BUILDING COMPLEX SENTENCES (COORDINATION AND SUBORDINATION)

Using complex sentence structure allows you to:

- Express more complicated thoughts
- Make the relationship between related ideas more clear
- Vary sentence structure, which makes your essay more enjoyable to read
- Avoid errors such as comma splice, run-on, and sentence fragments

Complex sentences use certain kinds of words and/or appropriate punctuation to properly combine simple sentences into longer, yet grammatically correct, complex sentences. Once you are able to tell the difference between simple and complex sentence, you can use the guidelines on the next page to help you build complex sentences.

### SIMPLE SENTENCES HAVE ONE SUBJECT/VERB PAIR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple Sentence</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marie ran.</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie ran the race.</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie ran the race quickly.</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My sister Marie ran the race quickly and won.</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When a sentence is written in a direct style, the **subject** of a sentence tells who or what the sentence is about. The **verb** tells what is happening to the subject.

### COMPLEX SENTENCES COMBINE TWO OR MORE SIMPLE SENTENCES

**Coordination** = joining two sentences that could each stand alone

My sister **Marie** was very tired, but **she** ran the race quickly and **won**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coordinate Sentence</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My sister Marie was very tired, but she ran the race quickly and won.</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Subordination** = joining two sentences where one is made to depend on the other to be complete

Even though my sister Marie was very tired, she ran the race quickly and **won**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subordinate Sentence</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Even though my sister Marie was very tired, she ran the race quickly and won.</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What differences do you notice between the two examples of complex sentences?
**COORDINATION**

**Comma and a Coordinating Conjunction**

- Independent clause: **,**  
  - for, and, but, or, nor, yet, so  
  - Independent clause.

**Example:**

*Raul loves to run with his dog, **but** the dog’s short legs prevent her from running very far.  
I was running late to school, **so** I asked my roommate for a ride.*

**Punctuation Alone**

- Independent clause: **:**  
  - ;  
  - independent clause.

**Example:**

*Mary’s announcement surprised the committee: **she had decided to resign.**  
I came here to convince you to join me; now I see that it’s hopeless.  
I know you begin your new job tomorrow. I can’t wait to hear how it goes.*

**Semicolon and a Transition Word**

- Independent clause: **;**  
  - however  
  - therefore  
  - in fact  
  - independent clause.

**Example:**

*Budget cuts have reduced resources at the college; **however,** the writing center is still open.*

**SUBORDINATION**

**Subordinating Conjunction**

- Independent clause:  
  - after, although  
  - as (as if), because  
  - before, if  
  - since, unless  
  - until, whereas  
  - when (ever), while  
  - independent clause.

**Example:**

*Robin had to finish her homework **before** she went out with her friends.*

**Subordinating Conjunction and Comma**

- Independent clause:  
  - After, Although  
  - As (as if), Because  
  - Before, If  
  - Since, Unless  
  - Until, Whereas  
  - When (ever), While  
  - independent clause.

**Example:**

*Before she went out with her friends, Robin had to finish her homework.*