PART 3 | Sentence Structure

Now let’s begin to study the different kinds of sentences in English.

There are four kinds of sentences in English: (1) simple, (2) compound, (3) complex, and (4) compound-complex. In this chapter, you will learn about simple sentences.

**Simple Sentences**

A simple sentence is a sentence that has one subject-verb pair.

The word simple in “simple sentence” doesn’t mean “easy.” It means “one subject-verb pair.”

The subject in a simple sentence may be compound:

*My brother and I* are completely different.

The verb in a simple sentence may be compound:

*They laughed and cried* at the same time.

However, each sentence is a simple sentence because it has only one subject-verb pair.

Analyze the simple sentences in the left column and their “formulas” in the right column. There are many variations, but each sentence has only one SV pair.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple Sentences</th>
<th>“Formulas”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My younger sister speaks English well.</td>
<td>SV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My mother and father speak English well.</td>
<td>SSV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My mother and father speak and write English well.</td>
<td>SSVV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My parents will retire soon.</td>
<td>SV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Then they will move into a smaller apartment or live with my older brother and his family.</td>
<td>SVV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*compound: In grammar, compound means “more than one.”*
The following sentence is not a simple sentence because it has two subject-verb pairs. The formula looks like this: SV SV. You will learn more about this kind of sentence in Chapter 2.

\[ \text{S V} \quad \text{S V} \]

My brother lives in New York, and my sister lives in Paris.

**Writer’s Tip**

When you look for verbs, count only verbs that change tense.

My grandmother **wants** to learn to drive.

(Count only wants. **Do not count** to learn or to drive because they **do not change** tense. Verbs with **to** in front of them are infinitives. **Infinitives never change**.)

My sister **will teach** in exchange for cooking lessons.

(Count will teach as one verb, **not two**.)

A duck **is swimming** in the hotel swimming pool.

(Count only the first is swimming. The **second** swimming is not a verb; it is a special kind of adjective called a participle.)

Swimming **is** my favorite way to exercise.

(Count only is. In this sentence, swimming is a special kind of noun called a gerund.)

**Practice 8**

**Simple Sentence Patterns**

A. Identify the formula in the following simple sentences.

**Step 1** Underline the subjects with one line.

**Step 2** Underline the verbs with two lines.

**Step 3** Write S above each underlined subject and V above each underlined verb.

**Step 4** Finally, write the formula for each sentence in the numbered spaces.

**My Grandfather**

\[ \text{S V} \]

1. **My grandfather** is old in years but young in spirit. 2. Every day, he swims a mile and works in his garden. 3. He and my grandmother have four children and ten grandchildren. 4. My grandfather loves parties and invites our entire family to his house for a big dinner on his birthday.

(continued on next page)
All twenty of us eat and tell stories half the night. He never gets tired and is always the last to go to bed. On his last birthday, my brothers and I gave him a present. We put our money together and bought him a video game system. Now he invites us to his house every weekend to play video games with him. My grandfather will always seem young to me.

1. S V
2. ___
3. ___
4. ___
5. ___
6. ___
7. ___
8. ___
9. ___
10. ___

B. Work first by yourself, and then with a partner.

Step 1 Write six simple sentences about your family or family members. Use each of these patterns twice: SV, SSV, SVV.

Step 2 Show your sentences to your partner. Ask your partner to identify the pattern in each sentence.

SVV 1. My youngest brother goes to school and works part-time.

___ 2.

___ 3.

___ 4.

___ 5.

___ 6.

___ 7.
Often you need to connect words or groups of words in a sentence. One way to do this is to use a connecting word. Connecting words are called **conjunctions**. There are many conjunctions in English. Two of the most common ones are **and** and **or**. They have different meanings.

**And** joins two or more similar things in positive sentences.

I like Chinese **and** Italian food.

We have class on Mondays, Wednesdays, **and** Fridays.

**Or** connects two or more similar things in negative sentences.

I don’t like warm milk **or** cold coffee.

We don’t have class on Tuesdays **or** Thursdays.

**Or** also connects two or more choices or alternatives.

I would like to go to London, Rome, **or** Paris on my next vacation.

(*I cannot go to all three places. I will choose one.*)

My father **or** my mother will meet me at the airport.

(*This sentence means that only one person will come to the airport.*

*Compare:* My father **and** my mother will meet me at the airport.

*This sentence means that two people will come to the airport.*)

Use this chart to help you remember the meanings of **and** and **or** in a simple sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Use and</strong> to join two or more items in a positive sentence.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>I love tacos, pizza, <strong>and</strong> egg rolls.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Use or</strong> to join two or more items in a negative sentence.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>I don’t like hot dogs <strong>or</strong> hamburgers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T?</th>
<th>F?</th>
<th><strong>Also, use or</strong> to connect choices.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T?</td>
<td>F?</td>
<td>Is this sentence <strong>true</strong> or <strong>false</strong>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T?</td>
<td>F?</td>
<td>Do you want to stay home <strong>or</strong> go out tonight?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRACTICE 9

Using and, or

Combine the two sentences in each pair to make one sentence. Use and or or according to the meaning. Try not to repeat any words.

1. I like chocolate ice cream. I like coffee ice cream.

   I like chocolate and coffee ice cream.

2. I can speak English. I can understand English.

3. I can’t speak Tagalog. I can’t speak Vietnamese.

4. Blue is my favorite color. Yellow is my favorite color. (Be sure to make the verb and the word color plural.)

5. Would you like soup? Would you like salad? (You can have only one.)

6. You can eat your pizza here. You can take it home.

7. Helen Keller, a famous American woman, was blind. Helen Keller, a famous American woman, was deaf.

8. She could not see. She could not hear.

9. With the help of her teacher, Helen learned to speak. Helen became a famous spokesperson for handicapped people all over the world.
Sentence Combining

Sentence combining is a way to improve your sentence-writing skills. When you do a sentence-combining exercise like the Practice you just completed, you combine two (or more) short sentences into one longer sentence. All the long sentences together make a paragraph.

There may be several correct ways to combine the sentences. However, there are a few rules to follow.

1. Don’t repeat words if possible. For example, in example 1 below, don’t repeat *I am*.
2. You may omit words, but don’t leave out any important information.
3. You may change words. For example, you may change a noun to a pronoun or make a singular word plural.
4. You may add words. For example, in example 2, you need to add the connecting word *and*.

Your goal is to write smooth, grammatically correct sentences that contain all the information but do not repeat any of it.

Example 1

a. *I am a man.*

b. *I am famous.*

Combined sentence: *I am a famous man.*

*I am a man and I am famous* is a grammatically correct sentence, but a native speaker would not write it because a native speaker would not repeat the words *I am*. Another possible sentence is *I am a man who is famous*, but this sentence contains unnecessary words.

Example 2

a. *I have white hair.*

b. *I have a long white beard.*

Combined sentence: *I have white hair and a long white beard.*

You must keep the word *white* in the expressions *white hair* and *a long white beard* because it is important information.
Try It Out!  

Step 1 Combine the sentences in each pair to make one sentence. There may be more than one correct way to combine the sentences.

Step 2 Write your new sentences in paragraph form. Do not number the sentences, and do not write them in a list. Write them as a paragraph.

Who Am I?

1. a. I am a cartoon animal.
   b. I am famous.

   I am a famous cartoon animal.

2. a. I have big ears.
   b. I have black ears.

3. a. I always wear red shorts.
   b. I always wear white gloves.

4. a. I look like an animal.
   b. I talk like a human.

5. a. I live in a place called Disneyland.
   b. I work in a place called Disneyland.

6. a. In Disneyland, I stand around.
   b. In Disneyland, I smile a lot.

7. a. I usually team up with my friend Goofy.
    b. I usually team up with my friend Minnie.

   (I team up with only one friend at a time.)
8. a. Together we greet visitors.
   b. We pose for photographs.

9. I am ________________________________.
   (Write the name of this cartoon animal. Do not write your own name.)

   **Who Am I?**

   I am a famous cartoon animal.

**PART 4 | Writing**

**Review Questions**

Check your understanding of the important points in this chapter by answering the following questions.

**Organization**

1. What is a paragraph?
2. Can a paragraph discuss more than one topic?
3. What are the three parts of a paragraph?
4. Where do you write the title of a paragraph?
5. What is indenting?
6. What are margins?