

Transformation of sentences

In English, there are mainly three types of sentences.

Simple sentence

Compound sentence

Complex sentence

A simple sentence has just one clause. A complex sentence has one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses. A compound sentence has more than one main clause.

We can change a simple sentence into a compound sentence or a complex sentence. This is usually done by expanding a word or phrase into a clause. In the same way, we can change a complex or compound sentence into a simple sentence. This is done by reducing a clause into a word or phrase.

Study the examples given below.

It is too late to start a new lesson.

As you can see this sentence has just one clause and therefore it is a simple sentence. The number of clauses in a sentence is equal to the number of finite verbs in it. Note that to-infinitives and -ing forms are not finite verbs.

The structure too...to can be replaced by the structure so...that.

It is so late that we cannot start a new lesson.

As you can see this sentence has two clauses: one main clause (It is so late) and one subordinate clause (That we cannot start a new lesson.) We have already learned that a sentence containing one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses is called a complex sentence.

Another example is given below.

He worked hard that he might pass the examination.

The above sentence is an example of a complex sentence. It has one main clause (He worked

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hard) and one subordinate clause of purpose (That he might pass the examination).
Subordinate clauses of purpose can be reduced to to-infinitives.

He worked hard to pass the examination. (Simple sentence)

One more example is given below.

He ordered that the traitor be jailed. (Complex sentence)

This sentence, too, can be converted into a simple sentence with the help of a to-infinitive.

He ordered them to jail the traitor.