Simple Sentence

* A **simple sentence** has the most basic elements that make it a sentence: a subject, a verb, and a completed thought.
* A simple sentence can also be referred to as an **independent clause**. (It is referred to as "independent" because, while it might be part of a compound or complex sentence, it can also stand by itself as a complete sentence).

Examples of simple sentences:

The dog barked. The big black cat sat on the brick wall. The dog *and* the cat howled. The dog howled *and* barked.

Compound Sentence

* A sentence that contains two sentences (or independent clauses) joined by a coordinating conjunction with a comma preceding it.
* The coordinators are as follows: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*. (Helpful hint: The first letter of each of the coordinators spells *FANBOYS*.)



Writer’s Note: Coordinating conjunctions are useful for connecting sentences, but compound sentences often are overused. Too many compound sentences that use "and" can weaken writing.

**F**or **A**nd **N**or **B**ut **O**r **Y**et **S**o

Examples of compound sentences:

The dog barked, and the cat yowled. The dog barked; the cat yowled.

Complex Sentence

* A complex sentence has an independent clause joined by one or more **dependent clauses**. (A dependent clause lacks one of the elements that would make it a complete sentence).
* A complex sentence always has a **subordinating conjunction** such as *because, since, after, although,* or *when* or a relative pronoun such as *that, who,* or *which*.

Writer’s Note: Complex sentences are often more effective than compound sentences because a complex sentence indicates clearer and more specific relationships between the main parts of the sentence.

* When the dependent clause comes first, a comma should be used to separate the two clauses.



* When the independent clause comes first, a comma should **not** be used to separate the two clauses.

Examples of complex sentences:

Because the dog howled so loudly, the student couldn't eat his hamburger.

The dog howled although he was well fed