



Compound and Complex Sentences

An **independent** clause expresses a complete thought and contains a subject and a verb.

A **dependent** clause, while it contains a subject and a verb, does not express a complete thought. It is “dependent” on the stronger, independent clause to complete its meaning and does not stand alone. Words that make a clause **dependent** include: whose, while, who, whoever, whenever, what, where, whom, when, whether, after, although, as, since, so, than, that, though, because, before, and if. When a sentence begins with a **dependent** clause, a comma separates the **dependent** clause from the **independent** clause.

A **compound** sentence is composed of two or more independent clauses. The clauses may be joined by a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so), a semicolon, or a conjunctive adverb (also, however, likewise, therefore, then, certainly).

Ex: *Bob was studying late last night, and he is tired today.*

Bob was studying late last night; he is tired today.

Bob was studying late last night; therefore, he is tired today.

A **complex** sentence is composed of one **independent** clause and one or more **dependent** clause(s).

Ex: *If this is a dependent clause, it must be connected to an independent clause.*

When a sentence starts like this, place a comma between the clauses.

With some practice, one can recognize dependent clauses by their first word.

A **compound** and a **complex** sentence can be combined to make a **compound-complex** sentence. It contains two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses.

Ex: *Because Tom is a picky eater, he does not eat cafeteria food, and he often feels hungry as a result.*

When Sheila visits her grandmother, she watches a lot of movies, and she always stays up late.