

Success on determining a sentence's structure is greatly determined by understanding what a subject and verb is.

S V

Sentence Structures

Simple, Compound, Complex, and Compound-Complex sentences.

Independent clause expresses a complete thought and can stand alone in a sentence.

S V
I want to go home.

S V
E2020 is great.

S V
Bill ran to the store.

S V
Bill is my hero.

* These all make sense.

Subordinate clause does not express a complete thought and cannot stand by itself even though it has a subject and a verb in it.

S V
As we watched the spaceship land.

S V
Who approached the house in long leaps.

* Even though they have a subject + verb, these "sentences" don't make sense.

Simple Sentence-contains one independent clause and no subordinate clauses. It may have a compound subject, a compound verb, and any number of phrases.

S V
The boys wanted to take a vacation last summer.

S S V V
Ray and Joe worked and saved enough for a trip to Ohio.

Compound Sentence-contains two or more independent clauses and no subordinate clauses.

S V S V
Originally, they wanted to ride bikes all the way, but they decided to take the train instead.

S V S V
Ray looked forward to seeing his cousins; Joe was eager to play with his uncle's band.

S V S V
Uncle James played in a country band; however, Joe preferred rock music.

They're basically two sentences combined.

Complex Sentence-contains one independent clause and at least one subordinate clause.

S V S V
Because Joe wanted to keep his guitar with him, they decided against taking a plane.

S V S V
If they took the train, they could see all the sights, too.

The part before the comma cannot stand alone = subordinate

Compound/Complex Sentence-contains two or more independent clauses and at least one subordinate clause.

S V S V S V
The band played at a dance, and Ray was pulled into a line dance that was starting

To his surprise, he was good at line dancing; afterward, he joined in whenever he got the chance.

Independent clause | Ind. clause | subordinate clause