

Sentence Structure

What is a sentence?

A sentence is a string of words put together to express a complete thought, consisting of a subject and a predicate.



A predicate is basically everything in a declarative sentence that is not the subject. It contains the verb phrase and often, an object.



So simple sentences are usually made up of a subject, verb, and object in that order.



The subject is the person or thing *doing* something in a sentence. (I'll highlight subjects in pink in later examples)



The verb is what they are doing. (I'll highlight verbs in green)



The object is who or what they are doing it too. (I'll highlight objects in blue)



There are four types of sentences:



Simple



Complex



Compound



Complex-Compound

1. Simple Sentences

A simple sentence is an independent clause with no conjunction (and/but etc) and no dependent clause. It must contain a subject and a verb, and it can contain an object.

The boy jumped out of the window.

This is an independent clause because it contains a subject (the boy) and a verb (to jump), and it expresses a complete thought.

2. Compound Sentences

A compound sentence is two independent clauses joined by a conjunction.

The boy jumped out of the window, and he landed on his feet.

This is two independent clauses as each line can be written as separate sentences. Note the comma - this is required between two independent clauses.

3. Complex Sentences

A complex sentence contains one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. They are combined using conjunctions or subordinators (when, if, who, because etc).

The boy jumped out of the window when he saw the monster.

A dependent clause contains a subject (he) and a verb (the monster) but does not express a complete thought. 'When he saw the monster' does not make sense without the rest.

4. Complex-Compound Sentences

A complex-compound sentence contains multiple independent clauses and at least one dependent clause, containing both conjunctions and subordinators.

The boy jumped out of the window when he saw the monster, and he landed on his feet.

