Characteristics of simple sentences

(1) Structure of a simple sentence: SV(O)

A simple sentence consists of at least a **<u>Subject</u>** and a **<u>Verb</u>** (and often also an **Object**), short: **SV(O)** (in that order).

[All freshmen] [have to take] [FYW 1050].
        S   V   O

(2) Content of a simple sentence: One complete thought

A simple sentence expresses (i) a complete **statement**, (ii) a **question**, or (iii) a **command**.

(i) All students completed their homework.
(ii) Did all students complete their homework?
(iii) Complete your homework!

(3) Punctuation in a simple sentence: Period, question mark, or exclamation mark at the end

A simple sentence starts with a capital letter and **ends with** (i) **a period** (for statements), (ii) **a question mark** (for questions), or (iii) **an exclamation mark** (for commands).

(i) <u>A</u>ll students completed their homework<u>.</u>
(ii) <u>D</u>id all students complete their homework<u>?</u>
(iii) <u>C</u>omplete your homework<u>!</u>

Commas do not end sentences; they only separate parts of sentences.

(4) Intonation in a simple sentence: Lowering of the voice and a longer pause at the end

- Pausing and lowering of the voice > at the end of a sentence > period
- Pausing without lowering of the voice > within a sentence > comma

Characteristics of (grammatically correct) complex sentences

Some clauses, i.e. complete SV(O)'s, always occur together with another clause, i.e. another complete SV(O).

- **Coordination**: main clause + main clause

  ➢ Remember: FANBOYS (*for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, *so*)!

- A clause introduced by any of the FANBOYS always **follows** another complete clause.
- The two clauses are separated by a comma because together they form a single sentence.

Example: We learn classical Arabic in school**, but** we speak a dialect at home.

- **Subordination**: main clause + subordinate clause

  ➢ Remember that all clauses that start with *after, although, as, as if, because, before, even though, if, rather than, since, so that, that, though, unless, until, when, where, whether, while* are **subordinate/dependent clauses**.

  - The subordinate = dependent clause depends on the main = independent clause, i.e. it cannot stand by itself.
  - The two clauses may appear in either order:
    - main/independent + subordinate/dependent
    - subordinate/dependent + main/independent
  - The two clauses are separated by a comma (except in the case of *because* and *that* and in the case of *if* or *unless* appearing in the middle of a sentence) but never by a period because together they form a single sentence.

  Example: <u>Although</u> we learn classical Arabic in school**,** we speak a dialect at home.
  We speak a dialect at home**,** <u>although</u> we learn classical Arabic in school.

Punctuation rules for coordination

- Coordination of **two words or phrases**, e.g. Noun Phrase + Noun Phrase:

  A and B
  NOT: A, B

  Example: I studied English [in my home country] <u>and</u> [in the U.S.]

- Coordination of **two clauses**, i.e. SV(O) + SV(O):

  A, and B
  NOT: A, B
  Also NOT: A and B
  ➢ Note how this is different from conjoining two words or phrases.

  Example: [I]$_S$ [learned]$_V$ [Cantonese as my first language]$_O$**, and** [I]$_S$ [studied]$_V$ [Mandarin in school]$_O$.

- Coordination of **three or more** words, phrases, or clauses:

  A, B, and C
  NOT: A, B, C
  Also NOT: A and B and C

  Example: I speak Cantonese**,** Mandarin**, and** English.

Example of (unacceptable) run-on sentences

- Example 1:
  "The book talks about how you can live with others and how you can get the keys to solve your problems and how you can deal with people. The author starts his book with his experiences and then starts to write about how people can live together and make concessions to each other because everybody is not the same and the author believes you might like or love something and your wife or son or brother don't like it at that moment you should give the sacrifice for them and for yourself."

  ➢ Problem: … and … and … and … / SV(O) and SV(O) and SV(O) and …

- Example 2:
  "There wasn't even a police investigation, the guy just robbed her and left the area."

  ➢ Problem: ..., ... /   SV(O), SV(O).

Suggestions for revision

(1) Understand the difference between when to use a comma and when to use a period. Split the run-on sentence up into **several simple sentences** by looking for where commas might be turned into periods and the word *and* might be deleted.

   - Look for where a complete SV(O) ends.
   - Check if the SV(O) could stand by itself (i.e. is not a dependent clause).
   - Read out the sentence and listen to where your voice naturally goes down. Then ask yourself whether the sentence could end there.

- Example 1 with revisions:
  The book talks about how you can live with others, ~~and~~ how you can get the keys to solve your problems, and how you can deal with people. The author starts his book with his experiences. ~~and~~ He then starts to write about how people can live together and make concessions to each other because everybody is not the same. ~~and~~ The author believes you might like or love something, and your wife, ~~or~~ son, or brother don't like it. At that moment you should give the sacrifice for them and for yourself.

- Example 2 with revision:
  There wasn't even a police investigation. The guy just robbed her and left the area.

(2) Split the sentence up into **grammatically correct coordinating and subordinating constructions**.

- Example 1 with revisions:
  . . . The author believes that **if** you like or love something, **but** your wife, son, or brother doesn't like it, you should give the sacrifice for them and for yourself.

➢ If in doubt or unsure how to do this, stick to suggestion (1) above. There is absolutely nothing wrong with having a string of short, simple sentences, all separated by periods: SV(O). SV(O). SV(O). …

(3) To help you "hear" where a sentence actually ends or should end but you erroneously used a comma or you used too many *and*'s, have your iPad read the text to you:

- Highlight the text to be read out aloud, e.g. one paragraph, and hit "Speak."
- The Speak function will read out the text in such a way that its intonation reflects the (correct and incorrect) punctuation.
- But the document must be in MS Word or PDF with text recognition because the Speak function does not work on Google Docs and PDFs without text recognition (i.e. text from a photo or scanned text).