Your writing will be more effective if you learn to incorporate different kinds of sentences into your writing. By using a variety a sentence types, you can make your writing more interesting and control a reader’s reaction. For instance, the author of a horror story might use long, complex sentences to establish a mood and then a short, simple sentence to frighten the reader.

As Susan walked sprightly down the rain-soaked street, the happy sounds of crickets and frogs seemed to chirp in tune to her steps. Suddenly, the sounds of the night stopped.

The first of these two sentences is a complex sentence that creates the mood of happiness, a not-a-care-in-the-world attitude. The second sentence is a short simple sentence that breaks the mood. Something potentially frightening has happened.

There are four kinds of sentences: simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex. When using all four sentence types, you will be using sentence variety that makes your writing more interesting.

SIMPLE SENTENCE

The simple sentence has one independent clause. The following sentence contains a subject and verb and a complete thought; it is a simple sentence.

Example: The team flew to Chicago.

The simple sentence can have more than one subject and more than one verb, but it has only one independent clause.

Example: The team and the coach flew to Chicago and won the debate.

This is also a simple sentence even though it contains two subjects and two verbs. Simple sentences do not have to be short; a thirty-five-word sentence might still be a simple sentence if it contains only one independent clause.

NOTE: At this point you must review dependent and independent clauses, or you will have trouble understanding the four kinds of sentences.
KINDS OF SENTENCES

COMPOUND SENTENCE

The compound sentence contains two or more independent clauses joined by a semi-colon or a coordinating conjunction with a comma. A compound sentence is an example of coordination, that is, two independent clauses are linked together. Proper coordination requires linking two ideas that are related or that represent a sequence in which one idea is a logical extension of the first idea. The compound sentence is always balanced; both ideas are equally important and related to one another.

A semi-colon is used to join two independent clauses that are related in meaning.

Example: The art gallery has closed for the day; it will open tomorrow morning.

Each of the above independent clauses could have stood alone as a simple sentence, but because the ideas are closely related--the closing and opening of the art gallery--the independent clauses are connected by using the semi-colon. Using a coordinating conjunction with a comma could also join the two independent clauses.

There are seven coordinating conjunctions which you might need to memorize: and, but, for, so, yet, or, nor. The seven coordinating conjunctions are easy to remember with the word FANBOYS.

For
And
Nor
But
Or
Yet
So

In the following example, the two independent clauses are underlined; they are joined by a comma and a conjunction, which is in bold letters.

Example: The art gallery has closed for the day, but it will open tomorrow morning.

Although using coordination will create variety in your writing, be careful not to use too many compound sentences. An overuse of compound sentences can make your writing monotonous. In any paragraph, some ideas should stand alone (simple sentence) and some ideas should be presented as less important than others (complex sentence).
COMPLEX SENTENCE

A complex sentence consists of one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. The main idea is always in the independent clause, while additional or supporting information is in the dependent clause. Because the dependent clause presents information that is not as important as the main idea, the dependent clause is called a subordinate clause. Thus a complex sentence uses subordination to express its idea(s).

Dependent clause: Although the gallery has closed for the day, it will open tomorrow morning.
Independent clause: it will open tomorrow morning.

Complex sentences allow you to link a series of ideas; however, if complex sentences are overused, the reader may lose track of the meaning.

COMPOUND-COMPLEX SENTENCE

A compound-complex sentence is a compound sentence with one or more dependent clauses.

Dependent clause: When the gallery closed for the day, the docent turned the lights off, and
Independent clause: she placed the sign on the door.

Exercise 1: In each of the following sentences, circle the dependent clauses and underline the independent clause. Then identify each sentence as simple (S), compound (CD), complex (CX), or compound-complex (CC).

1. The novels of Mark Twain are well known.
2. The lights in Springfield went out when lightning hit that power line, but JEA restored service in less than one hour.
3. The art auctioneer stepped to the podium, and then he asked his assistant to describe the first painting to be sold.
4. Fish swim in underground streams beneath the Sahara Desert.

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5. ____ The LC was especially quiet on Friday, and many of the students seemed to be dozing.
6. ____ When we flew out of Jacksonville, the sky was clear, but when we got to Atlanta, the clouds were very dark and eerie.
7. ____ The traffic barely moved; each car seemed to be attached to the cars before it and after it, like a single segment in an earthworm.
8. ____ Before we could move into the building, the inspectors had to examine each floor, and the fire department had to check the sprinkler system.
9. ____ The home is the oldest institution in the world.
10. ____ The hummingbird is the only bird that can fly backward.
11. ____ The United States and Russia were the first countries to develop the atomic bomb.
12. ____ Those people who do not respect the rights of others are selfish.
13. ____ I had misplaced my keys, but fortunately I had another set hidden beside the door.
14. ____ It can prove to be a real disappointment.
15. ____ My son Carl will be getting married next March.
16. ____ Although the party was a lot of fun, I stayed out too late and felt awful the next day.
17. ____ James backpacked, camped, fished, hunted, swam, and skied, but never found time for his schoolwork.
18. ____ Skip and Nancy worked on that project through many nights, but didn’t seem to get tired of one another’s company or the work.
19. ____ Although Alfred is a hard worker, he doesn’t seem to get his deserved promotions.
20. ____ The girls drove their parents crazy because of sibling rivalry; each was always whining that nothing was fair.
**KINDS OF SENTENCES**

Answers for Exercise 1:

1. **S**  The novels of Mark Twain are well known.
2. **CC**  The lights in Springfield went out (when lightning hit that power line), but JEA restored service in less than one hour.
3. **CD**  The art auctioneer stepped to the podium, and then he asked his assistant to describe the first painting to be sold.
4. **S**  Fish swim in underground streams beneath the Sahara Desert.
5. **CD**  The LAC was especially quiet on Friday, and many of the students seemed to be dozing.
6. **CC**  (When we flew out of Jacksonville), the sky was clear, but (when we got to Atlanta), the clouds were very dark and eerie.
7. **CD**  The traffic barely moved; each car seemed to be attached to the cars before it and after it, like a single segment in an earthworm.
8. **CC**  (Before we could move into the building), the inspectors had to examine each floor, and the fire department had to check the sprinkler system.
9. **S**  The home is the oldest institution in the world.
10. **CX**  The hummingbird is the only bird (that can fly backward).
11. **S**  The United States and Russia were the first countries to develop the atomic bomb.
12. **CX**  Those people (who do not respect the rights of others) are selfish.
13. **CD**  I had misplaced my keys, but fortunately I had another set hidden beside the door.
14. **S**  It can prove to be a real disappointment.
15. **S**  My son Carl will be getting married next March.
16. **CX**  (Although the party was a lot of fun), I stayed out too late and felt awful the next day.
17. S James backpacked, camped, fished, hunted, swam, and skied, but never found time for his schoolwork.
18. S Skip and Nancy worked on that project through many nights, but didn’t seem to get tired of one another’s company or the work.
19. CX (Although Alfred is a hard worker), he doesn’t seem to get his deserved promotions.
20. CC The girls drove their parents crazy because of sibling rivalry; each was always whining that nothing was fair.