

## English 2

### Lesson 05: Sentences

#### Lesson Objectives:

- Students will comprehend how transitions and conjunctions affect sentence meaning.
- Students will apply conjunctions and transitions to given sentences in order to combine them into one sentence.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the use of grammar and mechanics in given sentences.

**The sentence is how we express a complete thought or idea. No matter how short, it must contain one finite verb and a subject or agent to direct the action of the verb.**

"Birds fly;" "Fish swim;" "Men walk;"—these are sentences.

A sentence always contains two parts: something spoken about and something said about it. The word or words indicating what is spoken about form what is called the *subject* and the word or words indicating what is said about it form what is called the *predicate*.

In the sentence "Birds fly," the word "birds" is the subject and the word "fly" is the predicate.

There are three kinds of sentences, *simple*, *compound*, and *complex*. Simple sentences are like the ones above, in that they have a single subject and predicate. You should have already mastered these. In this course we will be focusing more on how to construct compound and complex sentences.

A compound sentence consists of two or more simple sentences of equal importance the parts of which are either expressed or understood, such as, "The men work in the fields and the women work in the household," or "The men and women work in the fields and in the household."

A complex sentence consists of two or more simple sentences combined so that one depends on the other to complete its meaning, such as, "When he returns, I shall go on my vacation." Here the words "when he returns" are a *clause* which is dependent on the rest of the sentence for meaning. We will be discussing clauses further below.

#### **Forming Compound and Complex Sentences**

The first and easiest way to join two sentences is with the seven basic conjunctions: *and*, *so*, *for*, *nor*, *or*, *yet*, and *but*. Whenever you join two sentences with one of these basic coordinating conjunctions, you need to use a comma.

I wanted to go to the store, but John told me not to go.

Another way to join two sentences is through the use of a semicolon, even without a conjunction. Essentially, you can use a semicolon anywhere you would use a comma and a coordinating conjunction.

I wanted to go to the store; John told me not to go.

The next way to join two sentences, which enhances meaning even more than the basic conjunctions, is through correlative conjunctions: *not only...but also*, *either...or*, *both...and*. This also requires a comma prior to the second half of the pair.

Not only did the writer expect his audience to understand, but he also expected them to care.

Students often try to use correlative conjunctions without the second half of the pair, which looks something like this:

Not only did the writer expect his audience to understand, he expected them to care.

This is incorrect. It sounds okay because your mind's ear fills in the missing part of the correlative conjunction, but it is still grammatically incorrect. Also, notice that the comma is splicing the thought together without a supporting conjunction of any kind.

The final way to combine two thoughts is to introduce dependent and independent clauses to the sentence. You can tell the two kinds of clauses apart by determining whether or not the clause can stand on its own. If the thought can't stand on its own, it's a dependent (or subordinate) clause, but if the thought can make a sentence on its own, it is an independent clause. It's important to tell the difference, because a dependent clause takes a comma, while an independent clause needs a semicolon (unless you use a coordinating or correlative conjunction).

Though the writer is male, he tends to focus on female characters.

"Though the writer is male" will make no sense by itself, so it is a dependent clause.

The writer is male, but he focuses on female characters.

Each part of this can be a simple sentence on its own; it was correct to use the comma because I used a coordinating conjunction.

The writer is male; however, he focuses on female characters.

Many students would have used a comma here instead of the semicolon. However, using the comma would create a comma splice, which is incorrect grammar. Notice that you can rewrite the sentence to avoid using the semicolon, as I did above.

Subordinating conjunctions link the dependent clause to the sentence. Here are a few of the more common subordinating conjunctions:

*after, although, as, because, before, even if, even though, if, in order to, since, though, unless, until, when, whenever, whether or not, while*

Transitional or bridge words link independent clauses. Here are a few common transitional words:

*also, as a result, besides, consequently, finally, furthermore, however, in contrast, moreover, nevertheless, otherwise, similarly, therefore, thus*

Don't get tricked! Dependent and independent clause can use the same connecting words; the best test is to see if the clause makes sense by itself. Remember, a dependent clause gets separated by a comma, but an independent clause is separated by a semicolon.

### Examples

It seemed that the role of women was to behave according to certain principles, by staying at home and tending the children; nevertheless, women seemed to be able to express themselves in unexpected ways without bringing censure, as long as they were suitably embarrassed by the attention.

First it seemed that Goodman Brown would be gone only a short while, but then as his journey continued he was drawn deeper into the mysteries of the woods. Ultimately, he would be faced with a difficult epiphany: that all mankind was evil in some way.

When commas, conjugates, semicolons, and transitional words are not used correctly, you will find one of three errors: a run-on sentence (no conjunction or semicolon), a comma splice (a comma used instead of a semicolon), or a sentence fragment (a dependent clause left to stand alone as a sentence). Remember to check for these in your work, especially when writing papers.

### Word Order

An interesting thing to note about compound and complex sentences is that while there are several ways to form these sentences correctly, the way we put them together can have a different effect on the reader. There is a line in one of Thomas Gray's poems that reads, "The ploughman homeward plods his weary way." According to John Devlin, there are 18 different ways to arrange the words in this sentence. Here are a few examples:

Homeward the ploughman plods his weary way.  
The ploughman plods his weary way homeward.  
Plods homeward the ploughman his weary way.  
His weary way the ploughman homeward plods.  
Homeward his weary way plods the ploughman.  
Plods the ploughman his weary way homeward.  
His weary way the ploughman plods homeward.  
His weary way homeward the ploughman plods.  
The ploughman plods homeward his weary way.  
The ploughman his weary way plods homeward.

Notice that changing the order creates differences in meaning: sometimes small differences, sometimes large ones. Not all of these combinations read as smoothly as others, or make as good a point; even though they may not be technically incorrect, some are awkward or hard to read.

The most powerful places for a piece of information to be in a sentence are at the beginning and the end. When you have a choice of how to arrange your information, it can be helpful to remember that.

### Grading Rubric:

**To get a 10:** In the first submission, you may miss up to two sentences.

**To get a 9:** In the first submission, you may miss up to three sentences.

**To get an 8:** In the first submission, you may miss up to four sentences. You will be given three opportunities to revise up to a 9.

**To get a 7:** In the first submission, you may miss up to five sentences. You will be given three opportunities to revise up to a 9, and unlimited opportunities to revise up to an 8.

**To get a 6:** In the first submission, you may miss up to six sentences. You will be given three opportunities to revise up to a 9, and unlimited opportunities to revise up to a 7 or 8.

**To get a 5:** Plagiarism, purposeful or mistaken, which will lower your final grade for the course (so be very careful when posting your work!) OR lack of effort, disrespect, or attitude (we are here to communicate with you if you don't understand something). Lesson requirements to receive a grade of 6 must still be met.

You may only revise up to a 9, so be careful to do your best on your first submission!

### Assignment:

Do not submit text that you have copied from sources, including websites. All of your work should be in your own words. Using copied text would be considered plagiarism. For more information, review our page on [Plagiarism and Citation](#). When citing your sources, be sure to use the full proper citation format as described in [Plagiarism and Citation](#).

**For 1-10, combine the sentences. You may only use each conjunction or a lone semicolon once. (So if you combine the first set using "and," you can't use that in any of the other sentences.) Combining sentences may require that they be rewritten or reordered, but try to keep the original meanings intact as well. Use appropriate pronouns! Use good transition and bridge words!**

1. The dog was barking. The dog was hungry.

2. It was raining. The day was pleasantly warm.
3. You can go to work. You can get fired.
4. He wanted the peaches. He wanted strawberries.
5. She was tired. She took a nap at lunch.
6. The tree was old. The windstorm blew the tree down.
7. The rat was in the cupboard. The cat was wailing to be let in.
8. The lights went out. The radio was playing.
9. He finished the book on Monday. He mailed the book on Thursday.
10. The plane flew overhead. There was a loud noise.

**For 11-20, look at the complex sentence. If it is correct, simply mark it as correct. If it is incorrect, explain precisely why it is wrong.**

11. I wanted to go outside to get the paper, however, it was raining.
12. He walked to the bus stop, the bus never came.
13. He told the dog to stay down, but the dog wasn't listening.
14. There was a large crack in the ceiling; and water poured through it every time it rained.
15. The cat wouldn't stop crying, so we went over to pet it.
16. Goldfish may seem like great pets, but they take a lot of work.
17. Not only were there no pillows, but the blankets were wet.
18. Either the cats get to go or we won't go.
19. The oven was too hot, it dried out the chicken.
20. It seems like it should be easy; but sometimes it gets confusing.