

Week 2

SENTENCE STRUCTURE: COMPOUND SENTENCES

Previously, you learned about simple sentences. Another kind of sentence is a compound sentence.

A **compound sentence** is two simple sentences connected by a comma and a coordinating conjunction.

This is the **basic formula** for a compound sentence:

| | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Simple sentence, | COORDINATING CONJUNCTION | simple sentence |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|

These are compound sentences:

*My family goes camping every summer, and we usually have fun.
Last year we went camping at Blue Lake, but we had a terrible time.*

Command sentences can also be compound. Remember that the subject “you” is not expressed in commands.

Have a good time, but (you) don't stay out too late.

Here are three important points to know about compound sentences:

1. A **comma** and a **coordinating conjunction** connect the two halves of a compound sentence.
2. There are seven coordinating conjunctions in English: *for*, **and**, *nor*, **but**, **or**, *yet*, and **so**. Remember them by the phrase “fan boys.”
3. Don't confuse a compound sentence with a simple sentence that has a compound verb. The first sentence in each of the following pairs of sentences is simple and doesn't need a comma. The second one is compound and requires a comma.

| | | “Formulas” |
|------------------------------------|---|--------------|
| Simple sentence with compound verb | My family goes camping every summer and usually has fun. | SV V |
| Compound sentence | My family goes camping every summer, and we usually have fun. | S V, and S V |
| Simple sentence with compound verb | Last year we went camping but had a terrible time. | SV V |
| Compound sentence | Last year we went camping, but everyone had a terrible time. | S V, but S V |
| Simple sentence with compound verb | Next year we will go to the beach or perhaps stay at home. | SV V |
| Compound sentence | Next year we will go to the beach, or perhaps we will stay at home. | S V, or S V |

COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS: AND, BUT, OR, SO

In compound sentences, *and*, *but*, *or*, and *so* have these meanings:

And connects two sentences with similar ideas. The sentences can be positive or negative.

e.g.

My roommate is an art student, and her boyfriend plays in a rock band. She doesn't like rock music, and he doesn't like art.

NB! Remember to use *or*, not *and*, in a negative simple sentence.

But connects two sentences with contrasting or opposite ideas.

e.g.

She likes classical music, but she doesn't like rock. She likes country music, but he hates it.

Or connects two sentences that express alternatives or choices.

e.g.

Every Friday night, they go to a classical concert, or they visit an art gallery.

Every Saturday night, he practices with his band, or they go to hear a rock concert.

So connects a reason and a result.

Reason

Result

e.g.

They both like jazz, so they go to jazz concerts together.

He works a lot, so they don't go out very often.

TWO SENTENCE ERRORS: RUN-ONS AND COMMA SPLICES

Two sentence errors that writers sometimes make are **run-ons** and **comma splices**.

These mistakes happen most often when the two sentences are related in meaning.

• A **run-on** is two simple sentences incorrectly joined with no coordinating conjunction and no comma.

e.g. WRONG: *Write your signature on the line print your name below it.*

• A **comma splice** is two simple sentences incorrectly joined with a comma alone.

e.g. WRONG: *Write your signature on the line, print your name below it.*

There are two ways to fix these errors.

1. Separate the sentences with a period.

e.g. *Write your signature on the line. Print your name below it.*

2. Add (or keep) the comma and add a coordinating conjunction.

e.g. *Write your signature on the line, and print your name below it.*

WRITING A PARAGRAPH

A **paragraph** is a group of related sentences about a single topic. The topic of a paragraph is one, and only one idea.

A paragraph has three main parts.

1. **Topic sentence**

The first sentence in a paragraph is a sentence that names the topic and tells what the paragraph will explain about the topic. This sentence is called the **topic sentence**.

2. **Supporting sentences**

The middle sentences in a paragraph are called the **supporting sentences**. Supporting sentences give examples or other details about the topic.

3. **Concluding sentence**

The last sentence in a paragraph is called the **concluding sentence**. A concluding sentence often repeats the topic sentence in different words or summarizes the main points.



Each paragraph that you write for this class should also have a **title**. A title tells the topic of the paragraph in a few words. A title is short. It is not a complete sentence. It may be just one word. Here are some examples of titles:

My Flat

New Gadgets

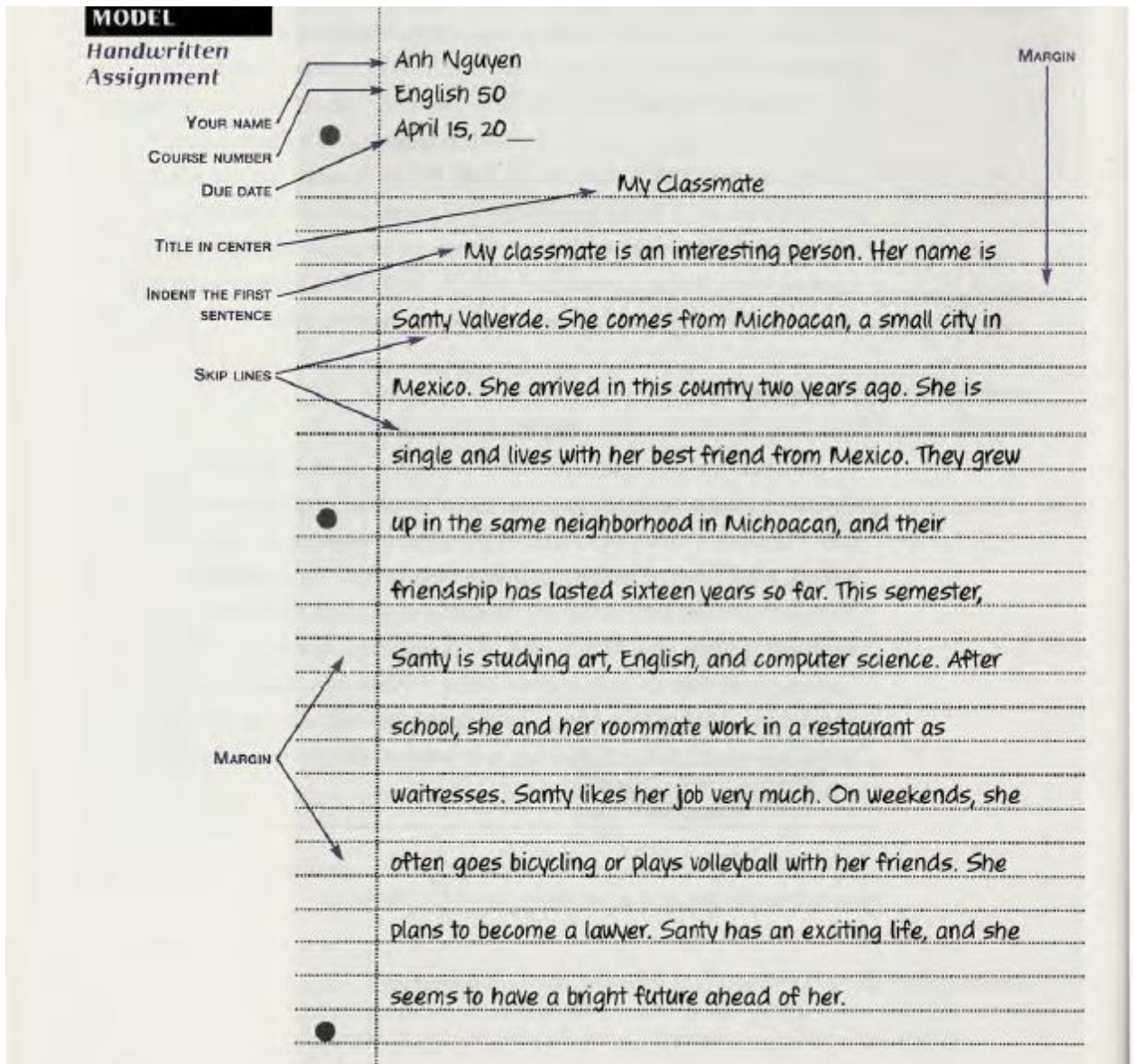
Paragraph 1

Mrs. Robinson

¹My first grade teacher was an important person in my life. ²Her name was Mrs. Robinson. ³In the schools in my country, children usually learn to print before they learn to write. ⁴Mrs. Robinson didn't believe in printing. ⁵She thought it was a waste of time. ⁶She taught us to write in cursive script (like handwriting) from the first day. ⁷At first it was hard. ⁸She made us practice a lot. ⁹I remember filling entire pages just with capital Os. ¹⁰At the end of the year, we felt very grown up because we could write in cursive. ¹¹Mrs. Robinson was important in my life because she taught me a valuable lesson. ¹²I can achieve anything by working hard.

In academic writing, there is a special form for paragraphs.

You should put **your name (and group)**, course number (**subject**), and **date**. Your paper should have a title and **margins**.



If you use a computer, make your paper look like this:

MODEL

Computer-Written Assignment

YOUR NAME → Sacha Petrovsky
 COURSE NUMBER → English 50
 DUE DATE → April 15, 20__

TITLE IN CENTER → My Classmate

USE THE TAB KEY TO INDENT THE FIRST SENTENCE FIVE SPACES. → Our classmate from Brazil is very athletic. His name is Antonio Gonsalves. His friends call him Tony. Tony is from Brazil. He is the oldest son in his family. His family sent him here to learn English and to study business. Then he will return to his home and work in his family's company. One interesting thing I learned about Tony is that he is a big sports fan. He watches sports on television all the time. He also plays several sports. His favorite sport is soccer. After all, he is from Brazil! I would like to play soccer with Tony after class some day.

DOUBLE SPACE →

MARGIN →

Here are the rules for correct paragraph form for a paragraph typed on a computer.

1. **Paper**

Use standard white paper.

2. **Font**

Use a standard font style, such as Times New Roman. Do not use underlining, italics, or bold type to emphasize words. It is not correct to do so in academic writing.

3. **Heading**

Type your full name in the upper left corner. On the next line, type the course number. On the third line of the heading, type the date the assignment is due in the order month-day-year, with a comma after the day.

4. **Assignment Title**

Skip one line, and then center your title. Use the centering icon on your word processing program.

5. **Body**

Skip one line, and start typing on the third line. Indent (move to

the right) the first line of each paragraph by using the TAB key. (The TAB key automatically indents five spaces.)

6. Margins

Leave a 1-inch margin on the left and right margins.

7. Spacing

Double-space the body.

WRITING PROCESS

Good writing is more than just sitting down and “talking” on a piece of paper. Good writing involves thinking, planning, writing, and revising. You become a good writer by always using these four steps:

1. Pre-write to get ideas and organize them.
2. Write the first draft.
3. Edit: Check and revise your work.
4. Write the final copy.

Step 1 Pre-write to get ideas

In the prewriting step, you get ideas to write about. **Taking notes** is one way to gather ideas. Another way to get ideas is called **freewriting**. Here is how to do freewriting.

Choose a topic and write it at the top of a piece of paper. Then write whatever sentences come into your mind about the topic. Write horizontally across the paper as you do when you write a letter.

e.g.

Freewriting About my Grandmother

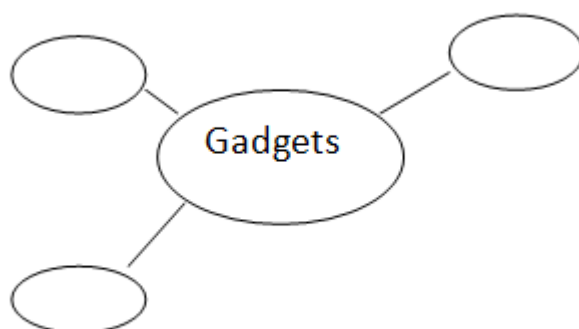
My grandmother. She was a good cook. The best cook. Every weekend we have a big dinner. With big, big bowls of food. Lots of talking. Everybody in the family there. Every time we eat the same food, but we always love it. Is our favorite meal. She never mad at us. She always defends us when we are in trouble with our parents. One time I picked all the roses in her garden. She not even mad then. Grandmother kind and generous. She gives food to poor people. She never makes them feel bad about taking it. Makes people feel good, just as she made me feel good when I picked all the roses. Thanked me for the beautiful bouquet. Mother really angry. Grandmother always forgives. Forgiving heart.

Don't worry about grammar, spelling, or punctuation, and don't worry about putting your ideas into any kind of order. You don't even have to write complete sentences. Just write everything that comes into your mind about your topic. If you can't think of an English word, write it in your own language (NB!). The goal is to keep writing without stopping for about ten minutes or until you run out of ideas.

After you have run out of ideas, edit your freewriting. (Remember that *edit* means to review and change writing in order to improve it.) Read what you have written and choose one main idea for your paragraph. Cross out ideas that aren't related to the one main idea.

Clustering is a prewriting technique that helps you get ideas to write about. Here is how to do clustering.

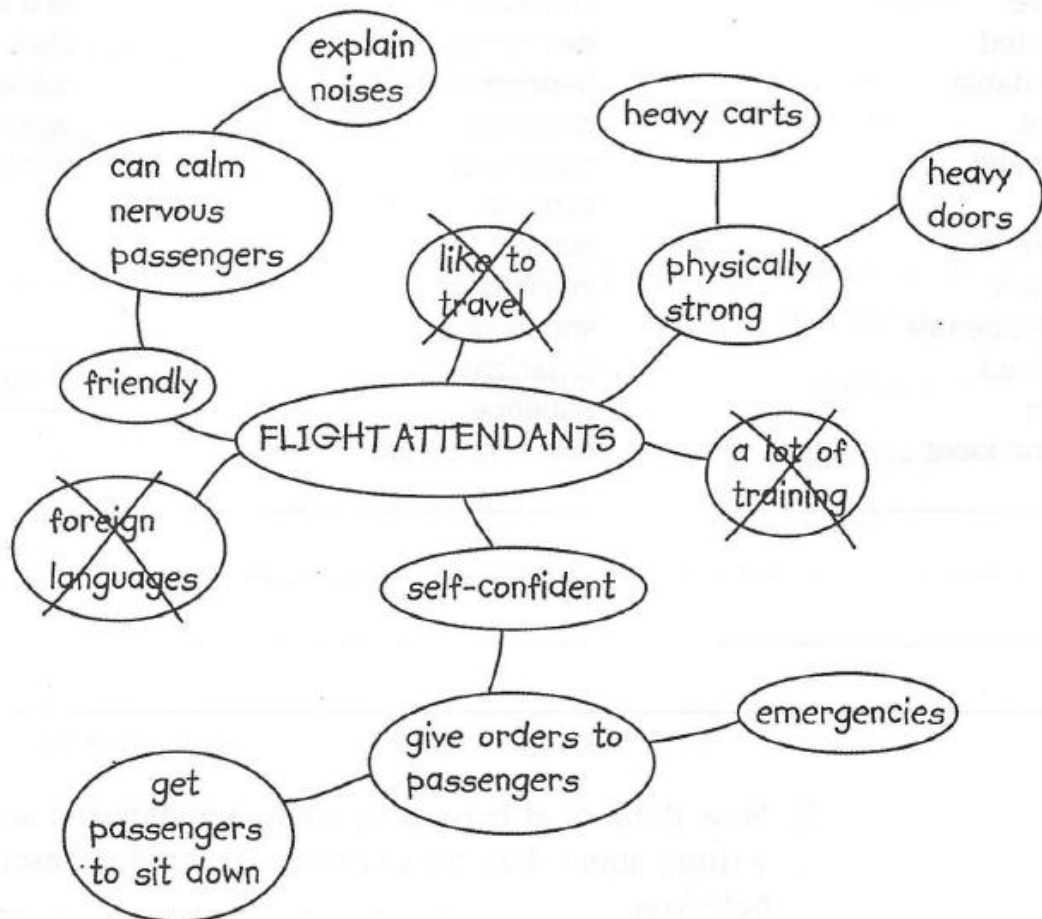
Begin by writing a word in the center of a piece of paper. Draw a circle around it.



Write words or phrases in circles around the main circle and then connect them to the main circle. Write down every idea that comes into your mind.

Next, think about the word or phrase in each circle. Try to think of something that illustrates the word or phrase. Also, cross out circles that you don't want.

e.g.



From these clusters, or groups of circles, you can begin to see which ideas to use and which ones to throw away. Use the clusters that have the most circles.

Making an outline (outlining) is another part of prewriting. Once you get ideas to write about, you need to organize them. An outline helps you do this. When you write an outline, try to make the main points (A, B, C, and so on) the same—all adjectives, all nouns, all verb phrases, or all sentences.

e.g.

- A. Friendliness
- B. Self-confidence

C. Physical strength

NOT Correct! – Why?

1. Breakfast
2. Go to work
3. Lunch

Step 2 Write the first draft.

In the second step, you write your paragraph in rough form without worrying too much about errors. This first writing is called the **first draft** or the **rough draft**.

Step 3 Edit the first draft.

In the third step, you edit your paragraph. When you edit something, you check it and make changes and corrections. Editing is usually a two-step process.

- In the first step, you check the paragraph as a whole. Is the meaning clear?
- In the second step, you check the paragraph for good form, organization, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and so on.

Step 4 Write the final copy.

In the last step, you write a neat final copy of your paragraph to hand in to your teacher.

LISTING-ORDER PARAGRAPHS

ORGANIZATION

Organization is one of the most important writing skills. A well-organized paragraph is easy to read and understand because the ideas are in a recognizable pattern. Just as you organize tools on a workbench or clothes in a closet, you also organize sentences in a paragraph. Listing order is a pattern often used in English.

In a listing-order paragraph, **you divide the topic into separate points**. Then you discuss one point, and then another point, and then a third point, and so on.

There are three keys to writing a listing-order paragraph:

1. Begin with a sentence that names your topic and says it has several points.
2. Write about each point separately.
3. End with a sentence that reminds your reader about the points you just discussed.

e.g.

Flight Attendants

Flight attendants have three important characteristics. First of all, flight attendants are friendly. They enjoy greeting passengers and making them feel comfortable. Sometimes passengers are afraid of flying. A friendly flight attendant can talk to them and help them feel calm. For example, he or she can explain strange noises made by the aircraft. Second, flight attendants are self-confident. They give instructions to passengers, and they must be firm enough so that passengers obey them. This characteristic is especially important in emergencies. Third, flight attendants are physically strong. They push heavy carts of food and drinks up and down the aisles. They also have to open and close the heavy doors of airplanes. In short, flight attendants are friendly, self-confident, and strong.

Previously, you learned that a paragraph has three parts: a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence. Now we will study each part of a paragraph in more detail.

THE TWO PARTS OF A TOPIC SENTENCE

A topic sentence has two parts: a **topic** and a **controlling idea**. The topic part names the topic. The controlling idea part tells what the paragraph will say about the topic. It tells the reader: This paragraph will discuss these things—and only these things—about this topic.

e.g. *Flight attendants have three important characteristics.*

For example, the topic of the model paragraph above is *flight attendants*. What will the paragraph say about flight attendants? The controlling idea tells us: *They have three characteristics*. The paragraph will not tell us about their uniforms, their training, or their duties. It will only discuss three characteristics that flight attendants have.

Here are examples of other topic sentences. The topic in all three examples is the same: *English*. The controlling idea in each says something different about English.

*English is constantly adding new words.
English borrows words from other languages.
English is necessary for many different jobs.*

Usually, the topic comes first and the controlling idea comes second in the topic sentence. However, the controlling idea may come first. In the A sentence, the topic is first. In the B sentence, the controlling idea is first.

- A. **English** borrows words from other languages.
- B. Other languages give words to **English**.

SUPPORTING SENTENCES

The middle sentences of a paragraph are the supporting sentences. Supporting sentences explain or prove the idea in the topic sentence. The supporting sentences are the biggest part of a paragraph

LISTING-ORDER TRANSITION SIGNALS

A transition signal is a word or phrase that shows how one idea is related to another idea. In a listing-order paragraph, use transition signals such as *First*, *Second*, and *Third* to tell your reader that these are main points.

Here are some transition signals that show listing order.

| Listing-Order Signals | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| First, | also |
| First of all, | , also. |
| Second, | |
| Third, | |
| In addition, | |
| Also, | |
| Finally, | |

1. Place most listing-order transition signals at the beginning of the sentence, and put a comma after them.

e.g.

First, living in a foreign country helps you learn another language faster than studying it at school.

In addition, small colleges are friendlier, so new students make friends more quickly.

2. *Also* may come in the middle of a sentence (between the subject and the verb) without a comma or at the end of a sentence with a comma.

e.g.

They **also** like to “hang out” at the beach with their friends.

They like to “hang out” at the beach with their friends, **also**.

PARAGRAPH UNITY

A paragraph must follow the rule of unity. All the sentences in a paragraph are about one main idea. Another way of expressing the rule of unity is to say that all the supporting sentences in a paragraph must be relevant. Relevant means “directly related to the main idea.”

THE CONCLUDING SENTENCE

Paragraphs that stand alone (that is, paragraphs that are not part of a longer composition) often have a concluding sentence at the end. A concluding sentence closes the paragraph so that the reader is not left expecting more.

1. Sometimes a concluding sentence reminds the reader of the main point by restating the topic sentence in different words.

e.g.

Indeed, a beach is a place to have fun all year.

2. Sometimes a concluding sentence summarizes the main points.

e.g.

In short, flight attendants are friendly, self-confident, and strong.

To summarize, employers look for dependable, responsible team players.

NB!

Do NOT introduce a new idea in your concluding sentence. Just review or repeat the ideas you have already discussed. Don't add anything new.

Use a transition signal to tell your reader that this is the end of your paragraph. The following chart lists several conclusion signals. Notice that there is always a comma after conclusion signals.

| Conclusion Signals | | |
|--------------------|---------------|-----------|
| To conclude, | To sum up, | In brief, |
| In conclusion, | To summarize, | In short, |
| | In summary, | Indeed, |