

Sentence Structure Glossary

This glossary can be made available to students all at once, or it can be cut and pasted into lessons as needed during the semester.

Phrase

- A grammar unit that does not contain a subject/verb combination
 - **Prepositional phrase:** I drink *coffee in the morning*.
 - **Gerund phrase:** *Running in the park* is my favorite exercise.
 - **Appositive (reduced adjective clause):** Mary, *an elementary school teacher*, is very good with children.

Clause

- A grammar unit that contains a subject and a verb
 - **Independent Clause**
 - Contains a subject and a verb
 - Can “stand alone” and expresses a complete idea
 - Also called a “simple sentence”
 - Does not have a dependent clause marker word at the front
 - **Dependent Clause**
 - Contains a subject and a verb
 - Uses a “marker word” at the front
 - Cannot “stand alone” – must connect to an independent clause

TYPES OF SENTENCES

Complete Sentence

- A grammar unit that contains at least one independent clause
 - Every sentence contains one independent clause
 - *Tom eats breakfast.*
- A group of independent and dependent clause units that use the correct punctuation to connect them
 - *In the morning before he goes to work, Tom eats breakfast, and he reads the news on his phone.*

Incomplete Sentence (also called a fragment)

- A grammar unit that uses a period but does not contain at least one independent clause.
 - *In the morning before he goes to work.*

Simple Sentence

- Contains a subject and a verb
- Can “stand alone” and expresses a complete idea
- Does not have a dependent clause marker word at the front
 - *I like coffee. In addition, I like tea.*

Compound Sentence

- Contains two independent clauses connected by:
 - Conjunctions (FANBOYS)
 - *I like coffee, **and** I like tea.*
 - Adverbial Conjunctions (Transitions)
 - *I like coffee; **in addition**, I like tea.*

Complex Sentence

- Contains at least one independent and one dependent clause
Because I am an early riser, I drink coffee every morning.

Run-on Sentence (an error)

- A combination of independent and/or dependent clauses that does not use the correct punctuation
 - ***Because I wake up early I drink coffee every morning it helps me wake up it tastes good too.***

Fragment - also called an incomplete sentence (an error)

- A phrase or dependent clause that is not connected to an independent clause
 - ***In the morning.*** I go to work.
 - ***Because I was tired.*** I went to bed.

SENTENCE CONNECTION

Independent clauses can be connected in four ways:

Punctuation marks creates two separate sentences

1. A **period** between them.
 - a. I like coffee. I like tea.
2. A **semi-colon** between them (not as common)
 - a. I like coffee; I like tea.

Connector words creates one "compound sentence"

3. A **conjunction** between them
 - a. **FANBOYS** – for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so
 - i. FANBOYS do not begin a sentence in academic writing – they only connect.
 - ii. I like coffee, and I like tea. comma before the FANBOYS word
 - iii. I like coffee and tea no subject after the FANBOYS word, no comma
4. An **adverbial conjunction (transition)** between them
 - a. I like coffee. In addition, I like tea. period + capital letter + comma after the transition
 - b. I like coffee; in addition, I like tea. semi-colon + lowercase letter + comma after the transition
5. Two independent clauses cannot be connected with just a comma in formal academic writing!
 - a. ~~I like coffee, I like tea.~~

SENTENCE SUBORDINATION

There are three types of Dependent Clauses: Adverb, Adjective, and Noun

- Each type of Dependent Clause has its own punctuation rules
- Learning the marker words can help you remember the punctuation rules

1. Adverb (subordinate) Clause (BOBUB IS WA WA WA)

- **Marker Words:** *Before, Once, Because, Until, By the time, If, Since, When, After, While, As, Whenever (+ other -ever words), Although (+ even though, though)*
- **Use:** Organizes time and events in a sentence
- **Punctuation Rules:**
 - **BOBUB at the front comma at the end of the clause**
 - **Before he goes to work,** Tom eats breakfast.
 - **BOBUB in the middle no comma**
 - Tom eats breakfast **before he goes to work.**

2. Adjective (relative) Clause

- **Marker Words:** *who, whom, whose, that, which, when, where*
- **Use:** Defines, identifies, or gives more information about the noun it is next to
- **Punctuation Rules:**
 - **Never use commas with THAT**
 - *The man **that I met** was nice.*
 - **Identifying Adjective Clauses (Defining/Restrictive):**
 - No commas
 - These clauses are necessary to identify or define the head noun. You can ask, "Which ___?"
 - *The students **who were late to class** received a warning.*
 - **Non-Identifying Adjective Clauses (Non-Defining/Non-Restrictive):**

- Use commas
- These clauses give useful information, but they do not identify or define it. The head noun already refers to a specific thing.
- Proper nouns (Names) and possessive pronouns usually use commas because Names and possessives identify a specific person, place, or thing.
 - *Mary, **who is an elementary school teacher**, is very good with children.*
 - *My hometown, **which is near the ocean**, is a popular place for tourists to visit.*
- **Test for commas/no commas with Adjective Clauses:** Remove the adjective clauses above – is the head noun still clear?
- **Steps for editing with Adjective Clauses**
 - o Locate a series of two sentences that refer to the same person or thing: Who/what is the second sentence referring to in the first sentence? Box the two nouns/pronouns/phrases (a “referent”).
 - o Change the referent in the second sentence to a marker word.
 - o Move the clause directly next to the head noun in the first sentence
 - o Commas or no commas?
 - Non-identifying/non-defining: Use commas with head nouns that are names and personal pronouns
 - Identifying/Defining: Do not use commas if the clause defines the head noun

3. Noun Clause

- **Marker Words:**

- *question words (who, what, when, where, why, how)*
 - *used to elicit information*
 - I want to know **where you went last night.**
- *if, whether (or not)*
 - *used to express doubt about something*
 - I don't know **if I should go to work today.**
- *That*
 - *used to express information, facts, belief*
 - I know **that he wants to get a new job.**
 - *used in body paragraph transition sentences*
 - The first reason is **that he is honest.**
 - *used in conclusions that recommend ("subjunctive")*
 - I recommend **that you find a new job.**
 - *Used to report what someone said without using quotation marks ("reported speech")*
 - He told me **that he wanted to find a new job.**

- **Punctuation Rules:**

- No commas with noun clauses
 - ~~He told me, that he was sorry.~~
- End-of-sentence punctuation depends on the independent clause
 - Independent clause = question form, use a question mark at the end of the sentence
 - **Can you tell me** where the library is?
 - Independent clause = sentence form, use a period at the end of the sentence
 - **I want to know** where the library is.

REDUCED DEPENDENT CLAUSES

Dependent Clauses are often reduced in speech and writing. This means that parts of the clause are removed and changed.

It is not always possible to reduce a dependent clause.

If you're not sure, use the whole clause!

1. Reduced Adverb Clause:

- a. To reduce, the subject must be the same in both the dependent and independent clause.
- b. Delete the subject in the dependent clause and change the verb to -ING. If there is a BE verb (am, is, are, was, were) delete that, too.
- c. Reduction of Adverb clauses is most often used when expressing facts about the past or present (simple past or simple present.)

Examples:

a. Full Adverb Clause

Before he goes to work, Tom eats breakfast.

Reduced Adverb Clause

Before going to work, Tom eats breakfast.

b. Full Adverb Clause

While she is running, Mary listens to music.

Reduced Adverb Clause

While running, Mary listens to music.

c. Full Adverb Clause

Before he goes to work, Tom's daughter kisses him goodbye.

Reduced Adverb Clause

None HE and Tom's daughter are not the same subject.

2. Reduced Adjective Clause

1. To reduce, take away the adjective clause marker.
 - a. Check to see if you have a subject. If you do, you're done.
 - b. If there is no subject, check the verb.
 - i. If it's a BE verb, remove the verb.
 - ii. If it's a SIMPLE ACTION verb, change it to the -ing form.
2. Reduction of Adjective Clauses is most often used when expressing facts about the past or present (simple past or simple present.)
3. Full adjective clauses must stay directly next to their head noun; reduced adjective clauses can be moved in front of the noun they describe.
4. Reduced non-restrictive/non-identifying adjective clauses are called "appositives." They always have commas around them.

Examples:

- a. Full Adjective Clause (with a subject in the clause – 1.a)

*The class **that I am taking** is very difficult.*

Reduced Adjective Clause

*The class **I am taking** is very difficult.*

- b. Full Adjective Clause (no subject + BE – 1.b.i)

*Mary Brown, **who is my best friend**, has given me support throughout my life.*

Reduced Adjective Clause (appositive)

*Mary Brown, **my best friend**, has given me support throughout my life.*

- c. Full Adjective Clause (no subject + ACTION – 1.b.ii)

*Students **who cheat on the test** will be given a failing grade.*

Reduced Adjective Clause

*Students **cheating on the test** will be given a failing grade.*

d. Full Adjective Clause

*Mr. Thompson, **who is a collector of rare books and antiques**, will discuss his collection on Wednesday.*

Reduced Adjective Clause in the same position (3)

*Mr. Thompson, **a collector of rare books and antiques**, will discuss his collection on Wednesday. (**appositive**)*

Reduced Adjective Clause in front of the noun (3)

***A collector of rare books and antiques**, Mr. Thompson will discuss his collection on Wednesday.*

3. Reduced Noun Clause

1. Only noun clauses with THAT can be reduced

a. To reduce, remove THAT

i. Full Noun Clause

*I want you to know **that I appreciate your help.***

Reduced Noun Clause

*I want you to know **I appreciate your help.***

ii. Full Noun Clause

*The first reason is **that he is honest.***

Reduced Noun Clause

*The first reason is **he is honest.***