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SCHOOL OF ART AND
HUMAN SCIENCES, AIN SHOK
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COMPOSITION

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OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE:

This course aims at studying basic sentence structures so that the students may be able to avoid mistakes and to write coherently.

There are three major parts in the course. The first one will consist of units on the different parts of speech used in a sentence. The main subparts will concern the simple, the coordinate and the complex sentence. These will be studied in detail to draw the student's attention to the mistakes that may occur in their writing as a result of their unawareness of basic rules of grammar and writing.

By the end of the course, the students will hopefully be able to demonstrate their good command of the fundamentals of writing such as understanding the topic, choosing the subject of their interest and narrowing it adequately so as to remain within the boundaries of the assignment given, organizing and writing their ideas correctly and coherently, developing supporting ideas by using specific details to explain and clarify the general ideas expressed in their essays.

By learning the mechanics of writing, students will also be able to use the English language with more precision, avoiding any errors in grammar or sentence structure.

Précis writing, which consists in writing a brief summary of a text, is a valuable training in composition and will help students come to grips with the complexity of essay writing which requires clearness and conciseness in the choice of words and the careful arrangements involved in such a process in order to ensure a maximum amount of meaning in a relatively limited space.

The last part of the course will be devoted to paragraph and essay writing.

THE SIMPLE SENTENCE

SENTENCE DEFINITION:

A sentence is a group of words expressing a complete thought, as opposed to phrase which is just a small part of a sentence.

The simple sentence consists of a subject and a predicate. The subject of the sentence is that part about which something is being said. The predicate is that part which says something about the subject. There may be more than one subject or one verb in a sentence. In this case, although the sentence as a whole remains simple, we may say that its subject or verb are compound.

1 EXAMPLE:

Subject	Verb	Complement
Mhamed	teaches	English

This is a simple sentence with a simple verb and simple predicate.

2 EXAMPLE:

compound subjects *compound verbs*
The doctor and his assistant arrived and started work immediately;

In this simple sentence, we have two subjects and two verbs which we call compound but the sentence is still qualified as simple.

EXERCISE 1:

Read the following paragraphs and underline the subject and the predicate in them.

PARAGRAPH 1:

My mother was born in the Federal Republic of Germany in 1918. She grew up in the Bavarian Alps and lived there until her family moved to the city of Marsruhe which lies near Black Forest, along the Rhine River. Just prior to World War II, my mother married my father and I came along in 1939.

In 1945, after the war and after my father had been killed in action, my mother met and married my stepfather and traveled to the United States to live with him and me in California.

PARAGRAPH 2:

In the minds of many people, the octopus is considered as an animal of hell, a devilish fish; however, for me this strange creature has amazing powers. First, the octopus has excellent human like eye-sight. The eyes, like those of vertebrates, have lids, irises, crystalline lenses, and retinas. When a predator appears, the orange-brown eyes, which are mobile and so can be turned in different directions and flash in the sea like sun in the sky, can see it clearly. Similarly amazing is that the octopus, usually a round marine animal, can make itself entirely flat like an envelope or it can stretch itself like India rubber in order to enter the small crevice. This remarkable animal can also transform itself by changing color: white, black, and even red.

The agents for these color changes are chromatophores, the color cells. The octopus has two different kinds of cells, one for the dark colors, and another for the light ones.

Finally, we may say that there are four kinds of sentences classified according to their structures: there is **the simple, the compound, the complex, and the compound-d complex sentence**. In the next chapters, we shall study each one separately. However, it would be interesting to first of all define what a clause is and how each type functions in a sentence.

THE COMPOUND SENTENCE

DEFINITION:

The compound sentence consists of two independent clauses joined by a conjunction or a semicolon. This must not be confused with compound subjects or verbs that may form a *simple sentence*. The compound sentence always contains coordinate ideas that are ordered or ranked, which means of equal grammatical rank.

Because a compound sentence consists of two independent clauses, it is necessary to separate them with a conjunction and comma or semi-colon. The common kinds of relationship between coordinate clauses are addition, contrast, choice, and result.

The following connectives are used for expressing addition:

And also
Besides furthermore
Both...and likewise (de même)
Then moreover

Contrastive ideas use the following connectives:

But still
However yet nevertheless

For alternate possibilities, we use the following connectives:

Either.....or neither....nor otherwise

Coordinate ideas expressing result are introduced by the following connectives:

Accordingly hence
Consequently therefore

EXERCISES: connect the following coordinate ideas with the appropriate connectives.

- 1- The students were dismissed at one o'clock. Nobody went home.
- 2- Beatrice was seriously injured in yesterday's practice. She will not be able to play today. *however,*
- 3- Jimmy played right end. I played left end. *and*
- 4- Deliver the shipment by the 25th. I will cancel the order.
- 5- Math has always been my hardest subject. I have never failed a math test.
- 6- In an auditorium of this size, you must speak louder. Your audience won't be able to hear you.

- 7- This magazine publishes the best literary criticism. It is financial failure.
- 8- Some of the best TV courses are offered at 6: 30 am. They reach only a small audience of early risers.
- 9- The American economy has long depended on a high level of military spending. Some people fear the economic consequences of ending the arm race. *Therefore*
- 10- The oil burner had stopped during the night. The house was cold in the morning.
- 11- We heard the assignment. We hadn't understood it.
- 12- We were to be marked for neatness. We took greater pain than usual.
- 13- We returned late. The canoe was a wreck.
- 14- Our hearts were in our boots. We gathered enough courage to carry out the orders.
- * 15- We had planned on going to town that afternoon. We were slightly annoyed at being kept in camp.
- 16- The head counselor warned us to take better care of the property of others. She said she would send our parents a bill.
- 17- The bill my parents received was quite unexpected. It took them some time to recover from it. *therefore*
- 18- Sue's parents also received a bill. They were just as surprised as my parents were. *AND*
- 19- They were all amazed at the high price of the canoes. They paid the bill promptly.
- 20- Parents can be put to a great deal of trouble and expense by their children. They are usually patient and generous with us.

Notice that the compound sentence contains coordinate ideas; ie, ideas of equal grammatical ranks, whereas the complex sentence is a mixture of dependent, that is subordinate ideas, and independent clauses.

They are called subordinate ideas because they have unequal grammatical ranks.

Before starting the chapter on the complex sentence, let us first of all define the clause and its grammatical function. After that, we can deal with each kind of subordinate clause in separate sections in order to avoid confusion.

1- DEFINITION OF THE CLAUSE:

The clause is a group of words containing a subject and a predicate. A predicate includes a verb in its conjugated form and any complements that may accompany it.

There are two types of clauses: subordinate and main. The main clause is also said to be independent; ie, not requiring any other parts of a sentence to express a complete thought. The subordinate clause, however, requires other parts of the sentence to express a complete thought.

A sentence may consist of one single independent clause. In such a case, it is called a **simple sentence**. It may consist of two independent clauses joined by a conjunction and a comma, or just a simple semi colon (;), Such a sentence is qualified as **compound**. When a sentence contains one independent clause and an indefinite number of dependent clauses, we call it **complex**.

Subordinate clauses may function as nouns, adjectives or adverbs. When a clause functions as a noun in a sentence, we call it **noun clause**. When it is used as an adjective, we call it **adjective clause**, and when it is used as an adverb it is called **adverb clause**.

THE SUBORDINATE NOUN CLAUSE

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Definition:

A noun clause is a subordinate clause used as a noun. It is therefore used for the same grammatical function as a single noun in a sentence.

EXAMPLES:

- 1- **SUBJECT:** whoever wins the elections will become a president.
- 2- **DIRECT OBJECT:** He said that he tried his best.
- 3- **INDIRECT OBJECT:** The school gave whoever won the race a very good prize.
- 4- **OBJECT OF PREPOSITION:** I was not involved in what happened.
- 5- **APPOSITIVE NOUN CLAUSE:** This kind of clause may easily be confused with the adjective clause but there are ways to differentiate between the two. For instance, when the sentence begins with an abstract noun such as the fact (that), the clause is actually noun clause rather than an adjective.

EX: The thought that he may become the dean of students scared everyone.

The book that the professor recommended was out of print.

These two clauses seem to be the same, but they are not. The first one definitely contains an appositive noun clause: that he may become dean of students, whereas the second one includes an adjective clause: that the professor recommended.

The word thought in the first sentence does not require any identification, whereas it does in the second one.

EXERCISES: Find the noun clause in the following sentences and determine its function.

- 1- I know whose car this is.
- 2- Whatever a clockmaker says will be filled with the jargon of the trade of keeping time.
- 3- On the left is timepiece that is really a clock, and on the right is what someone wrongly called a clock.
- 4- Explaining this chapter on noun clauses, one has to be ready to tell what is the exact function of each one comes across.
- 5- Whatever can properly be called a clock always strikes the hours on a bell.
- 6- The history of the words we use is what determines their correct meaning.
- 7- The fact that that the law was be applied by the end of the year worried everyone.
- 8- They had a clear idea about where they wanted to spend their next summer holidays.

- 11- I know what I would do if I were you.
- 12- On hearing the news that they were going to move premises, they felt greatly annoyed.
- 13- I could not agree with the fact that it was necessary to move.
- 14- For what they did in the classroom, the children were severely reprimanded.
- 15- It is possible that they have already been here.

THE ADJECTIVE CLAUSE

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DEFINITION:

An adjective clause is a subordinate clause that modifies a noun or a pronoun in a sentence. It is usually introduced by a relative pronoun, but sometimes this may be omitted, on the condition that it doesn't function as a subject.

EXAMPLES:

The place where they met was a secret.

The man I met was very nice.

Students whose books remained on the table were suspected by the teacher to cheat.

As mentioned in the chapter on noun clauses, there may be some resemblance between these clauses, but with a correct analysis of the sentence, the confusion may be lifted.

EXERCISES: find the adjective clause in the following sentences and indicate the word it modifies.

- 1- In Hamlet, the characters whom most people remember are Hamlet and Ophelia.
- 2- The house where Shakespeare was born can still be visited by admirers today.
- 3- The coach's reply to the grandstand strategists who were criticizing him was an undefeated season.
- 4- He was one of those whom the politicians have never influenced.
- 5- The writer the teacher referred to was unknown to most of the students.
- 6- The house where he grew up was very big.
- 7- The poet whose poem we are studying belongs to the Renaissance period.
- 8- Leslie expected us to use the camera she had lent us but which we had lost.
- 9- The amount of hot dogs that that boy can eat is incredible!
- 10- I know a nice place where we can enjoy a picnic.

THE ADVERB CLAUSE

DEFINITION:

The adverb clause is a subordinate clause that modifies a verb, an adjective, a verbal or another adverb. It is introduced by a subordinating conjunction and may occupy different positions in a sentence.

EXAMPLES:

- 1- She is confident that she will win the elections.
- 2- They play golf as though they were in a hurry.
- 3- Because the majority of people did not attend, the meeting was called off.
- 4- After the professor had explained the rules, the unit became easier.
- 5- Everyone must attend, unless they have a solid excuse for not doing so.
- 6- The Hassan Tower is much higher than Elkoutoubia.
- 7- Although it was raining, the open air annual assembly was maintained.
- 8- They will move wherever there is more space.

EXERCISES: Identify and determine the function of each of the adverb clauses in the following sentences.

- 1- When you drive a car, you must carry an insurance which pays for any damage or injury that you may inflict on others.
- 2- Insurance in some places is cheaper than it is in others.
- 3- It is nice that you've been able to come to the party.
- 4- An unmarried male who is under twenty five pays the highest premium because statistics show that he is the worst risk.
- 5- Drivers who have a record of accidents must also pay a high premium risk since they have cost their insurance companies a great deal of money.
- 6- Insurance companies divide accidents into two categories: those that happen because of unforeseeable events and those that are made to happen.
- 7- When a fire blows out while you are driving in heavy traffic, the resulting accident is qualified as unforeseen.
- 8- If a driver passes another car on a turn, the resulting accident is one that was made to happen.
- 9- What is most alarming about accidents is that four fifths of them are made to happen.
- 10- Insurance is costly for all of us because so many drivers make accidents happen.
- 11- The entire electorate sighed with relief as the matter ended.