Technical Writing Skills

Sentences - Punctuation and Correctness

Learning Outcome

At the end of this lecture you should be able to:

- Revise your work for errors in punctuation and commonly misused/misspelled words.
- Explain the difference between different sentence structures.
- Apply basic punctuation rules to your writing.
- Identify common spelling mistakes.

Punctuation

Is punctuation important?

Let's eat, grandma!

Let's eat grandma!

Punctuation

Punctuation

The following types of activities are among those that don't qualify for overtime pay:

The canning, processing, preserving, freezing, drying, marketing, storing, packing for shipment or distribution of:

    (1) Agricultural produce;

    (2) Meat and fish products; and

    (3) Perishable foods.

Review: Sentence Structures

What is a sentence?

A sentence is a group of words which makes sense in itself. It must contain a subject, at least one complete verb, and one main item of information (a complete thought) to which various subsidiary ideas may be added.
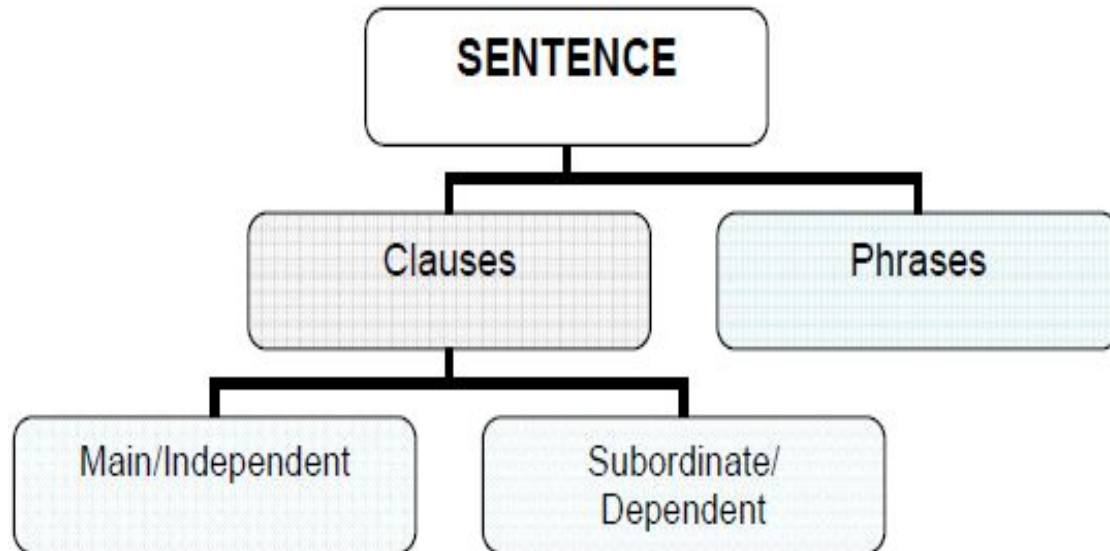
Review: Sentence Structures

What is a clause?

A clause is a group of words that contains a subject (doer of the action) and a verb (the action in the sentence) and functions as part of a sentence.

Review: Sentence Structures

What are sentences made of?

A sentence is composed of clauses and/or phrases.

Review: Sentence Structures

A main or independent clause must contain a subject and a verb and express a complete thought.

A subordinate or dependent clause does not mean anything on its own; it depends on the main clause to give it meaning.

Review: Sentence Structures

What is a phrase?

A phrase is a group of related words that does not include a subject and verb.

Sentence Structures

There are three common sentence structures:

- Simple
- Compound
- Complex

Sentence Structures

A simple sentence:

- Contains 1 main clause.
- Expresses one main idea.

Example

Lava from a nonexplosive eruption ordinarily contains only 0.2 percent water.

Sentence Structures

A compound sentence:

- Contains 2 or more independent clauses.
- Expresses 2 or more ideas of equal importance.

Example

Precursor activity to the eruption began on March 20, 1980, and many times during the next two months the mountain shook for minutes.

Sentence Structures

A complex sentence:

- Contains an independent clause joined with one or more dependent clauses.
- Expresses a main idea supported by subsidiary information.

Example

The eruption itself had been expected for weeks although the amount of devastation caused by the May 18 blast was a surprise.

Sentence Structures

A compound sentence can be joined by:

1. A coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, and so)

Examples

Precursor activity to the eruption began on March 20, 1980, and many times during the next two months the mountain shook for minutes.

Sentence Structures

A compound sentence can be joined by:

2. A semicolon.

Example

Precursor activity to the eruption began on March 20, 1980; many times during the next two months the mountain shook for minutes.

Sentence Structures

A compound sentence can be joined by:

3. A semicolon and a transitional word (therefore, moreover, however, also).

Example

Precursor activity to the eruption began on March 20, 1980; also many times during the next two months the mountain shook for minutes.

Sentence Structures

A complex sentence can be written two ways:

The main clause followed by a subordinate conjunction (although, if, when) and a dependent clause.

Example

The eruption itself had been expected for weeks although the amount of devastation caused by the May 18 blast was a surprise.

Sentence Structures

A complex sentence can be written two ways:

1. The main clause followed by a subordinate conjunction (although, if, when) and a dependent clause.

2. The dependent clause followed by the main clause.

Example

***Although the amount of devastation caused by the May 18 blast was a surprise**, the eruption itself had been expected for weeks.* *(note: requires a comma)*

Activity #1