



Sentence Types

Structurally, English sentences can be classified four different ways, though there are endless constructions of each. The classifications are based on the number of independent and dependent clauses a sentence contains. An independent clause forms a complete sentence on its own, while a dependent clause needs another clause to make a complete sentence. By learning these types, writers can add complexity and variation to their sentences.

Simple sentence: A sentence with one independent clause and no dependent clauses.

- My aunt enjoyed taking the hayride with you.
- China's Han Dynasty marked an official recognition of Confucianism.

Compound Sentence: A sentence with multiple independent clauses but no dependent clauses.

- The clown frightened the little girl, and she ran off screaming.
- The Freedom Riders departed on May 4, 1961, and they were determined to travel through many southern states.

Complex Sentence: A sentence with one independent clause and at least one dependent clause.

- After Mary added up all the sales, she discovered that the lemonade stand was 32 cents short.
- While all of his paintings are fascinating, Hieronymus Bosch's triptychs, full of mayhem and madness, are the real highlight of his art.

Complex-Compound Sentence: A sentence with multiple independent clauses and at least one dependent clause.

- *Catch-22* is widely regarded as Joseph Heller's best novel, and because Heller served in World War II, which the novel satirizes, the zany but savage wit of the novel packs an extra punch.