

## APSU Writing Center

### Understanding Sentence Structure

#### Clauses and Sentence Types

- **Independent Clause**
  - An independent clause can stand alone as a sentence. It contains a subject, a verb, and expresses a complete thought.
    - **Example:** The researcher conducted an experiment.
    - **Example:** She submitted her final draft.
- **Dependent Clause**
  - A dependent clause is not a complete sentence and must be attached to an independent clause. It often begins with a subordinating conjunction (although, because, when, etc.).
    - **Example:** Although the researcher conducted an experiment, ...
    - **Example:** Because she submitted her final draft, ...

#### Sentence Components

- **Subject** (**Bold** in examples)
  - A subject is a person, place, thing, or concept that performs the action in a sentence. Identify the subject by asking, "Who or what?"
    - **Example:** **The professor** graded *the essays*.
    - **Example:** **My classmate** shared *her notes*.
- **Verb** (Underlined in examples)
  - A verb expresses action or a state of being. Identify the verb by asking, "What happened?"
    - **Example:** **The professor** graded *the essays*.
    - **Example:** **The discussion** was *insightful*. ("was" functions as a linking verb.)
- **Object** (*Italicized* in examples)
  - An object receives the action in a sentence. Identify the object by asking, "The subject did what?" or "To whom?/For whom?"
    - **Example:** **The student** wrote *a research paper*.
    - **Example:** **The editor** revised *the manuscript*.
- **Prepositional Phrase**
  - A phrase that begins with a preposition (in, at, for, behind, until, after, etc.) and modifies a word in the sentence.
    - **Example:** **The student** wrote *a research paper* **for the journal submission**.
    - **Example:** **The editor** revised *the manuscript* **before publication**.

#### Sentence Structure

- A sentence....
  - begins with a capital letter.
  - ends with punctuation (period, question mark, or exclamation point).
  - contains a subject that is only given once.
  - contains a verb or verb phrase.
  - follows Subject + Verb + Object order.
  - must express a complete thought (independent clause).
    - **Example:** **The group** finalized *their presentation*.

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### Sentence Types

#### Sentence Types

- **Simple Sentence**

- A simple sentence contains one independent clause.

- **Example:** She reviewed *her notes*.
- **Example:** He drafted *a proposal*.
- **Example:** They discussed *the hypothesis*.

- **Compound Sentence**

- A compound sentence contains at least two independent clauses, joined by a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) or a semicolon.

- **Example:** The **professor** gave *an assignment*, and the **students** completed *it*.
- **Example:** The **editor** revised *the article*, but the **author** *requested additional changes*.

- **Complex Sentence**

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

- **Example:** Although the **student** studied *extensively*, **he** was still nervous *for the exam*.
- **Example:** They cited *multiple sources* as **they** wanted *to strengthen their argument*.

- **Compound-Complex Sentence**

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

- **Example:** Although **he** submitted *his essay*, **he** forgot *his citation*, so **he** had to revise *it*.
- **Example:** They (subject) discussed *the results*, and **they** decided *to include additional references* because **they** wanted *to support their claims*.



## **APSU Writing Center**

### **References**

University of Nevada, Reno Writing & Speaking Center. (2023). *Sentence types*. University of Nevada, Reno. <https://www.unr.edu/writing-speaking-center/writing-speaking-resources/sentence-types>

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