Sentence Types: Simple, 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 was fired for stealing school supplies.

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

A simple sentence has only one clause.  
A complex sentence has one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses.  
A compound sentence has two or more clauses of the equal rank.

**State whether the following sentences are simple, complex or compound.**

#### 1. We met rather few people who spoke English.

#### 2. I have been on rather too many planes and trains recently.

#### 3. We drove right up to Helsinki in two days.

#### 4. I don’t care how expensive it is.

#### 5. Two minutes ago the child was fast asleep, but now he is wide awake.

#### 6. He is not tall enough to be a soldier.

#### 7. I guess she just doesn’t respect you.

#### 8. I have got four sisters and each of them is quite different from the others.

#### 9. You can either come with me now or walk home.

#### 10. He will never leave home because he hasn’t got the courage to.

#### 11. When all else fails, read the user manual.

#### 12. It was Sam who paid for the drinks.

### Answers

1.We met rather few people who spoke English. (Complex sentence)  
2. I have been on rather too many planes and trains recently. (Simple sentence)  
3. We drove right up to Helsinki in two days. (Simple sentence)  
4. I don’t care how expensive it is. (Complex sentence)  
5. Two minutes ago the child was fast asleep, but now he is wide awake. (Compound sentence)  
6. He is not tall enough to be a soldier. (Simple sentence)  
7. I guess she just doesn’t respect you. (Complex sentence)  
8. I have got four sisters and each of them is quite different from the others. (Compound sentence)  
9. You can either come with me now or walk home. (Compound sentence)  
10. He will never leave home because he hasn’t got the courage to. (Complex sentence)  
11. When all else fails, read the user manual. (Complex sentence)  
12. It was Sam who paid for the drinks. (Complex sentence)

**Rule I**

Compound: but,yet,still

Complex: though,although,even though

Simple: inspite of, despite

Ex:

He Bought the book but he did not read it. ( compound sentence)

Though he bought the book,he did not read it. (complex sentence)

Inspite of buying the book, he did not read it.( simple sentence)

Rule II

Compound: and

Complex: when,After

Simple: v + ing/ on + (verb = ing)

Ex:

He saw me and greeted me . ( compound sentence)

When he saw me,he greeted me. (complex sentence)

On seeing me, he greeted me. ( simple sentence)

Rule III

Compound: very,extremely etc

Complex: so that

Simple: too… to

Ex:

1. He is too old to walk ( simple)

He is so old that he cannot walk .( complex)

He is very old and therefore he cannot walk. (compound)

Rule IV

Compound: v+ … and …

Complex: if you …

Simple: in the event of/ in case of

Ex.

Work hard and you will pass ( compound)

If you work hard,you will pass( complex)

In the event of working hard,you will pass.(simple)

Rule V

Compound: or ,or else

Complex: if you …. Not

Simple: without, in the event of not

Ex.

Work hard or you will fail. ( compound)

If you do not work hard,you will fail. ( complex)

Unless you work hard you will fail.(simple)

Rule VI

Compound: at once,just then ,immediately

Complex: as soon as

Simple: immediately afer + ( v+ ing)

Ex.

He received the telegram and at once he left for his native place. ( compound)

As soon as he received the telegram , he left for his native place. ( complex)

Immediately after receiving the telegram , he left for his native place. (simple)

Rule VII

Compound: and so,and therefore

Complex: as

Simple: Being/ ( v+ ing)

Ex.

He was poor and so he could not buy new clothes. ( compound)

As he was poor he could not buy new clothes. ( complex)

Being poor, he could not buy new clothes. (simple)

**Rewrite the following Simple Sentences as Compound Sentences:**

1. The old man being weak could not walk properly.
2. His father in spite of being poor is a contended man.

**Rewrite the following Complex Sentences as Compound Sentences:**

1. As the shopkeeper quarrels with every customer, nobody likes him.
2. If he does not improve his behavior, he will lose all his friends.

**Rewrite the following Compound Sentences as Complex Sentences:**

1. She is feeling unwell so she cannot attend her office today.
2. The child felt hungry, so he started weeping.

**ANSWERS:**

1. The old man was weak therefore he could not walk properly.
2. His father is poor but he is a contended man.
3. The shopkeeper quarrels with every customer therefore nobody likes him.
4. He must improve his behavior otherwise he will lose all his friends.
5. She cannot attend her office today as she is feeling unwell.
6. The child started weeping because he felt hungry.