

Simple Sentences and Compound Sentences

Simple Sentences

7a. A **simple sentence** contains one independent clause and no subordinate clauses.

An independent clause has a subject and a verb. An independent clause expresses a complete thought and can stand alone as a sentence.

S V

EXAMPLES That **sweater has been** his trademark. [The entire sentence is an independent clause. *Sweater* is the subject, and *has been* is the verb, and the word group expresses a complete thought.]

V S

Is that film a classic? [The entire sentence is an independent clause. *Film* is the subject, and *Is* is the verb, and the word group expresses a complete thought.]

EXERCISE A Draw one line under the subject and two lines under the verb in each of the following simple sentences. Remember to include helping verbs such as *has*, *have*, and *can* when underlining verbs.

Example 1. Will you answer the phone, please? [The subject is *you*, and the verb is *Will answer*.]

1. Tiny, colorful stalls lined the street. [Which word is the subject? Which word is the verb?]
2. Hadn't he ever been to a play before?
3. The sound system was not working.
4. The CDs in that music store were all on sale.
5. Could you pour me a glass of water?

A simple sentence may have a compound subject, a compound verb, or both.

S S V

EXAMPLES **Desks and chairs were stacked** in the hallway. [*Desks and chairs* make up the compound subject in this sentence.]

S V V V

They cleaned the walls but **haven't painted** them yet. [*Cleaned* and *have painted* make up the compound verb in this sentence.]

S S V V V

He and I had not seen or heard of it. [*He and I* make up the compound subject. *Had seen* and *heard* make up the compound verb.]

EXERCISE B Draw one line under the subject and two lines under the verb in each of the following sentences. Hint: Some sentences have a compound subject, a compound verb, or both.

Example 1. A few stones and mortar had become a magnificent fireplace. [*Stones and mortar* make up the compound subject. *Had become* is the verb.]

6. Jane took the sheet of paper and wrote her address on it. [Which word or words make up the subject? Which word or words make up the verb?]
7. Suddenly, the horse saw the visitors and galloped away.
8. Red and yellow catch the eye and would be great colors for the cover of our yearbook.
9. Would San Francisco or Los Angeles be the better site for a convention?
10. The spectators cheered and waved at the team.

Compound Sentences

7b. A **compound sentence** contains two or more independent clauses and no subordinate clauses.

The independent clauses of a compound sentence are usually joined together by a comma and a connecting word (*and, but, or, nor, for, so, or yet*). The independent clauses of a compound sentence may be connected by a semicolon (;). When a semicolon joins together two independent clauses, no connecting word is needed.

S V S V

EXAMPLES Lou plays the guitar, **and** Mary plays the drums. [This compound sentence contains two independent clauses. The two clauses are joined by a comma and the coordinating conjunction *and*.]

S V S V

Lou plays the guitar; Mary plays the drums. [This compound sentence contains two independent clauses. The two clauses are joined by a semicolon.]

EXERCISE C Identify each of the following word groups as a simple sentence or a compound sentence. Write *S* for *simple sentence* and *C* for *compound sentence* on the line provided. Hint: Look out for simple sentences with compound subjects or verbs.

Example S 1. The guests were not there yet but would arrive soon. [This word group contains one independent clause. The subject is *guests*, and the compound verb is *were* and *would arrive*. Therefore, the word group is a simple sentence.]

11. "Sharon's Party" is the title of my story. [How many independent clauses are there in this sentence?]
12. The puzzle seemed easy; however, it was tricky.
13. Matthew, please get me a disk; this one is full.
14. We entered the word *Africa* into the search engine and waited for the results.
15. Either Rolando and I will give a speech, or we will hand in a ten-page paper.

