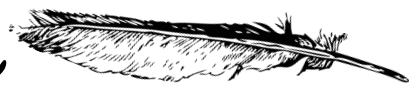


# Understanding Sentence Structure



Before you can learn to write fluent sentences, you first need to understand syntax.

## What is a Sentence?

A sentence is a group of words, which expresses a statement, question, command, or wish. Sentences contain a **subject** and **main verb**. In written English, the first word of a sentence is capitalized and the sentence ends with a period, question mark, or exclamation point.

For example:

James ate. ✓ This is a complete sentence: it contains a subject and verb.

James ate a giant peach.

subject

verb

Note

Ate a giant peach. ✗ Not a complete sentence: there is no subject.

James and a giant peach. ✗ Not a complete sentence: there is no verb.

## SUBJECT

All sentences are about something or someone; the something or someone that the sentence is about is called the **subject** of the sentence.

examples

Bethany went to the grocery shop.  
The boy on the swings is my son.  
He will never be allowed back.  
This document is very complicated.

- » A subject can be a noun, pronoun or noun phrase.
- » You can also have a compound subject.  
For example: Tom and Jim went shopping.

## PREDICATE

The predicate is the rest of the sentence, after the subject. It can include the main verb, subject complement, direct object, indirect object, and object complement.

examples

Bethany went to the grocery shop.  
The boy on the swings is my son.  
He will never be allowed back.  
This document is very complicated.

- » You can also have a split predicate.  
For example: Yesterday morning Harry ate hotdogs.

## OBJECT

The object is the entity that is acted upon by the subject; this can either be a direct or indirect object.

DIRECT

The direct object is who/what is being acted upon.  
The man handed the cat the ball.  
(The ball is the thing being handed.)

INDIRECT

The indirect object is to/for whom/what the action is enacted  
The man handed the cat the ball.  
(The cat is receiving the action.)

## PHRASE

When you have a group of words together without a subject paired with a finite verb, you have a phrase.

examples

She was lost in the depths of the forest.  
Basket under her arm, she left the house.  
It was a story as old as time.

- » There are many types of phrases: noun phrases, adverb phrases, adjective phrases, preposition phrases etc.

## CLAUSES

A clause is a group of words, which contain a subject and a predicate; a clause can be either dependent/subordinate or independent.

### INDEPENDENT

An independent clause expresses a complete thought and can stand alone.  
I like watching movies.

### DEPENDENT/SUBORDINATE

A dependent/subordinate clause expresses an incomplete thought and cannot stand alone.  
When I am sick, I like watching movies.

Elements of a sentence / Key Terms



# Different Types of Sentences

If you want to improve your sentence fluency, you first need to know and understand the different types of sentences, so that you can best utilize them in your writing.

## STRUCTURE

Every sentence can be classified as one of these **AND** as one of these.

## PURPOSE

### Simple

A simple sentence, (also called an *independent clause*), contains a subject and a verb, and it expresses a complete thought.

Example: **Fish swim in the sea.**

subject      verb

#### WRITING TIP

A short, simple sentence can be used to grab your reader's attention.

### Compound

A compound sentence contains two or more independent clauses, which are normally joined with a conjunction (such as *and* or *but*).

Example: **I like pasta but Jo likes pizza.**

See how the two clauses are simple sentences themselves?

#### WRITING TIP

A compound sentence can be used to emphasize balance and parallelism in your writing.

### Complex

A complex sentence contains an independent clause joined by one or more dependent (*subordinate*) clauses, which can't stand alone.

Example: **After he ran, he had a shower.**

This subordinate clause cannot stand alone.      Main clause

#### WRITING TIP

Complex sentences show how information depends on other information; they also add variation.

### Compound-Complex

A compound-complex sentence is made from two or more independent clauses, joined with one or more dependent clauses.

Example: **Although I love running, it is not good for my knees, and I really should stop.**

See how this is a combination of a complex sentence & a compound one?

#### WRITING TIP

A compound-complex sentence (when used correctly) can add a fluency & rhythm to your writing & prevent it from sounding stilted.

### Declarative

A declarative sentence presents information or an opinion in the form of a statement.

Example: **I want to be a fireman.**

Do you see how this sentence is a declarative statement?

#### WRITING TIP

Declarative sentences are the most common in writing and can be used to simply convey information.

### Interrogative

An interrogative sentence asks a question.

Example: **When did you start learning Spanish?**

An interrogative sentence ends with a question mark.

#### WRITING TIP

When writing, an interrogative sentence will force your reader to think about what you are writing.

### Exclamatory

An exclamatory sentence expresses strong emotion; it makes a statement more forcefully than a declarative sentence.

Example: **You scared me!**

An exclamatory sentence ends with an exclamation mark.

#### WRITING TIP

An exclamatory sentence can jolt the reader and help convey emotion. However, they should be used sparingly.

### Imperative

An imperative sentence gives a command or makes a request.

Example: **Please sit down now.**

An imperative sentence can either end with a period or an exclamation mark.

#### WRITING TIP

An imperative sentence can encourage your reader to act right away.



## From Red Ink to Revelation - Notes and Exercises

<b>SENTENCE</b>			
A complete thought Expresses a statement, question, command, or request			
<b>MAIN CLAUSE</b>		<b>SUPPORTING PHRASES AND CLAUSES</b>	
Show <b>support</b> , <b>illustration</b> , or <b>qualification</b> of the MAIN CLAUSE or other supporting phrases/clauses			
Subject Noun	Verb	Conjunction	Coordinating - FANBOYS Subordinating - AAAWWUBBIS
Who/What the sentence is ABOUT  Singular or Plural  Person, Place, Thing, Idea  <i>Paul, saints, Rome, altar, love</i>  Can be implied if there is a command (" <b>You</b> ")	The action or state of being completed by the Subject Noun  <i>Abide, anoint, baptize, transform, reconcile, sanctify</i>  <i>is, am, are, was, were</i>	<b>Participial</b>	- <i>ing</i> words
		<b>Infinitive</b>	"To" and a verb
		<b>Prepositional</b>	at, by, for, from, in, of, on, to, and with followed by a noun
		<b>Relative</b>	Who, whom, which, that

### 🕶️ GRAMMAR POLICE - WATCH LIST 🕶️

FANBOYS	AAAWWUBBIS	-ing and -ed descriptive words	"to" + verb	Prepositions	Relatives
For And Nor But Or Yet So	After Although As When While Until Before Because If Since  *many more*	bearing increasing remembering abounding  called established  (*Irregular: build → built write → written)	to be to give to live to tell	at by for from in of on to with toward according to  *many more*	Who Whom Which That What

**So what do I do FIRST??**

- When we SEE main clauses, **UNDERLINE** the Subject Noun and Verbs.
- Keep your MAIN CLAUSE aligned to the furthest LEFT in your visual outline.

**Exercise 1 - Identify the Main Clauses**

1. Genesis 1:1 - In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
2. Colossians 1:15 - He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
3. Romans 5:8 - While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

<b>SUPPORTING PHRASES AND CLAUSES</b>		
<b>Conjunction</b>	Coordinating - FANBOYS - creates a <b>parallel</b> relationship; an addition or contrast  Subordinating - AAWWUBBIS - creates a <b>logical</b> relationship (cause and effect, time and place, or concession and contrast) that <b>depends</b> on the MAIN CLAUSE	<b>For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So</b>  <b>After, Although, As, When, While, Until, Before, Because, If, Since</b>

**Exercise 2 - Coordinating Conjunctions - FANBOYS**

**So, what do I do??**

- Place FANBOYS words on their own line in your visual outline.

1. Psalm 107:19 - I cry unto the Lord in my trouble, **and** He saves me out of my distresses.

I cry unto the Lord in my trouble,  
**and**  
He saves me out of my distresses.

2. Matthew 5:44 - "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' **But** I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven."

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

**But**

I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven."

### Exercise 3 Subordinating Conjunctions - AAWWUBBIS

**So, what do I do??**

→ Keep AAWWUBBIS words WITH the subject and verb they are with and indent it further to the right from the MAIN CLAUSE.

1. Romans 5:8 - **While** we were still sinners, Christ died for us.  
                   **While** we were still sinners,  
                   Christ died for us.
  
2. 1 John 4:19 - We love **because** he first loved us.  
                   We love  
                   **because** he first loved us.
  
3. Romans 1:21 - **Although** they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.  
                   **Although** they knew God,  
                   they did not honor him as God  
                   or  
                   give thanks to him,  
                   but  
                   they became futile in their thinking,  
                   and  
                   their foolish hearts were darkened.

<b>SUPPORTING PHRASES AND CLAUSES</b>	
<b>Participial</b>	<p><b>-ing and -ed words that <u>describe</u> a noun</b></p> <p><b>A participial phrase is NOT the main clause VERB - not the main action or point of the sentence; it adds DETAIL and DESCRIPTION</b></p>
<p>1. 1 Corinthians 1:1 - Paul, <b><u>called</u></b> to by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus</p> <p>2. Colossians 1:10 - ...walk in a manner worthy of the Lord...<b><u>bearing</u></b> fruit in every good work and <b><u>increasing</u></b> in the knowledge of God.</p> <p>3. Colossians 2:6-7 - Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, <b><u>rooted</u></b> and <b><u>built up</u></b> in Him and <b><u>established</u></b> in the faith, just as you were taught, <b><u>abounding</u></b> in Thanksgiving.</p>	

<b>Infinitive</b>	<p><b>“To” and a verb</b>          To run, To sing, To dance, To be          Learning foreign languages → conjugation homework!  <i>(Hablar - to talk, Yo hablo, Tú hablas, Él habla, etc.)</i></p>
<p>1. Philippians 1:21 - For to me <b>to live</b> is Christ, and <b>to die</b> is gain.</p> <p>2. Genesis 1:15 - And God made the two great lights - the greater light <b>to rule</b> the day and the lesser light <b>to rule</b> the night - and the stars.</p>	
<b>Prepositional</b>	<p><b>at, by, for, from, in, of, on, to, and with followed by a noun</b>          There are over 100 prepositions!</p> <p><b>Prepositions connect a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase to reason, direction, location, ownership, or time. Listen for the next NOUN to know where the prepositional phrase ends.</b></p> <p><b>Do a “pen” test to see if it is a preposition: Where is the pen in relation to the desk?</b>  <i>Above, under, beside, on, near, etc.</i></p> <p><i>(Over the river) and (through the woods) (to grandmother’s house) we go.</i></p>
<p>1. Ephesians 2:8-9 - For it is (by grace) you have been saved, (through faith)—and this is not (from yourselves), it is the gift (of God)— not (by works), so that no one can boast.</p> <p>2. 1 Corinthians 1:2 - (To the church) (of God) that is (in Corinth), (to those) sanctified (in Christ Jesus), called to be saints together (with all those) who (in every place) call (upon the name) (of our Lord Jesus Christ), both their Lord and ours:</p>	
<b>Relative</b>	<p>Who, whom, which, that, what          Relative clauses provide more information about nouns</p>
<p>1. Psalm 18:3 - I call upon the LORD, <b>who is worthy to be praised</b>, and I am saved from my enemies.</p> <p>2. Psalm 71:23 - My lips will shout for joy, when I sing praises to you; my soul also, <b>which you have redeemed</b>.</p>	

**Use your GRAMMAR POLICE - WATCH LIST to identify the chunks of words that make up phrases. You do NOT have to label what “kind” of phrase. There is no “RIGHT” answer!**

**Colossians 1:9-12**

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

**Psalm 1:1-2**

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

**HOMEWORK - Try it on your own! Share your visual outline and any observations you make after looking at the structure.**

**1 Peter 1:3-5**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

**Ephesians 1:15-22**

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

## Colossians 1:9-12

And so,  
from the day we heard,  
**we have not ceased to pray**  
for you,  
asking that you may be filled  
with the knowledge  
of his will  
in all spiritual wisdom  
and  
understanding,  
so as  
to walk  
in a manner  
worthy of the Lord,  
fully pleasing to him:  
bearing fruit  
in every good work  
and  
increasing  
in the knowledge  
of God;  
being strengthened  
with all power,  
according to his glorious might,  
for all endurance and patience  
with joy;  
giving thanks  
to the Father,  
who has qualified you  
to share  
in the inheritance  
of the saints  
in light.

**What do you notice about what “lines up” down the text? Look at what is parallel, equal, or concurrent.**

**Why are certain sections INDENTED really far? Look at the phrase above to see how it supports, illustrates, or qualifies.**

Psalm 1:1-2

**Blessed is the man**

who walks not  
    in the counsel  
        of the wicked,  
nor  
stands  
    in the way  
        of sinners,  
nor  
Sits  
    in the seat  
        of scoffers;

but

**his delight is**

in the law  
    of the Lord,  
and  
on his law  
    he meditates day and night.

What do you notice about what “lines up” down the text? Look at what is parallel, equal, or concurrent.

Why are certain sections INDENTED really far? Look at the phrase above to see how it supports, illustrates, or qualifies.