

Sentences: simple and compound

There are mainly three kinds of sentences in English: simple, complex and compound.

Simple sentence

A simple sentence consists of just one clause. Examples are given below.

The dog barks.

The kettle boils.

Birds live in nests.

The boys are singing.

In its simplest form, a simple sentence consists of a subject and a verb.

We can add more meaning to the sentence by including qualifiers, objects, complements etc.

Sitting on a branch, the monkey gibbered.

The little girl was carrying a basket on her head.

Compound sentence

A compound sentence is made up of two or more independent clauses.

The boys sang and the girls danced.

This compound sentence consists of two simple clauses connected by the coordinating conjunction and.

Another example is given below.

Men may come and men may go, but I go on forever.

This compound sentence consists of three independent clauses.

We make compound sentences by joining independent clauses with the help of coordinating conjunctions.

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More examples of compound sentences are given below.

You may watch TV or you can go out to play.

You should either sit quietly or go out.

The old man could neither see nor hear.

He took the test several times but he couldn't pass.

He is famous, yet he is very humble.

She was angry, still she kept her cool.

The thieves not only robbed the man of his possessions, but also inflicted injuries on him.

Notes

The words however, therefore and nevertheless are not conjunctions. They cannot be used to connect two independent clauses.

My car broke down on the way; therefore, I hired a taxi. (NOT My car broke down on the way, therefore I hired a taxi.)

He lost all his money; nevertheless, he is cheerful.

Two independent clauses need to be connected with a coordinating conjunction or separated with a full stop or a semicolon.