

Student Support Programme

Grade 8 - English Language

Unit 2: Complex Sentences (Writing Skills)

NOTES

In this lesson you will learn about **complex sentences**.

What do you notice in the following sentences?

- Po used his dumpling skills against Master Shifu.
- Tigress wanted to be the Dragon Warrior.
- The furious five teamed up to fight Tai Lung.

They are complete sentences.

Now, have a look at the following sentences.

- Po used his dumpling skills against Master Shifu because he (Po) was hungry.
- Tigress wanted to be the Dragon Warrior although Master Oogway chose Po.
- The furious five teamed up to fight Tai Lung when he escaped from jail.

Are they still complete sentences? Answer: Yes.

Now, consider the following:

- because he was hungry
- although Master Oogway chose Po
- when he escaped from jail

Are they complete sentences?

Answer: No, they are not complete sentences as they have information missing. These bits of sentences are known as dependent clauses.

Definition of Dependent clause:

A dependent clause cannot stand on its own. A dependent clause is unfinished and does not convey a full and complete thought.

Let's check these sentences:

- Po used his dumpling skills against Master Shifu.
- Tigress wanted to be the Dragon Warrior.
- The furious five teamed up to fight Tai Lung.

Have you noticed that each one is a complete sentence?
We call each an **independent clause**.

Definition of independent clause:

An independent clause is a clause that **can stand on its own**. It **expresses a complete thought** and is therefore a complete sentence.

Difference between a **dependent** and an **independent clause**:

An independent clause can stand by itself
A **dependent clause** cannot stand by itself.

An example to clarify:

- Po used his dumpling skills against Master Shifu **because he was hungry**.

This sentence has both an independent and a dependent clause.

Po used his dumpling skills against Master Shifu. This is an independent clause.

The other part is **because he was hungry**. This one is a dependent clause as it cannot stand by itself.

What is a complex sentence?

- Let's use the same example. Po used his dumpling skills against Master Shifu **because he was hungry**.

This is an example of a complex sentence. It has **both an independent and a dependent clause**.

Note: A complex sentence can have more than one dependent clause. Therefore, a complex sentence has one independent clause and at least one dependent clause.

Let us consider an example of a complex sentence having **more than one dependent clause**.

- We need to make sure Po gets a strawberry cake when we celebrate Po's victory because it is his favourite.

Independent clause: We need to make sure Po gets a strawberry cake

Dependent clause 1: when we celebrate Po's victory

Dependent clause 2: because it is his favourite

NOTE: A dependent clause begins with words like: **because, although, when, after, if** etc...

Did you notice them in the examples above?

Let's recall:

- **because** he was hungry
- **although** Master Oogway chose Po
- **when** he escaped from jail

The above words in bold are known as **subordinating conjunctions**.

The following is a table to help you with subordinating conjunctions:



Let us identify the dependent clause in the following sentences.

1. Po defeated Tai Lung because he believed in himself.

Answer: because he believed in himself

2. Master Shifu used food as a reward when he trained Po.

Answer: when he trained Po.

3. Po has to train very hard although he has been chosen to be the Dragon Warrior.

Answer: although he has been chosen to be the Dragon Warrior.

Note: The first part of each of the sentence starts with the independent clause followed by the dependent clause. However, a complex sentence can also start with a dependent clause first then followed by the independent clause.

Let's take some examples:

Example 1: **Because Po believed in himself**, he defeated Tai Lung.

Example 2: *When Master Shifu trained Po*, he used food as a reward.

Example 3: *Although Po has been chosen to be the Dragon Warrior*, he has to train very hard

In these three examples above, we have the **dependent clause first** then second the **independent clause**. **In short, you can start a sentence using a subordinating conjunction.**

Note: If a dependent clause is found at the beginning of a sentence, then there should be a comma before the independent clause.

The use of **comma** here is a must.

Recap ...

- **A complex sentence has an independent clause and at least one dependent clause.**
- **An independent clause can stand on its own.** It expresses a complete thought.
- **A dependent clause cannot be on its own.** It is incomplete and unfinished.

In **COMPLEX SENTENCES**, the order can be as follows:

1. Independent clause + dependent clause/s

OR

2. Dependent clause/s + independent clause

Task: Write a funny short story of around 50 -60 words, **using complex sentences.**

You may also include other types of sentences that you have learnt previously. (**Simple, Compound, and Complex Sentences**)