

Complex Sentences

Complex sentences involve combining two sentences of unequal value; one sentence is dependent on the other for its full meaning.

For example, **After her father reads her a bedtime story**

This is not a complete sentence, for it does not make sense by itself. It leaves us with the question, *what happened after the bedtime story?* It is an example of a **dependent clause**. Unlike an independent clause, a dependent clause starts with a dependent word that leaves the sentence hanging. In the above example, this word is **after**. The dependent word is known as a **subordinating conjunction (SC)**.

A **dependent clause** must be paired with an **independent clause** to achieve its full meaning. The result is a **complex sentence**.

Example: **Maria goes to sleep after her father reads her a bedtime story.**

In the example above, the dependent clause is followed by an independent clause; **her father reads her a bedtime story**.

Common subordinating conjunctions:

After	although	though	as	because
Before	even though	how	if	as if
Since	so that	unless	until	what
Whatever	when	whenever	where	wherever
Whether	whichever	while	who	whose

There are two methods for creating complex sentences. Both of these methods use subordinating conjunctions; one puts the independent clause first, the other puts the dependent clause first.

A. Independent Clause + Subordinating Conjunction + Dependent Clause.

Example: I want to proofread my essay before showing it to my LIA.

B. Subordinating + Dependent Clause + Comma + Independent Clause. Conjunction

Example: Although I am nervous about writing, I think I will do just fine.

Practice with Subordination

Read the following information; afterwards, complete the exercise below.

Ten Steps for Handling Criticism

- 1. Remain calm!**
The easiest thing to do is get upset. Instead, have an open mind. The person criticizing you may have something worthwhile to say.
- 2. Don't take it personally.**
Keep your self-confidence. You are being criticized for something you *did*, not something you *are*.
- 3. Listen!**
Often we use the time someone else is talking to figure out what our response is going to be. Instead, give your full attention to what is being said.
- 4. Make sure you understand.**
In your own words, repeat what the person has said to you. Make sure you've got it right.
- 5. Ask for time to think about it.**
Don't respond right away unless you're forced to. Tell the person you need time to take this all in.
- 6. Compare what is being said with what you know about yourself.**
Sit down in a quiet place and think about what the person said. Is it factually correct? Could it be true? Why are you feeling so upset about this? Sometimes the truth hurts.
- 7. Share the criticism.**
Talk with someone who knows you well, and ask that person what he or she thinks. Share the criticism with a person you really trust. Ask for your friend's honest opinion.
- 8. Decide whether you agree with the criticism.**
This is up to you and nobody else. All of us can improve; maybe the person has a point, but don't beat yourself up either. Maybe the person doesn't have a point.
- 9. Decide what action you're going to take.**
If you agree with the criticism, what should you do? What might you change? Think in terms of action.
- 10. Respond to the criticizer.**
This is sometimes the hardest thing of all. Figure out what you're going to say and say it. Tell the criticizer what you've decided, what steps you've taken, and what you're going to do now. Make sure you stay calm.

Exercise

Complete the following complex sentences.

1. I don't like being wrong because _____.
2. I don't mind criticism unless _____.
3. Joe gets defensive whenever _____.
4. It is better to stay calm since _____.
5. I better tell you what's wrong before _____.