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Department of English

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SENTENCE TYPES

A sentence is a group of words that you use to communicate your ideas. Every sentence is formed from one or more clauses and expresses a complete thought.

There are basically four kinds of sentences in English: simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex. The kind of sentence is determined by the kind of clauses used to form it.

1- *Simple Sentences*: A simple sentence is one independent clause.

- ◆ I enjoy playing tennis with my friends every weekend.
- ◆ I enjoy playing tennis and look forward to it every weekend.
- ◆ My friends and I play tennis and go bowling every weekend.

Notice that the second sentence has two verbs, *enjoy* and *look forward to*. This is called a compound verb. Because there is only one clause, this is a simple sentence. The third sentence has a compound subject as well as a compound verb, but it is still a simple sentence because it has only one clause.

2- Compound Sentences: A compound sentence is two or more independent clauses joined together. There are three ways to join the clauses:

1. With a coordinator	I enjoy tennis, but I hate golf.
2. With a conjunctive adverb	I enjoy tennis; however , I hate golf.
3. With a semicolon	I enjoy tennis; I hate golf.

2.1. Compound Sentences with Coordinators

A compound sentence can be formed as follows:

Independent clause, + coordinator + independent clause

Notice that there is a comma after the first independent clause. The following sentences illustrate the meanings of the seven "FAN BOYS" coordinators.

for	Women live longer than men, for they take better care of their health. (The second clause gives the reason for the first clause.)
and	Women follow more healthful diets, and they go to doctors more often. (The two clauses express equal, similar ideas.)
nor	Women don't smoke as much as men do, nor do they as much alcohol. (Nor means "and not." It joins two negative independent clauses. Notice that question word order is used after nor.)
but	Men may exercise harder, but they may not exercise as regularly as women do. (The two clauses express equal, contrasting ideas.)
or	Both men and women should limit the amount of fat in their diets, or they risk getting heart disease. (The two clauses express alternative possibilities.)
yet	Women used to be known as the "weaker sex," yet in some ways, they are stronger

	than men. (The second clause is a surprising or unexpected contrast to the first clause.)
so	Men are less cautious than women, so more men die in accidents. (The second clause is the result of the first clause.)

2.2. Compound Sentences with Conjunctive Adverbs

A compound sentence can also be formed as follows:

Independent clause; + conjunctive adverb, + independent clause

Notice the punctuation: a semicolon follows the independent clause, and a comma follows the conjunctive adverb. Moreover, just like the FAN BOYS coordinators, conjunctive adverbs express relationships between the clauses. Here is a list of conjunctive adverbs:

Also	Accordingly	Additionally	Again	
Anyway	As a result	Besides	Conversely	Consequently
Contrarily	Comparatively	Certainly	Eventually	Equally
Elsewhere	Further	Finally	Furthermore	Henceforth
Hence	However	In fact	In contrast	In comparison
In addition	Incidentally	Instead	Indeed	Just as

Likewise	Moreover	Meanwhile	Next	Nevertheless
Namely	Nonetheless	Now	Notably	Otherwise
On the other hand	Rather	Still	Subsequently	Similarly
That is	Thereafter	Then	Therefore	Thus
Undoubtedly	Uniquely			

- ◆ Jeffrey does not want to go to school today; **nevertheless**, his mother is making him attend classes.
- ◆ Your work is not bad; **in fact**, you probably deserve a raise.
- ◆ He did not like eating tomatoes as a child; **conversely**, ketchup is his primary food source today.
- ◆ They forgot class was canceled for the week; **undoubtedly**, they had trouble figuring out how to spend their free time.

2.3. Compound Sentences with a Semicolon

Two sentences combined into one with ONLY a semicolon (;) coming directly between each sentence. There is NO conjunction (“and”, “but”, “or”, “so”, “yet”) used at all! The idea behind this type of compound sentence is that both sentences should logically relate to one another.

- ◆ David loves Alaska; he fishes there.
- ◆ Keely writes well; she loves to show off her story skills!

3- Complex Sentences: A complex sentence contains a main clause and one or more dependent clauses.

If the dependent clause comes before the independent clause, add a comma after the dependent clause. If the main clause comes first, no comma is needed between the two.

We won the game because we worked together as a team.

Although I broke my arm, I still cheered for my team from the sidelines.

Here is a list of **Subordinating Conjunctions** that begin dependent clauses:

- **Comparison:** than, rather than, whether, as much as, whereas
- **Time:** after, as soon as, until, now that
- **Concession:** though, although, even though
- **Relative pronouns:** who, whoever, whom, whomever, whose
- **Reason:** because, since, so that, as
- **Condition:** if, if only, unless, provided that, assuming that
- **Place:** where, wherever
- **Relative adjectives:** that, whatever, which, whichever
- **Manner:** how, as though, as if

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

- ◆ Though Jack prefers watching comedy films, he rented the latest spy thriller, and he enjoyed it very much.

References:

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