Basic Sentence Structure

A sentence is defined as one or more independent clauses, sometimes connected to dependent clauses and sometimes not, that express a complete thought.

**Elements of a sentence**

**Independent clause**: A subject and a predicate that express a complete thought. An independent clause can stand alone as a sentence (e.g., “I like to run.”).

**Subject**: The noun, noun phrase, or gerund that is performing the action or state of being described in a sentence.

**Predicate**: The verb describing the action or state of being performed by the subject of a sentence, as well as any object of the verb.

**Dependent clause**: A subject and predicate that do not express a complete thought. A dependent clause must be connected to an independent clause in a sentence; it cannot stand alone (e.g., “because I like to run.”).

**Coordinating conjunction**: A word that links two independent clauses. The words that can be used as coordinating conjunctions are *for, and, nor, but, or, yet,* and *so.*

**Subordinating conjunction**: A word that links a dependent clause to an independent clause. Examples include *after, before, even though, during, if, when,* and many more.
1. Simple Sentence

A simple sentence consists of one independent clause

Ex. 1

**Run!**

**Independent clause**

Subject: implied *you* (noun)
Predicate: *run* (verb)

Ex. 2

**James ran.**

**Independent clause**

Subject: *James* (noun)
Predicate: *ran* (verb)

Ex. 3

**James ran across the wet field.**

**Independent clause**

Subject: *James* (noun)
Predicate: *ran* (verb) + *across the wet field* (prepositional phrase)
2. Compound Sentence

A **compound sentence** contains two or more independent clauses linked by a coordinating conjunction.

**Ex. 1**

*James crossed the wet field, and his shoes got soaked.*

- **Independent clause:** 
  - Subject: *James* (noun)
  - Predicate: *crossed* (verb) + *the wet field* (object)

- **Conj.**

- **Independent clause:**
  - Subject: *his shoes* (noun phrase)
  - Predicate: *got soaked* (verb phrase)

**Ex. 2**

*I could have followed him, but I didn’t want to.*

- **Independent clause:**
  - Subject: *I* (noun)
  - Predicate: *could have followed* (verb phrase) + *him* (object)

- **Conj.**

- **Independent clause:**
  - Subject: *I* (noun)
  - Predicate: *didn’t want to* (verb phrase)
3. Complex Sentence

A complex sentence contains an independent clause combined with a dependent clause.

Ex. 1

After James stopped running, he took off his wet shoes.

**Independent clause**
Subject: *he* (noun)
Predicate: *took off* (verb) + *his wet shoes* (object)

**Dependent clause**
Subject: *James* (noun)
Predicate: *stopped running* (verb phrase)

Ex. 2

Sarah, who is my best friend, rented a movie.

**Independent clause**
Subject: *Sarah* (noun)
Predicate: *rented* (verb) + *a movie* (object)

**Dependent clause**
Subject: *Who* (relative pronoun)
Predicate: *is* (verb) *my best friend* (object)
4. Compound-Complex Sentence

A sentence with two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses.

Ex. 1

**When we arrive, James will make the popcorn, and**

**Sarah will start the movie.**