

ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION INFO SHEET

Grammar: Complex Sentence (G: CxS)

Sentences are the building blocks of all writing, and effective writers use a variety of structures to engage the reader. This is the third of three information sheets, which will guide you through the most basic sentence structures. Remember that we have not included a definitive explanation of sentences, and there are a number of exceptions to these rules. However, this information may help you to solve some basic errors when writing.

Learn about:

- complex sentences
- how to solve common punctuation errors in complex sentences.

See other **Info sheets, Activity sheets and videos** about simple and compound sentences.

There are three major types of sentences. Each type of sentence requires specific punctuation.

1. Simple sentence: Tom walks to work most days
2. Compound sentence: Tom walks to work, and Sam joins him every Friday.
3. **Complex sentence:** Although Tom likes walking to work, he has started to drive on Fridays.

What is a complex sentence

A complex sentence is created with two clauses (one **independent** and one **dependent clause**). The dependent clause can go first or last in the sentence. However, the punctuation is different depending on the order. See example below:

Bob's heart is in Yeppoon even though he calls Melbourne home.
Even though Bob calls Melbourne home, his heart is in Yeppoon.

What is a dependent clause?

A dependent clause contains a complete verb, but it does not make sense on its own. The clause requires extra information to make the meaning clear. Example: *Although many bills are paid online ...* The example is a dependent clause, as we require more information to make the meaning clear. Note: By adding a subordinating conjunction, you can change an independent clause into a dependent clause. The following charts provide examples of how to punctuate a complex sentence.

Dependent Clause		comma	Independent Clause
Subordinating Conjunction	Independent Clause		
Although Even though	Don <u>likes</u> gardening	,	he <u>has</u> a small garden.
Even if	Sam <u>takes</u> the train	,	he <u>will not get</u> there before Joy.
Because	Lee <u>drives</u> well	,	her insurance <u>is</u> low.
When	Jim <u>applies</u> himself	,	he <u>does</u> very well in his exams.
Before	Pam <u>had</u> children	,	she <u>was</u> a member of the local council.
Until	Bob <u>understands</u> this	,	he <u>will continue</u> to make the same mistake.
After	Lia <u>walked</u> to town	,	she <u>called</u> her friends.
Since	Eddy <u>likes to talk</u>	,	he <u>has been given</u> the role of speaker.
As	Eve <u>has</u> many friends	,	she <u>has</u> limited time to study.
Independent Clause		Dependent Clause	
		Subordinating Conjunction	Independent Clause
Don <u>has</u> a small garden		even though	he <u>likes</u> gardening.
Sam <u>will not get</u> there before Joy		even if	he <u>takes</u> the train.
Lee's insurance <u>is</u> low.		because	she <u>drives</u> well .
Jim <u>does</u> very well in his exams.		whenever	he <u>applies</u> himself.
Pam <u>was</u> a member of the local council		before	she <u>had</u> children.
Bob <u>will continue</u> to make the same mistake		until	he <u>understands</u> this.
Lia <u>called</u> her friends.		after	she <u>walked</u> to town.
Edd <u>has been given</u> the role of speaker.		since	he <u>likes to talk</u> .
Eve <u>has</u> limited time to study.		as	she <u>has</u> many friends.

Common errors with complex sentences

Although Sam met his 2015 targets and brought about a significant change in the way that the company processed information. X

This example is not a complete sentence; it is a sentence fragment. A sentence fragment is an incomplete sentence (dependent clause). The writer will need to add an independent clause to make the sentence complete. See the example below.

*Although Sam met his 2015 targets and brought about a significant change in the way that the company processed information, **he has still not received a promotion.***

Punctuation: Notice how the punctuation changes depending on the order of the clauses.

1. Sam decided to stay up late because she had an exciting project to complete.
2. If you hurry, we might get to the station on time.
3. Although Lee had a cold, he went to work.