

# SENTENCE STRUCTURE

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## TOP TIP

The more you read, the better your writing will become.

## What does a sentence consist of?

- A sentence consists **of clauses (a verb + a noun)**
- **A noun** (subject/ person/ place/ thing)
- **A verb** (action/ state/ occurrence).

## Structure

**The noun and verb in a clause must match**, e.g. a plural noun should have a plural verb, etc. **In other words, multiple nouns and multiple verbs.** There are two types of clauses: **independent** and **dependent**.

## Independent Clauses

**An independent clause stands on its own as a complete sentence.** In other words, independent clauses have the noun.

## Dependent Clauses

**Dependent clauses must be paired with an independent clause in order to create a complete sentence.** It does not have the noun. Dependent clause on its own is a fragmented sentence i.e. an incomplete sentence.

## Different Types of Sentences

There are four different "types" of sentences. Each type has a corresponding correct end punctuation.

## Declarative Sentences

This type of sentence **makes a statement or expresses an opinion and uses a full stop.**

You are stating something specific.

## Imperative Sentences

**This gives a command or makes a request.** It can sound authoritative. Usually there is a full stop and sometimes an exclamation point for emphasis.

## Interrogative Sentences

**This asks a question and always uses a question mark.**

## Exclamatory Sentences

**This expresses high emotion and always uses an exclamation point.**

## Simple Sentences

**Simple sentences are the most basic, and are made up of only one independent clause.** There are **no commas** separating any compound elements in simple sentences.

## Complex Sentences

A complex sentence is **made up of a dependent clause joined to an independent clause. It is an incomplete sentence combined with a complete sentence - which creates the complexity.** The dependent clause can either be essential, or non-essential to the meaning of the sentence.

## Compound Sentences

Compound sentences are **made up of two independent clauses joined together by coordinating conjunctions** (e.g. and, but, or, yet, etc.), **conjunctive adverbs** (such as, therefore, however) or a **semicolon**.

## Compound Complex Sentences

Compound-complex sentences **contain two independent clauses that are also joined to one or more dependent clauses.** These sentences are essentially compound sentences with at least one dependent clause added on. *For example, I am almost done with tutorials, but I don't know if I can finish my last essay on time because it is very difficult.*

# Common Errors in Sentence Structure

## TOP TIP

"Rather than embracing the flowery prose of the literati, he chose to eschew obfuscation at every turn and write simply and clearly." - Brian Clarke

In other words, short, clear and concise sentences are best.

## Run-on Sentences

A run-on sentence **occurs when several main clauses are strung together without proper punctuation. These can be fixed by adding punctuation such as semicolons, full stops or connecting words.**

## Comma Splice/ Incorrect Comma

An incorrect comma is **often used in this example to join two independent clauses.** This can be **fixed by replacing the comma with a connecting word like "and" or by separating the independent clauses with either full stops or semicolons.**

## Sentence Fragments

Sentence fragments are sentences that **cannot stand alone**, like dependent clauses. *For example, even though "it was raining." is an independent clause, but if it starts with "because" it is incorrect. "Because" is a word that links dependent clauses, this makes the phrase reliant on something more to be complete.*

## Structural Errors and Incorrect Prepositions

**If two or more parts of the sentence are doing the same thing, they need to have a matching or parallel structure.** *For example, "I like to read, writing and editing" does not make sense. This is where prepositions become important, and you need to ensure that their meaning carries so that the whole sentence makes sense. You may need to add another preposition. For example, it makes sense to be "excited about tutoring", but not to be "interested about tutoring".*

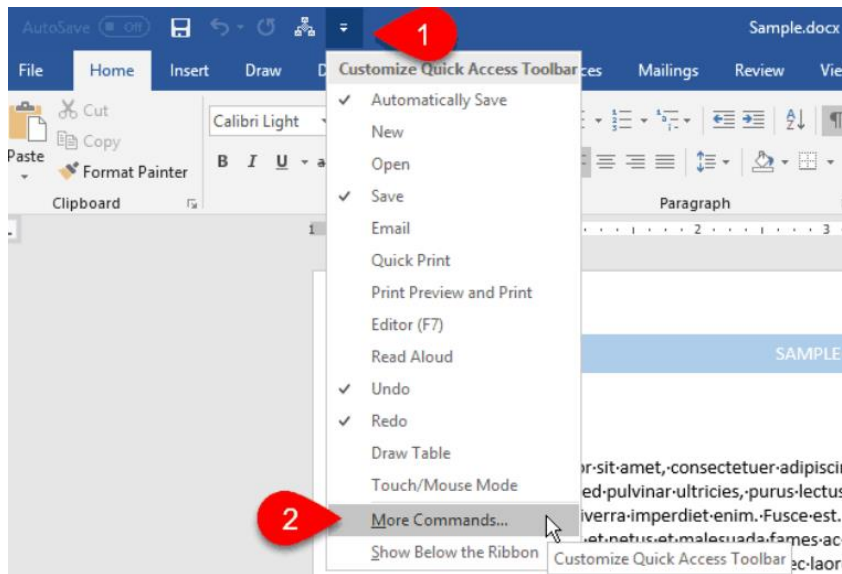
## TOP TIP

You should always read your writing out loud and if you make a mistake while doing this, there is likely to be something wrong with the sentence. Microsoft Word and Google Docs can convert the text to speech.

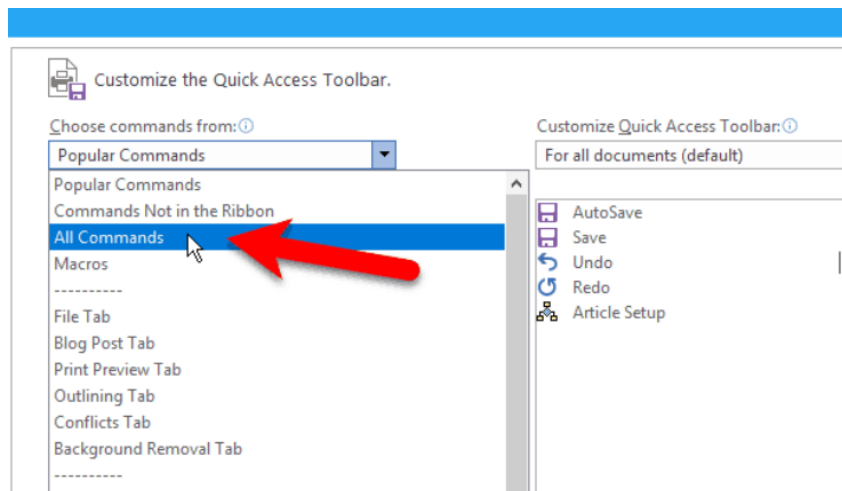
# Add Speak to the Quick Access Toolbar

You can add the Speak command to your Quick Access Toolbar by doing the following in Word, Outlook, Powerpoint, and OneNote:

1. Next to the Quick Access Toolbar, click **Customize Quick Access Toolbar**.



2. Click **More Commands**.



3. In the **Choose commands from** list, select **All Commands**.
4. Scroll down to the **Speak** command, select it and then click **Add**.
5. Click **OK**.
6. **Highlight the text** you want to be read out loud and **click the speech bubble icon**



## Useful Links

- Purdue Online Writing Lab, Available at: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/573/1/>
- BBC Bitesize, 'Analysing Language', Available at: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/higher/english/close\\_reading/sentence\\_structure/revision/1/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/higher/english/close_reading/sentence_structure/revision/1/)
- University of Technology Sydney, 'Academic writing: sentence level', Available at: <https://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/article/downloads/sentence.pdf>
- Walden University, 'Scholarly Voice: Varying Sentence Structure', Available at: <https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/writingcenter/scholarlyvoice/sentencestructure>
- Smrt English, 'Run-On Sentences and Comma Splices', Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQfJdhYeQfU>
- Study.com, 'How to Write Better by Improving Your Sentence Structure', Available at: <https://study.com/academy/lesson/how-to-write-better-by-improving-your-sentence-structure.html>

## Other Relevant PDFs

- Grammar
- Editing
- Proofreading
- Paragraph Structure