

Clause Detectives

Sort sentences by the clauses they contain.

10.LU.1.B "Use complex sentence structure (made up of main and subordinate clauses and subordinating conjunctions) to infuse sentence variety in writing."

NAME _____

DATE _____

COMPLEX SENTENCE

A complex sentence has one main clause and at least one subordinate clause. A subordinating conjunction, such as although, because, or while, begins the subordinate clause.

Although rain drummed on windows, musicians rehearsed quietly.

SIMPLE SENTENCE

A simple sentence has one main clause. It does not include a subordinate clause beginning with a subordinating conjunction.

Several astronauts floated calmly.

1 SORT

8 items

For each sentence, circle COMPLEX or SIMPLE, then in Part 2 choose two items and explain how you identified each one.

1. Because the trail was icy, hikers moved carefully.

COMPLEX

SIMPLE

2. The baker smiled when the bread rose.

COMPLEX

SIMPLE

3. Clouds covered the stadium.

COMPLEX

SIMPLE

4. If the alarm rings, the crew will leave.

COMPLEX

SIMPLE

5. My cousin collects postcards.

COMPLEX

SIMPLE

6. The violinist tuned her instrument.

COMPLEX

SIMPLE

7. We stayed indoors while the hail fell.

COMPLEX

SIMPLE

8. After the vote ended, the committee announced its decision.

COMPLEX

SIMPLE

2 PROVE IT Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ HOW I KNEW _____

ITEM # _____ HOW I KNEW _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN One of each

Write one new COMPLEX sentence and one new SIMPLE sentence.

COMPLEX _____

SIMPLE _____

CHALLENGE

Write a complex sentence, then rewrite it by moving the subordinate clause to the other end of the sentence. Use correct punctuation in both versions.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	Because the trail was icy, hikers moved carefully.	COMPLEX	"Because the trail was icy" is a subordinate clause, and "hikers moved carefully" is a main clause.
2	The baker smiled when the bread rose.	COMPLEX	"When the bread rose" is a subordinate clause, and "The baker smiled" is a main clause.
3	Clouds covered the stadium.	SIMPLE	This sentence has one main clause and no subordinate clause.
4	If the alarm rings, the crew will leave.	COMPLEX	"If the alarm rings" is a subordinate clause, and "the crew will leave" is a main clause.
5	My cousin collects postcards.	SIMPLE	This sentence has one main clause and no subordinate clause.
6	The violinist tuned her instrument.	SIMPLE	This sentence has one main clause and no subordinate clause.
7	We stayed indoors while the hail fell.	COMPLEX	"While the hail fell" is a subordinate clause, and "We stayed indoors" is a main clause.
8	After the vote ended, the committee announced its decision.	COMPLEX	"After the vote ended" is a subordinate clause, and "the committee announced its decision" is a main clause.

PART 2 • PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 • MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **COMPLEX:** Before dawn arrived, the gardener watered the roses.
- **SIMPLE:** The puppy chased a leaf.

Challenge: The museum opened after the mayor arrived. After the mayor arrived, the museum opened.

For Part 2, accept explanations that correctly identify a main clause and a subordinate clause in a complex sentence, or explain that a simple sentence has only one main clause. In the challenge, students should use a comma when the subordinate clause comes first.