

SENTENCE PATTERNS

Standard English sentences fall into the following four patterns, according to structure: *simple, complex, compound, compound-complex*. The category in which the sentence is classified is determined by the arrangement of clauses in the sentence. A clause is a group of words in which is a subject and a verb. There are two types of clauses: *independent* and *dependent*. An *independent clause* has a subject and verb AND expresses a complete thought. A *dependent clause* has a subject and a verb but does NOT express a complete thought, and it “depends” on an independent clause to exist. (The dependent clause is like a parasite.) The following is a simple chart to classify the four sentence patterns according to clauses:

<u>Pattern</u>	<u>Independent Clause</u>	<u>Dependent Clause</u>
<i>Simple</i>	1	0
<i>Compound</i>	2 or more	0
<i>Complex</i>	1	1 or more
<i>Compound-Complex</i>	2 or more	1 or more

Examples:

Simple: Because of the rain, we ran with all our strength to the shed. (*Note that this is a complete thought, and there is one set of subject-verb: we-subject, ran-verb.*)

Compound: I knew the answer to the question, and I raised my hand. (*Note that you have what looks like two short sentences put together by “and,” but there are still no dependent clauses. Compound sentences might have the independent clauses connected by these conjunctions: and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet. You might have the two independent clause connected by just a semicolon, instead of a conjunction.*)

Complex: Because we needed to practice, we met at Joe’s at 4 p.m. (*Note that you have one independent clause: we met at Joe’s at 4 p.m. You also have one dependent clause: Because we needed to practice.*)

Compound-Complex: We hoped that he would have our paperwork for us, so we hurried to his office. (*Note that you have two independent clauses: We hoped and we hurried to his office. You also have one dependent clause: that he would have our paperwork for us.*)

Notes: Remember that you must have a subject and a verb for a group of words to be a clause. For example, if you have three sets of subject-verb, then you should have three clauses.

For the following sentences, count up the independent clauses and dependent clauses. Then, after the sentence, classify it as S (for simple), CD (for compound), CX (for complex), or CD-CX (for compound-complex). Feel free to mark subjects and verbs to help figure it out.

1. The car hit the tree, but there was no damage. _____
2. When you get to the store, you will be given a free gift. _____
3. Because of the length of the movie, we arrived home late. _____
4. The man who left a message for you yesterday called back today, but he did not leave a message this time. _____
5. You will find the envelope under the paperweight on the right-hand corner of my desk.

6. Give the ticket to Mr. Marshall by tomorrow, or you will not be allowed to attend the dance. _____
7. He and I tried our very best in the tournament, but we knew that we were outclassed.

8. He was confident during the test, for he had studied for it thoroughly. _____
9. Stop when I ring the bell. _____
10. She heard a noise; she tip-toed up the stairs. _____