

# Sentence Structure

**A sentence represents a complete thought and must make sense on its own.**

A sentence

- starts with a capital letter
- ends with either a full stop (.), a question mark (?), or an exclamation mark (!)
- has a subject and a predicate
  - **subject:** who or what the sentence is about
  - **predicate:** everything else in the sentence that states what the subject does or is, and **it must contain a verb**

Subject (who or what)	Predicate (what is happening to the subject)
The <b>book</b>	<b>arrived</b> in the mail today.
<b>Operators of machines</b>	<b>should be given</b> further training.
<b>Hannah</b> and <b>Crystal</b>	<b>went</b> on a camping holiday in the South Island.
<b>He</b>	<b>bought</b> a new car yesterday.
<b>Collecting wood</b> for the fire	<b>took</b> a long time.
<b>Dancing</b>	<b>is good</b> for the soul.

*Note.* These examples are **simple sentences**. The subject can be a noun (e.g., book, operators of machines), pronoun (e.g., He), proper noun (e.g., Hannah, Crystal), or a gerund (a verb ending in -ing that functions as a noun, e.g., collecting wood, dancing).

## Four main sentence types

Sentence types are classified by their structure.

### 1. Simple sentences . . .

- are **one independent clause** (an independent clause can stand alone, and it represents a complete thought)
- have **one subject** and **one verb**

Subject      Verb  
 ↓                      ↓  
 The **outcomes are negotiated** at the beginning of the process.

Subject      Verb  
 ↓                      ↓  
 Some **unintended outcomes may occur**.



#### 4. Complex-compound sentences . . .

- combine compound and complex structures to create one sentence
- are compound because **two or more independent clauses are joined with a coordinating conjunction** (see sentence type 2)
- are complex because they contain **at least one dependent clause** (see sentence type 3)
- dependent clauses may come before or after one or all of the independent clauses

##### a. Dependent clause before independent clause

This example shows one dependent clause before the first independent clause.

Complex part of the sentence: dependent clause then independent clause

Since creative forms of therapy have become more popular, therapists report that music therapy promotes coping for trauma survivors, and clients report that dance therapy reduces their anxiety and depression.

Independent clause

Conjunction indicating a compound sentence

##### b. Dependent clause after independent clause

This example shows one dependent clause after the first independent clause.

Complex part of the sentence: independent clause then dependent clause

Students often find intrinsic motivation because of their interest in an activity, so it is important for teachers to identify the students' interests before planning a lesson.

Independent clause

Conjunction ('so') indicating a compound sentence

##### c. Dependent clauses before and after independent clauses in one sentence

This example shows two complex parts of the sentence with two dependent clauses: One dependent clause is before the first independent clause and the other is after the second independent clause.

Complex part of the sentence: dependent clause then independent clause

Although the dataset was restricted to urban schools, the researchers concluded that the intervention improved student engagement, and the findings were disseminated widely because policymakers expressed interest in the results.

Another complex part of the sentence: independent clause then dependent clause

Conjunction ('and') indicating a compound sentence

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