



# Sentence Structure

This resource page contains basic information about the structure of sentences, the types of sentences, and the errors that are most common amongst student writers.

## Subjects & Predicates

A sentence must contain both a **subject** and a **predicate** in order to be considered a complete sentence. The **subject** addresses the someone or something that the writer is referring to in his or her sentence; it is the individual participating in the action. Keep in mind that the subject is usually, but not always, mentioned first in the sentence. In the sentence below, the subjects are highlighted in green.

- ⇒ **Example:** **Lauren** is a tutor in the Writing Center.
- ⇒ **Example:** Before she leaves for the day, **Jessie** makes sure all her paperwork is completed.
- ⇒ **Example:** **Jensen and I** are going to Disney World for the weekend.

A **predicate** provides the reader with information about the subject. The sentences mentioned above are repeated in this section, but instead highlight the predicates in blue.

- ⇒ **Example:** Lauren **is a tutor in the Writing Center.**
- ⇒ **Example:** Before she leaves for the day, **Jessie makes sure all her paperwork is completed.**
- ⇒ **Example:** Jensen and I **are going to Disney World for the weekend.**

## Sentence Types

Sentences can be determined by the number of clauses they contain. An independent clause is a part of a sentence that contains both a subject and a predicate. The four types of sentences are as follows:

**Simple Sentence:** a sentence that consists of one independent clause.

- ⇒ **Example:** I like coffee.
- ⇒ **Example:** I have homework.

**Compound Sentence:** a sentence that consists of two independent clauses that are joined by a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS) and a comma. They may also be joined by a semicolon when the independent clauses have related ideas expressed in them. Lastly, they may be joined by a semicolon and a subordinate conjunction.

- ⇒ **Example:** I have homework to complete, **and** a psychology exam to study for.
- ⇒ **Example:** I like coffee; David prefers tea.
- ⇒ **Example:** I like coffee; however, David prefers tea.



**Complex Sentence:** a sentence that consists of an independent clause, as well as one or more, dependent clauses. A dependent clause starts with a subordinating junction such as that, because, although, while, where, if.

- ⇒ **Example:** I drove the car **while** Lana scanned her map for the quickest route.
- ⇒ **Example:** I have homework **because** I failed to finish my assignment during class.

**Compound Complex Sentence:** a sentence that contains two independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses. In the following example, the dependent clause is in blue, and the independent clauses are in red.

- ⇒ **Example:** *Although I like to go to Dunkin Donuts,* I have not had the time to go recently, and I have not found anyone to go with.

## Run-on Sentences

A run-on sentence is a sentence where two independent clauses are incorrectly connected. These can include both fused sentences, and comma splices. The original sentence, as well as the corrected sentence, can be seen in the examples listed below. The errors are highlighted in purple.

- ⇒ **Example of a fused sentence:** I like all the tutors in the Writing Center *they are extremely knowledgeable.*
- ⇒ **Correct example:** I like all the tutors in the Writing Center. They are extremely knowledgeable.
- ⇒ **Example of a fused sentence:** Dean forgot to bring his science project to class *he left his assignment on the kitchen table.*
- ⇒ **Correct example:** Dean forgot to bring his science project to class. He left his assignment on the kitchen table.
- ⇒ **Example of a comma splice:** Today I am tired, *I will take a nap.*
- ⇒ **Correct example:** Today I am tired. I will take a nap
- ⇒ **Example of a comma splice:** The children wanted to stay up all night, the parents wanted to go to bed.
- ⇒ **Correct example:** The children wanted to stay up all night. The parents wanted to go to bed.



## Sentence Fragments Resource

⇒ [Fragments](#)

**Further Assistance:** For more detailed help or if you have questions, visit the Writing Center located in the Lewis University Library or call 815-836-5427.