowfalls.	(Places)
Eggs rolled off the counter.	(Things)
Silence is golden.	(Quality)
Peace is at hand.	(Idea)

The Predicate of a Sentence

The **predicate** shows the

state of being
or
action

—
|
—

Verbs

of the subject of the sentence.

Examples:

Sally sneezed. (Physical action)
John thinks. (Mental action)
Jesse is my friend. (State of Being)

Search and Check

- Step 1: Look for the action or state-of-being word to find the verb.
Example: Kevin reported the theft.
- Step 2: Ask yourself “Who or what (verb)?” to find the subject.
Example: Paula is an astronaut.

Helping Verbs

am
Are

can
Could

do
does
did

has
have
had

be
been
being

is

may
might
must

shall
should

was
were
will
would

State of Being Verbs

am

are

is

was

were

be

being

been

Steps for Sentence Writing

Step 1: Pick a formula

Step 2: Explore words to Fit the formula

Step 3: Note the Words

Step 4: Search and Check (verbs and subjects)

-Look for the action or state-of-being word(s) to find the verb(s).

-Ask the “Who or What Question” to find the subject(s).

Compound Sentence

A compound sentence has two or more independent clauses.

Examples:

The students finished class, and they went to lunch.

Kevin did not want to hurt Kathy's feelings, so he said nothing about her mistake.

I want to see my sister soon, for she has been in Switzerland for two years.

Comparing Compound Sentences to Simple Sentences with Compound Subjects and Compound Verbs.

Simple Sentence:

The men and women met at the station and went to dinner.

Compound Sentence:

The men met at the station, and the women went to dinner.

Simple Sentence:

The ducks and geese squawked and fluttered their wings.

Compound Sentence:

The ducks squawked, and the geese fluttered their wings.

Simple Sentence:

Harry and Joe ate ice cream and drank pop.

Compound Sentence:

Harry ate ice cream, and Joe drank pop.

Coordinating Conjunction

A word that is used with a comma to join two independent clauses.

,For

,And

,Nor

,But

,Or

,Yet

,So

Examples:

Baseball is my favorite sport to watch, but football is my favorite sport to play.

The children ran all the way to school, yet they were late any way.

You will have to finish the project, or your group will get a failing grade.

Hanni was not at the game, nor was she at the party.

We did not see Mike at the movie, nor did we see him at the restaurant.

SEMICOLONS

Semicolons (;) can also be used to join the two independent clauses of a compound sentence.

Examples:

Susan loves to swim; her brother likes to dive.

Jason was highly respected; he was always such a responsible person.

The meeting was over; it was already midnight.

COMPLEX SENTENCE

A complex sentence has one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses.

DEPENDENT CLAUSE

A **dependent clause** is a group of words with a subject and verb that cannot stand alone.

Examples:

I like Sally because she is funny.

Kathy will be late for dinner since the meeting is still in progress.

The game will end when one team scores.

Subordinating Conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions are words that show the relationship of dependent clause to the independent clause.

Some words that can be used as **subordinating conjunctions** are:

after
although
as
as if
as long as
as soon as
as though
because
before

even if
even though
if
in order that
just as
like
once
provided
rather than

since
so that
than
though
unless
until
when
whenever
while

SEQUENCING COMPLEX SENTENCES

Dependent Clause First (comma needed)

When I get to Phoenix, you will be sleeping.

After the players practiced, they went out for a pizza.

Until the storm is over, we will not know about the damage.

Independent Clause First (comma not needed)

You will be sleeping when I get to Phoenix.

The players went out for a pizza after they practiced.

We will not know about the damage until the storm is over.

Compound-Complex Sentence

A **compound-complex sentence** has two or more independent clauses and at least one dependent clause.

Examples:

When you are ready, I will call the store, and we can talk to Reed.

Before the trick-or-treaters came, Jill made candied apples; they were delicious.

Sequencing Compound-Complex Sentences

Dependent Clause First

- ❖ After the party was over, Jean had a headache, so Paul cleaned up the house.
- ❖ Whenever Jennifer feels sad, she calls Chris; he cheers her up.

Dependent Clause Second

- ❖ Jean had a headache after the party was over, so Paul cleaned up the house.
- ❖ Chad hates to sleep while his parents are awake, for he might miss something.
- ❖ The sky was gray when the volcano erupted; ash was falling everywhere.

Sequencing Compound-Complex Sentences (cont.)

Dependent Clause Third

- ❖ Jean had a headache, so Paul cleaned up the house after the party was over.
- ❖ The employer made Jill a good offer, and she accepted as long as he gave her a travel allowance.
- ❖ The doctors were busy with the serious cases; the slightly wounded soldier quietly waited while they worked.
- ❖ Todd gave an excellent report; his instructor thanked him after the rest of the class had left the room.

Example Set I

1. Jane went to the pool.
2. Paul is a very nice guy.
3. Cakes lined the store window.
4. I love chocolate ice cream.
5. Bikes are very expensive.
6. Dad is strict.
7. Bananas taste good.
8. Kathy has a son named Jimmy.
9. Raccoons raid our garbage can every night.
10. Flowers are in bloom everywhere.

Example Set II

1. The old gray mare limped down the lane.
2. The silver-winged plane soared.
3. Johnny's baby sister cried for hours.
4. The first three girls giggled.
5. Fourteen good pilots died in the war.
6. The chairman of the meeting left early.
7. The chrome-plated motorcycles glistened in the sun.
8. The pioneers in our family fled from England.
9. The dog's buried bones rotted in the ground.
10. Carol's best china plate broke into a hundred pieces.

Example Set III

1. The bus must have gone by now.
2. My best friend could not work tonight.
3. The light green grapes have been eaten.
4. The committee of environmentalists is working to solve the smog problem.
5. Steven's aunt is not following her new diet.
6. The old rickety wagon should not have been filled to the top.
7. The merry pied piper would have played a happy tune.
8. A stray sunbeam could have pierced the clouds.
9. The paint on the old gray house was peeling.
10. The peace treaty might have been signed today.

Example Set IV

1. **Bill and Sue want to go to the movies.**
2. **Jason and his friends work together.**
3. **Are the car and truck parked outside?**
4. **The park and sidewalks are covered with snow.**
5. **Hiding and seeking are fun activities.**
6. **The old man and his black cat have lived long lives.**
7. **The station and its surrounding parking lot become dangerous after 9:00 P.M..**
8. **Arnie, Karen, and Ty went to buy a new van.**
9. **Peace and war are direct opposites.**
10. **Did Marty and Kathy travel 500 miles just to speak at the conference?**

Example Set V

1. Sally swam and played all afternoon.
2. The dogs had barked all night and slept all day.
3. Michelle came home yesterday and did not work all day today.
4. The basketball team rode on a bus and flew in a plane to attend the game.
5. The park is dark and spooky at night and can be delightful on sunny days.
6. Did Jane call her father and tell him the news?
7. I miss my sister and want to see her again soon.
8. Children should not be allowed to watch T.V. and should be encouraged to play.
9. Will you sit by the sea and paint the ships?
10. The books were stacked on the floor and were ruined by the flood.

Example Set VI

1. The ponies and calves scampered and played in the field.
2. Kathy and her father do not like to play tennis and hate to jog.
3. The Army and the Navy had a football game and filled the stadium.
4. The two boys and their fathers were sick and did not attend the Father-Son-Banquet.
5. Parties and dances are usually fun and can be thrilling.
6. Cards and dice were used at the party and had been scattered everywhere.
7. Radio towers and tall buildings must have lights and must be visible at night.
8. Candles and flowers can brighten the table and can make guests feel special.
9. Tape and string are needed to secure packages and can be used for other things.
10. The graduates and their parents posed for pictures and celebrated with a party.

THE END

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