

Functional Skills

English

Level 2 Writing W4a

Use a Range of Sentences to Effectively Organise Written Communication

v1.0

Functional Skills English:

Level 2

Skill Standard:

Writing W4a

Coverage and Range:

Use a range of sentence structures, including complex sentences, to organise written communication effectively.

'Learners should be able to construct sentences which go beyond straightforward subject/verb/object structure, demonstrating grammatically correct articulation. The writing should form a coherent piece with linking features and a logical sequence of ideas, facts and/or opinions. Learners should include more than one clause, where appropriate, and be able to use conjunctions (for example *but*, *and*) and connectives (for example *however*, *nevertheless*) effectively.¹

¹ QCA Functional Skills guidance: amplification of the standards June 2008 QCA/08/3700

Improving Your Writing

Sentences are the building blocks of your writing, and the purpose of this workbook is to help you become familiar with more advanced sentence forms. In your exams you are not going to be asked to tell a complex sentence from a compound, but you are increasingly expected to be able to use such sentences to good effect. The chief point is really to help you avoid making mistakes, e.g.

- By overusing simple sentences so that the reader runs out of breath and/or patience: (*I ate my lunch. Then I went home. But I was late. I then had a drink. But I didn't like it. So I went out. I bought a lemonade. I drank that in one big gulp.*)

- By creating run-on sentences that lack connectives and/or suitable punctuation: (*I went home I had a headache.*); (*Ben plays snooker with his granddad on Fridays his granddad is better than he is.*)

- By creating comma splices instead of using connectives or more suitable punctuation: (*I went home, I had a headache*); (*The driver was going too fast, he spun his car on the verge and almost hit the lamppost.*)

One of the easiest ways to become a better rider is to be a better reader. Daily reading of enjoyable texts allows you to witness good writing in action, whilst imitating successful writers' sentence styles is a quick and easy way to improve the standard of your own texts.

Clauses & Phrases

Text that is boring to write is boring to read, and you want to be able to wow examiners with your prose. To write well you need to understand how to construct, punctuate and vary sentences accurately and for effect. To understand sentences fully, however, you must first comprehend *clauses*.

Clauses ultimately come in two forms: independent and dependent.

An independent clause is defined as a group of words that contains a **subject** performing a **verb**, e.g. *I like books* or ***She is** nineteen*.

All **independent** clauses can exist on their own as complete thoughts, e.g.

***Rutland** is one of the counties of England.*

A **dependent** clause on the other hand, whilst it must likewise contain a subject and a verb, cannot exist on its own as a complete thought (it *depends* on another clause) e.g.

*...after **dad** bought an antique bath...*

When you say this clause out loud you can *hear* that more information is needed before and/or after it in order for it to make sense, e.g.

Mum was *angry* after **dad** bought *an antique bath*.
 After **dad** bought *an antique bath*, **the ceiling** above the lounge collapsed.

To help you identify them more easily, it is common (though by no means compulsory) to see dependent clauses begin with one of the following words:

after	since	whether
although	so that	which
as	than	while
because	that	whichever
before	though	who
even if	unless	whoever
even though	until	whom
if	when	whose
in order that	whenever	whosoever
once	where	whomever
provided that	whereas	why
rather than	wherever	

Clauses are distinct from *phrases* which, while they contain information, do not have subjects performing verbs, e.g.

sputtered loudly (verb but no subject)
Peter's green motorbike (subject but no verb)

As you might have suspected, we can use phrases to make clauses, though, e.g.

Peter's green motorbike sputtered loudly.

Sentences

To be a sentence, a group of words must therefore:

1. contain a verb (a *doing* or *being* word, e.g. *am, is, are, throw, chase*);
2. and a subject (a *person* or *thing* that the sentence is about, e.g. *Tom, gran, Courtney's guinea pig, the rain*);
3. and express a complete idea.

Again, sentences are distinct from phrases (also known as sentence *fragments*) which themselves **do not** express a complete idea:

- i. *The car turned right.* (Sentence)
- ii. *The box, please.* (Sentence Fragment)

In example i, you can see that there is a subject (the car), a verb (turned) and a complete idea (that the car turned right). In example ii, by contrast, we might have an unlikely subject (a box), but we certainly have neither a verb nor a complete idea. What about the box? Is it ours? Should it be moved? Is it damaged? From the fragment alone we just don't know.

Sentence Types

As a point of note, there are four *types* of sentence in English:

Statements:	<i>The weather is warm.</i>	(Matters of fact and/or opinion)
Questions:	<i>Why is the sky blue?</i>	(Querying a matter)
Exclamations:	<i>Look at that rhinoceros!</i>	(Expressing high emotion)
Commands:	<i>Don't touch that dial.</i>	(Making a request or giving an order)

Sentence Structures

All true English sentences also fall into one of four major categories:

1. Simple
2. Compound
3. Complex
4. Compound-Complex

There is a fifth catch-all category which includes *Fragmentary*, *Incomplete* and *Minor* sentences, but as these are not complete sentences, for our purposes they can all be thought of as one group. Such sentences tend not to contain verbs, but they can, in context, convey meaning. They are usually used to create impact, and you will most often find them in creative works, persuasive texts or speech:

Bargains galore!
Staff only.
Pink or blue?
Yes, the red one.

The whining huskies.
The jester, who wears a silly hat.
More offers in store.
The clementines there.

Whilst in your writing you should always therefore use complete sentences, you can see how such sentences can convey meaning in, say, everyday speech, e.g.

Q. *What do you want passing next?*

A: *The box, please.*

Simple Sentences

Each *simple sentence* **must** contain a **subject** and a **main verb** and form one complete piece of information that **makes sense on its own**. It will be a *single independent clause*:

The large, fat, lazy, ginger cat from next door sat glumly on our green wheelie bin.
Kim prefers milk to juice.
The children were giggling.

That lightning bolt was massive.
The boys like singing folk songs.

Exercise 1a.

Identify which of the following are complete simple sentences and circle your answers.

The tiny dormouse hanging on the stalk of wheat.	Yes / No
The meatballs and pasta tasted delicious.	Yes / No
The old pocket watch my granddad gave me.	Yes / No
The toy car belonging to my youngest cousin, Gerald.	Yes / No
My mother called him yesterday.	Yes / No
The whining huskies are.	Yes / No
Because Galileo was the first person to see Saturn's rings.	Yes / No
The jester, who wears a silly hat.	Yes / No
The box of clementines that I bought for you yesterday.	Yes / No
Whilst reading a book in the bath.	Yes / No
A flock of honking geese flew over my home an hour ago.	Yes / No
My grandmother coughed.	Yes / No
I am.	Yes / No

Exercise 1b.

Create three simple sentences of your own and have your tutor mark them.

Compound Sentences

These are made up of two or more **independent clauses** joined by various connectives:

1. One of the seven **coordinating conjunctions**: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*. Except in short sentences or lists, you should formally put a comma before each of these words in a compound sentence:

I had hoped to attend the play, but I am unfortunately too unwell.

The little dog laughed to see such fun, and the dish ran away with the spoon.

I'm bored so I'm going home.

The cow mooed, the sheep bleated, and the pig grunted.

2. One of many **conjunctive adverbs**. The key with these is to place a semicolon before them and a comma afterwards:

I had hoped to attend the play; however, I am unfortunately too unwell.

Jason had finished making the game; consequently, he was as pleased as punch!

There are many of these words, some of which are as follows:

<p>A accordingly additionally again also anyway</p> <p>B besides</p> <p>C certainly comparatively consequently conversely</p>	<p>E elsewhere equally eventually</p> <p>F finally further furthermore</p> <p>H hence henceforth however</p>	<p>I in addition in comparison in contrast in fact incidentally indeed instead</p> <p>L Likewise</p> <p>M meanwhile moreover</p>	<p>N namely nevertheless next nonetheless notably now</p> <p>O on the other hand otherwise</p> <p>R rather</p>	<p>S similarly specifically subsequently</p> <p>T that is then thereafter therefore thus</p> <p>U undoubtedly uniquely</p>
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3. You can also use a colon when the second clause explains the first, or just a semicolon where they are merely related to one another:

I can see the problem: the wheel is buckled.

The wind is nearing gale force; many buildings have already been damaged.

Note: The coordinating conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs sit apart from the clauses that surround them. **Do not** worry about remembering the terms *coordinating conjunction* and *conjunctive adverb*, though, as it's highly unlikely you'll need to recall them.

If you do want to memorise them, however, try to remember that if your clothes go together they are said to be *coordinated*. Equally, a *junction* is where two or more roads come together. A *coordinating conjunction* or a *conjunctive adverb* is the same, but with clauses rather than clothes or roads.

Ultimately, what is truly important is that you understand how these words and clauses work and where their associated punctuation goes.

Exercise 2a.

Identify which of the following are compound sentences and circle your answers. Remember that all the separate clauses must be properly punctuated and independent, i.e. *make sense on their own*:

I love eating curries, but my wife hates spicy food.	Yes / No
The tuna salad's dressing wasn't to my liking.	Yes / No
The sun is shining; the birds are singing; all is well with the world.	Yes / No
After the tidal wave, there wasn't much of the dock left.	Yes / No
I have never been to France, yet I have been to Germany.	Yes / No
Sarah spent all her money, so she had to borrow some off me.	Yes / No
The Maxwell and Colombo Gaps appear in Saturn's rings.	Yes / No
The jester, who wears a silly hat, made me laugh.	Yes / No
The box of clementines that I bought for you yesterday.	Yes / No
My toes went wrinkly so I got out of the bath.	Yes / No

Exercise 2b.

All of the following are compound sentences, yet they are missing colons, semicolons or commas. Correctly punctuate each one.

Some of the passengers on board the ship were worried by the storm but the captain reassured them over the tannoy system.

The ground beneath the trees was covered in bluebells it made a stunning photo.

The Solar System fascinates me the distances between the worlds are just enormous.

I have never studied cooking so I am not proud of my meals.

I thought that there might be a problem however I was mistaken.

Please do not come into the lounge for half an hour otherwise you will spoil the surprise.

The post office's fire alarm had gone off consequently I couldn't buy any stamps.

I had just two choices I could twist or stick.

Thank you for your kind words it means a lot to me to know someone cares.

All the world's a stage and all the men and women are merely players.

That's the fastest time he's ever run but it's not as fast as the world record.

People who say that age is a number are wrong age is clearly a word.

Some people don't do any exercise yet I probably do too much.

I am currently stuck in traffic nonetheless I think I will be there on time.

Exercise 2c.

Create three compound sentences of your own and have your tutor mark them.

Complex Sentences

Each of these contains one independent (or main) clause and one or more dependent clauses. **Remember:** an independent clause makes sense on its own, whereas a dependent does not; it *depends* on the main clause to reveal its full meaning.

As you can see from the examples below, dependent clauses can appear before, behind or inside an independent clause. Commas are sometimes used to separate dependent and independent clauses. There's always the odd exception, but typically, if the dependent clause appears first, a comma is needed after it; if it's in the middle, a pair of bracketing commas should be used; and if the dependent clause appears last, a comma tends to be placed before it:

Wherever I lay my hat, that's my home.

He asked if she would dance now.

I will, unless you have anything else to add, now sum up.

The car that had crashed was towed away.

Now it is obvious why *that had crashed* is a dependent clause, as under no circumstances could it make sense on its own. Some people, however, do get confused by sentences such as the following:

Jack carried the stool while Jill fetched the cow.

At first glance you may think that *Jack carried the stool* and *Jill fetched the cow* are both independent clauses, and, indeed, taken on their own, they are. The key word in this sentence, though, is *while*. This is a *dependent conjunction*. Unlike coordinating conjunctions which stand apart from the surrounding clauses, *dependent conjunctions* latch onto and become part of the clause they precede. The second clause is therefore *while Jill fetched the cow*, and clearly that is a dependent clause as it cannot make sense on its own.

Dependent Conjunctions & Relative Pronouns

As alluded to above, the most crucial word within any complex sentence is the **dependent conjunction** or **relative pronoun** (which does the same sort of job). Not only do these indicate a time, place or cause-and-effect relationship between the clauses, but they also tell us which of the clauses is *dependent* because they always appears *before* it.

There are many of these words, some of which are listed below. Remember that they make the clause that follows them depend on the independent one to deliver the overall sentence's full meaning:

A after although as (as soon as)	E even though I if in order that O once	P provided R rather S since	T than that though U unless until	W when(ever) whereas where(ver) whether while who(ever) why
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Exercise 3a.

Identify which of the following are complex sentences and circle your answers. Remember that all such sentences contain an independent clause (which can stand on its own) and one or more dependent clauses introduced by a dependent conjunction or relative pronoun:

Because of the weather, the cricket match was cancelled.	Yes / No
The woman who runs the bakery is very nice.	Yes / No
As expected, the film we went to see was utter drivel.	Yes / No
The Sky at Night is my granddad's favourite TV programme.	Yes / No
Always be yourself; everyone else is already taken.	Yes / No
The weather is beautiful; it is going to be a lovely day.	Yes / No
Dance like there's nobody watching.	Yes / No
Jack hated the dentist, but he went anyway.	Yes / No
I sent the meal back after taking one bite.	Yes / No
When I was younger I believed in Santa Claus.	Yes / No

Exercise 3b.

Some of the following complex sentences are correct as they are, whilst others are mispunctuated. Add or remove colons where necessary, and remember that the dependent clause can appear before, after or inside the independent.

After you finish washing the pots please will you dry them?

I will have to drive tonight unless I can think of an excuse.

When I go on holiday I will take my mobile phone with me.

Even though he doesn't like football Martin will play in the charity match.

Royston whether he likes it or not is going to have to wash the car.

Since her trip to the Far East, Laura, has been a different woman.

Because of the traffic lights on the main road I will have to drive a different route.

I didn't enjoy the main course although the starter, and pudding, were exquisite.

After thirty years apart the two brothers were reunited, on the airport concourse.

Whenever I am in New England I always go walking through the forests.

There are some animals that are truly noble beasts though others are less so.

I always like to take photos wherever I go.

Exercise 3c.

Below are eight pairs of simple sentences. Make each pair into one complex sentence using subordinate clauses or relative pronouns. Do not combine the sentences simply into a compound sentence by using a joining word (*and*, *but*, etc.) Remember to adjust the punctuation and word order, too, if necessary.

The first one has been done for you as an example.

- 1) She shouted out loud. She tripped over the rug.
She shouted out loud because she tripped over the rug.

- 2) Diane is a woman on a mission. Jason is a man on the edge.
-

- 3) You are eating out tonight. I won't cook you any dinner.
-

- 4) I enjoy fishing for sticklebacks. I'm not a very skilful fisherman.
-

- 5) The telephone call came too late. She had already left.
-

- 6) Cassandra was not one of them. Most of the students worked very hard.
-

- 7) Tristram can't go out tonight. He washes the dinner pots.
-

- 8) Tom is, in and of himself, unique. He is a twin.
-

Exercise 3d.

Create three complex sentences of your own and have your tutor mark them.

Compound-Complex Sentences

Also known as complex-compound (CC), these are sentences which, as their name suggests, are a merger of two of the more basic types. Note that all CC sentences must contain at least **two independent**, and one or more dependent, clauses:

*Although I like most vegetables, **I hate artichoke**, but **my wife thinks it's delicious**.*

*Despite being thought to be unsinkable, **Titanic sank on her maiden voyage and more than 1,200 people were drowned**.*

***I went for a walk on the beach** because I had an hour to kill, and **it was during that time that I found the treasure**.*

***Simon chose to climb the tree**, which was a really tall, old oak, so **he was better able to see the rocket's launch**.*

Exercise 4

Create three CC sentences of your own and have your tutor mark them.

Use a Range of Sentences to Effectively Organise Written Communication

Exercise 5

A friend of yours has written a cycling article on puncture repair. Unfortunately, he has not only used far too many simple sentences, but he has also wrongly separated several independent and dependent clauses from one another.

Proofread the extract below before rewriting your own much improved version in the text box, although there's no perfect answer.

Remember to try and make use of compound and complex sentences, but don't forget that simple sentences do have their uses, so don't overcomplicate matters unnecessarily.

Extract:

Punctures don't occur every time you go out and about. They are the most common form of maintenance. You'll need to handle.

In order to mend a puncture you should:

- 1 Release the brake calipers. Disengage the chain (if necessary). Undo the axle nuts. Remove the wheel.
- 2 Use strong spoons, blunt screwdrivers or tyre levers. To remove the tyre.
- 3 Check for any foreign objects that may be lodged in the tyre. Remove them.
- 4 Locate the hole or holes in the inner tube. Inflate it. Hold it underwater. Feel for leaking air.
- 5 A cheap puncture repair kit will often contain all you need. Chalk, sandpaper, patches and glue. Keep one with you at all times.
- 6 Use chalk to mark the puncture(s). Use sandpaper to roughen the area. Around each puncture.
- 7 Smear glue evenly. Onto the back of the patch. Place it carefully over the puncture. Hold down for 30 seconds. Ensure you don't get any glue on your fingers.
- 8 When the glue is dry. Place the inner tube back onto the rim. Ensure that the valve is in the right place.
- 9 Replace the tyre onto the rim. It might be difficult. Use your tools to help you. Reinflate the tube. Listen for any leaks. If you hear any. Disassemble the wheel again. Check the patch.
- 10 If all is OK. Position the wheel. Back onto the bike. Tighten the nuts evenly. Keep the wheel in line.
- 11 Reconnect your brake calipers. Test them before riding.

Exercise 6

Read the article below and use a range of suitably advanced sentence types, including quoted passages, to list the supposed benefits of the proposed changes. You need only create three or four paragraphs, but ensure you write in full sentences.

*There is only one way to create a biking paradise,
and that is to invest massively in making it safer*

Imagine we could invent a miracle mode of transport that was quick, efficient and got the passenger exactly where they wanted to go and exactly when they wanted.

Imagine that this machine was silent, beautiful, with zero emissions and promoted oxygenation of the brain and a general sense of well-being.

Let us say, moreover, that this amazing contraption got commuters out of their cars and their trains and their buses and thereby not only relieved the pressure on an over-stretched mass transit system but also allowed the former captives of that system to revel in the light and the space and the tree-lined, sun-dappled glory of the most beautiful capital city on earth.

Wouldn't we be mad not to promote such a device?

...

The bikes of 2015 are vastly better even than those of 20 years ago: lighter, safer, faster, and with gears so ingeniously tuned as to propel us uphill as if by magic carpet. Since London's landscape is broadly flat, it is no wonder that the habit is spreading.

...

We want a cycling environment that is equally welcoming to women, to families, to pin-striped captains of industry wobbling gently along – the kind of cycle-friendly environment you see in Copenhagen or Amsterdam.

...

Some are worried about the loss of space for cars. I understand those anxieties and we are confident that we can very largely (if not entirely) address them. In the end we need to make a choice about the kind of city we want, and focus on the economic boost that goes with less traffic, less pollution and a lovelier urban realm. A more bike-friendly city will be a better city all round.

Exercise 7

You're reading a magazine whilst on holiday and see the article below. Read it and then write a letter in order to give your opinion. Be sure to enhance your case by using many, if not all, the advanced sentence forms outlined in the previous resources. Take note of the chief points and claims the writer makes and argue either **for or against** them.

The Lowe Down: Highway Crimes and Misdemeanours

By Simon Lowe

More than 100 cyclists are killed each year on Britain's roads, whilst almost 20,000 more are injured. Many motorists' attitudes towards bike riders are also grotesquely inconsiderate, with a large proportion blaming them for causing delays and worsening traffic problems, neither of which is true.

Riding just 10 miles on the roads gives you a one-in-a-million chance of getting killed. This might not seem a lot at first glance, but it is a sobering thought that every three days someone gets on their bike and never returns.

Everyone also recognises that cycling, in and of itself, is hugely beneficial. 'Spoke jockeys' live longer, take fewer days off work, are more productive, happier and fitter than their four-wheeled compatriots. In the UK, however, government spending on cycling infrastructure is pathetic. Whilst investment in London has increased recently, it is still poor compared to other major cities, with matters outside the capital shoddy and sporadic.

Despite the obvious risks of road riding, in legal terms it remains unlawful for cyclists to use their bikes on Britain's pavements. With the roads so unsafe, however, I am calling for this to change. Queen Victoria was on the throne when this law was passed and cars hadn't even been invented, so it is high time that this relic was brought up to date to take into account the realities of the 21st century.

With due care and attention and consideration from all concerned, cyclists and pedestrians would be a much better match than drivers and bikers are. Speed limits and sensible restrictions would apply, and safer journeys would result. It is high time this was sorted out and now is the time to do it!

