Sentence Types

Sentences are made up of **clauses**. A **clause** is any group of words that contains at least one subject and at least one verb.

An **independent clause** can stand alone as a sentence; it represents one complete thought.

Example: *Aunt Mary and Uncle Joseph live across the street from my grandmother.*

(Subjects) (Verb)

A **dependent clause** cannot stand alone as a sentence.

Example: *Although her mother bought her a teddy bear*

(Subject) (Verb)

The four sentence types are defined by the types of clauses they contain:

**A simple sentence** contains one independent clause.

Example: *The baseball landed on the roof.*

**A compound sentence** contains two or more independent clauses.

Example: *Fiona contributed a pie to the potluck, and Jamal brought a tuna casserole.*

Independent Clause: Fiona contributed a pie to the potluck.

Independent Clause: Jamal brought a tuna casserole.

**A complex sentence** contains one independent clause and at least one dependent clause.

Example: *When Mike Brady married Carol, their families joined together.*

Dependent Clause: When Mike Brady married Carol

Independent Clause: their families joined together.

**A compound-complex sentence** contains at least two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause.

Example: *Luis grew up in Utah, but because he hates snow, he moved to Florida.*

Independent Clause: Luis grew up in Utah

Dependent Clause: because he hates snow

Independent Clause: he moved to Florida
Ten Ways to Create Sentence Variety

- Mix long and short sentences
- Include a rhetorical question
- Begin with an adverb:
  
  *Unfortunately*, the outfielder dropped the fly ball.
- Begin with a prepositional phrase:
  
  *With great style*, the pitcher delivered a curve.
- Join ideas with a compound predicate:
  
  The fans *roared and banged* in their seats.
- Mix coordination and subordination:
  
  **Coordination**: The fans hissed, *but* the umpire paid no attention.
  The fans hissed; the umpire paid no attention.
  The fans hissed; *however*, the umpire paid no attention.
  **Subordination**: The umpire paid no attention *although* the fans hissed.
  *Although* the fans hissed, the umpire paid no attention.
- Join ideas with an “ing” modifier:
  
  *Diving* head first onto the grass, Cody caught the ball.
- Join ideas with a past participial modifier:
  
  *Frustrated by the call*, the batter kicked dirt onto home plate.
- Join ideas with an appositive:
  
  Beer, *the cause of much rowdiness*, should not be sold at games.
- Join ideas with a relative clause:
  
  Box seats, *which are hard to get for important games*, are often bought by big corporations.