



Kinds of Sentences

A **sentence** is the largest unit of any language. In English, it begins with a capital letter and ends with a full-stop, or a question mark, or an exclamation mark.

The **sentence** is generally defined as a word or a group of words that expresses a thorough idea by giving a statement/order, or asking a question, or exclaiming.

Example:

He is a good boy (statement), Is he a good boy? (question), What a nice weather! (exclaiming).

Ideally, a sentence requires at least one subject and one verb. Sometimes the subject of a sentence can be hidden, but the verb must be visible and present in the sentence. Verb is called the heart of a sentence.

Example:

Do it. (In this sentence, a subject ‘you’ is hidden but verb ‘do’ is visible)

“[A sentence is] a group of words, usually containing a verb, that expresses a thought in the form of a statement, question, instruction, or exclamation and starts with a capital letter when written.”

More about a Sentence

In other words, a complete English sentence must have **three characteristics**:

- First, in written form, a sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period (i.e., a full stop) [.] , a note of interrogation (i.e., a question mark) [?] , or a note of exclamation (i.e., an exclamation mark) [!].
- Second, it must express a complete thought, not fragmented.
- Third, it must contain at least one subject (hidden/visible) and one verb comprising an independent clause. (An independent clause contains an independent subject and verb and expresses a complete thought.)

Types of Sentences

Structurally, sentences are of four types:



- Simple sentence
- Compound sentence
- Complex sentence, and
- Compound-complex sentence.

Simple sentence

A *simple sentence* must have a single clause (a single verb) which is independent, and it cannot take another clause.

Example:

I always wanted to become a writer. (One clause – one verb)

The young students enjoyed the game.

Compound sentence

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 thief stole the clothes, **and** he ran away.

^Both sides of the conjunction “**and**” are complete sentences. “The thief stole the clothes” can stand alone and so can “he ran away.” 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.

3. *Will Mary go, or will John go?*



4. *He felt cold, for it was snowing.*

Complex sentence

A complex sentence is an independent clause joined by one or more dependent clauses. A complex sentence always has a subordinator (**as, because, since, after, although, when, who, that, which**)

1. The students are studying **because** they have a test tomorrow.
2. This is the book **that** everyone is talking about.
3. The book, **which** is out of print, is one of my favorites.

Before Susan called me, she called her mom, and her mom asked her to babysit her brother.

A compound-complex sentence

A compound-complex sentence is comprised of at least two independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses.

Example: Layla forgot her friend's birthday, **so** she sent her a card **when** she remembered.

Example: Begin with two independent clauses:

The team captain jumped for joy. The fans cheered

Then combine the independent clauses to form a compound sentence:

The captain jumped for joy, **and** the fans cheered.

Now, add a dependent clause to your compound sentence to create a compound-complex sentence.

The captain jumped for joy, and the fans cheered **because** we won the match.

When we won the match, the captain jumped for joy, **and** the fans cheered.

Functionally, sentences are of mainly four types:

- Declarative sentence
- Imperative sentence
- Interrogative sentence, and



- Exclamatory sentence

Declarative sentence:

An *assertive sentence* (*declarative sentence*) simply expresses an opinion/feeling, or makes a statement, or describes things. In other words, it declares something. This type of sentence ends with a period (i.e., a full-stop).

Examples:

- I want to be a good engineer. (a statement)
- I am very happy today. (a feeling)

Imperative sentence:

We use an *imperative sentence* to make a request or to give a command. Imperative sentences usually end with a period (i.e., a full stop), but under certain circumstances, it can end with a note of exclamation (i.e., exclamation mark).

Examples:

- Please sit down.
- Please search the room carefully.

Interrogative sentence:

An *interrogative sentence* asks a question. Interrogative sentences must end with a note of interrogation (i.e., question mark)

Examples:

- When are you going to submit your assignment?
- Do you know him?

Exclamatory sentence.

An *exclamatory sentence* expresses overflow of emotions. These emotions can be of happiness, wonder, sorrow, anger, etc.

Examples:

- 1, What a day it was!
2. What a beautiful garden it is!
3. What a big house this is!
4. What an excellent dancer she is!
5. **How beautiful the mountains are!**
6. **How fast time flies !**
7. How excellently she plays!



Exercise

Identify each sentence as either **declarative, interrogative, imperative or exclamatory**.

1. Pick up some more milk when you pass by the supermarket.
2. Just try and figure out what the new password is.
3. How beautiful your rose garden is!
4. Take a good look at this financial chart.
5. Clean out the gutters with this plastic scooper I bought
6. I am sick and tired of this rainy weather!
7. Go get another paper towel from the kitchen.
8. This closet is where we keep the spare batteries.
9. May I have a clean plate?
10. Did the door lock behind you?

Exercise

*Read the following sentences and state whether they are **simple, complex or compound**.*

1. The girl looked at her brother and smiled.
Simple
Complex
Compound
2. Janet went to the library to borrow some books.
Simple
Complex
Compound
3. The water was so cold that we could not swim in it.
Simple
Complex
Compound
4. The little girl started crying when she couldn't find her toy.
Simple
Complex
Compound
5. I live in a large city.



Simple

Complex

Compound

6. As soon as the bell rang, the children rushed out.

Simple

Complex

Compound

7. We saw a film which was based on the life of Nelson Mandela.

Simple

Complex

Compound

8. His crude remarks offended me.

Simple

Complex

Compound

9. Jane and Alice had their dinner and went for a walk.

Simple

Complex

Compound

10. The boys and the girls were shouting loudly.

Simple

Complex

Compound

11. The customers were happy because they got what they wanted.

Simple

Complex

Compound

12. The meeting was held in a room near the library.

Simple

Complex

Compound

Answers

1. The girl looked at her brother and smiled. (Compound sentence)

2. Janet went to the library to borrow some books. (Simple sentence)



3. The water was so cold that we could not swim in it. (Complex sentence)
4. The little girl started crying when she couldn't find her toy. (Complex sentence)
5. I live in a large city. (Simple sentence)
6. As soon as the bell rang, the children rushed out. (Complex sentence)
7. We saw a film which was based on the life of Nelson Mandela. (Complex sentence)
8. His crude remarks offended me. (Simple sentence)
9. Jane and Alice had their dinner and went for a walk. (Compound sentence)
10. The boys and the girls were shouting loudly. (Simple sentence)
11. The customers were happy because they got what they wanted. (Complex sentence)
12. The meeting was held in a room near the library. (Simple sentence)