

2013 Jim Burke The English Teacher's Companion

4th Ed.

Forms and Functions: The Sentences

Name and Description	Examples Used in Academic Writing
FUNCTION	
Declare (Declarative) Makes a statement; tells us something about a person, place, thing, or idea	Upon entering the woods, the speaker in Frost's poem encounters "two roads [that] diverged in a yellow wood."
Question (Interrogative) Poses a question; expresses interest, consternation, wonder, curiosity, challenge	Why does Frost, after initially saying the paths were different, say they are "really about the same"?
Exclaim (Exclamatory) Indicates strong emotion, surprise, power, passion	The narrator in Frost's poem is himself divided into two "I's," two selves!
Command (Imperative) Demands action; tells what to do; includes an implied subject (You!); suggests authority, confidence	Write an essay in which you examine the attitude of Frost's speaker toward the road. Include in your response examples from the text. Avoid summary.
Wonder (Conditional) Such "If . . . then . . ." sentences speculate about what something would be like under certain conditions	If, however, Frost wrote it in the third person instead, the tone of the poem and our relationship with the speaker would fundamentally change, as would the meaning of the poem.
STRUCTURE	
Simple One independent clause, no dependent clauses; can have single or compound subject; single or compound predicate; capable of complexity, nuance	a. Literary critics provide perspective. b. Literary critics and other scholars provide perspective. c. Literary critics provide perspective and challenge our assumptions.
Compound Two or more independent clauses joined by a semicolon, or by a comma and a coordinating conjunction	a. Literary critics provide perspective, but some are more insightful than others. b. Literary critics provide perspective; some are more insightful than others.
Complex One independent clause and 1+ dependent clauses	a. Although some question the validity of such critical interpretations, literary critics do provide a useful perspective. b. Literary critics provide a useful perspective, though some interpretations, such as those provided by Marxists, seem more political than literary.
Compound-Complex 2+ independent clauses and 1+ dependent clauses	a. Literary critics provide perspective, but because they too often mix their interpretations with political motives, they lack credibility in the eyes of many readers.
RHETORIC	
Periodic AKA: left-branching sentence that puts the subject at the end. Creates tension, suspense, emphasis; causes confusion if left branch is too long	In contrast to other writers of his time, who still embraced the more ornate language of the previous era, Hemingway created a new style.
Cumulative AKA right-branching or loose sentence; begins with main idea (independent clause), then adds details (phrases! clauses). Establishes main idea immediately for emphasis; each addition builds on the others for a cumulative effect	Hemingway created a new style , one that stood in contrast to other writers of his time, who still embraced the more ornate language of the previous era.
Interrupted AKA: midbranching sentence. Interrupted by phrases/clauses that are parenthetical, creating a pause or disrupting the flow. Creates tension, distraction; allows for emphasis, suspense, elaboration; set off by dashes or parentheses though enclosing	Hemingway , rejecting the more ornate language of the previous era, created a new style.

FIGURE 7.5 Forms and Functions: The Sentences

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