

Types of Sentences

There are four types of sentence:

1. *Simple*
2. *Compound*
3. *Complex*
4. *Compound-Complex*

Each sentence is defined by the use of independent and dependent clauses, conjunctions, and subordinators.

A clause is comprised of a group of words that include a subject and a finite verb. It contains only one subject and one verb. The subject of a clause can be mentioned or hidden, but the verb must be apparent and distinguishable.

Example:

- I graduated last year. (One clause sentence)
- When I came here, I saw him. (Two clause sentence)
- When I came here, I saw him, and he greeted me. (Three clause sentence)

Independent Clause

It functions on its own to make a meaningful sentence and looks much like a regular sentence.

In a sentence two independent clauses can be connected by the **coordinators: and, but, so, or, nor, for*, yet*.**

Example:

- He is a wise man.
- I like him.
- Can you do it?
- Do it please. (*Subject you* is hidden)
- I read the whole story.
- I want to buy a phone, **but** I don't have enough money. (Two independent clauses)
- He went to London **and** visited the Lords. (Subject of the second clause is 'he,' so "he visited the Lords" is an independent clause.)
- Alex smiles whenever he sees her. (One independent clause)

Dependent Clause

It cannot function on its own because it leaves an idea or thought unfinished. It is also called a subordinate clause. These help the independent clauses complete the sentence. Alone, it cannot form a complete sentence.

The **subordinators** do the work of connecting the dependent clause to another clause to complete the sentence. In each of the dependent clauses, the first word is a subordinator. Subordinators include relative pronouns, subordinating conjunctions, and noun clause markers.

Example:

- When I was dating Daina, I had an accident.
- I know the man who stole the watch.
- He bought a car which was too expensive.
- I know that he cannot do it.
- He does not know where he was born.
- If you don't eat, I won't go.
- He is a very talented player though he is out of form.

Dependent Clauses are divided into three types and they are –

1. Adjective Clause

It is a Dependent Clause that modifies a Noun. Basically, Adjective Clauses have similar qualities as Adjectives that are of modifying Nouns and hence the name, Adjective Clause. These are also called Relative Clauses and they usually sit right after the Nouns they modify.

Examples:

- I'm looking for the red book **that went missing last week**.
- Finn is asking for the shoes **which used to belong to his dad**.
- You there, **who is sitting quietly at the corner**, come here and lead the class out.

2. Noun Clause

Dependent Clauses acting as Nouns in sentences are called Noun Clauses or Nominal Clauses. These often start with "how," "that," other WH-words (What, Who, Where, When, Why, Which, Whose and Whom), if, whether etc.

Examples:

- I like **what I hear**.
- You need to express **that it's crossing a line for you**.
- He knows **how things work around here**.

3. Adverbial Clause

By definition, these are Dependent Clauses acting as Adverbs. It means that these clauses have the power to modify Verbs, Adjectives and other Adverbs.

Examples:

- Alice did the dishes **till her legs gave up**.
- Tina ran **to the point of panting vehemently**.
- I went through the book **at a lightning speed**.

A subordinate clause, like an independent clause, has a subject and a verb, but unlike an independent clause, it cannot stand alone as a sentence. Subordinate clauses begin with certain words or short phrases called subordinating words (also known as dependent words, or subordinating/subordinate conjunctions).

A subordinate clause supports the main clause of a sentence by adding to its meaning. Like all clauses, a subordinate clause has a subject and verb. In "when Jack blew the whistle," the subject is "Jack" and the verb is "blew."

Examples of Subordinate Clauses

Here are some examples of subordinate clauses (shaded). You will notice that none of the shaded clauses could stand alone as a sentence. This is how a subordinate clause (or a dependent clause) is different from an independent clause.

- She had a pretty gift for quotation, which is a serviceable substitute for wit.

- A musicologist is a man who can read music but can't hear it.
- Always be nice to those younger than you because they are the ones who will be writing about you.
- Personally I'm always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught.

In the examples, the independent clauses are not underlined. Notice how they could all be standalone sentences.

Types of Subordinate Clause

A subordinate clause supports the main clause in a sentence by functioning as an adverb, an adjective, or a noun.

Subordinate Adverbial Clause

Here is an example of a subordinate clause functioning as an adverb:

- I fished until the Sun went down.

(The subordinate clause "until the sun went down" modifies the verb "fished." It is an adverbial clause.)

Subordinate Adjective Clause

. Here is an example of a subordinate clause functioning as an adjective:

- The bull that charged us is back in the field.

(The subordinate clause "that charged us" describes "the bull." It is an adjective clause.)

Subordinate Noun Clause

Here is an example of a subordinate clause functioning as a noun:

- Whoever dislikes the new timings is more than welcome to leave.

(The subordinate clause "Whoever dislikes the new timings" is the subject of this sentence. It is a noun clause.)

The Link between a Subordinate Clause and an Independent Clause

When a subordinate clause is used as an adjective or an adverb, it will usually be part of a complex sentence (i.e., a sentence with an independent clause and at least one subordinate clause).

The link between a subordinate clause and an independent clause will often be a subordinating conjunction or a relative pronoun. For example:

- I fished **until** the sun went down.

(Subordinating conjunction in bold)

- The bull **that** charged us is back in the field.

(Relative pronoun in bold)

1. Simple Sentences

A simple sentence is one clause with a **subject** and **verb**.

Computers are *important in the modern world.*

Formula = SV

However, it can have more than one subject and verb:

2 subjects:

Computers and other technological devices are *important in the modern world.*

Formula = SSV

2 Verbs:

I search *for information and* **play** *games on my computer.*

Formula = SVV

2 subject and 2 verbs:

My brother and **I search** for information and **play** games on our computers.

Formula = SSVV

2. Compound Sentences

A compound sentence consists of 2 or 3 clauses. It is when simple sentences are joined together.

In this sentence structure, the clauses are joined with the following **coordinating conjunctions**:

F = for

A = and

N = nor

B = but

O = or

Y = yet

S = so

The word 'fanboys' is an easy way to remember the different conjunctions that make up compound sentences. Obviously the most common are 'and', 'but', 'or' and 'so'.

Here are some examples of compound sentence structure:

Computers are important, **but they can be** dangerous too.

Formula = SV but SV

Computers are important, **but they can be** dangerous too, **so we must be** careful.

Formula = SV but SV so SV.

Avoid writing too many clauses as the sentence may get difficult to follow, and you **cannot** use each one **more than once** in a sentence to join clauses.

This is **wrong**:

*Computers are used widely in most countries now, **and** they are a sign of progress, **and** we must ensure everyone has access to them.*

Incorrect formula = SV and SV and SV. **X**

Two possible corrected versions:

*Computers are used widely in most countries now, **and** they are a sign of progress. We must ensure everyone has access to them.*

Formula = SV and SV. SV.

*Computers are used widely in most countries now, **and** they are a sign of progress, **so** must ensure everyone has access to them.*

Formula = SV and SV so SV.

Using semicolons

There is an instance when you can have a compound sentence structure without a coordinating conjunction, and this is when you join two clauses with a semicolon. It is used when two ideas are related.

For example:

Computers are used widely in most countries; they are a sign of progress.

3. Complex Sentences

Complex sentences are more complicated (which is maybe why they are called 'complex!').

This type of sentence structure is important for IELTS because to get awarded a band 6 or higher for your 'grammatical range and accuracy', you need to demonstrate that you are able to use them.

The **more varied** and the **more accurate** your complex sentences are, the higher the band scores for this.

There are different types of complex sentences and these will be looked at in more detail later, so here you are just provided with the basics.

Complex sentences are two (or more) clauses joined together, but they are not joined by 'fanboys' (coordinating conjunctions). They are joined by subordinating conjunctions.

These are subordinating conjunctions:

<i>after</i>	<i>even if</i>	<i>unless</i>
<i>although</i>	<i>even though</i>	<i>until</i>
<i>as</i>	<i>if</i>	<i>when</i>
<i>as if</i>	<i>in order to</i>	<i>whenever</i>
<i>as long as</i>	<i>in case</i>	<i>whereas</i>
<i>as much as</i>	<i>once</i>	<i>where</i>
<i>as soon as</i>	<i>since</i>	<i>wherever</i>
<i>as though</i>	<i>so that</i>	<i>while</i>
<i>because</i>	<i>that</i>	
<i>before</i>	<i>though</i>	

For example:

*People take natural health supplements **even though** they may not have been tested.*

*Our children may not be properly educated **if** we don't spend more on schools.*

*I went to bed **as soon as** he left **because** I was tired.*

These are all **adverbial clauses**. In these types of complex sentence, the second clause can be used to start the sentence.

In this case, a comma is needed in the middle.

***Even though** they may not have been tested, people take natural health supplements.*

***If** we don't spend more on schools, our children may not be properly educated.*

***As soon as** he left, I went to bed **because** I was tired.*

Noun clauses and **relative clauses** are also a type of complex sentence structure, but these will be looked at later.

4. Compound-Complex Sentences

Compound-complex sentences are the same as complex sentences but they also have a simple (or compound) sentence before or after the 'complex' part.

For example:

*I ate a lot **when** I got home, **but** I was still hungry.*

The part that is underlined is the complex sentence. As you can see, it also has a simple sentence connected to it. It can also have a full compound sentence attached to it:

*I ate a lot **when** I got home, **but** I was still hungry, **so** I went shopping to buy some more food.*