The Complex Sentence

A complex sentence is made up of a simple sentence (a complete statement) and a statement that begins with a dependent word. Here is a list of common dependent words. The bold words can be used to begin a sentence when used correctly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Words</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>after</td>
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<td>although, though</td>
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<td>as</td>
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<td>because</td>
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<td>before</td>
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<td>even though</td>
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<td>how</td>
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<td>if, even if</td>
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<td>in order that</td>
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<td>since</td>
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<td>that, so that</td>
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<td>unless</td>
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<td>what, whatever</td>
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<td>where, wherever</td>
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<td>who</td>
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<td>whose</td>
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A complex sentence is used when you want to emphasize one idea over another in a sentence. Look at the following complex sentence:

Because I forgot the time, I missed the final exam.

The idea that the writer wants to emphasize here - I missed the final exam - is expressed as a complete thought. The less important idea, - Because I forgot the time - is subordinated to the complete thought. The technique of giving one idea less emphasis than another is called subordination.

Following are other examples of complex sentences. In each case, the part starting with the dependent word is less emphasized part of the sentence.

While Aisha was eating breakfast, she began to feel sick.
I checked my money before I invited Pedro for lunch.
When Jerry lost his temper, he also lost his job.
Although I practiced for three months, I failed my driving test.

Practice:
Underline the main clause once and double-underline the subordinate clause.

When ice is on the road, drive more carefully.

Unless I’ve misunderstood the store clerk, the package should arrive next Thursday.

Jim wanted to go to the concert, but he couldn’t get off work.

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1 The two parts of a complex sentence are sometimes called an independent clause and a dependent clause. A clause is simply a word group that contains a subject and a verb. An independent clause expresses a complete thought and can stand alone. A dependent clause does not express a complete thought in itself and "depends on" the independent clause to complete its meaning. Dependent clauses always begin with a dependent or subordinating word.

From Sentence Skills, Form A (7th)
Practice 1
Use logical dependent words to combine the following pairs of simple sentences into two complex sentences, and circle the subordinating conjunction. Place a comma after a dependent statement when it starts the sentence.

• I obtained a credit card.
  • I began spending money recklessly.
    a. When I obtained a credit card, I began spending money recklessly.
    b. After I obtained a credit card, I began spending money recklessly.
    c. I began spending money recklessly after I obtained a credit card.

• Alan dressed the turkey.
  • His brother greased the roasting pan.
    a. Alan dressed the turkey while his brother greased the roasting pan.
    b. While his brother greased the roasting pan, Alan dressed the turkey.
    c. After Alan dressed the turkey, his brother greased the roasting pan.

1. - The instructor announced the quiz.
   - The glass groaned.
     a. ______________________________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________________________

2. - Gene could not fit any more groceries into his cart.
   - He decided to go to the checkout counter.
     a. ______________________________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________________________

3. - Your car is out of commission.
   - You should take it to Otto’s Repair Shop.
     a. ______________________________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________________________

4. - I finished typing the paper.
   - I proofread it carefully.
     a. ______________________________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________________________
Practice 2
Rewrite the following sentences using subordination rather than coordination. Include a comma when a dependent statement starts a sentence.

Example
The hair dryer was not working right, so I returned it to the store.
Because the hair dryer was not working right, I returned it to the store.

1. The teacher turned on the large window fan, but the classroom remained hot.

2. The plumber repaired the water heater, so we can take showers again.

3. I washed the sheets and towels, and I scrubbed the bathroom floor.

4. You should go to a doctor, for your chest cold may get worse.

5. The fish tank broke, and guppies were flopping all over the carpet.

Practice 3
Combine the following simple sentences into complex sentences. Omit repeated words. Use the dependent words who, which, or that.

Notes
a. The word who refers to persons.
b. The word which refers to things.
c. The word that refers to persons or things.

Use commas around the dependent statement only if it seems to interrupt the flow of thought in the sentence.

Example: Clyde picked up a hitchhiker.
The hitchhiker was traveling around the world.
Clyde picked up a hitchhiker who was traveling around the world.

From Sentence Skills, Form A (7th)
Example
- Larry is a sleepwalker.
- Larry is my brother.
  Larry, who is my brother, is a sleepwalker.

1. The magazine article was about politics.
   The article made me very angry.

2. The woodshed has collapsed.
   I built the woodshed myself.

3. The power drill is missing.
   I bought the power drill at half price.

4. Richard Nixon was indicted for eavesdropping and wiretapping.
   Richard Nixon was our president.

5. The chicken pies contained dangerous preservatives.
   We ate the chicken pies.

Practice 4
On a separate piece of paper, write five complex sentences using, in turn, the dependent words unless, if, after, because, when, who which, and that. Write in ink.