

Teacher's notes

Write more complex sentences

Warm up

See what students know about writing more complex sentences. For example, in *C21 English for the 21st Century*, Level 3, students learn to link sentences with conjunctions such as *because* and *so*, and in Level 4 they learn to use relative clauses. Depending on where you are up to in the course, you can brainstorm what they know about these ways of making sentences more complex. See if they have any other ideas.

Using the Factsheet

There are three possible ways to use the Factsheet:

- 1 Give students the Factsheet before the lesson, so they can read it at home and come to the lesson prepared to do the Worksheet. If you use this approach, start the lesson by checking that all students have read and understood the Factsheet and answer any questions.
- 2 Give students the Factsheet at the beginning of the lesson and start by working through it with the students.
- 3 Focus on the Worksheet in the lesson, then give students the Factsheet at the end of the lesson, so they can take it home and keep it as a reference or revision tool.

Theory to practice

Answers

- a 3
- b 2
- c 6
- d 5
- e 1
- f 7
- g 8
- h 4

Using the Worksheet

- Go through the information at the top of the page. Emphasize that students have already learnt some of the skills which they need to make more complex sentences. Reassure them that learning to write in a more academic style is a gradual process. They do not need to learn a completely new technique; rather, it will come more naturally to them as their level of general English improves.

Practice

1 Choose the correct phrase to complete each sentence.

- Discuss the first item together. Check that there is general agreement on the correct answer. Make sure students have worked out that, since all of the words could be correct within the first clause, they have to read the whole sentence to work out the answer
- If you want to explore the grammar of this exercise explicitly, you can write the phrase *If you trust the people you are working with* on the board, and ask students to match this to one of the items a–h from the Theory to practice section of the Factsheet, if they have done it yet. (The answer is a – subordinate clause.) Explain that in this exercise, students practise making sentences with subordinate clauses.
- If necessary, review the meanings of the conjunctions. You could do the whole exercise as a whole-class activity.

Answers

- a If
- b When
- c Although
- d whereas
- e Since

2 Read the biography and complete each non-defining relative clause with a word from the box.

- Again, discuss the first item together. Students practise using *who* and *which* in relative clauses in *C21 English for the 21st Century*, Level 4. They do not practise using *where* and *when* in this way, but they encounter these usages in reading texts. Go over the words and check students know what they are used to refer to (*who* – people; *which* – things; *where* – places; *when* – times or dates).

Answers

- a who
- b where
- c when
- d which
- e which
- f where
- g who

3 Complete each gap with a colon (:), semicolon (;) or comma (,).

- You could introduce the exercise by discussing how each of the three items of punctuation is used. This can be done in the students' own language if necessary. Even so, students may find it difficult to explain or understand the uses; many native English speakers struggle to use these items of punctuation correctly.
- Explain that colons and semicolons are used much more frequently in academic writing, and that they are very helpful in constructing more complex sentences. Since commas have so many uses, one way of completing this exercise is to work out whether a colon or semicolon can be used; if not, a comma is correct.

Colon (:)

- introduces a list
This paper discusses three writers: Tolstoy, Nietzsche and Kierkegaard.
- also used before any other statement or fact that 'completes' the first idea
The clearest statement of this idea is in one of Nietzsche's last works: The Antichrist, written in 1888.

Semicolon (;)

- used instead of a conjunction to join two sentences
There are several alternatives to using fossil fuels; solar power is one of the best.
- separates items in a list
The energy sources we currently use are: coal, gas and oil; wind power; and solar power.

Comma (,)

- used with a conjunction to join two sentences
The slave revolt failed, and those involved were executed.
- separates items in a list
The British used slaves on their plantations in Jamaica, Barbados, St. Kitts, Nevis, Antigua and other islands in the Caribbean.
- used after a subordinate clause
Although the use of torture was widespread, today this is little known.
- used before (and after) a non-defining relative clause
Toussaint L'Ouverture, who had been a slave, was the most famous leader of the Haitian Revolution.
- There are other uses of commas – see if students can name any more!

Answers

- a Some employers make their staff work very long days, but this does not always increase productivity.
- b Some people like to work from home; others prefer an office environment.
- c Although employers sometimes argue that they can put well-paid workers under pressure, the workers usually do not agree.

- d Some workers find it difficult to see their friends or family: they have to work at the weekend or on public holidays.
- e Working from home used to be quite unusual, whereas now it is quite common.
- f Going to the gym can improve your physical health; it can also increase your sense of wellbeing.
- g Many employers have rules that reinforce gender stereotypes: men have to wear suits; women have to wear skirts or dresses.

4 Combine the sentences. Choose a conjunction from the box to link each pair of sentences.

- Introduce the exercise by doing the first item together. Elicit suggestions from the class and write out the complete new sentence on the board.
- **Note:** *So* is the best word to use in item a, but *and* is also possible. There is more than one possible answer to several of these items.

Possible answers

- a Teachers at schools and universities became concerned that students couldn't concentrate, so they introduced regular mindfulness sessions.
- b Mindfulness originates in Buddhism, but it is popular today in non-religious contexts.
- c Many people judge their thoughts as good or bad, whereas mindfulness encourages them to notice thoughts without judging them.
- d Many people think a lot about the past, or they worry about the future.
- e Some schools practise mindfulness with five year olds, because young children can find life very stressful, sad or distracting.
- f Mindfulness encourages you to pay attention to the present moment, and many people find this helpful.
- g Accepting negative thoughts is an important part of the practice, but people who are depressed or in pain often find this very difficult.

5 Rewrite the sentences. Add the phrases in brackets to the highlighted noun phrase.

- This exercise gives students practice in creating long noun phrases, which are frequently used in academic writing. In order to complete it, students need to think about the grammatical type of each additional word and where it should go in relation to the main noun. For example: an adjective goes before a noun; a prepositional phrase comes after a noun; etc. Depending on how you think students will cope with this, you could put them in pairs to support each other or do the whole exercise as a class.
- **Note:** In item d, the article needs to be changed from *a* to *an* in order to incorporate the new words. You can either tell students this or leave them to work it out for themselves.

Answers

- a The first hand-held camera was produced in 1888.
- b The background lighting in the original photo is very confusing.
- c This dramatically altered dark background makes the foreground look very different.
- d The golden ratio is an important geometric principle of art, photography and architecture.
- e The ratio has been used in some extremely highly regarded works of art.
- f In the rule of thirds, the main elements of the composition should be placed on the horizontal and vertical lines that separate the image into nine parts.

6  Swap a piece of your writing with a partner.

- Put the students in pairs. Ideally you will already have identified a recent writing task that students can use for this exercise. Alternatively you could give students a piece of writing from *C21* or a short piece that you have written for this exercise.
- First, give students a few minutes to read and identify a complex sentence. Get them to discuss their ideas in pairs before eliciting a few examples from the class. You could write them up on the board and analyze them in detail with the class, if there is time.

- Back in their pairs, get students to identify a sentence (or sentences) which could be made more complex. Remind them that one of the best ways of making a complex sentence is to combine two sentences. Let them discuss their ideas in pairs, before eliciting ideas from the class again.

Reflect

7 Reread the sentences in Exercise 5. Identify the grammatical types of the words in each rewritten noun phrase.

- This exercise reinforces students' work in Exercise 5. It can be done in class or set for homework.

Answers

- a article + determiner + adjective + noun
(*The first hand-held camera*)
- b article + noun + noun + preposition + article + adjective + noun
(*The background lighting in the original photo*)
- c determiner + adverb + verb + adjective + noun
(*This dramatically altered dark background*)
- d article + adjective + adjective + noun + preposition + noun + noun + conjunction + noun
(*an important geometric principle of art, photography and architecture*)
- e determiner + adverb + adverb + verb + noun + preposition + noun
(*some extremely highly regarded works of art*)
- f article + adjective + conjunction + adjective + noun + pronoun + verb + article + noun + preposition + number + noun
(*the horizontal and vertical lines that separate the image into nine parts*)

Learning outcome

By the end of the lesson, students should:

- know about some different ways to make more complex sentences
- be able to link sentences using conjunctions
- be more confident about writing noun phrases, relative clauses and subordinate clauses
- have improved their understanding of colons and semicolons

Ending the lesson

Have a whole-class discussion about what students feel they learnt from the lesson.

Ask students if they know any other techniques for making more complex sentences. For homework, you could ask them to find some examples of different kinds of sentence in books they are reading.

Integrated skills

In Exercise 2, check the answers with students by reading out a version of the text with some wrong answers. Students have to raise their hands when they hear an incorrect word, say what it is and suggest the correct word. Likewise, in Exercise 4, rather than having students write down the right answers, have them just study the sentences; then read out a mixture of right and wrong sentences to the whole class. Students have to listen, identify the conjunction that has been used and decide whether it is right or wrong. In this way, students can practise listening for the key word types (relative pronouns, conjunctions) which determine the sense of complex sentences.

In Exercise 6, do a 'Before and after' activity with the class. Have pairs of students read out the old versions of the sentences they improved, then the new versions. The class, or an individual student, has to reconstruct both sentences by writing them down in a notebook or on the board, then say what the key difference is.