Basic Sentence Patterns

Student Name:

Instructor:

Date:

Course:

# About This DLA

## Important Note

All the activities (3) in the DLA must be completed in their entirety before receiving credit for completion. Students are welcome to meet with a tutor if they need help, but please be aware that students might need a second appointment for review and signature in that case. If your instructor wants evidence of this completed DLA, return this form to him or her with the tutor’s signature included.

## Learning Outcomes

Through independent work, you will learn about basic sentence patterns and practice composing correct sentences.

## Activities (approximately 1 hour)

Read the information, complete the activities that follow, and be prepared to discuss your answers when you meet with a tutor.

# DLA Video Review

If you would like to watch [a brief video that reviews parts of Basic Sentences DLA content](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3qmRPduYAg&t=3s), please use the QR code below:



# Understanding Basic Sentence Patterns

A key component to writing is that it should not only make sense grammatically, but the ideas should also connect and flow smoothly from one to another. One way to make sentences flow smoothly is to use various sentence patterns.

**Key parts to every sentence:**

1. Subject: the *who* or *what* in the sentence doing the action or expressing the relationship or condition in the sentence

* **José** is fluent in Portuguese.

1. Verb: expresses the action, condition, or relationship to the subject

* Myrna **speaks** German.

## Sentence Pattern 1: Simple Sentence

A simple sentence contains a  **subject** , **verb**, and expresses a complete thought.

Sentence Patterns:

**S-V.**

* José **studied** for the exam.

A simple sentence can have a compound subject or a compound verb, but there is still only one main subject-verb pair.

* Elaine, Lily, and Stephanie **needed** someone to proofread their papers. *(compound subject)*
* He **reviewed** the assignment and **wrote** practice sentences. *(compound verb)*

## Sentence Pattern 2: Compound Sentence

When you want to join two complete sentences, use a semicolon; a comma and a *coordinating conjunction* (FANBOYS); or a semicolon, conjunctive adverb, and comma.

Sentence Patterns:

**S-V; S-V.**

**S-V, [coordinating conjunction] S-V.**

**S-V; [conjunctive adverb], S-V.**

* José **wrote** his paper**;** his classmates then **gave** him feedback on his writing.
* José **studied**,butChris  **fell** asleep.
* José **passed** the exam;however, Chris **failed** it.

When using a coordinating conjunction, only use a comma when joining two complete sentences. The following sentence is a simple sentence with a compound verb; therefore, no comma is used with *but*.

* José **had** a rough start last semester but **was doing** great by the end.

## Sentence Pattern 3: Complex Sentence

Complex sentences consist of an independent clause and a dependent clause. These types of sentences can be made in a variety of ways. One way is to use a *subordinating conjunction*; any clause that begins with a subordinating conjunction is a dependent clause. This dependent clause can then be joined to an independent clause to make a complex sentence.

Sentence Patterns:

**[Subordinating conjunction] S-V, S-V.**

**S-V [subordinating conjunction] S-V.**

**In the following examples, the dependent clause is boxed. Note that no comma is used when the dependent clause follows the independent clause.**

* Because he **had studied** hard, José **aced** the exam.
* José **aced** the exam because he **had studied** hard.

Another way to create a complex sentence is by using an adjective clause. Adjective clauses begin with a *relative pronoun* and modify a noun. See the Adjective Clauses DLA for more practice with this topic.

* The dog *that* is wearing a red collar belongs to my neighbor.
* Dr. Jacobs, *who* practices cardiology, wants to retire in three years.
* The student *whose* bag is on the sofa stepped out to use the restroom.

Noun clauses can also be used to create complex sentences. Noun clauses function in the same way as nouns and noun phrases, which means they can serve as subjects, objects, and complements.

* Whoever borrowed the restroom key will bring it back soon. (noun clause as subject)
* The professor knows that students have questions about the test. (noun clause as object)
* My brother’s problem is that he works too many hours. (noun clause as subject complement)

## Sentence Pattern 4: Compound-Complex Sentence

These sentences have at least two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause. The following examples show how you can make complex sentences with a subordinating conjunction; however, keep in mind that noun clauses and adjective clauses are also dependent clauses.

Sentence Patterns:

**S-V, [coordinating conjunction] S-V [subordinating conjunction] S-V.**

**[Subordinating conjunction] S-V, S-V, [coordinating conjunction] S-V.**

* José **wrote** a rough draft,and he **went** to the tutoring center because he **needed** help.
* Althoughhe **hadn’t studied**, Chris **expected** to pass,but he **was** wrong.

## Connecting Ideas Using Coordinators and Subordinators

The following chart shows coordinators and common subordinators used when moving from point to point *within* a paragraph. Refer to the pink Combining Clauses handout for more information.

|  | Coordinating Conjunctions (compound sentence) | Conjunctive Adverbs and Transitional Expressions (compound sentence) | Subordinating Conjunctions (complex sentence) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Addition | and | also, moreover, furthermore, in addition |  |
| Alternative | or |  |  |
| Consequence | so | consequently, therefore, as a result |  |
| Contrast | but, yet | nevertheless, however, in contrast, on the other hand | even though, although, while, though |
| Negation | nor |  |  |
| Purpose |  |  | so that |
| Reason | for |  | because, since |

## So vs. So That

Note that in the chart above, *so* is a coordinating conjunction and *so that* is a subordinating conjunction. They have different meanings; *so* expresses a consequence or result, whereas *so that* expresses a purpose or goal.

* Kendra lost her umbrella, so she needs to buy a new one. (“*So”* introduces the result of Kendra losing her umbrella.)
* Kendra went to the store so that she could buy a new umbrella. (“S*o that”* introduces the purpose of Kendra going to the store.)

*So that* can be reduced to *so*, but it remains a subordinating conjunction and is not used with a comma.

* Kendra went to the store so she could buy a new umbrella.

# Activities

Check off each box once you have completed the activity.

## 1. Online Quiz

Go to http://tinyurl.com/BasicSentencePatternsDLAQuiz. and take the [Basic Sentence Patterns DLA Quiz](http://tinyurl.com/BasicSentencePatternsDLAQuiz). You must score 80% or higher on the quiz before seeing a tutor. After you finish, print your results. If you are in the lab, **PLEASE ASK A LAB TUTOR OR FRONT DESK ATTENDANT TO PRINT THE PAGE THAT HAS YOUR SCORE. DO NOT EXIT THE PROGRAM UNTIL THIS PAGE HAS BEEN PRINTED (FREE OF CHARGE).** If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask a lab tutor.

## 2. Coordination and Subordination Practice

Combine the pair of sentences below using both coordination and subordination strategies. Refer to the chart of connectors to choose an appropriate connecting word and sentence pattern.

* Myrna couldn’t speak English.
* She was fluent in Spanish, French, and German.

| Write the answer. |
| --- |
| 1. Use a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence. |
|  |
| 1. Create a simple sentence using at least two verbs. |
|  |
| 1. Use a transitional expression in a compound sentence. |
| 1. Use a subordinating conjunction in a complex sentence. |
|  |

## Choose 3a or 3b Below

## 3a. Review Your Own Writing

Collect some of your written work. Find examples of the different sentence patterns, and write them down below.

| Write the answer. |
| --- |
| Simple Sentence |
|  |
| Compound Sentence |
|  |
| Complex Sentence |
|  |
| Compound-Complex Sentence |
|  |

**If you do not have your own essay to work with, please complete the supplemental activity below (3b).**

## 3b. Sentence Writing

On a separate sheet of paper or in a Word document, write two sentences for each of the four sentence patterns above. You should have written a total of eight sentences.

## 4. Review the DLA

Go to https://mtsac2.mywconline.com and use the [Mt. SAC Writing Center Appointment System](https://mtsac2.mywconline.com/) to make a DLA appointment, or sign-up to see a tutor on the “**Walk-in**” list in the Writing Center. During your session with a tutor, explain your understanding of the different sentence patterns. Consider the main concept you learned in this DLA. How will knowledge of these different sentence patterns affect your writing?

Student’s Signature:

Tutor’s Signature

Date:

Date:

If you are an individual with a disability and need a greater level of accessibility for any document in The Writing Center or on The Writing Center’s website, please contact the Mt. SAC Accessible Resource Centers for Students, [access@mtsac.edu](mailto:access@mtsac.edu), (909) 274-4290.

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