

SAT Verbal

Lecture 1

Sentence Structure: Sentence Boundaries

SAT

TestVerbal

1. Subject and Verb

Every sentence must contain a subject and a verb

Wrong: **Drives a car.** (This sentence has no subject).

Correct: My friend drives a car

Wrong: **Everyone who wishes to study in a US university.** (Again, this sentence has no verb).

Correct: Everyone who wishes to study in a US university has to take the SAT test.

2. Avoid Fragments

Fragments are not full sentences because they miss either a subject or a verb

NBC will broadcast the debate. **With discussions afterwards.**

NBC will broadcast the debate, with discussions afterwards.

Jane didn't return to work for three weeks after her illness. **To let her knee fully heal.**

Jane didn't return to work for three weeks. She wanted to let her knee fully heal.

3. Simple Sentences

A simple sentence consist of one subject/verb pair.

My brother has been learning French for five years.

Many students want to get a good job after graduation.

A simple sentence may have a compound subject or a compound verb:

The boy and his father played basketball.

They boy ate dinner, did his homework, and watched TV.

The boy and his father played basketball and watched TV.

4. Compound Sentences

A compound sentence has more than one subject/verb pair.

Each subject/verb pair is **independent** (it may stand alone as a simple sentence)

Sometimes I ignore my alarm clock, and I have to rush to get to classes. – compound sentence

Sometimes I ignore my alarm clock. – independent simple sentence

I have to rush to get to classes. – independent simple sentence

James is obsessed with baseball; he eats, breathes, and lives the game. – compound sentence

James is obsessed with baseball. – independent simple sentence

He eats, breathes, and lives the game. – independent simple sentence

5. Comma in Compound Sentences

You should use a comma and a compound conjunctions to separate two clauses in an compound sentence

I started on time, but I arrived late.

You can remember these compound conjunctions by acronym FANBOYS

for and nor but or yet so

6. Introductory Words and Phrases

You may use an introductory word or phrase (*however, therefore, moreover, as a result, for example*) to connect two **independent** sentences. Introductory words and phrases should be separated by commas

Sometimes I ignore my alarm clock. Therefore, I have to rush to get to classes. – introductory word *therefore* is used in the beginning of a second simple sentence.

Sometimes I ignore my alarm clock; therefore, I have to rush to get to classes. – introductory word *therefore* is used in the middle of a compound sentence.

Sometimes I ignore my alarm clock, so I have to rush to get to classes. – compound conjunction *so* is used in the middle of a compound sentence.

7. Comma with Introductory Words or Phrases

You should use a comma to separate an introductory word or phrase in a sentence

Suddenly, *an angry black cat sprang from the shadows.*

Remember the following introductory words and phrases and do not confuse them with conjunctions.

***first(ly), second(ly), third(ly), last(ly),
also, moreover, furthermore, in addition,
however, nevertheless, on the one hand, on the other hand
therefore, in conclusion, hence, consequently, so,
for example, for instance
logically, interestingly, paradoxically, interestingly, increasingly***

8. Complex Sentences

A complex sentence has an independent clause (main clause) and a dependent clause.

A dependent clause cannot stand alone without the independent (main) clause.

Many students think that grammar is tricky. – complex sentence

Many students think. – main clause (simple sentence)

That grammar is tricky. – dependent clause (fragment)

Those who are afraid of heights should not climb the Eiffel Tower. – complex sentence

Those should not climb the Eiffel Tower. – main clause (simple sentence)

Who are afraid of heights. – dependent clause (fragment)

9. Dependent Clauses

A dependent clause starts with a subordinate (dependent) conjunction:
**that, which, who, whom, when, where, why, how, unless, until, if, after
because, for, since, while, although, though**

When he wrote the letter. – dependent clause (fragment)

Which will finish tomorrow. – dependent clause (fragment)

Because I will study hard. – dependent clause (fragment)

Since she didn't read this book. – dependent clause (fragment)

Where they live. – dependent clause (fragment)

Why you always find excuses. – dependent clause (fragment)

When you make mistakes. – dependent clause (fragment)

I do not understand why you always find excuses when you
make mistakes – full complex sentence

10. Subordinate Conjunctions

You should identify subordinate conjunctions in a complex sentence.
Remember the following subordinate conjunctions

that, which, who, whom, whose
what, where, when, how, until, as long as, if, unless
because, since
although, though, while, as

Do not confuse them with compound conjunctions (FANBOYS)

11. Comma in Complex Sentences

If the subordinate clause comes first, you need to use a comma

Because I was thirsty, I drank a glass of water.

If the main clause comes first, you don't need to use a comma

I drank a glass of water because I was thirsty.

You need to use a comma in all cases with ***although*** and ***though***

12. Compound-Complex Sentences

A compound-complex sentence consists of two or more independent clauses and one dependent clause.

I complimented Joe when he finished the job, and he seemed pleased. – compound-complex sentence

I complimented Joe. – independent clause (simple sentence)

And he seemed pleased. – independent clause (simple sentence)

When he finished the job. – dependent clause (fragment)

13. Don't Confuse!

Compound
Conjunctions

and

but, yet

so

for

Subordinate
Conjunctions

as

**although, though
while**

because, since, as

Introductory
Words/Phrases

also, moreover, furthermore

however, nevertheless

so, therefore, hence

for this reason