

# Sentences Classified According to Structure

Sentences may be classified according to purpose as declarative, imperative, interrogative, or exclamatory. Sentences may also be classified according to structure. The term *structure* refers to the number and types of clauses in a sentence.

**4g.** Depending on its structure, a sentence can be classified as simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex.

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

**(1) A simple sentence contains one independent clause and no subordinate clauses. It may have a compound subject, a compound verb, and any number of phrases.**

**EXAMPLES**      S      V  
The boys wanted to take a vacation last summer.

S      S      V      V  
Ray and Joe worked and saved enough for a trip to Ohio.

**(2) A compound sentence contains two or more independent clauses and no subordinate clauses.**

The independent clauses in a compound sentence may be joined by a comma and a coordinating conjunction; by a semicolon; or by a semicolon, a conjunctive adverb, and a comma.

**EXAMPLES**      S      V  
Originally, they wanted to ride bikes all the way, **but**

S      V  
they decided to take the train instead.

S      V                              S      V  
Ray looked forward to seeing his cousins; Joe was eager to  
play with his uncle's band.

S      V  
Uncle James played in a country-music band; **however,**

S      V  
Joe preferred rock music.

## Reference Note

For more on **classifying sentences by purpose**, see page 109.

## Think as a Reader/Writer

Paragraphs in which all the sentences have the same structure can be monotonous to read. To keep your readers interested in your ideas, evaluate your writing to see whether you've used a variety of sentence structures. Then, use revising techniques—adding, cutting, replacing, and reordering—to enliven your writing by varying the structure of your sentences.

## SKILLS FOCUS

Identify and use simple sentences. Identify and use compound sentences. Identify and use complex sentences.

**NOTE** Don't confuse a simple sentence that contains a compound predicate with a compound sentence. Compound sentences always have two or more complete clauses.

	S	V		V
COMPOUND PREDICATE	Joe	considered	country music corny and	said so.
	S	V	S	V
COMPOUND SENTENCE	Joe	considered	country music corny, and	he said so.

### COMPUTER TIP

A word processor can help you check for varied sentence structure in your writing. Make a copy of your document to work on. By inserting a return or a page break after every period, you can view the sentences in a vertical list and compare the structures of each sentence in a particular paragraph. Make any revisions on the properly formatted copy of your document.

(3) **A complex sentence contains one independent clause and at least one subordinate clause.**

**EXAMPLES**  $\begin{matrix} S & V \\ \text{Because Joe wanted to keep his guitar with him,} \end{matrix}$

$\begin{matrix} S & V \\ \text{they decided against taking a plane.} \end{matrix}$

$\begin{matrix} S & V & S & V \\ \text{If they took a train, they could see all the sights, too.} \end{matrix}$

(4) **A compound-complex sentence contains two or more independent clauses and at least one subordinate clause.**

**EXAMPLES**  $\begin{matrix} S & V & S & V \\ \text{The band played at a dance, and Ray was pulled into a line} \end{matrix}$

$\begin{matrix} S & V \\ \text{dance that was starting.} \end{matrix}$

$\begin{matrix} S & V \\ \text{To his surprise, he was good at line dancing; afterward,} \end{matrix}$

$\begin{matrix} S & V & S & V \\ \text{he joined in whenever he got the chance.} \end{matrix}$

### SKILLS FOCUS

Identify and use compound-complex sentences. Understand agreement.

### Exercise 6 Classifying Sentences According to Structure

Classify each of the following sentences as *simple*, *compound*, *complex*, or *compound-complex*. Be sure that you can identify all subordinate and independent clauses.

**EXAMPLE** 1. The Iroquois are American Indian peoples originally from New York State.

1. *simple*

1. Members of the Iroquois—which include the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Tuscarora, and Seneca—have an ancient history of storytelling.
2. In the early days, professional storytellers went from house to house, and they were paid for their storytelling with small gifts.
3. Most of what is known today about Iroquois folk tales comes from the Senecas, whose stories have been written down by historians.
4. Some of the most popular stories are about a creature who is hairless except for one strip of fur down his back.
5. He is so huge that his back can be seen above the trees.
6. He eats people; because he cannot be killed in any ordinary way, he is especially frightening.
7. The tales about this creature are even more frightening than are the ones about Stone Coat, who has skin like stone.
8. Fortunately, Stone Coat is not very smart, and many of the folk tales tell of ways that the Iroquois outsmart him.
9. There are also tales about the Whirlwinds, who usually appear as bodiless heads with fiery eyes; in some stories, the Whirlwinds eat sticks and rocks when they cannot catch people.
10. Other Iroquois stories tell about the adventures of Elk, Partridge, Skunk, and Rattlesnake.

Link to



Literature

### Exercise 7 Classifying Sentences According to Structure

Classify each of the following sentences as *simple*, *compound*, *complex*, or *compound-complex*.

**EXAMPLE** 1. In all the world, there is only one art museum for children's art, and it is located in Norway.

1. *compound*

1. This museum is the International Museum of Children's Art, which occupies a big, old house in Oslo.
2. The walls are covered from top to bottom with brilliantly colored creations by young artists up to age seventeen.

