

## WEEK 1

Lesson: *Sentence Savvy*

## 1.1 Introduction

A clear understanding of sentence structure is the first step in writing effective paragraphs and essays. Most students are familiar with the common sentence types: declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory. However, in order to develop the ability to write in an interesting manner, four basic sentence structures must be mastered. Good writers emphasize important points, heighten readers' interest, and enhance readability by the way they vary sentence structure. This unit is a review of the four basic sentence structures: simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex.

## 1.2 Simple Sentence

The first and easiest sentence structure is the **simple sentence** which is composed of a single **independent clause**. A **clause** is a cluster of words that contains a **subject** and a **predicate**. It can function as a single part of speech within a sentence, or as a sentence by itself. A clause is said to be "independent" when it can stand alone as a complete sentence.

*Mary had a little lamb.*

Even if the above sentence had multiple subjects or multiple verbs, it would still be a simple sentence:

Multiple Subjects: *Mary, John, Joe, Bill, Betty, and Lois had a little lamb.*

Multiple Verbs: *Mary herded, fed, watered, and sheared her little lamb.*

Furthermore, if a sentence had multiple subjects and multiple verbs, it would still be a simple sentence:

*Mary, John, Joe, Bill, Betty, and Lois herded, fed, watered, and sheared their little lamb.*

## 1.3 Compound Sentence

A sentence changes from a simple sentence to a **compound sentence** when two equivalent and related independent clauses (simple sentences) are connected by a coordinating conjunction, a semi-colon, or a semi-colon plus conjunctive adverb. **Coordinating conjunctions** (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) and semi-colons make simple connections:

Coordinating Conjunction: *Jack and Jill went up the hill, but Jack tumbled down.*

Semi-Colon: *Jack and Jill went up the hill; Jack tumbled down.*

**Simple sentences are composed of a single independent clause.**

**A clause is a cluster of words with a subject and predicate that can function independently or as a single part of speech.**

**Verb: Shows action or state of being.**

**Predicate: Includes the verb and other words used to explain action or condition.**

*The wavy-underline indicates an independent clause.*

**Compound sentences contain two related independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction, semi-colon, or semi-colon plus conjunctive adverb.**

**Conjunctive adverbs**, on the other hand, both connect the independent clauses and show how they relate to one another. To be used properly, a semi-colon must follow the first clause, and the conjunctive adverb is set off by a comma:

Conjunctive Adverb: Jack and Jill went up the hill; then, Jack tumbled down.

Each underlined part in the above sentences is an independent clause which can stand alone without the other. Notice that there is a subject and verb on both side of the “connector”. If there were not a subject *and* verb both before and after the “connector”, the sentence would be simple, having only one independent clause:

Jack and Jill went up the hill, but tumbled down.

Additionally, a compound sentence may contain numerous subjects and verbs in each independent clause:

The driver and passenger were both injured in the crash, but the shopkeeper, pedestrian, and onlookers all escaped injury.

#### 1A - Common Conjunctive Adverbs \*

accordingly	in addition	nevertheless	thereafter
consequently	likewise	otherwise	therefore
furthermore	meanwhile	still	thus
however	moreover	then	

\* See Appendix A (page 199) for a more extensive list.

**Complex sentences have one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses.**

### 1.4 Complex Sentence

The next level of sentence structure is the **complex sentence**. This is a sentence comprised of one independent clause and one or more **dependent (subordinate) clauses**. The dependent clause is generally created by the use of a **subordinating conjunction**, which connects two unequal ideas. That is, one of the ideas is made *dependent* on the other.

The students did not complete the assigned task since they were out of time.

or,

Since the students were out of time, they did not complete the assigned task.

In the above examples, “since” serves to subordinate the idea of the students’ lack of time to the main idea that the task was not completed. The main idea is made most important and the subordinate clause offers supporting information.

Dotted underline indicates a dependent clause.

Even if additional subordinate (dependent) clauses are added, the sentence remains a **complex sentence**.

*After the ski trip was over, the students did not complete the assigned task since they had run out of time.*

### 1B - Common Subordinating Conjunctions

after	as soon as	so that	where
although	because	than	which
as	before	that	while
as if	if	when	

\* See Appendix A (page 199) for a more extensive list.

## 1.5 Compound-complex Sentence

The fourth sentence structure, **compound-complex**, is made up of a compound sentence with one or more subordinate clauses. Remember that a compound sentence contains at least two independent clauses.

*While the monkey raced around the enclosure, the zoo onlookers clapped their hands, and one little child let out a delighted squeal.*

*As the bull raged, the matadors raced in every direction seeking to escape, but a small child, oblivious to the danger, wandered into the ring while the crowd watched in horror.*

**Compound-complex sentences are made of two independent clauses with one or more dependent clauses.**

## 1.6 Mastering Variety

Mastery of diverse sentence patterns combined with a well-developed vocabulary equips a writer to state his exact point in an interesting and stylish manner. For instance, if a pupil wanted to communicate in some way that learning to write can be challenging and rewarding, the four different sentence patterns can accomplish this in differing degrees.

### 1C - The Four Basic Sentence Structures

1. Simple:	<i>The pursuit of writing well is very challenging and rewarding.</i>
2. Compound:	<i>Writing well is challenging, but its pursuit produces the benefits of strong communication skills.</i>
3. Complex:	<i>Although writing well is challenging, those who diligently pursue it reap the benefits of strong communication skills.</i>
4. Compound-complex:	<i>Writing well is challenging; however, those who diligently pursue it will reap the benefits of strong communication skills, as it is also rewarding.</i>

**1D - Above sentences divided into clauses**

	<b>Independent</b>	<b>Dependent</b>
1.	<i>The pursuit of writing well is very challenging and rewarding.</i>	
2.	<i>Writing well is challenging, but its pursuit produces the benefits of strong communication skills.</i>	
3.	<i>those reap the benefits of strong communication skills.</i>	Although writing well is challenging, <i>who diligently pursue it</i>
4.	<i>Writing well is challenging; however, those will reap the benefits of strong communication skills,</i>	<b>who diligently pursue it</b> as it is also rewarding.

NOTE: If you cannot clearly identify all subjects and verbs in the above clauses, review these basics in a grammar course.

Regardless of the composition topic, great variety can be accomplished by using these patterns. Remember that complex sentences can have one or more dependent clauses, and compound-complex sentences must contain at least two independent clauses combined with any number of dependent clauses as long as the ideas remain clearly stated. With practice, any sentence structure can be expanded significantly beyond the samples presented above.

**1.7 Emphatic Locations**

**Emphatic location** refers to the placement of ideas in a sentence in order to increase or decrease their impact on the reader. The two primary points of emphasis are the beginning of the sentence and the end of the sentence. The end position is the strongest emphatic location because ideas here are the last in the reader's mind. Understanding how to change sentence structure allows a writer to shift ideas to different locations in the sentence depending on what he wants to emphasize. In the following example, notice how the emphasis changes as the ideas are moved to various locations:

*Nothing but the outer shell of the car was left after the fire was doused.*

*Nothing but the outer shell of the car was left, after the firemen doused the fire.*

*After the fire was doused, nothing but the outer shell of the car was left.*

*After the fire was doused, nothing of the car was left but the outer shell.*

Which sentence above has the strongest impact? Which sentence is weakest?

**Emphatic Locations:**

1. **End of sentence**
2. **First of sentence**

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**Daily Assignments**

(Write answers to all Daily Assignments on a separate sheet of paper.)

————— **Day 1** —————

**A. Reading Assignment:**

*Carefully read the Week 1 Lesson, Section 1.1 and 1.2. Be certain that you understand the concept of the simple sentence.*

**B. Grammar Drill:**

*Write the following state of being verbs and helping verbs on an index card to use for daily drill. Drill will require either written or oral rehearsal of these items every day to help you, in coming lessons, identify passive voice sentences and avoid over use of these verbs. Begin memorizing the list.*

State of being verbs: am, are, was, were, be, been, being, is

Helping (Auxiliary) verbs: have, has, had, do, does, did, can, could, shall, should, will, would, may, might, must

**C. Lesson Exercise:**

*Copy the following simple sentences onto a separate sheet of paper. Then draw one line under the subject(s) and two lines under the verb(s) in each sentence:*

1. The majestic Columbia River courses through an expansive gorge.
2. White foaming water rushes over Multnomah Falls and Horsetail Falls and cascades to the valley below.
3. Prevailing east winds stream through the Columbia Gorge, making it a world famous destination for windsurfers.

————— **Day 2** —————

**A. Reading Assignment:**

*Carefully read the Week 1 Lesson, Section 1.3. Be certain that you understand the difference between simple and compound sentences.*

**B. Grammar Drill:**

*Drill the state of being verbs.*

**C. Lesson Exercise:**

*Again, copy these sentences onto a separate sheet of paper. Underline subjects once and*

verbs twice. Place brackets [ ] around each clause and circle any coordinating conjunctions. Then indicate whether each sentence is simple or compound.

1. A trek to the top of Multnomah Falls culminates with a stunning view of the Columbia Gorge.
2. The trail up the face of the cliff can be slippery, and one must watch out for falling rocks.
3. The tour group hoped to see Mount Saint Helens, but clouds obscured the view.
4. Jeff and Jason willingly hosted the out of town visitors and offered their rooms to the welcome guests.

### ————— Day 3 —————

**A. Reading Assignment:**

*Carefully read Week 1 Lesson, Section 1.4. Be certain that you understand the distinction between a compound and a complex sentence.*

**B. Grammar Drill:**

*Drill the state of being verbs.*

**C. Lesson Exercise:**

*Again, copy these sentences onto a separate sheet of paper. Underline subjects once and verbs twice. Place brackets [ ] around each clause and circle any coordinating conjunctions. Then indicate whether the following sentences are simple, compound, or complex.*

1. The soggy camping trip, which had begun in the Redwoods, ended at Newport, Oregon.
2. In order to keep the tent from leaking, the family spread tarps over the makeshift structure.
3. Although this precaution was taken, the next morning the family awoke to their tent standing in six inches of water.
4. Mother and Father put the young children in the car, and the parents began to fill the car-top carrier with camping gear.
5. The inclement weather had finally won.
6. After days of camping in the rain and visiting numerous laundromats, the defeated campers headed home.

### ————— Day 4 —————

**A. Reading Assignment:**

*Carefully read the Week 1 Lesson, Section 1.5. Take notice of the difference between compound and compound-complex sentences.*

**B. Grammar Drill:**

*Drill the state of being verbs.*

**C. Lesson Exercise:**

*Again, copy the following sentences onto a separate sheet of paper. Underline subjects once and verbs twice. Place brackets [ ] around each clause and circle any coordinating conjunctions. Then indicate whether the sentences are simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex.*

1. When the front door swung open, the dog ran for freedom.
2. Before anyone got a look as to the dog's direction, he sneaked into the back yard, and he dodged into the underbrush, chasing a startled black cat.
3. Yes, the black cat was his most hated enemy.
4. Everyone knew that the dog would lose in a fight with his charcoal-colored enemy, so they installed a long chain for restraining the foolish canine.
5. To taunt the dog, the frisky feline stayed just out of the animal's reach.
6. To this day, the dim-witted dog chases the cat to the end of the restraining chain even though he flies through the air like a rocket when he hits the end of the tether.

**D. Writing Exercise:**

Write four sentences that demonstrate each of the basic sentence structures (one simple, one compound, one complex, one compound-complex), using the same general topic in each sentence. Mark all subjects and verbs so that you can clearly see the clauses.

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**Day 5**

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**A. Reading Assignment:**

*Finish the Week 1 Lesson by reading the section 1.6 Mastering Variety and 1.7 Emphatic Location.*

**B. Grammar Drill:**

*Drill the state of being verbs.*

**C. Lesson Exercise:**

*On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions using complete sentences.*

1. Based on the information in this lesson, which location in the sentence gives an idea the strongest emphasis?
2. What is the second strongest point of emphasis in a sentence?
3. Why would a knowledgeable writer shift an idea to the end of a sentence?

**D. Writing Exercise:**

1. Write a sentence which has the word "accident" in the greatest point of emphasis.
2. Rewrite the above sentence with the word "accident" moved to the second most emphatic location. Underline the most emphasized word or phrase in this new sentence.
3. Write four sentences that demonstrate each of the basic sentence structures, using the same general topic in each sentence. Mark all subjects and verbs so that you can clearly see the clauses.