

Here's the Idea

A sentence's structure is determined by the number and kind of clauses it contains.

▶ **The structure of a sentence may be simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex.**

Simple Sentences

A **simple sentence** consists of one independent clause and no subordinate clauses.

Two friends invented the first trivia game.

A simple sentence may have a compound subject or verb.

Chris Haney and Scott Abbott created and marketed it.

COMPOUND SUBJECT

COMPOUND VERB

For more on compound sentence parts, see pp. 42–43.

Compound Sentences

In a **compound sentence** two or more independent clauses are joined together.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE

Bette Nesmith typed on an electric typewriter, and she often made mistakes.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE

Independent clauses can be joined by a comma and a coordinating conjunction, a semicolon, or a semicolon with a conjunctive adverb and a comma.

She could have erased them, but that took a lot of time.

Nesmith did not erase her errors; she covered them with a mixture of water and white paint.

Nesmith was not happy with the name "paper correction fluid"; consequently, she gave the mixture a catchy brand name.

For more on conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs, see pp. 26–27.



Avoid using commas to join independent clauses that should be separate sentences. For more on "comma splices," see page 120.

Complex Sentences

A complex sentence contains one independent clause and one or more subordinate clauses.

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE

If cockleburs had not clung to his jacket, George de Mestral might never have invented Velcro.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE

He was curious to know the reason why they clung so tightly.

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE

Compound-Complex Sentences

A compound-complex sentence contains two or more independent clauses and one or more subordinate clauses.

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE

When de Mestral studied the burs, he saw tiny hooks on their surfaces becoming entangled in loops of fiber and this observation inspired him to invent the hook-and-loop fastener.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE

While another might have been annoyed, he was intrigued and he thought of a use to which the phenomenon could be put.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE

Why It Matters in Writing

By using compound sentences to connect main ideas and complex sentences to add subordinate ideas, you can express complicated thoughts clearly and achieve sentence variety.

STUDENT MODELS

Kurt Vonnegut's story "Harrison Bergeron" is about a futuristic society in which people are forced to be equal. In this society, no one is allowed to be bright and no one is allowed to be talented. These qualities are forbidden because they threaten the equality policy of those who are in power. However, one person—Harrison Bergeron—demands that his uniqueness be acknowledged.

SUBORDINATE IDEAS

CONNECTED MAIN IDEAS

Practice and Apply

A. CONCEPT CHECK: Sentence Structure

Identify each sentence as simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex.

Bubble Gum

1. Some inventions are created by accident.
2. Walter E. Diemer worked for a chewing-gum company.
3. He was an accountant, but he wanted to improve the company's gum.
4. He did experiments because he wanted chewier gum.
5. He didn't succeed, but he did come up with something that became a successful product.
6. He produced a mixture that could be blown into bubbles.
7. This mixture was the first bubble gum.
8. Diemer had pink food coloring, which he added to the gum.
9. The gum was fun to chew, and the color made it attractive.
10. If Walter Diemer had not experimented, he would not have discovered bubble gum, and we might not have it today.

→ For a SELF-CHECK and more practice, see the EXERCISE BANK, p. 612.

Combine sentences 6 and 7 into a compound-complex sentence.



B. REVISING: Achieving Sentence Variety

Rewrite this paragraph by following the directions below it.

Chewing Through the Ages

- (1) Chewing gum has a long history. (2) The ancient Greeks chewed hardened sap. (3) It came from the mastic tree. (4) Over 1,000 years ago the Maya of Mexico chewed chicle. (5) Native Americans later taught European settlers to chew gum. (6) During the 1850s people chewed paraffin wax. (7) It wasn't as good as gum. (8) It crumbled or stuck to the teeth. (9) Modern chewing gum was originally made with sugar. (10) In the mid-1900s companies began making sugarless gum.
1. Combine sentences 2 and 3 to form a complex sentence.
 2. Combine 4 and 5 to form a compound sentence.
 3. Combine 6, 7, and 8 to form a compound-complex sentence.
 4. Combine 9 and 10 to form a compound sentence.

In your **Working Portfolio**, find the paragraph you wrote for the **Write Away** on page 90. Use clauses to combine sentences and vary the sentence structure of your paragraph.