

CLASSIFYING SENTENCES - STUDY GUIDE

There are four types of sentences: simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex:

1) The **SIMPLE sentence** contains **ONE INDEPENDENT** clause.

Example: The man standing in the doorway is my Uncle Fred.

Notice that the sentence does not have to be short to be simple. It can have many phrases and still be a “simple” sentence. In fact, parts of a simple sentence may be compound, as in the example below:

Example: Mary and Tom are going to the dance together. (This sentence contains a compound subject.)

2) The **COMPOUND sentence** contains **TWO INDEPENDENT clauses** joined by a **conjunction**, such as “and,” “but,” “or,” “nor,” “yet,” or “for”. In such sentences, the **conjunction** should be preceded by a comma. If the **independent clauses** are very short and closely related, they may be joined by a **semicolon (;)**.

Examples:

A) Marty is the leader of the group, but he is not the best person for the job.

B) I like dogs; he likes cats.

NOTE: Sometimes the independent clauses are joined by conjunctive adverbs such as: moreover, nevertheless, therefore, however, or consequently. If so, the conjunctive adverb is preceded by a semicolon and followed by a comma.

Example: He is an expert in this field; therefore, the company hired him.

3) The **COMPLEX sentence** contains at least **ONE INDEPENDENT clause** & **ONE DEPENDENT clause**.

Example: (Before he went to the job interview), he got a haircut.

4) The **COMPOUND-COMPLEX sentence** contains **TWO INDEPENDENT clauses** joined by a **conjunction** or **semicolon**, and **ONE OR MORE DEPENDENT clauses**.

Example: (Bob is a doctor), and (he is a man) (who cares about people).

independent clause independent clause dependent clause

conjunction

FOLLOW THESE RULES TO CLASSIFY SENTENCES EASILY:

- 1 -If you find a conjunction or a semicolon and a complete sentence on both sides of it, the sentence is **COMPOUND**.
- 2 -If you find an adjective, adverb, or noun clause, the sentence is **COMPLEX**.
- 3 -If you find both 1 and 2 above, the sentence is **COMPOUND/COMPLEX**.
- 4 -If you find neither 1 nor 2 above, the sentence is **SIMPLE**.