

Simple, Compound and Complex Sentences: Rules Chart

A clause has a subject (a noun or pronoun) and a verb. **Independent clause**: makes sense on its own. **Dependent clause**: cannot stand alone. **Coordinating conjunction**: a FANBOYS word that joins two independent clauses.

Type	Formula	Example
Simple	1 independent clause	The train left.
Compound	2+ independent clauses + a conjunction	The train left, but we missed it.
Complex	1 independent + 1 dependent clause	We missed the train because we were late.
Compound-complex	2+ independent + 1 dependent clause	Because we were late, we missed the train, so we took a taxi.

FANBOYS: the seven coordinating conjunctions

for reason | and adds | nor another no | but surprise | or choice | yet surprise | so result

Subordinating conjunctions and relative pronouns

because, although, even though, when, while, if, unless, until, before, after, since, as, so that, where, who, which, that, whose

Three tests

- 1. Subject and verb.** Find each verb and ask who or what does it. Each subject and verb pair is one clause.
- 2. Stand Alone.** Cover the rest. Can this clause be a sentence by itself? Yes = independent. No = dependent.
- 3. Count the clauses.** 1 independent = simple. 2+ independent = compound. 1 independent + 1 dependent = complex. 2+ independent + 1 dependent = compound-complex.

Comma rules and traps

- Two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction: put a comma before the conjunction. I was tired, so I went to bed.
- Dependent clause first: comma before the independent clause. When the bell rang, we ran out.
- A comma alone cannot join two independent clauses. The phone rang, nobody answered. is a comma splice.
- Two names or two verbs joined by and are still ONE clause: Ali and Sara sang and danced. is simple.
- A long sentence is not always complex. Count clauses, not words.
- However, therefore and then are not FANBOYS. Use a semicolon: It was late; however, we kept going.

Practise with free games: [Sentence Types Quiz, 8 levels](#) | [Make Sentences Against the Clock](#) | [Make Each Sentence Type](#) | [Collect Nouns and Verbs, Build Sentences](#)

Simple, Compound and Complex Sentences Worksheet

Name: _____ Class: _____ Score: _____ / 64

A. Subject and Verb

Underline the subject (the noun or pronoun) once and the verb twice.

1. The baby laughed.
2. Birds fly south in winter.
3. My little brother is reading a comic.
4. Every morning, Grandfather waters the plants.
5. The children in the back row cheered.
6. Under the bridge sat a tired old goat.
7. Have you finished your homework?
8. Zara and her cousin built a sandcastle.

B. Sentence or Fragment

Write sentence if it is a full sentence, or fragment if it is not.

1. The bus left early. _____
2. When the bus left. _____
3. Running down the hill. _____
4. Stop! _____
5. Because I was hungry. _____
6. The tall man with the blue umbrella. _____
7. She smiled. _____
8. Although the shop was closed, we waited outside. _____

C. Independent or Dependent Clause

Write independent if the clause can stand alone, or dependent if it cannot.

1. the rain stopped _____
2. after the rain stopped _____
3. if you call me _____
4. I will answer _____
5. that we found in the garden _____
6. the old clock ticked _____
7. until the sun came up _____
8. we played cricket _____

D. Simple Sentence or Not

Write simple (one independent clause) or not simple (two or more clauses).

1. The cat slept on the warm mat. _____
2. Ali and Bilal played football in the park. _____
3. The dog barked, and the cat ran away. _____
4. My sister sang and danced at the school show. _____
5. I stayed at home because I had a fever. _____
6. Early on a cold, windy morning in December, the old farmer slowly walked to the barn with his two dogs. _____
7. It rained. _____
8. We waited, but nobody came. _____

E. Coordinating Conjunctions

Choose the coordinating conjunction from the brackets that fits the gap.

1. I was thirsty, _____ I drank some water. (so / but / or)
2. The test was hard, _____ I passed it. (but / so / or)
3. You can walk to school, _____ you can take the bus. (so / nor / or)
4. Mina likes apples, _____ she also likes mangoes. (and / so / or)
5. He did not eat the cake, _____ did he drink the juice. (so / and / nor)
6. The road was icy, _____ the driver went slowly. (so / nor / or)
7. The team trained hard every day, _____ they still lost the final. (or / yet / so)
8. We went inside, _____ it had started to rain. (for / or / but)

F. Subordinating Conjunctions

Questions 1 to 6: choose the subordinating conjunction. Questions 7 and 8: underline the dependent clause.

1. We stayed inside _____ it was raining. (although / unless / because)
2. _____ she was tired, she finished her homework. (Unless / Although / Because)
3. You will miss the bus _____ you hurry. (since / because / unless)
4. Wash your hands _____ you eat. (although / unless / before)
5. Wait here _____ I come back. (although / because / until)
6. _____ the bell rang, the children ran outside. (Unless / When / Although)
7. The boy who won the race is my cousin.
8. If it is sunny tomorrow, we will go to the beach.

G. Build Compound and Complex Sentences

Use some of the pieces to write the sentence asked for. You do not have to use every piece.

1. Write a **compound** sentence. Pieces: the sun was hot | so | because | we swam in the river

2. Write a **complex** sentence. Pieces: we stayed at home | the roads were flooded | because | but

3. Write a **complex** sentence that starts with the dependent clause. Pieces: you finish your work | you can play | when | and

4. Write a **compound** sentence. Pieces: I wanted to go to the fair | but | if | I had no money

5. Write a **complex** sentence. Pieces: the girl | who sits next to me | plays the piano | and

6. Write a **compound** sentence. Pieces: you can wear the blue shirt | or | although | you can wear the green one

7. Write a **complex** sentence. Pieces: the shop was small | it sold everything | although | so

8. Write a **compound** sentence. Pieces: the phone rang | but | nobody answered it

H. Types of Sentences

Write simple, compound, complex or compound-complex.

1. The kite flew high above the trees. _____

2. The kite flew high, but the string broke. _____

3. When the wind dropped, the kite fell. _____

4. When the wind dropped, the kite fell, and my brother ran to catch it. _____

5. My aunt, who is a doctor, works at night. _____

6. Tariq and Hina washed and dried the dishes. _____

7. The lights went out, so we lit a candle. _____

8. We cheered because our team scored, but the referee blew the whistle. _____

Answer Key

One mark for each answer. 64 marks in total. In section G other correct sentences are fine if they are the right type. Need more practice? [Play the free sentence games](#) or read the [lesson with examples](#).

Section A

1. subject: The baby; verb: laughed
2. subject: Birds; verb: fly
3. subject: My little brother; verb: is reading
4. subject: Grandfather; verb: waters
5. subject: The children; verb: cheered
6. subject: a tired old goat; verb: sat
7. subject: you; verb: Have finished
8. subject: Zara and her cousin; verb: built

Section B

1. sentence
2. fragment
3. fragment
4. sentence
5. fragment
6. fragment
7. sentence
8. sentence

Section C

1. independent
2. dependent
3. dependent
4. independent
5. dependent
6. independent
7. dependent
8. independent

Section D

1. simple
2. simple
3. not simple
4. simple
5. not simple
6. simple
7. simple
8. not simple

Section E

1. so
2. but
3. or
4. and
5. nor
6. so
7. yet
8. for

Section F

1. because
2. Although
3. unless
4. before
5. until
6. When
7. who won the race
8. If it is sunny tomorrow

Section G

1. The sun was hot, so we swam in the river.
2. We stayed at home because the roads were flooded.
3. When you finish your work, you can play.
4. I wanted to go to the fair, but I had no money.
5. The girl who sits next to me plays the piano.
6. You can wear the blue shirt, or you can wear the green one.
7. Although the shop was small, it sold everything.
8. The phone rang, but nobody answered it.

Section H

1. simple
2. compound
3. complex
4. compound-complex
5. complex
6. simple
7. compound
8. compound-complex