



Connectives and Sentence Structure

Helping your child with connectives and sentence structure at home

There are many ways in which the same combination of information can be 'packaged' in sentences. Children need to be aware of the variety of sentence structures and be confident using them, and punctuating them correctly. Using a wide range of connectives will allow children to link their ideas and guide a reader through the writing.

This guide will provide you with information about the terminology your child will come across when learning about sentence structure and connectives in school, and includes suggestions as to how you could support them at home.

It is important that children understand the 'building blocks' of sentences, so that they can confidently manipulate them, adding variety and interest to their writing.

There are three main sentence structures: [simple, compound and complex](#). Below is a list of key terms that children are introduced to during KS2, which help them to understand how to build all three structures.

Sentence Vocabulary

Phrase

A group of words that work together.

e.g. **a big dog** **five minutes ago**

NB A phrase doesn't make complete sense on its own. As it doesn't have a verb, it can't be a complete sentence.

Clause

A group of words that work together and include a verb.

e.g. **the boy won the race**

There are two kinds of clauses (see below)

Main clause

A clause that makes complete sense on its own.

e.g. **she bought a new dress**

A main clause can be a sentence on its own.

Subordinate clause

A clause that doesn't make sense on its own – it needs to be joined onto a main clause.

e.g. **when she went shopping**

A subordinate clause cannot be a sentence on its own.

Often a subordinate clause will start with a subordinating conjunction

e.g. **when she went shopping**

Simple sentence

This is made up from just one clause.

e.g. **It was late.**

Compound sentence

This is made up from **two or more main clauses**. These clauses can be joined using coordinating conjunctions, such as 'and', 'but' or 'so'.

e.g. It was late **but** I wasn't tired.

Both the clauses are equally important.

Complex sentence

This is made up from a main clause and one or more **subordinate clauses**.

e.g. The man limped **because his leg hurt**.

Hoping nobody would notice, Ben slipped out of the room.

Rearranging complex sentences

Clauses can appear in different positions in complex sentences.

e.g. She took her dog with her **wherever she went**.

Wherever she went, she took her dog with her.

Rose, **because she had eaten the whole cake**, began to feel sick.

If the **subordinate clause** goes at the before the main clause, it is usually followed by a comma.

If the **subordinate clause** is 'embedded' into the main clause, there is usually a comma before and after it.

Connectives

Connective is the name for any word that links clauses or sentences together.

There are two main groups of connectives:

Conjunctions and Connecting Adverbs

Conjunctions

Conjunctions are words that are used to link clauses **within** a sentence.

There are two main kinds:

Co-ordinating conjunctions – link two main clauses to make compound sentences.

The acronym 'FANBOYS' can help children to remember coordinating conjunctions

e.g. for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so

I was angry **but** I didn't say anything.

Subordinating conjunctions - go at the start of a subordinate clause so they work to link the subordinating clause to the main clause.

e.g. when, while, before, after, since, until, if, because, although, that

We were hungry **when** we got home.

Connecting adverbs

Connecting adverbs link the ideas in two sentences together but the two sentences still **remain separate**.

Connecting adverbs link ideas in several different ways.

Addition – also, furthermore, moreover

Opposition – however, nevertheless, on the other hand

Reinforcing – besides, anyway, after all

Explaining – for example, in other words, that is to say

Listing – first(ly), first of all, finally

Indicating result – therefore, consequently, as a result

Indicating time – just then, meanwhile, later

e.g.

I was angry. **However**, I didn't say anything.

Commas are often used to mark off connecting adverbs.

How can you help?

- Read to, and with, your child, drawing their attention to different sentence lengths and complexities. Why do they think the writer used them?
- Ask your child to identify an example of each sentence structure in a page of their reading book.
- Using a highlighter, ask your child to find all the simple sentences in a an old newspaper/magazine article
- Ask your child to identify their favourite sentence in a passage of text – what did they like about it?