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Compound and complex sentences

Sentence Architects





Grammar at a glance

When you want to...	Form to use	Worked example
Find the sentence core	phrase / main clause	the tall tree / The tall tree sways.
Join actions in one clause	one subject + two verbs	The tree sways and creaks.
Join two main clauses	clause, so/but/and + clause	The branch snapped, so we moved.
Add a dependent clause	main clause + because/when/if ...	We moved because a branch fell.
Move the opening clause	dependent clause, main clause	When the wind rose, we went in.
Identify or add detail	identifying / extra relative clause	The tree that fell blocked the road.

SELECT A ROW TO OPEN ITS LESSON

COMPOUND AND COMPLEX SENTENCES

Phrases, clauses and complete statements



The report desk has three scraps: “the green box”, “Sam holds the box”, and “because Sam holds the box”. All mention the parcel, but they do different jobs.

A phrase can name something. A main clause can make a complete statement. Adding because can make a clause depend on another.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Name a thing	the green box	This noun phrase names a thing. It does not make a complete statement about it.
Make a statement	Sam holds the box.	Sam is the subject and holds is the finite verb. This independent clause can stand as a sentence.
Make it depend	because Sam holds the box	Because turns the clause into a reason that needs a main clause in this report.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Noun phrase	Independent clause	Dependent clause
the green box	Sam | holds the box	because | Sam holds the box

Is every group containing a subject and verb a complete sentence?

No. A dependent marker such as because can make that clause depend on another clause. In conversation a short reason may answer a question, but this task asks for a complete report sentence.

YOUR TURN

Classify “the tall tree”.

A noun phrase / An independent clause

> **Answer • A noun phrase**
> It names a thing without a finite verb.

COMPOUND AND COMPLEX SENTENCES

Shared subjects and predicates versus compound sentences



Lily and Sam carry one box together. Later, Lily holds the bag and Sam holds the box. The word and appears in both reports, but it does not always join two clauses.

And can join words or groups inside a clause. For a compound sentence, find two independent clauses.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Share the subject	Lily and Sam carry the box.	And joins two names in one subject. There is one independent clause.
Share the doer	Lily lifts and carries the bag.	Lily is the shared subject of two coordinated verbs. This is one clause with a compound predicate in the school grammar used here.
Give each clause a subject	Lily holds the bag, and Sam holds the box.	Each side has its own subject and finite verb. And joins two independent clauses into a compound sentence.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Shared subject	Shared predicate	Two clauses
Lily and Sam | carry the box	Lily | lifts and carries the bag	Lily holds the bag | Sam holds the box

Does every and signal a compound sentence?

No. And can connect names, objects, verbs or clauses. Identify the complete clause cores before deciding the sentence type.

YOUR TURN

What does and join in “The dog and cat sleep”?

Two independent clauses / Two nouns in a shared subject

> **Answer • Two nouns in a shared subject**
> The two animals share the predicate sleep.

COMPOUND AND COMPLEX SENTENCES

Compound sentences: addition, contrast and result



The investigation record says the pot tipped, causing soil to spill. It also says Sam was tired but still helped. Report both facts and their relationships accurately. A connector must not invent a cause that the evidence does not establish.

Join independent clauses with a word that preserves the relationship. But signals contrast and so can signal a result.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Add a fact	The pot tipped, and soil spilled.	And reports both events without itself asserting that one caused the other.
Show the recorded result	The pot tipped, so soil spilled.	So presents the spill as a result. The written investigation supports that causal link.
Show contrast	Sam was tired, but he helped.	But highlights the contrast between tiredness and continued help.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Supported cause	Result connector	Supported result
The pot tipped	so	soil spilled

Is so just a fancier version of and?

No. So introduces a result in these patterns. It changes the claim the reader receives and must be justified by the story evidence.

YOUR TURN

Record: the latch broke, causing the gate to open. Choose the result report.

The latch broke, so the gate opened. / The gate opened, so the latch broke.

> Answer • The latch broke, so the gate opened.
> Keep the supported causal direction.

COMPOUND AND COMPLEX SENTENCES

Complex sentences with reason, time, contrast and condition



A witness note reads “Because the pot tipped.” Another says “Although Sam was tired.” Each has a subject and verb but leaves a main message unstated.

A complex sentence joins a main clause to a dependent clause that can express time, cause, contrast or a condition.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Leave the reason alone	Because the pot tipped.	This is a dependent reason clause. Our complete report still needs the main message.
Attach the main result	Soil spilled because the pot tipped.	Soil spilled is the main clause; because the pot tipped explains its cause.
Attach a contrast	Sam helped although he was tired.	Sam helped is the main clause; although he was tired supplies the contrast.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Main clause	Dependent reason	Conditional plan
Soil spilled	because the pot tipped	If it rains | we will move inside

Is a dependent clause a clause with no verb?

No. Because the pot tipped has a subject and finite verb. Its dependence comes from how because links it to a main message, not from a missing verb.

YOUR TURN

Choose a complete report.

Because the gate was locked. / We waited because the gate was locked.

> Answer • We waited because the gate was locked.
> We waited supplies the main message.

COMPOUND AND COMPLEX SENTENCES

Opening dependent clauses and punctuation



The report is correct, but the editor wants the confirmed cause first. Move because the pot tipped as a whole unit. The result must remain the main message.

Moving a dependent clause to the front can change the emphasis. Mark its end with a comma.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Main message first	Soil spilled because the pot tipped.	The result is stated first, followed by its reason. In this ordinary integrated order, no comma is needed before because.
Reason first	Because the pot tipped, soil spilled.	The opening dependent clause is followed by a comma and the main clause. The cause is still tipping.
Break the connection	Because the pot tipped. Soil spilled.	The first part is left as a dependent fragment. A full stop cannot replace its connection to the main clause.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Main first	Reason first	Relationship unchanged
Soil spilled | because the pot tipped.	Because the pot tipped, | soil spilled.	tipping to spilling

Is correct punctuation enough to make an edit correct?

No. An edit can have suitable capitals and commas yet reverse cause, change a person's role or assert an uncertain event. Always reread its claim against the evidence.

YOUR TURN

Rewrite "The gate opened because the latch broke." Begin with Because and add the comma.

> Answer • Because the latch broke, the gate opened.
> The cause stays the broken latch.

COMPOUND AND COMPLEX SENTENCES

Defining relative clauses and a complete report



Two helpers are pictured with different parcels. The team wants the helper who holds the red bag, not the helper who holds the green box.

A relative clause can identify which person or thing you mean. Set off extra, non-identifying information with commas.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Leave the identity broad	The helper waved.	With two possible helpers, this record does not identify which one the writer means.
Identify by an action	The helper who holds the red bag waved.	Who holds the red bag identifies the intended helper. Waved is still the main verb.
Identify the other helper	The helper who holds the green box waved.	Changing the relative clause changes which helper the sentence selects. The clause is part of the meaning, not decoration.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Expanded subject	Main predicate	Identifying clause
The helper [who holds the red bag]	waved	who | holds the red bag

Does finding any verb mean the whole sentence is complete?

No. Holds can be inside a relative clause while the main predicate is still missing. The helper who holds the bag needs a main message such as waved or is ready.

YOUR TURN

In “The dog that wears the blue collar sleeps”, what is the main verb?

wears / sleeps

> **Answer • sleeps**
> Wears belongs to the identifying relative clause.

ONE LAST CHALLENGE

Can you move the reason?

The bus was late. We walked to school as a result. Write one complex sentence that begins with the reason.



A POSSIBLE ANSWER

Because the bus was late, we walked to school.

The opening clause gives the reason. The comma marks where the main clause begins.

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