Sentence Types

Overview: Using a variety of sentence types will make your writing more stylistically interesting and complex. There are four main sentence types: **simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences,** and **compound-complex sentences**. Alternating between sentence types will add variety to the rhythm of your writing, making it more engaging to your reader.

SIMPLE SENTENCES consist of just one independent clause.

Examples of simple sentences:

> 1) She went to the bookstore.
>
> 2) I want to be a teacher.
>
> 3) Breakfast is the most important meal of the day.
>
> 4) Few species of palm tree are native to Southern California.

COMPOUND SENTENCES are made up of two or more independent clauses, and no dependent clauses.

Independent clauses must be joined together with a coordinating conjunction (FANYBOYS) and a comma, OR with a conjunctive adverb and a semicolon in order to avoid run-on sentences and commas splices.

Examples of compound sentences constructed using a coordinating conjunction and a comma:

> 1) She finally received her financial aid check**, so** she went to the bookstore.
>
> 2) I want to be a teacher**, but** I will be in school for another year in order to complete my teaching credential.

Examples of compound sentences constructed using a conjunctive adverb and a semicolon:

> 3) Breakfast is the most important meal of the day**; nevertheless**, teens feel they do not have time for breakfast.
>
> 4) Many people associate palm trees with Southern California**; however,** few species of palm tree are native to this area.

COMPLEX SENTENCES consist of one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses.

Examples of complex sentences:

    1) She went to the bookstore to purchase her textbooks because she had received her financial aid.

    2) Teaching is not the highest paying career, but I love working with children.

    3) Although breakfast is the most important meal of the day, teens feel they do not have time for it.

    4) Even though few species of palm tree are native to this area, many people associate palm trees with Southern California.

COMPOUND-COMPLEX SENTENCES consist of multiple independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses.

Examples of complex-compound sentences:

    1) She finally received her financial aid check, so she went to the bookstore to purchase her textbooks even though classes had not yet started.

    2) I want to be a teacher; consequently, I will be in school for another year in order to complete my teaching credential unless I decide to teach pre-school instead.

    3) Breakfast is the most important meal of the day; nevertheless, many people feel they do not have time for breakfast because of their busy schedules.

    4) Many people associate palm trees with Southern California, yet few species of palm tree are native to this area, although that fact is little known.

Practice: Can you identify these sentence types in your writing? Choose one paragraph and revise the sentences in that paragraph so that you have at least one of each type of sentence. Remember that you should always include a variety of sentence types in your writing; try to avoid using the same one or two types. Varying sentence types helps you produce writing that is interesting to your reader.