Clauses & Sentence Structures

Independent Clauses (Simple Sentence)
A simple sentence consists of a subject, verb, and complete expression of thought.

Simple sentences are also referred to as independent clauses. So, an independent clause could stand alone as its own sentence.

Subject + verb [complete thought] = simple sentence
Melanie likes to dance.

Compound Sentences
A compound sentence consists of two simple sentences (independent clauses).

A comma is not enough to separate two independent clauses: use a comma and a conjunction (FANBOYS).

Simple sentence, [FANBOYS] simple sentence.
I needed milk, so I went to the store.

Independent clauses can also be joined with a semicolon.

Simple sentence; [FANBOYS] simple sentence.
I needed milk; so I went to the store.

Dependent Clauses
Dependent clauses can’t stand alone as their own sentences like independent clauses. A dependent clause starts with a dependent word, also called a complex conjunction. The complex conjunction makes the clause unable to function as a simple sentence.

Complex Conjunctions:

because  when  before  whenever
if  since  unless  though
after  although  wherever  even though
while  until  as  whereas
Complex Sentences
A complex sentence consists of an independent clause (simple sentence) and a dependent clause. Remember: A dependent clause begins with a dependent word (also called a complex conjunction).

There are two ways to structure a complex sentence.

1. If the dependent clause comes first, the sentence needs a comma in-between the dependent and independent clauses.

   Dependent clause + comma + independent clause = complex sentence
   
   **Because** they like to sing, Jo performed at the talent show.

2. If the independent clause comes first, the sentence does not need a comma.

   Independent clause + complex conjunction/dependent clause = complex sentence
   
   Jo performed at the talent show **because** they like to sing.