

Complex sentences are basically two or more clauses joined together to make one sentence. There are lots of ways of doing this. Look at the sentences below and work out how each sentence is more complex than the original sentence (below, in red).

*'This is a simple sentence'.*

1. This sentence is slightly **more** complex **than** the previous one.
2. This sentence is complex, **whereas** the first one was simple.
3. The previous sentences were more complex **because** they compared two things.
4. We need to use complex sentences **in order to** make our writing sound more academic.
5. **Although** these sentences are more complex, they are still easy to understand.
6. **If** you use complex sentences, you will get a higher score.
7. **Whenever** examiners see complex sentences, they jump for joy.
8. **Starting** your sentence with an '-ing' form is another way of making your writing more formal.
9. **What you really need to do is** ensure that you use a variety of complex sentences.
10. You could try extending your points with a relative clause, **which** will certainly make your sentences longer.

### Answers

1. **Comparison:** This sentence is slightly **more** complex **than** the previous one.
2. **Contrast:** This sentence is complex, **whereas** the first one was simple.
3. **Reason:** The previous sentences were more complex **because** they compared two things.
4. **Purpose:** We need to use complex sentences **in order to** make our writing sound more academic.
5. **Concession:** **Although** these sentences are more complex, they are still easy to understand.
6. **Conditionals:** **If** you use complex sentences, you will get a higher score.
7. **Time phrases:** **Whenever** examiners see complex sentences, they jump for joy.
8. **'ing' nouns:** **Starting** your sentence with an '-ing' form can make your writing more formal.
9. **Emphasis:** **What you really need to do is** ensure that you use a variety of complex sentences.
10. **Relative pronouns:** You could try extending your points, **which** will make your sentences longer.

## 1. Comparisons

This sentence is slightly **more** complex **than** the previous one.

- This sentence is **far more** complex **than** any of the sentences **that I have used before**.
- This sentence is **twice as** complex **as** the previous one, **because** it compares two things.
- **The reason why this sentence is more complex is that** it compares two things, which means that the analysis is much deeper.
- **Although** this sentence is an improvement on the first one, it is **not as** complex **as** the last one.
- Complex sentences are much **better than** simple sentences, which you learn as a beginner.

[This sentence compares two things, **and for this reason** it is considerably more complex than the one **which** only mentions one thing.]

*Real example: 'It may be worth paying a little extra to support a local business **rather than** basing your shopping decisions based on price and convenience'. [rather than + ing]*

## 2. Contrast

This sentence is complex **whereas** the previous one was simple.

- Some people argue that zoos are educational, **whereas** others are of the opinion that keeping animals in cages is cruel.
- Sales of e-books have increased dramatically, **while** sales of paper books has plummeted.
- Opinion is divided as to whether we should explore space, **but** I think the investment will be worth it.
- We now understand the importance of inherited characteristics more than ever before, **yet** we are still unable to decide whether an individual's personality is more influenced by genetic factors or by the environment.
- Proponents of GM food claim that it will eradicate famine. \*\*\***However**, others believe it threatens the food chain.

\*\*\**'However'* does not join 2 sentences to make one (see above - it's a new sentence).

However! You can use it to join 2 sentences when the meaning is like this:

*'However hard I try, I can't seem to understand it'*

= *'No matter how hard I try, ...'*

### 3. Reasons

Why were the previous two sentences complex?

They were complex **because** they compared two things.

**Question: Why is the climate changing?**

- The climate is changing **because of** human activity. [*because of + noun*]
- The planet is warming **due to the fact that** we continue to release carbon into the air by burning fossil fuels for energy. [*due to the fact that + sentence*]
- **As/Since** there are few affordable alternatives, this situation will only get worse.

### 4. Purpose

Why do we need to use complex sentences?

We need to use complex sentences **in order to** make our writing sound more academic

- The factory was demolished **in order to** make way for more housing.
- The factory was knocked down **so that** more houses *could be constructed*.  
(NB *passive = more complex*)
- Many people argue that keeping old buildings and repairing them is better because **by doing this**, the character of the town will be preserved.
- Electric vehicles and improved public transport networks should be financed **and** prioritised by governments **to** encourage more people to use them, **with** economic incentives **if** necessary.

### 5. Concession

**Although** these sentences are more complex, they are still easy to understand.

**Although/even though/though** technology has had negative effects, it has given us the potential to reach new heights that would not have previously been possible.

**Despite/In spite of the fact that** **we are aware** of the problem, we do little to prevent it.  
(S-V-O)

**Despite/In spite of being** aware of the problem, we do little to tackle it. (+ ing)

**Despite/In spite of our awareness** of the problem, we do little to address it. (+ noun)

## 6. Conditionals

What will happen **if** you use complex sentences?

**If** you use complex sentences, you **will** get a higher score.

- You won't get a higher score **unless** you use conditionals!
- **Using** conditionals **could** increase your score dramatically.
- Workplaces should ensure that staff have time to get outside at regular intervals throughout the day, **even if** it is just for a short walk.
- **If** we do not act quickly, we **may** be the next species to become endangered.
- **If** the government **had acted** more quickly, the situation **could have been avoided**.
- **Had** the government acted sooner, **we would not** be in this mess.

## 7. Time expressions

**Whenever** examiners see complex sentences, they jump for joy.

- **When** considering a ban on advertising, we need to bear in mind the benefits.
- **As soon as** the government introduces this legislation, the situation will improve.
- **As** more local businesses close down, different types of workers (shop floor staff, managers, cleaners) are having to find jobs elsewhere.
- **However** hard we try to do our bit as individuals, our effort is wasted unless governments play their part.
- **No matter how** hard they try, they will never be able to escape the cycle of poverty.
- **The sooner** we change our lifestyles, **the more** likelihood there is of us saving the planet.

## 8. The 'ing' form

Starting a sentence with a **noun/'ing'** form can make your writing more formal.

- **Selling** food in bulk could be one way of reducing plastic packaging.
- **Subsidising** public transport would be the single most effective way of cutting emissions.
- **Being** easily contactable has real advantages for business people and for working parents.

## 9. Emphasis

**What you really need to do** is ensure that you use a variety of complex sentences.

**10 ways to make your sentences more complex, formal and academic.**  
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- **One of the main reasons why** people disagree with zoos is **because of** animal welfare.
- **The most powerful argument in favour of** mobile phones is that they can be used to call for help in the most inaccessible places, **for example** when a car breaks down in a remote area.
- **One approach would be to** increase the number of police, **which** would act as a deterrent.
- Electric cars have several advantages. **Not only** are they better for the environment, **but they also** cost less in the long-term.

### **10. Relative pronouns**

You could try extending your points with a relative clause, **which** will certainly make your sentences longer.

- There are many creative professions where clothes convey a sense of style, **which** is very desirable in many companies.
- People prefer to shop online, **where** they can find everything they need **without** having to leave the sofa.
- The trend was similar for women, **with** numbers **going** up significantly in June and **remaining** high throughout the summer.
- It is often argued that private companies are more efficient, **cutting** any surplus costs where necessary and **incentivising** workers with bonuses and rewards for results.

You can also extend your points with '**for example**' and '**such as**', and '**like**'.

### **Test yourself - what goes in the gaps? (check back on page 1)**

1. **Comparison:** This sentence is slightly \_\_\_\_\_ complex \_\_\_\_\_ the previous one.
2. **Contrast:** This sentence is complex, \_\_\_\_\_ the first one was simple.
3. **Reason:** The previous sentences were more complex \_\_\_\_\_ they compared two things.
4. **Purpose:** We need to use complex sentences \_\_\_\_\_ make our writing sound more academic.
5. **Concession:** \_\_\_\_\_ these sentences are more complex, they are still easy to understand.
6. **Conditionals:** \_\_\_\_\_ you use complex sentences, you \_\_\_\_\_ get a higher score.
7. **Time phrases:** \_\_\_\_\_ examiners see complex sentences, they jump for joy.
8. **'ing' nouns:** \_\_\_\_\_ your sentence with an '-ing' form can make your writing more formal.
9. **Emphasis:** \_\_\_\_\_ ensure that you use a variety of complex sentences.
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sentences longer.

### Remember!

**The most important thing is that** you practise making your own sentences, **not only** in Task 1, **but also** in Task 2, **which** will **result in** your score being **higher than** you expected, **as long as** you use the examples accurately, ensuring that each one is 100% correct **so that when** the examiners read your essay, they will jump for joy **despite the fact that even though** your sentences make sense, they are extremely long, **like** this one!

### *And just for fun...*

*A grade is an inadequate report of an inaccurate judgement by a biased and variable judge of the extent to which a student has attained an undefined level of mastery of an unknown proportion of an indefinite material.*

*Drussel, 1983*

***Also, my students came up with this sentence, which I thought could be useful in a number of contexts:***

***The most powerful argument in favour of [demolishing old buildings] could be the fact that they are [run-down] and therefore [unsafe for people to live in].***