# The 4 Types of Sentence Structure

In [What is a Sentence?](https://www.englishclub.com/grammar/sentence/what-is-a-sentence.htm) we saw the minimum requirements for the formation of a sentence. Now we can look in more detail at the four types of **sentence structure**.



## Simple Sentence Structure

A **simple sentence** consists of one independent clause. (An independent clause contains a subject and verb and expresses a complete thought.)



* I like coffee.
* Mary likes tea.
* The earth goes round the sun.
* Mary did not go to the party.

## Compound Sentence Structure

A [**compound sentence**](https://www.englishclub.com/grammar/sentence/compound-sentence.htm) is two (or more) independent clauses joined by a conjunction or semi-colon. Each of these clauses could form a sentence alone.



* I like coffee and Mary likes tea.
* Mary went to work but John went to the party.
* Our car broke down; we came last.

There are seven coordinating conjunctions:

* and, but, or, nor, for, yet, so

## Complex Sentence Structure

A **complex sentence** consists of an independent clause plus a dependent clause. (A dependent clause starts with a subordinating conjunction or a relative pronoun, and contains a subject and verb, but does not express a complete thought.)



* We missed our plane because we were late.
* Our dog barks when she hears a noise.
* He left in a hurry after he got a phone call.
* Do you know the man who is talking to Mary?

Here are some common subordinating conjunctions:

* after, although, as, because, before, how, if, once, since, than, that, though, till, until, when, where, whether, while

Here are the five basic relative pronouns:

* that, which, who, whom, whose

## Compound-Complex Sentence Structure

A **compound-complex sentence** consists of at least two independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses.



* John didn't come because he was ill so Mary was not happy.
* He left in a hurry after he got a phone call but he came back five minutes later.