

# **BASIC GRAMMAR**

## **SENTENCES TYPES BASED ON THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION**

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# **SENTENCES TYPES BASED ON THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION**

## **A. SENTENCE TYPES BASED ON THE STRUCTURE:**

### **SENTENCE TYPES:**

**Simple,**

**Compound,**

**Complex, and**

**Compound-Complex**

# SIMPLE SENTENCES

- A simple sentence contains a subject and a verb.
- It expresses a single complete thought that can stand on its own.

Examples:

1. The baby cried for food.

^There is a subject and a verb that expresses a complete thought.

2. Professor Maple's intelligent students completed and turned in their homework.

^ A simple sentence does not necessarily have to be short. It can have adjectives. In this case,

there are two verbs "completed" and "turned in." However, the sentence expresses one complete thought and therefore is a simple sentence.

3. Megan and Ron ate too much and felt sick.

^Although there are two subjects and two verbs, it is still a simple sentence because both verbs share the same subjects and express one complete thought.

# COMPOUND SENTENCES

- A compound sentence has two independent clauses. An independent clause is a part of a sentence that can stand alone because it contains a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought.
- Basically, a compound contains two simple sentences.
- These independent clauses are joined by a conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).

Examples:

1. The shoplifter had stolen clothes, so he ran once he saw the police.

^Both sides of the conjunction "so" are complete sentences. "The shoplifter had stolen clothes can stand alone and so can "he ran once he saw the police."

Therefore, this is a compound sentence.

2. They spoke to him in Spanish, but he responded in English.

^This is also a compound sentence that uses a conjunction to separate two individual clauses.

# COMPLEX SENTENCES

- A complex sentence is an independent clause joined by one or more dependent clauses. A dependent clause either lacks a subject or a verb or has both a subject and a verb that does not express a complete thought.

- A complex sentence always has a subordinator (as, because, since, after, although, when) or

relative pronouns (who, that, which).

Examples:

1. After eating lunch at The Cheesecake Factory, Tim went to the gym to exercise.

^ The independent clause is "Tim went to the gym to exercise." The subordinating clause before it is dependent on the main, independent clause. If one were to say "after eating lunch at The Cheesecake Factory," it would be an incomplete thought.

2. Opinionated women are given disadvantages in societies that privilege male accomplishments.

^ The subject is "opinionated women" and the verb is "are given." The first part of the sentence "opinionated women are given disadvantages in societies" is an independent clause that expresses a complete thought. The following "that privilege male accomplishments" is a relative clause that describes which types of societies.

3. The woman who taught Art History 210 was fired for stealing school supplies.

^ The dependent clause in this sentence is "who taught Art History 210" because if removed, the rest of the sentence would stand as an independent clause. "Who taught Art History 210" is an adjective clause that provides necessary details about the subject, woman.

# COMPOUND-COMPLEX SENTENCES

- A compound-complex sentence has two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause.

Examples:

1. After the two soccer players lost their game, they joined their other teammates for lunch, and they went to the movies.

^ If we remove the dependent clause “after the two soccer players lost their game,” we have a compound sentence. The dependent clause makes this sentence compound-complex.

2. The man believed in the system, and he knew that justice would prevail after the murderer was sent to jail.

# PRACTICE:

Identify whether the sentences are simple, complex, compound or compound-complex. Please underline dependent clauses where it applies.

1. Vampires Dairies is my favorite television show, but I also love True Blood.
2. The student wiped the white board that was filthy with last week's notes.
3. The trendy fashion designer released her new line on Wednesday.
4. Trina and Hareem went to a bar in Hollywood to celebrate their anniversary.
5. Wicked Regina cast a spell on the entire city, so the citizens decided to rebel.
6. While waiting for the paint to dry, Angela went to Home Depot, and Martin organized the kitchen appliances.
7. After listening to the Kanye West CD, I have new respect for his music.
8. After the teacher chose groups, John and Sara were selected as partners for a project, yet Sarah did most of the work.

**SOURCE:**

<https://www.lamission.edu/learningcenter/docs/asc/worksheets/Grammar/Sentence%20Types.pdf>

The **Sentence** is the largest grammatical unit in the English Rankscale and it refers to a group of words that begins with a capital letter and ends with any of these three punctuation marks: the period or full stop, the exclamation mark and the question mark. This post, **Types of Sentences According to Structure with Examples**, takes a close look at the English sentence, its definition and various types with illustrative examples for easy comprehension. Come along with me as we navigate this grammatical journey.

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## **Types of Sentences According to Structure with Examples**

The English sentences are generally classified along two lines: classification based on the structural pattern or syntactic classes and classification based on the functions these sentences perform. We shall examine these classifications and discuss the type of sentences under each of these two basic classifications. However, we shall look in-depth at structural classification. I have written on the functional classification of sentences in another post. Do check it out. Let us see types of sentences according to structure with examples. Shall we?

### **Structural Classification of the English Sentences**

There are six (6) types sentences based on structural classification. These are:

1. **Simple Sentence**
2. **Complex Sentence**
3. **Compound Sentence**
4. **Compound-Complex Sentence**
5. **Multiple Sentence**
6. **Multiple-Complex Sentence.**

Let us discuss them one after the other:

#### **Simple Sentence**

A simple sentence is one which has one main or [independent clause](#). We also know this clause by the name [alpha clause](#). It is main, independent or alpha because it can stand on its own, unlike the subordinate clause. See [The English Simple Sentence](#). The structure or the composition of the simple sentence comprises the

subject, the predicator, the complement and the adjunct. But the only obligatory element here is the predicator. See a detailed discussion on the [syntactic elements of the clause structure](#). Let us see some examples of the simple sentence:

- *This is my food.*
- *I love you so much.*
- *He has gone home*
- *Pat bought a book this morning.*
- *The hardworking farmer reaped a bumper harvest last year.*

It is important to note that we do not determine whether a sentence is simple by how long or short it is. A sentence could be short and not be a simple sentence while another may be very long and still be a simple sentence. See these examples:

- *He left and disappeared for good.*

This sentence is NOT a simple sentence though it contains only six words. See the next sentence that is very long, yet qualifies as a simple sentence:

- *Despite the big plate of rice with chicken and assorted meats, the boys still complained of serious hunger.*
- *The long-awaited massive Airbus from the United States of America finally landed at the London Heathrow airport amidst pomp and pageantry with the crowds full of joy at yet another landmark and historic event in the history of mankind.*

The first sentence has eighteen (18) words while the second sentence has a stunning forty (40) words, yet both of them are simple sentences. The point? Never determine a simple sentence by length, you will certainly be wrong. Let us see the next type of sentence under structural classification:

### **Complex Sentence**

A complex sentence has one main, independent or [alpha clause](#) and one or more subordinate, dependent or beta clauses. The absence of a [subordinate clause](#) will make the sentence a simple one. The [beta clause](#) could be as many as possible, depending on what is grammatically acceptable, but one main clause must be present to make the sentence qualify for a complex sentence. The subordinate clause in a complex sentence is usually introduced by a subordinator or a [subordinate conjunction](#). We usually refer to these subordinators as 'binders' because they bind the subordinate clause to the main clause. Let us see some examples:

- *The boy failed the test because he did not work hard*
- *He locked the gate before beating the stubborn goats*
- *Even though the farmer worked hard the harvest was rather poor.*
- *Despite reading all night, the girl failed the test.*
- *If he had not run all the way home, he would have been caught in the rain.*

### **Compound Sentence**

The next type of sentence, based on structural classification, is the compound sentence. A compound sentence is a sentence with two main, [alpha](#) or independent

clauses with no **subordinate clause**. That is, two clauses make up a compound sentence and the two of them are main clauses as we have in the following examples:

- *The boy won the game but he was not given the prize.*
- *The food was badly cooked yet the starving boys ate it with relish.*
- *The farmer worked very hard and reaped a bumper harvest.*
- *My uncle asked if he should pay for my tuition or clear my accommodation bill.*
- *He returned from work and immediately went to bed.*

Note that each clause in a compound sentence can stand on its own as a complete sentence because each clause is actually a simple sentence joined by a **conjunction**. We refer to the items used to link the clauses in a compound sentence as **coordinating conjunctions**. These are: but, and, or. Some add 'yet' to the list but it is a 'marginal conjunction'. We can also refer to the linking items as 'linkers' because they link items of equal grammatical weight or status; word and word, group and group, clause and clause then sentence and sentence.

### **Compound-Complex Sentence**

A sentence that is compound-complex is a sentence that has two main, alpha or **independent clauses** and one or more subordinate, beta or dependent clauses. In this type of sentence, one would find both a coordinator (linker) and a subordinator (binder) present. The linker joins the two alpha clauses while the binder(s) joins one of the alpha clauses with a **subordinate clause**. The following examples depict compound-complex structures:

- *Jane gave the class a test and marked the test papers before writing the correction on the board*
- *The tenants refused to pay the house rent and gave the landlord a beating before the police arrived*
- *The resident doctors went on strike and refused to treat patients because the government refused to pay their allowances.*
- *Students prefer to buy phones and acquire other electronic gadgets with their money rather than buy textbooks.*
- *He washed his clothes and ironed them before he slept.*

### **Multiple Sentence**

A multiple sentence is a sentence which has three (3) or more main, independent or **alpha clauses** with no subordinate or **dependent clause**. Each of these clauses can stand on its own as a simple sentence. Consider these sentences:

- *He came, he saw and he conquered*
- *John cleared the garage, washed the dirty cars and later went to the gym to play football.*
- *She attended the interview, answered all the questions brilliantly yet she did not get the job.*

- *He also drove out the nations before them, allotted them an inheritance by survey and made the tribes of Israel dwell in their tents.*
- *He arrived the country on Friday, went to see his mother on Saturday and returned to Austria on Sunday.*

### **Multiple-Complex Sentence**

This is the last type of sentences under structural classification of sentences. A multiple-complex sentence has three main, independent or [alpha clauses](#) plus at least one subordinate, dependent or [beta clause](#). Examples of this sentence type include:

- *When he slew them then, they sought him and they returned and sought earnestly for God.*
- *I came, I saw, and I conquered because I was determined since no assistance was forthcoming.*
- *If the lawyers had not moved fast, the innocent man would have been ridiculed, made to refund the money he did not steal and thrown into prison.*
- *As a philosopher who likes simplicity, he wrote in the condolence register: 'life is simple and life is fragile.'*
- *I have had opportunity, in recent times, to interact closely with you and I have come to the conclusion painfully that if you can shun yourself to a great extent of personal and political interests and dwell more on the national interest and also draw the line between advice from selfish and self-centered aides and advice from those who in the interest of the nation may not tell you what you will want to hear, it will be*

Note that as a good writer or speaker of English, one should be able to vary one's sentence patterns to avoid monotony and lacklustre expressions. Ability to vary one's sentence patterns shows an understanding of different [sentence patterns](#) and this enriches your writing and makes your speech interesting.

### **Quiz**

Can you give me the structural classification of the following sentences?

1. One, the current situation and consequent possible outcome dictate that I should, before the door closes on reason and promotion of national interest, alert you to the danger that may be lurking in the corner.
2. I could sense a semblance between the situation that we are gradually getting into and the situation we fell into as a nation during the Abacha era.
3. I have also always told you that God has graciously been kind, generous, merciful and compassionate to me and He has done more than I could have ever hoped
4. For five capacities in which you find yourself, you must hold yourself most significantly responsible for what happens or fails to happen in Nigeria and in any case, most others will hold you responsible and God who put you there will surely hold you responsible and accountable.

5. I have always retorted that God only put you where you are and those that could be regarded as having played a role were only instruments of God to achieve God's purpose in your life.
6. I want nothing from you personally but that you should run the affairs of Nigeria not only to make Nigeria good but to make Nigeria great and I have always pleaded with you.

<https://akademia.com.ng/types-sentences-according-structure-examples/>

## **B. SENTENCE TYPES BASED ON THE FUNCTION:**

In addition to classifying sentences by the number of clauses they contain, you can pigeonhole sentences according to their functions. There are four sentence functions in English: *declarative*, *exclamatory*, *interrogative*, and *imperative*.

1. *Declarative sentences* state an idea. They end with a period. For example:
  - The first toilet ever seen on television was on *Leave It to Beaver*.
  - The problem with the gene pool is that there's no lifeguard.
2. *Exclamatory sentences* show strong emotions. They end with an exclamation mark. For example:
  - What a mess this room is!
  - The cake is ruined!
3. *Interrogative sentences* ask a question. As you would expect, they end with a question mark. For instance:
  - How you gonna keep 'em down on the farm when they've seen Paris?

Why is it possible to tickle someone else but not to tickle yourself?
4. *Imperative sentences* give orders or directions, and so end with a period or an exclamation mark. For instance:
  - Sit down and listen!
  - Fasten your seatbelts when the sign is illuminated.

<https://www.infoplease.com/language-arts/grammar-and-spelling/sentences-sentence-functions-four-tops>

# **TYPES OF SENTENCES ACCORDING TO FUNCTION WITH EXAMPLES**

In the English Rankscale, the Sentence is the largest grammatical unit and, by definition, it refers to a group of words that begins with a capital letter and ends with any of these three punctuation marks: the period or full stop, the exclamation mark and the question mark. This post, **Types of Sentences According to Function with Examples**, examines closely the different types of English sentences based on functions using copious illustrative examples.

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## **Types of Sentences According to Function with Examples**

The classification of the English sentences is in two forms. We classify sentences based on their syntactic classes or their structural appearance. Another classification has to do with the functions English sentences perform. So we have structural and functional classifications. I have put together a post on the [Structural Classification of English Sentences](#). But here, I will focus on the functional classification of sentences. Let us see the various types of sentences using the function parameter.

## Functional Classification of the English Sentences

There are five (5) types sentences based on structural classification. These are:

1. Declarative Sentence
2. Interrogative Sentence
3. Exclamatory Sentence
4. Imperative Sentence
5. Minor Sentence

Let us look at each of these types...

### Declarative Sentence

[E. E. Cummings](#), a US Poet and Painter once said, "The only man woman or child who wrote a simple declarative sentence with seven grammatical errors 'is dead.'" He might be implying the simplicity of the declarative sentence. As the name goes, a 'declares'. In other words, it is a sentence that makes a statement; it states. Sentences expressing hope or wish are somehow declarative. We also use Declarative Sentences to express an idea or give information. Some examples of the declarative sentence include:

- *The man has just gone out.*
- *The class over there is making a noise.*
- *She is an accomplished writer.*
- *The food got burnt.*
- *We ate samosa for lunch.*
- *Let us move over to the field.*
- *The sun is the centre of the Solar System.*
- *I hope we can get home before nightfall.*
- *May you live long.*
- *How I wish she was here.*
- *The American astronauts are in space.*
- *The governor has paid the salaries of workers.*

### Syntactic formation of a declarative sentence

There is a pattern for the formation of a declarative sentence. In its formation, the **subject** comes first and the **predicator** follows it immediately. In other words, the declarative sentence is the basic form. The basic form of a sentence is when the subject comes first and the predicator follows the subject immediately. E. g.

- *The president has disbursed the money.*

Let us see the next type of sentences...

### Interrogative Sentence

An interrogative sentence is a sentence that seeks to elicit information. When you need to ask a question, the interrogative sentence comes handy. Before we give examples of an interrogative sentence, it is essential, at this point, to let you know that there are various types of questions in English. We have the following questions

which are all forms of interrogation and, therefore, fall under the category of interrogative questions:

### **Polar or Yes/No Question**

This type of question requires yes or no for an answer e.g.

- *Are those girls reading their books?*
- *Is the programme ending today?*
- *Was the course difficult?*
- *Were they around this morning?*
- *Will you come with me?*

### **Syntactic formation of Polar Question**

In the syntactic of the polar question, there is subject-operator inversion; that is, we inverse the primary auxiliary such that it takes the place of the subject. We also call this 'S-op' inversion. For instance:

- *'Those girls are reading their books.'* becomes *'Are those girls reading their books?'*
- *'The programme is ending today.'* becomes *'Is the programme ending today?'*
- *'She was protesting her arrest.'* becomes *'Was she protesting her arrest?'*
- *'I am reading the second novel.'* becomes *'Am I reading the second novel?'*
- *'The youth were demonstrating.'* becomes *'Were the youth demonstrating?'*

Take note that at the end of the question, the voice pitch rises.

### **'Wh' Question**

This type of question usually starts with the 'wh' element which we refer to as the 'Q-word' that is, the 'question word'. An answer to this type of question cannot be 'yes' or 'no' like the Polar Question. Examples include:

- *What are you doing over there?*
- *How has life been with you?*
- *Where did you meet your wife?*
- *Why have you been away from work?*
- *When are we planning to leave the party?*
- *Who are you looking for?*
- *Whom did you give the letter?*
- *Who can we get to help us?*
- *How long have you been waiting here?*
- *Under what conditions have the prisoners been released?*

Unlike the polar question, which has the possibility of only two answers, that is 'yes' or 'no', 'wh'-question permits broad or open-ended number of answers.

Note that the voice pitch drops at the end of the question. This distinguishes it from the Polar Question among other things.

## **Syntactic formation of 'Wh' Question**

In forming this type of question, the Q-word (what) comes first, the operator (the auxiliary verb) follows, the subject comes next, then the lexical verb and the adjunct.

## **Exclamatory Question**

This type of question is one that shows emotional feelings – a kind of yes-no question with the force of an exclamation. In other words, it is a question that exclaims! It is said in a falling tune or intonation. Consider the following sentences:

- *Aren't these ladies beautiful! (An expression of how beautiful the ladies are)*
- *Isn't this a wonderful event! (An exclamatory question under interrogative sentence)*
- *Isn't her dress gorgeous!*
- *Wasn't that a scintillating performance!*
- *Aren't they fortunate breed!*

## **Syntactic formation of Exclamatory Questions**

The syntactic formation is S-op inversion (subject-operator inversion) like the Polar Question.

## **Tag Questions**

A tag question is a short question which we add to a statement, to elicit a confirming response from the hearer. We use a tag question to turn a statement into a question. Consider these examples:

- *The man has arrived, hasn't he?*
- *They are not here, aren't they?*
- *The candidates passed the examination, didn't they?*

The question is formed from the statement using the subject and the operator; the syntactic formation is a subject-operator (S-op) inversion.

In English, which has a broad range of tag questions, the choice of tag question depends on the grammatical form of the statement.

## Rules for Tag Question Formation

Moreover, there are rules for forming the most common types of tag questions and they are:

1. Using the non-contracted form, copy the operator of the given statement, and change it to negative if it is positive or to positive if it is negative. For example:
  - *You have arrived, haven't you?*
  - *She is not back. Is she?*
  - *They are swimming, aren't they?*
  - *We were asked to pay, weren't we?*
  - *He should not say that, should he?*
2. In the absence of an operator, we use the positive or negative form of the primary auxiliary 'do'. See the following examples:
  - *The dog likes to bark always, doesn't it?*
  - *The designs came out well, didn't they?*
  - *We live in an age of information, don't we?*
3. If the subject of the statement is a personal pronoun, copy and place it after the operator in the tag question. For instance:
  - *We have not met before, have we?*
  - *He is a jolly good fellow, isn't he?*
4. If the subject of the statement is not a personal pronoun, use a personal pronoun which matches its referent (in number, person, case and gender) to replace it in the tag question. For example:
  - *The meeting won't take long, will it?*
  - *The children should eat now, shouldn't they?*

## Exclamatory Sentence

This type of sentence expresses an emotional feeling and it is usually ended with an exclamatory mark. For example:

- *What a wonderful event this is!*
- *How lovely she looks!*
- *What kind of a person he has turned to!*
- *What a strange sight they saw!*
- *How skillfully he dribbles the ball!*
- *What a mess they are in!*

## Syntactic formation of Exclamatory Sentence

In the formation of this type of sentence, the EX-element, which brings out the exclamation, always comes first; then a complement intensive usually follows and the subject and predicator follow respectively. Each sentence formation depends on the structure of the exclamatory sentence. Look at this example:

- How I used to enjoy myself in those days!

(the EX-element 'how', an adjunct, comes first, then comes the subject, predicator, the complement intensive and the adjunct respectively.

## Imperative Sentence

An imperative sentence is one that makes or expresses a command, gives an order or gives an instruction. Depending on the tone of the voice, a command sentence can also be a request sentence. Note that we use 'may' and 'could' to make polite requests in English. See [Modal Auxiliary Verbs](#). Examples of the interrogative sentence include:

- *Stop the work immediately!*
- *Work on these exercises!*
- *Come at once!*
- *Do these exercises*
- *Answer four questions!*
- *Get out of here now!*
- *State your mission clearly!*

## Syntactic formation of Imperative Sentence

In the syntactic formation of an imperative sentence, the subject is deleted and an imperative verb is used.

## Minor Sentence

Minor sentences which do not belong to any of the types of sentences we have discussed earlier but which exist nonetheless in English. Generally, a minor sentence omits one of the structural elements like the subject, predicator, or complement. Some simple sentences are not usually represented fully in some contexts. In such contexts, the simple sentence may be represented by any of the elements or a combination of the elements in the SPCA framework. The process of ellipsis or deletion has been used. A minor sentence is similar in nature to a **verbless sentence**. Let us see what a verbless sentence is...

## **Verbless Sentence**

This is a unit of grammar that is independent; that is, it is not part of some other grammatical units, and yet does not contain any verb. Although a verb is essential to a sentence, a verbless sentence is very common in spoken language and are far from rare in written texts. Examples are:

- *Happy birthday!*
- *Good, God!*
- *How cool!*
- *No problem.*
- *A thousand Naira, please.*
- *Down!*
- *More coffee?*
- *Yes, Lord!*

## **Types of Minor Sentence**

Broadly speaking, we can divide the minor sentence into two types. They include the following:

### **Productive Minor Simple Sentence**

The realisation of this type is limitless since we can still model or produce new ones after them where necessary. We commonly use this type in newspaper headlines, greetings, adverts, conversations, commentaries, etc. Let us see few examples:

#### **Newspaper Headlines**

- *EU's Brexit stance about to splinter?*
- *Super Eagles in a 2-0 victory!*
- *Trump off to London.*
- *Arsenal in, Chelsea out!*
- *No plans to sack workers.*

#### **Adverts**

- *Milo: Food drink for future champions!*
- *CocaCola: Enjoy!*
- *Union Bank: Big, Strong, Reliable*
- *FCMB: My bank and I*

## Responses to Conversations and Questions

- *Who owns this book? **John***
- *Where are you going? **Home***
- *When are you coming back? **Soon***
- *Where are you travelling to? **Lagos.***
- *Bring something for me.*

Most responses to questions are somehow minor sentences.

## Commentaries

- *A square pass to Ronaldo.*
- *Dribbles two in a row.*
- *A good pass there.*
- *A volley shot!*
- *Into the net!*

## Titles

- *The Chief-of-Army Staff.*
- *Bad road network in Nigeria*
- *The Faith of the Son*
- *Introduction to ICT*
- *The English Tense System*

## Non-Productive Minor Sentences

Non-productive minor sentences are those with fixed forms as we cannot model new ones after them. We can find examples in greetings:

## Greetings

- *How are you? Fine!*
- *Hello!*
- *Thank you!*
- *Long time!*
- *Congratulations!*
- *Happy New Year!*
- *Good morning.*
- *Merry Christmas!*

## Interjections/Exclamations

These subdivide into two:

**Primary interjections** which have only one lexical element such as Hurray! Wow! Ah! Oh! Etc. and **Secondary interjections** which have more than one element such as: Bless you! Thank God! Thank goodness! Good heavens! Oh dear! Etc.

## **Aphoristic Minor Sentences**

These are usually traditional expressions which we cannot add to. Often, they formed a closed class. Examples include:

- *Easier said than done.*
- *The earlier the better.*
- *More haste, less speed.*
- *Midas touch.*
- *Slow and steady.*

It has been a quite interesting discussion on the functional classifications of English sentences. I am sure you will be able to classify any sentence you come across based on its function. Right? Great!

<https://akademia.com.ng/types-sentences-according-function-examples/>