

## Sentence Clauses

A clause = a part of a sentence.

An **independent clause** forms a complete sentence that can stand alone, and which does not rely on any other part of the sentence to make sense.

- E.g. *The study was carried out carefully.*
- Independent clauses contain both a subject (a noun) and a predicate.
- A **predicate** = the part of the sentence that contains an action (a verb), which comments on the subject (the noun).
- E.g. *The analysis failed to address important considerations.* In this example, the verb fail is commenting on the subject/ noun analysis.

A **dependent clause** is the part of a sentence that cannot stand alone, i.e. the part of a sentence that requires an independent clause to complete the sentence.

- E.g. *Despite mid-Victorian poverty levels, there were many aristocratic families living in England.*
  - The first clause in this sentence (*Despite mid-Victorian poverty levels*) is the dependent clause.
  - The second clause in this sentence (*there were many aristocratic families living in England*) is the independent clause that completes the sentence.
- A common mistake: sentences that lack a verb or predicate.
  - E.g. *The printing press was a cultural revolution. A new level of production.* This is not grammatically correct. In this example, the second sentence (*A new level of production*) is not a full sentence; rather, is a dependent clause that requires an independent clause to make it complete.

### Examples:

1. *The extent to which anaesthesia causes unconsciousness is difficult to establish, although anaesthesia undoubtedly induces unresponsiveness and amnesia.*

- The first half of this sentence is the independent clause because it makes sense on its own; it has both a noun/subject (*extent*) and a verb/predicate (*is*).
- The second half of this sentence is the dependent clause because it requires the first half to make sense; it also begins with a subordinating conjunction (*although*).

2. *If we apply Foucault's analysis of the prison system from his book *Discipline and Punish* (1975), it is clear that the theatre and the prison operate in similar fashions with similar purposes.*

- The first half of this sentence is the dependent clause because it requires the second half to make sense; it also begins with a subordinating conjunction (*if*).
- The second half of this sentence is the independent clause because it makes sense on its own; it has both a noun/subject (*it*) and a verb/predicate (*is*).

## Sentence Structure

**Syntax** = the structure of a sentence, i.e. the arrangement of words and phrases in a sentence. Most sentences have a subject (a noun) that performs an action (a verb), which can have a direct or indirect impact on another subject (a noun).

Syntactical patterns = how we choose to arrange the information in a sentence.

## Syntactical Patterns

### Simple Sentences

- Only contain one independent clause. E.g. *The experiment results supported the theory.*
- Sometimes, simple sentences only contain one word. E.g. *Run!*

### Compound Sentences

- Consist of two or more independent clauses (simple sentences). E.g. *The experiment results supported the theory, but the methodology was altered.*
- Independent clauses are joined by conjunctions such as *and, but, and or.*

### Complex Sentences

- Consist of one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. E.g. *Although the experiment results supported the theory, the methodology was altered.*
- In the example above, the first clause (*Although the experiment results supported the theory*) is a dependent clause, but the second clause (*the methodology was altered*) is a full, simple sentence. Together, they make a complex sentence.

### Compound-Complex Sentences

- Consist of two or more independent clauses (full, simple sentences) + one or more dependent clauses. E.g. *The author said that she would have the essay draft completed by Monday; however, if she does not complete the task, the lecturer will not provide an extension, so it is essential that the student completes the work on time.*
- The example above has 4 clauses.
  1. The first clause (*The author said that she would have the essay draft completed by Monday*) is an independent clause, i.e. a full, simple sentence.
  2. The second clause (*however, if she does not complete the task*) is a dependent clause.
  3. The third clause (*the lecturer will not provide an extension*) is an independent clause, i.e. a full, simple sentence.
  4. Finally, the fourth clause (*so it is essential that the student completes the work on time*) is a dependent clause.

## Grammatical Relationships

English is an **analytic language**, which means that it relies on the order of words in a sentence (the syntax) to indicate the grammatical relationship between those words. Understanding such grammatical relationships helps readers to deduce meaning from the sentence, and it helps us to think about how we might structure our sentences.

Word Type	Function / Grammatical Relationship	Example
The Subject	The noun performing the action in the sentence.	<b>The lecturer</b> gave Matthew's book to the student.
The Direct Object	The noun impacted directly by the action in the sentence.	The lecturer gave <b>Matthew's book</b> to the student.
The Indirect Object	The noun impacted indirectly by the action in the sentence.	The lecturer gave Matthew's book to <b>the student</b> .
The Genitive	The noun that is possessed by another noun in the sentence.	The lecturer gave Matthew's <b>book</b> to the student.
The Possessive	The noun that is possessing another noun in the sentence.	The lecturer gave <b>Matthew's</b> book to the student.

## Syntactical Sequences

- Subjects are usually situated first in a sentence.
- Verbs are usually situated second in a sentence.
- Objects are usually situated last in a sentence.
- Genitives and possessives may be situated almost anywhere in a sentence.

### NOTE: Not all sentences follow these sequences:

- The use of a preposition may radically alter the sentence sequence. Prepositions are also essential for indicating grammatical relationships, especially the sequence deviates from the sequences outlined above.
- A preposition = a word that governs a noun or pronoun by describing its grammatical relationship with another word in the sentence (e.g. *to, from, after, in, up, on, at, across, with, despite, since*).
- E.g. *The nurse did not say to which hospital she was going.* In this example, the verb (*going*) comes at the end of the sentence because of the use of the preposition (*to*). We cannot conclude a sentence with a preposition and so the sequence has been altered slightly so that it is grammatically correct. Note that the subject (*the nurse*) and the verb (*did not say*) are situated in their usual positions (i.e. first and second, respectively).

## General Types of Sentences

### Declarative Sentence:

- This is a sentence that makes a statement, or presents a claim.
- E.g. *The potato blight was a central cause of the Irish famine in the nineteenth century.*

### Exclamatory Sentences:

- This is a sentence that expresses heightened emotion or sentiment, such as surprise or excitement, and it concludes with an exclamation mark (!). Exclamatory sentences are common in creative writing, but rare in professional or academic writing. Sometimes you may find these sentences in your written feedback for assignments.
- E.g. *Your analysis of the text is excellent!*

### Interrogative Sentences:

- This is a sentence that poses a question, which concludes with a question mark (?), and which often opens with an interrogative pronoun (*who, what, where, when, why, whom, etc.*).
- E.g. *To whom is this letter addressed?*

### Imperative Sentences:

- This is a sentence that expresses a demand, command, or request. These sentences often render the subject (noun) passive or implicit, and they focus attention on the action (verb).
- E.g. *Submit the assignment on Friday.* In this example, the assignment is the direct object and we do not have a subject, i.e. the assignment must be submitted by whom? The focus of the sentence is not on the subject, but instead on the necessity of submission (the action/verb of the sentence, which has not been conjugated).

## General Rules of Sentences

- New sentences begin with a capital letter.
- All sentences conclude with a period/ full stop (.), a question mark (?), or an exclamation mark (!).
- Commas (,) should never be used to separate sentences, i.e. commas separate clauses within sentences. Please see the UCD Writing Centre's handout on commas.
- Colons (:) and semicolons (;) may be used to separate full sentences, but we do not use a capital letter to start the sentence after the colon or the semicolon. For further information on the use of colons and semicolons, please see the UCD Writing Centre's handout on punctuation.
- The number of the noun (i.e. whether it is plural or singular) must match the number of the verb (i.e. if the noun is plural, the verb must also be plural; if the noun is singular, the verb must also be singular. This is called **noun-verb agreement**.
  - ✗ **Incorrect:** *The students carries their books to class*, i.e. the noun (*student*) is plural, but the verb (*carries*) is singular.
  - ✓ **Correct:** *The students carry their books to class*, i.e. the noun (*students*) is plural, and the verb (*carry*) is also plural.