**Complex Sentences**

**Complex Sentences - What are They?**

Complex sentences are made up of two clauses - an [independent clause](http://esl.about.com/od/grammarintermediate/p/tip159.htm) and a [dependent clause](http://esl.about.com/od/grammarintermediate/p/tip160.htm). Independent clauses are similar to simple sentences. They can stand alone and function as a sentence. Dependent clauses, however, need to be used together with an independent clause to make sense. Here are some examples:

**Independent Clauses**

*We didn't pass the test. Angela won the competition. The doctor will go ahead with the operation.*

**Dependent Clauses**

*Although we had studied for a long time Because she had practiced for weeks If he gets positive test results*

Notice how the first group of sentences, the independent clauses, can be used as complete sentences. The dependent clauses, on the other hand, are missing an element (the independent clause) to make sense.

Here are the two clauses combined to make complex sentences:

*Although we had studied for a long time, we didn't pass the test. Angela won the competition because she had practiced for weeks. The doctor will go ahead with the operation if he gets positive test results.*

Complex sentences are written by using [subordinating conjunctions](http://esl.about.com/od/grammarintermediate/a/subclauses.htm) to connect the two clauses. These subordinating conjunctions fall into different categories. Here are the most common subordinating conjunctions based on their function. When beginning a sentence with a subordinating conjunction, place a comma at the end of the clause. There is no need for a comma if the subordinating conjunction introduces the dependent clause in the middle of the sentence.

**Showing Opposition or Unexpected Results**

*although / even though / though*

Although I felt he was wrong, I decided to trust him.  
Sharon started looking for a new job even though she was currently employed.  
Though I couldn't understand a word, we had a great time!

**Showing Cause and Effect**

*because / since / as*

Since you need some help, I'll come over this afternoon.  
Henry felt he needed to take some time off because he had been working so hard.  
The parents paid for extra lessons as the children were very gifted.

**Expressing Time**

*when / as soon as / before / after / by*

By the time you get this letter, I will have left for New York.  
I used to play a lot of tennis when I was a teenager.  
We had a wonderful dinner after she had arrived.

**Expressing Conditions**

*if / unless / in the case that*

If I were you, I would take my time with that project.  
They won't come next week unless you ask them to do so.  
In the case that he isn't available, we'll look for another consultant.

**Instructions**  
Use each of the ten complex sentences below as the model for a new sentence of your own.

**Example:**  
*Original sentence:* Whenever I look at a mountain, I expect it to turn into a volcano.  
  
*Imitation:* Whenever I bite into an apple, I expect a worm to crawl out any minute.

1. The air whistled around me as I ran down the dark street.

1. The dog hid in the bedroom and whimpered while Chris played his violin.

1. When I was a child, I would place the covers over my head before I went to sleep.

1. One hot summer evening, my sister and I watched in awe as bolts of lightning from a distant storm lit up the sky.
2. "It is difficult, when faced with a situation you cannot control, to admit you can do nothing."  
   (Lemony Snicket,*Horseradish: Bitter Truths You Can't Avoid*, 2007)

1. "When I write, I feel like an armless, legless man with a crayon in his mouth."  
   (Kurt Vonnegut)

1. "As she walked down the stairs into the club, she was looking forward to a seething, teeming, wriggling, wiggling throng of dancers."  
   (Nick Hornby,*Juliet, Naked*, 2009)

1. "There is love enough in this world for everybody, if people will just look."  
   (Kurt Vonnegut,*Cat's Cradle*, 1963)

1. "As Pecola put the laundry bag in the wagon, we could hear Mrs. Breedlove hushing and soothing the tears of the little pink-and-yellow girl."  
   (Toni Morrison,*The Bluest Eye*, 1970)

1. "Miracles are like pimples, because once you start looking for them you find more than you ever dreamed you'd see."  
   (Lemony Snicket,*The Lump of Coal*, 2008)