

Grammar Help Sheet: Sentence Types

Arranging words to make sentences is the key to writing. There are four main types of sentences made up of words, clauses, and phrases.

Every clause contains a subject (noun or pronoun) and a predicate verb (action or linking).

A simple sentence has one main (independent) clause with a subject and a predicate.

A complex sentence has one main (independent) clause and one or more subordinate clause.

A compound sentence has two or more main (independent) clauses and no subordinate clause.

A compound-complex sentence has two or more main (independent) clauses and at least one subordinate clause.

(simple)	<u>Jack</u> and <u>Jill</u> <u>went</u> up the hill.
(compound)	<u>Jack</u> <u>ran</u> and <u>Jill</u> <u>walked</u> .
(complex)	<u>She</u> <u>ran</u> before <u>he</u> <u>arrived</u> .
(compound-complex)	<u>She</u> <u>ran</u> and <u>he</u> <u>walked</u> until <u>she</u> <u>stopped</u> .

You can't always tell what type of sentence is being used based on the length or number of subjects or verbs. Some compound, complex, or compound-complex sentences can be short, while some simple sentences can be long. A simple sentence with compound subjects, compound predicates, many different phrases is still simple if it only has one subject and one verb.

In the black forest, behind the clearing, in a small cottage, sits Anne Marie, a young woman with lovely brown eyes and long black hair to her waist, wearing a long black skirt and white blouse, tending a fire and reading a book containing pictures of castles, dungeons, and people, but listening to a mockingbird all the while.

The above sentence is simple because it only has one main clause and no dependent clauses.

Subject = Anne Marie Predicate = sits

The rest of the sentence contains phrases used to describe Anne Marie and the setting.