



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

CDE Science of Reading Literacy Series

## **Sentence Structure Handout**

## Warm Up

The grey warm evening of August had descended upon the city and a mild warm air, a memory of summer, circulated in the streets. The streets, shuttered for the repose of Sunday, swarmed with a gaily coloured crowd. Like illumined pearls the lamps shone from the summits of their tall poles upon the living texture below which, changing shape and hue unceasingly, sent up into the warm grey evening air an unchanging unceasing murmur.

(James Joyce, 1914)

# Grammar Handout

Parts of Speech		
Word	Definition	Example
<b>Noun</b>	A person, place, thing, or idea. Can function as a subject, indirect object, direct object, predicate noun, object of a preposition.	The powerful <i>lion</i> chased the timid <i>zebra</i> through the <i>fields</i> .
<b>Pronoun</b>	A word used in place of a noun.	<i>It</i> chased <i>them</i> very quickly through the fields.
<b>Verb</b>	States an action or state of being.	The powerful lion <i>chased</i> the timid zebra through the fields.
<b>Helping verb</b>	Supports the main verb (e.g. are, had been, is)	The powerful lion <i>is</i> chasing the zebra through the fields.
<b>Linking verb</b>	Links the subject to the rest of the sentence, but does not show action. (e.g. am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been)	The lion <i>is</i> in the field.
<b>Adverb</b>	Describes (modifies) a verb, adjective, or another adverb. Answers: How? When? Where?	The powerful lion chased the timid zebra <i>very quickly</i> .
<b>Adjective</b>	Describes(modifies) a noun or pronoun. Answers: What kind? Which one? How many?	The <i>powerful</i> lion chased the <i>timid</i> zebra through the <i>golden</i> fields.
<b>Preposition</b>	Begins a phrase and shows direction, location or time, or introduces an object.	<i>During</i> the day the powerful lion chased the timid zebra <i>through</i> the golden fields.

Conjunctions		
Word	Definition	Example
<b>Conjunctions</b>	Joins words, phrases, and clauses to each other. They help make writing clear and linguistically rich. There are four types of conjunctions: coordinating, correlative, subordinate, and adverbial.	boy <i>and</i> girl We went to get lunch <i>because</i> we were hungry.
<b>Coordinating Conjunction</b>	Joins two words or groups of words of equal standing which creates either a compound subject or verb, or a compound sentence. Sometimes referred to using the acronym <b>FANBOYS</b> (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).	I am hungry, <i>so</i> I will eat.
<b>Subordinating Conjunction</b>	Begins a dependent clause in a complex sentence (e.g. after, before, as while, until, because, since, unless).	<i>Because</i> I was hungry, I ate.
<b>Correlative Conjunction</b>	Joins phrases or clauses to show a relationship and are found in pairs (e.g. either, or & neither, nor).	<i>Either</i> I saw a mountain lion, <i>or</i> I saw a lynx.
<b>Adverbial Conjunction</b>	An adverb that joins two phrases or clauses together to clarify an idea.	I thought I saw a mountain lion; <i>however</i> , I actually saw a lynx.

# Grammar Handout cont.

Types of Sentences		
Word	Definition	Example
<b>Sentence</b>	A sentence is complete when it has at least one complete subject and one predicate with a capital letter at the beginning and a punctuation mark at the end. Length does not equate to a complete sentence. A sentence has at least one independent clause in it.	I ate.  The little boy ate a steak and cheese sandwich for lunch with his grandma.
<b>Simple Sentence</b>	Includes one subject-predicate independent clause that can stand alone. Subjects and predicates can be compounded, but may not have two independent ideas. Simple does not imply length--sometimes simple sentences can be very long.	The boy and girl jumped.  The strong little boy jumped excitedly up and down onto the rock near the edge of the river.
<b>Compound Sentence</b>	Includes two independent clauses (simple sentences) joined by a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS) using a comma.	The boy and girl jumped up, and they giggled as they fell.
<b>Complex Sentence</b>	A complex sentence has a subordinate or dependent clause(s) attached to an independent clause. One part of the sentence cannot stand alone.	Although the boy jumped high, he fell down.

## References:

Birsch, J.R and Carreker, S. (2018). *Multisensory Teaching of Basic Language Skills, 4th edition*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing

Moats, L.C (2010). *Speech to Print: Language essentials for teachers 2nd edition*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing

Van Cleave, W. (2014). *Writing Matters: Developing Sentence Skills in Students of All Ages, 2nd ed.* W. V. C.ED. (wvced.com)

## Parts of Speech can be Tricky!

When teaching the parts of speech, focus the students' attention on the role a word plays or the job a word has in the sentence. This builds student writing and comprehending because it reinforces the ability to understand the way words relate to one another to convey meaning.

**Back** is a noun, but it can also be an adjective, verb, or adverb.

- The old man's **back** hurt after a long day. (noun)
- We will enter through the **back** door. (adjective)
- I can **back** the car into the parking spot. (verb)

**Run** is a verb, and it's also a noun.

- You should **run** a little farther. (verb)
- There is a **run** in her stockings. (noun)

**Fast** is an adjective, and it's also a verb.

- He travelled by a **fast** train. (adjective)
- They will **fast** until sundown. (verb)

**Mean** is a verb, and it's also an adjective and a noun.

- What does that word **mean**? (verb)
- The **mean** owner hit his dog for barking. (adjective)
- What is the **mean** temperature in that area? (noun)

# Sentence Structure Activities

## Sentence Expansion

Students expand basic sentences and ideas into more sophisticated sentences.

Ex. Add at least 3 adjectives to each sentence to make it more descriptive.

The parents and their children took pictures at the national park.  
The *exhausted* parents and their *mischievous* children took pictures at the *breathtaking* national park.

## Sentence Combining

Students combine basic sentences into more sophisticated sentences.

Ex. Combine the following short sentences into one longer sentence.

My brother plays games. He is friendly. He shares his games with me.  
My friendly brother shares and plays his games with me.

## Sentence Sorting

Students sort examples of sentences vs. fragments, phrases vs. clauses, independent vs. dependent clauses, or simple, compound, complex sentences.

Ex. Cards with fragments and sentences to sort  
*around the house vs. My sister leaves her dirty clothes around the house.*



# Sentence Structure Activities

## Sentence Starters

Students will complete a sentence from a sentence starter or frame. This can include adding conjunctions, transition words, etc.

Ex.

The state of Colorado is great because \_\_\_\_\_.

The state of Colorado is great, but \_\_\_\_\_.

The state of Colorado is great, so \_\_\_\_\_.

## Sentence Scramble

Students unscramble sentences from content area reading or decodable text.

Ex. baby The sleeping is soundly

*The baby is sleeping soundly.*

## Sentence Imitation

Students use a sample or mentor sentence to imitate and create their own using the similar structure or instructional focus.

Ex. “It’s a funny thing about mothers and fathers. Even when their own child is the most disgusting little blister that you could ever imagine, they still think he or she is wonderful.” - Matilda, Roald Dahl

*It’s a funny thing about \_\_\_\_\_ . Even when their own \_\_\_\_\_ is the most \_\_\_\_\_ you could ever imagine, they still think \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ .*





# Sentence Expansion Practice

The dogs ran.



Expand the subject.

- 

Expand the predicate.

- 

Add phrases.

- 

Compound the subject.

- 

Compound the predicate.

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## Sentence Combining Lesson Example

### 1. **Introduce:** *Combining Sentences*

When we speak, we use long smooth phrases. When we write, sometimes our sentences can be short and choppy even when writing about the same subject. Combining can make sentences more complex, interesting, and easier to understand.

### 1. **Identify:** Let's take a look at some basic sentences and combine them into a more complex sentence.

1. The bear catches fish in the river.
2. The bear eats up to 30 fish in a day.

### 1. **Combine:**

Combine the 2 sentences above.

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### 1. **Generate:**

Create two different sentences by combining these 2 basic sentences.

Bears hibernate in winter. Bears sleep in their dens for months.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. **Share:**

Choose #1 or #2 to share with your table group.

### 1. **Discuss:**

Teacher asks each table group to share out one of the sentences they talked about in their group. Teacher uses the student examples to clarify and expand upon student knowledge.