

Types of the English Sentences and their Structures

1. Definition of a Sentence and a Finite Verb

A **sentence** is a group of words that expresses a complete thought, comprised of a *subject* and a *finite verb*, beginning with a *capital letter* and concluding with a *full stop*. It serves as a complete and independent expression, conveying a single thought or idea.

A **finite verb** is a verb that indicates a *specific tense, person, and number*. It changes form based on the subject and the tense of the sentence. It shows when the action is happening and who is performing the action.

- **Example:** “Charlie and his friend climb a tree.”

In this sentence “Charlie and his friend climb a tree”, *the subject* of this sentence is ‘Charlie and his friend’: it is a compound subject because it consists of two nouns connected by *the conjunction* “and”. *The verb* “climb” here is an action verb because it shows the action performed by the subject and it is a finite verb conjugated in the present simple tense indicating that the action is happening now and agrees with the plural because it refers to more than one person. *The object* of the sentence is ‘a tree’. It receives the action of the verb ‘climb’. In this case, “a tree” is a direct object because it directly receives the action of the verb.

On the other hand, a **nonfinite verb** is a verb that does not show *tense, person, or number*. It is not limited by the subject of the sentence and does not change its form. Nonfinite verbs are often in the base form (infinitive), gerund (ing), or participle form (ed/irregular verbs).

- **Example:** “To swim is my favorite activity.”

In this sentence the verb “to swim” is nonfinite because it is in the *infinitive form* and it does not change based on the subject or tense.

2. Types of the English Sentences

The following are the kinds of sentences that we say and write every day:

A. Declarative Sentence:

A declarative sentence is used to make a statement or expresses an opinion. It provides information, conveys facts, or expresses thoughts.

- **Structure:** Subject + Verb (+ Object)
- **Examples:** “The sun rises in the east.”/ “Emma goes to school.”

B. Interrogative Sentence:

An interrogative sentence is used to ask a question in order to get an answer, seek information or confirmation.

- **Structure:** (WH question/How) + Auxiliary Verb + Subject + Main Verb (+ Object)?
- **Examples:** “Did you finish your homework?”/ “Did Emma go to school?”/ “When did you arrive?”

C. Exclamatory Sentence:

An exclamatory sentence expresses strong emotion, surprise, astonishment, or excitement. It often ends with an exclamation mark.

- **Structure:** What/How + Adjective/Adverb + Subject + Verb (+ Object)!
- **Example:** “What a beautiful sunset!”

D. Imperative Sentence:

An imperative sentence gives an order, instruction, or request. It is used to give instructions, warnings, give advice, ask people to do things, make offers, persuade someone to do something, or to wish things.

- **Structure:** (You) + Base Verb (+ Object)?
- **Examples:**

a. to give instructions	Turn right down the hall.	b. to make offers	Have another glass of orange juice.
c. to give warnings	Look out! There is a car coming.	d. to persuade someone do something	Please! Consider supporting our cause by making a donation.
e. to give advice	Drink water. You look thirsty.	f. to wish things	Have a nice weekend!
g. to ask people to do things	Please! Pass me the salt.		

E. Simple Sentence:

A simple sentence consists of a single independent clause. It represents a complete thought and can stand alone as a sentence.

- **Structure:** Subject + Verb (+ Object)
- **Examples:** “He likes to watch series”. / “The weather is bad today”.

F. Compound Sentence:

A compound sentence consists of two or more independent clauses and joined by coordinating conjunctions (**for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so**) or a semicolon (;).

- **Structure:** Independent Clause + Coordinating Conjunction + Independent Clause.
- **Examples:**
 - o He enjoys playing the guitar, **and** he likes singing.
 - o He's neither interested in sports **nor** in outdoor activities.
 - o She wanted to go to the movies, **but** she preferred staying at home.
 - o You can have the chocolate ice cream, **or** you can choose the vanilla flavor.
 - o I need to finish this project by Friday, **yet** I haven't even started.
 - o I have a busy day at work, **so** I can't join you for lunch.

G. Complex Sentence:

A complex sentence includes an independent clause and one or more dependent clauses (subordinate clauses). Generally joined by the subordinating conjunctions (**because, since, before, while, when, although .etc.**). These clauses are connected to form a complete thought.

- **Structure:** Independent Clause + Subordinating Conjunction + Dependent Clause(s)
- **Examples:** “Although it was raining, she went for a walk”. / “He stayed at home because he is ill”. / “James hates watching TV because he thinks it is very loud”.

List of the subordinating conjunctions		
After	If	Than
Although	In case	That
As	In order that	Though
As if	In the event that	Till
As long as	Lest	Unless
As much as	Now that	Until
As soon as	Once	When
As though	Only	Whenever
Because	Only if	Where
Before	Provided that	Whereas
By the time	Since	Wherever
Even if	So	Whether or not
Even though	Supposing	While

H. Compound-Complex Sentence:

A compound-complex sentences are composed of two independent clauses or more and one dependent clause or more. They allow us to convey more complex and nuanced ideas by combining multiple independent and dependent clauses.

- **Example:** “She went to the store, and she bought some groceries because she was running low on supplies.”

In this example, there are two independent clauses joined by “and” (forming a compound sentence), and there's a dependent clause (“because she was running low on supplies”) that adds more information to the sentence.

3. Independent and Dependent Clause

In English written expression, a clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a predicate. Clauses are the building blocks of sentences, and they can be classified into two main types: independent clauses and dependent clauses.

A. Independent Clause:

An independent clause (**also known as a main clause**) can stand alone as a complete sentence because it expresses a complete thought. It has a subject and a predicate and does not rely on another clause to make sense. For example: “*She is studying for her exams.*”

B. Dependent Clause:

A dependent clause (**also known as a subordinate clause**) also contains a subject and a predicate, but it cannot stand alone as a complete sentence. It relies on an independent clause to form a complete thought. For example: “*Although she is studying for her exams...*” This clause introduces additional information but does not provide a complete idea on its own.

Examples:

- **Independent Clause:** “The sun was shining brightly.”

=> This can stand alone as a complete sentence.

- **Dependent Clause:** “While I was walking in the park...”

=> This clause does not express a complete thought on its own. It needs an independent clause to complete the idea, e.g., “While I was walking in the park, I saw a beautiful sunset.”