

Sentence Types

The four sentence types are **simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex**. To accurately determine the **sentence types**, you must first be able to identify the **different sentence structures** contained within the sentences (see page 1 of this handout for sentence structures).

Simple Sentence: contains only one **independent clause** and no **dependent clauses**. A simple sentence can contain phrases.

Examples

We can give more money. (Contains only one **independent clause**)

If needed, we can give more money. (Contains one **phrase** and only one **independent clause**)

We can give more money to the presidential campaign. (Contains only one **independent clause** and one **phrase**)

If needed, we can give more money to the presidential campaign. (Contains two **phrases** and only one **independent clause**)

We can give more money and donate more volunteer time to the presidential campaign. (Contains only one **independent clause** and one **phrase**)

Compound Sentence: contains two or more **independent clauses** joined by both **a comma and a coordinating conjunction** or by a **semicolon, conjunctive adverb, and a comma**, or by a **semicolon**.

Examples

I am going to the Black Arts Festival in Winston Salem, so I am going to save my money. (Contains only two **independent clauses** that are joined by a **comma** and a **coordinating conjunction**. Also, contains two **phrases**.)

The Festival begins in August; therefore, we need to get our ticket by the end of July. (Contains only two **independent clauses** that are joined by a **semicolon**, a **conjunctive adverb**, and a **comma**)

If not by then, the tickets may sell out by the first of August; I am going to get my tickets today. (Contains two **independent clauses** and a **semicolon**)

Complex Sentence: contains only one **independent clause** and at least one **dependent clause**.

Examples

Since we have raised enough to support three candidates, we can give more money to the presidential campaign. (Contains one **dependent clause** and one **independent clause**)

If needed, we can give more money to the presidential campaign after we raise money for the local candidates. (Contains one **independent clause**, one **dependent clause**, and three **phrases**)

Compound-Complex Sentence: contains two or more **independent clauses** and one or more **dependent clauses**.

Example

After we donate to the presidential campaign, we will raise more money, and we will reserve those funds for local candidates. (Contains one **dependent clause**, two **independent clauses**, and one **phrase**)