

A **clause** is a part of a sentence that contains a verb. Different types of sentence can be created by combining the clauses of the sentence in different ways.

### **Simple sentences**

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A **simple sentence** has one clause, with a subject and a verb.

The girl sang.

You could add more information to the phrases in the sentence to make an even longer simple sentence. However, the meaning of the sentence essentially stays the same.

The very tall girl with the long brown hair sang beautifully at the concert.

### **Compound sentences**

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If you join two or more simple sentences with a **co-ordinating conjunction** such as **and, but, or, so**, you create a **compound sentence** (sometimes called a **co-ordinate sentence**) in a process called **co-ordination**.

The sentences become clauses of equal importance in this new sentence. They are considered **main clauses**.

She was a very tall girl *and* she sang beautifully.

### **Complex sentences**

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Alternatively, you can add a clause which would not make sense on its own to a simple sentence. The process is called **subordination**, and this kind of clause is called a **subordinate clause**. The subordinate clause can come before or after the main clause.



Subordinate clauses begin with **subordinating conjunctions** such as **after, although, as if, as long as, because, before, if, in case, since, though, until, when, where, while**. Sentences containing subordinate clauses are known as **complex sentences**.

The very tall girl sang beautifully *when she appeared in the concert*.

*When she appeared in the concert*, the very tall girl sang beautifully.

➤ See also **Language Workshop** panel on **Subordinate clauses**.



What types of sentence are the following?  
What seems to be the most important clause in each?

1. **I hate horrible, green broccoli.**
2. **I hate horrible, green broccoli, but it is always served with our meals.**
3. **Although I hate broccoli, it is always served with our meals.**



Can you make this paragraph read better by using different sentence types?

**I rang the doorbell. I ran away. I was scared. I hid behind a tree. I saw a man answer the door. He looked angry. There was no one there.**