Simple Sentences

A *simple sentence* contains one independent clause and no subordinate clauses.

A simple sentence may have a compound subject, a compound verb, or both.

**EXAMPLES**

*Thelma* sells automobiles.

*Thelma* and *Leo* buy and sell automobiles.

**EXERCISE** Circle each subject and underline each verb in the following sentences.

**Example** 1. **Claudia** smiled sweetly and motioned the guests inside.

1. Carmen skated at the pond after school.

2. Iris and Phil took a train to Chicago.

3. The pattern of every snowflake is unique.

4. During the Renaissance, Italian women shaved the front part of their heads and kept the rest of their hair long.

5. Federico and Garth rowed over to the island last summer.

6. Emily Dickinson published very few poems in her lifetime.

7. After the harvest, the workers and their families have a dance and play music in the barn.

8. *Cats* takes place in a junkyard.

9. The well-known musical is based on T. S. Eliot’s poems.

10. Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune have rings.

11. Christina played the guitar and sang songs from Chile.

12. Leaves and branches lay beneath the trees in our front yard and blocked the driveway.

13. Jill and Erica campaigned energetically and raised the needed funds.

14. My favorite snack is graham crackers and milk.

15. Jordan should wash the dishes and put them away.

16. Lupe raked the leaves in the backyard.

17. We congratulated Rosa on her achievement.

18. I read the draft of the paper and did a thorough revision.

19. This month’s school newspaper includes a list of new books in the library.

20. Where will Tim and Eric ride their bicycles this weekend?
Compound Sentences

A compound sentence contains two or more independent clauses and no subordinate clauses.

The independent clauses of a compound sentence are usually joined by a comma and a coordinating conjunction (and, but, for, nor, or, so, or yet). Independent clauses also may be joined by a semicolon.

**EXAMPLES**

Mark Twain wrote fiction, and T. S. Eliot wrote poetry.

My brother does the dishes and takes out the trash; my chores include vacuuming and dusting.

**EXERCISE A**

Each of the following compound sentences contains two independent clauses joined by a comma and a conjunction. Underline each subject once and each verb twice. Then, circle the conjunction.

**Example 1.** Kiyo likes the beach, and she often goes there with her brothers.

1. The ice-covered sidewalk was slippery, and several people fell down.

2. Some students ate in the cafeteria, but others went outside in the sunshine.

3. The talk show host was silly, but his show had a large audience.

4. The waves were enormous, yet the surfer rescued his new surfboard.

5. Mr. Kumamoto has uncovered some great fossils, for he is an experienced fossil hunter.

**EXERCISE B**

Rewrite each of the following pairs of simple sentences as one compound sentence. Use the coordinating conjunction in parentheses, and write your sentences above the original sentences. Be sure to add the correct punctuation where necessary.

**Example 1.** Ants are small. They are powerful. (but)

6. We can go to a movie. We can watch a videotape at home. (or)

7. Angel wrote a poem about his girlfriend. He did not show it to her. (but)

8. Dark clouds gathered above the baseball field. Rain fell steadily. (and)

9. The bears stole all our food. We left the campground early. (so)

10. Outside, a storm howled. We were warm inside the igloo. (yet)

11. Aretha has never taken a drawing class. She can sketch almost anything. (but)

12. They wanted to surprise her. They gave her a gift the day before her birthday. (so)

13. Joe can wait for us at the entrance. He can go in and find us a seat. (or)

14. Suddenly, Sparky ran to the window. We wondered what he saw. (and)

15. Last night the house felt chilly. I drank hot tea and curled up with a book. (so)
Simple or Compound?

16a. A simple sentence contains one independent clause and no subordinate clauses.

16b. A compound sentence contains two or more independent clauses and no subordinate clauses.

The independent clauses of a compound sentence are often joined by a comma and a coordinating conjunction, but they also may be joined by a semicolon.

**SIMPLE SENTENCE** I went outside and looked at the sky.

**COMPOUND SENTENCES**

The sky looked threatening, so I expected a storm.
The sky looked threatening; I expected a storm.

**EXERCISE A** For each of the following sentences, underline each subject once and each verb twice. Then, identify the sentence by writing S for simple sentence or CD for compound sentence on the line provided.

**Example** CD 1. Geronimo was an Apache; he struggled to preserve the Apache way of life.

____ 1. Geronimo was born in No-doyohn Canyon, Mexico.

____ 2. Geronimo defended his homeland against colonization by Mexicans and North Americans.

____ 3. Mexican bounty hunters killed his mother, his wife, and his children in 1858.

____ 4. Geronimo wanted revenge, so he gathered a band of men.

____ 5. He led the band of Apaches in raids against Mexican settlements.

____ 6. The Mexicans called him Geronimo; that name in English is Jerome.

____ 7. The Apaches used his name as their battle cry.

____ 8. In 1874, U.S. authorities forcibly moved about four thousand Apaches to a reservation.

____ 9. Geronimo led these Apaches in attacks on U.S. settlements and soldiers.

____ 10. The United States sent five thousand soldiers to capture Geronimo, but the small group of Apaches did not surrender for more than four months.

**EXERCISE B** For each of the following sentences, underline each subject once and each verb twice. Then, identify the sentence by writing S for simple sentence or CD for compound sentence above the item number.

**Example** [1] The army finally tracked Geronimo to his camp in the mountains.

Complex Sentences

A complex sentence contains one independent clause and at least one subordinate clause.

A subordinate clause cannot stand alone as a sentence. The following words are often used to introduce subordinate clauses: who, whose, whom, which, that, after, as, because, if, since, before, when.

**INDEPENDENT CLAUSE** I often go to the library

**SUBORDINATE CLAUSE** because I like to read

**COMPLEX SENTENCE** Because I like to read, I often go to the library.

**EXERCISE A** The sentences in the following paragraph are complex sentences. For each sentence, underline the independent clause once and the subordinate clause twice.

Example [1] Mr. Morales, who is my English teacher, encouraged me to be a writer.

[1] Since I was five years old, I have read in bed at night. [2] For my twelfth birthday I received *A Light in the Attic*, which is a book of poems. [3] Before I go to sleep, I sometimes read my favorite poems to my little brother. [4] As he listens to me, he closes his eyes and falls asleep. [5] When he wakes up in the morning, he usually asks about the ending of a poem. [6] I may be a writer or an editor when I grow up. [7] My Aunt Sabrina, who lives in Dallas, is a copyeditor for a newspaper. [8] If I study hard, I can become an editor, too. [9] A job as an editor makes sense for me because I love words. [10] The books that I love most sit on a special shelf in my room.

**EXERCISE B** The sentences in the following paragraph are complex sentences. For each sentence, underline the independent clause once and the subordinate clause twice.

Example [1] When I read some Greek myths last summer, I learned a lot of interesting things.

[11] As I read, I learned about Arachne, a character in a famous Greek myth. [12] In the stories, she weaves tapestries that are very beautiful. [13] When people see her work, they are really impressed. [14] Because Arachne is such a good weaver, she begins to boast about her skill. [15] Athena, who is the goddess of arts and crafts, hears about Arachne’s boastfulness and decides to pay Arachne a visit. [16] After Athena arrives, she warns Arachne not to be so boastful. [17] Because Arachne refuses to listen, the goddess Athena challenges her to a weaving contest. [18] The contest that Athena proposes ends in a draw. [19] Because Athena feels sorry for Arachne, she turns Arachne into a spider. [20] According to the myth, spiders, who are also excellent weavers, are descended from Arachne.