

SENTENCES

A sentence is a group of words that **makes sense on its own**:

I rode my bicycle up Cerro San Cristóbal. = This is a sentence. You can understand what it means. It makes sense on its own.

Words such as cheese, car, house, table, on Tuesday, might be English, but they make no sense written like this. In order for these words to make sense you need two kinds of words. A verb always, and most of the time a subject.

Verbs and subjects = a sentence must have a **VERB** (a doing word) such as ride, live, cook, walk, need.

A sentence generally also has a **SUBJECT**. This is the person, or the thing, that is doing the action. For example:
I, Rosy, Tuesday, dog, you, table, the weather.

Length = sentences can be very short, or very long. There is no correct number of words. But you should make sure that your sentences are not too long. The length of the sentence depends on what you want to say and the effect you want to get.

Compound sentence = constant use of short sentences is unusual. To make your writing more interesting, you can use two other sorts of longer sentences. When you have two or more short, independent, simple sentences which are equal in weight you can join them together using special words called **conjunctions** to make a more interesting compound sentence that shows a relationship between the pieces of information. If you remove the conjunction, the individual parts still make sense.

'I hate curry.' is a simple sentence. 'I like Thai food.' is also a simple sentence. Now with a conjunction:

'I hate curry' + **but** + 'I like Thai food' = 'I hate curry, but I like Thai food.'

Commas are not conjunctions and they should never be used to join short sentences together (commas aren't glue, so you can't use them to stick information together!).

Complex sentences = the conjunction is used to join together clauses. Some of these clauses might be complete short sentences, but in a complex sentence at least one of them will depend on the conjunction for its meaning. In other words, if you take the conjunction away, the sentence won't divide into complete units that make sense by themselves:

'The dinner was burned because she had forgotten it.'

'The dinner was burned' = **complete, short sentence** + 'because' = **conjunction** (joining word) + 'she had forgotten it' = **subordinate clause**.

Punctuation = this shows the person who is reading your writing where the sentences begin and end. Remember:
A sentence must begin with a capital letter.
A sentence must end with a full-stop (.), a question mark (?), or an exclamation mark (!).

Joining words = for both compound and complex sentences, you need joining words like **and, although, as, because, but, if, or**. There are also other important conjunctions:
TIME = **before, after, until, since, when, whenever, while**
PLACE = **where**
AGREEMENT = **though, although, whether**