

Sentence Types

Varying Sentence Structure



Adapted from *The Little, Brown Handbook*, 11th Edition, Contributors Dayne Sherman, Jayetta Slawson, Natasha Whitton, and Jeff Wiemelt, 2010, 262-263. Prepared by the Southeastern Writing Center. Last updated July, 2011.

Simple Sentences

A **simple sentence** consists of only one independent clause and no subordinate clauses. Use a simple sentence when you need to express ideas clearly and directly.

Example: Sara and John presented the award to the winner of the physics scholarship.

Compound Sentences

A **compound sentence** consists of two or more independent clauses that are usually joined by:

- A comma and a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, or so*)
- A semicolon
- A semicolon and a conjunctive adverb (*consequently, further, however, indeed, in fact, moreover, nevertheless, then, therefore, thus*)

Example: Sam totaled his car, **so** he bought a new one.
Sam totaled his car; he bought a new one.
Sam totaled his car; **therefore**, he bought a new one.

Complex Sentences

A **complex sentence** consists of one independent clause and one or more dependent clause. Complex sentences are usually formed by using subordinating conjunctions (*after, although, as, because, before, if, since, until, whereas, while*).

Example: **After** the movie was over, we went out for dinner.
We went out for dinner **after** the movie was over.

Compound-Complex Sentences

A **compound-complex sentence** consists of at least two independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses. Compound-complex sentences are formed by joining the two independent clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction and subordinating the dependent clause with a subordinating conjunction.

Example: **Although** we had difficulty deciding, we finally chose a destination, **and** Sam made the travel arrangements.