

COMPLEX SENTENCES

Complex sentences contain a dependent clause and an independent clause.

Complex Sentences

Definition:

Complex sentences are comprised of one independent clause and one or more dependent clause.

Independent clauses:

- can stand alone as a complete sentence
- contain a subject and a verb and
- express a complete thought.

Dependent clauses:

- contain a subject and a verb
- cannot stand alone as a complete sentence
- do not express a complete thought

Examples:

- Independent clause:

The rainforest could disappear.

- Dependant clause:

Unless steps are taken immediately.

- Complex sentence:

The rainforest could disappear *unless steps are taken immediately.*

Types of complex sentences

There are two types of complex sentences.

- Subordinating conjunctions

- Example: *When* the fish ate the bait, Martina reeled it in.

- Relative pronouns

- Example: Email, *which* has been popular for many years, is losing its status to text and instant messaging.

Type 1: Subordinating Conjunctions

Subordinate conjunctions express:

- Time (after, before, until, when, while, since ...)
- Reason or cause (as, because)
- Result or effect (in order that, so that)
- Condition (even if, if, unless)
- Contrast (although, even though, though, whereas)

2 Patterns with Subordinate Conjunctions

- Dependent clause, independent clause. (comma)
 - Example: Even though she studied for the exam until 2 a.m., she did not receive an A.
- Independent clause dependent clause. (no comma)
 - Example: She did not receive an A even though she studied for the exam until 2 a.m.

Relative Pronouns

□ **Relative pronouns:**

Who, which, that

- *Who* refers to people – He is the man **who** bought the car.
- *Which* refers to things – Years of effort produced the Hubble telescope, **which** is very powerful.
- *That* refers to things or to groups of people – The subject **that** we discussed was global warming. The Beatles was the band **that** changed music forever.

Punctuating Complex Sentences with relative pronouns

- **That:** No commas are necessary
 - ▣ Example: The freshman did the homework *that* was assigned.
- **Who, which:** Commas *may* be necessary
 - ▣ Commas are necessary when the information in the clause is non-restrictive – when the information is extra and not necessary to the meaning of the sentence.
 - Example: My car, *which* is a Honda, is very old.
 - ▣ Commas are not necessary when the information in the clause is restrictive – when the information is necessary to the meaning of the sentence.
 - Example: The car *which* is in the yellow zone is going to be towed.

Complex Sentences: Importance

Complex sentences are important in writing.

- They make writing more sophisticated.
- They help connect ideas.
- They show the relationship between ideas.
- They help writers achieve sentence variety
- They can help writers have more impact.