

SIMPLE, COMPOUND, and COMPLEX SENTENCES

Sentence Type	What do they do?	Examples	When should I use it?	What should I watch for?
Simple Sentences	Express complete, independent thoughts.	Dogs are cute. Dogs bark. Dogs want their owners' attention. Dogs sometimes make messes. I do not want a cat.	The simple sentence is ideal when what you have to say is a single thought. Without unrelated and unnecessary words and thoughts confusing the issue, your meaning will be much easier for readers to grasp.	A long series of simple sentences will make your writing "choppy" and dull. Further, you will often want to show that an idea has two or more closely related thoughts, which cannot easily be done with simple sentences.
Compound Sentences	Join two ideas to show a relationship of equal importance. This is known as coordination, and is usually done using a coordinating or correlative conjunction	Dogs bark, for they want attention. Dogs want attention, so they bark. Dogs make messes, but I don't want a cat. I'm allergic to cats; thus, I avoid them.	Use a compound sentence when you want to show that two ideas are related, and of equal significance.	Don't connect simple sentences at random, so that they are joined for no real reason (<i>Mildred Taylor is my favorite writer, and my mother is a social worker.</i>) Also, coordination will not be very useful when you want to show that one idea is more important than another is.
Complex Sentences	Join an independent clause [the "main thought"] with one or more dependant clauses ["pieces" of a sentence that cannot stand on their own as complete thoughts]	As the clock struck three, <u>the students rushed out the door.</u> Although I hate to miss your class, <u>I will not be there Friday.</u> Unless I am mistaken, <u>you are wandering around the room aimlessly.</u> As soon as the answers were given, <u>he corrected his homework.</u> <u>Squirrels</u> , though they may look adorable, <u>are vicious, dangerous animals.</u>	Use a complex sentence when you want to show a relationship between two or more ideas, one of which is more important than the others are. In the examples, the underlined independent clauses express the "point" of each sentence. Most of the sentences you write should probably be complex. It is up to you as a writer to decide what thoughts you wish to stress.	When used properly, these sentences can make your writing much easier to follow. However, overusing them can result in confusing run-on sentences