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Level III (Grades 6-8)

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Level IV (Grades 9–12)

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2. Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of informational texts — Pages: 40–44; 50–54; 60–63; 72–85; 94–100; 108–111; 120–127
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Understanding Complex Sentences

◎ What?

Often you will have no difficulty in understanding the sentences in a text. But even the most experienced reader will sometimes stumble over more **complex sentences**.

Sentences might be complex . . .

- because they are very long.
- because they consist of many parts.
- because they contain many facts and ideas.
- because of a combination of these factors.

◎ How?

To understand complex sentences, you need to:

- Take your time and read slowly. Read the difficult sentences twice, three times, or as many times as you need to.
- Read the difficult parts out loud. This often helps to make things clearer.
- Work out the essential parts of the sentence. Work out what the subject of the sentence is (i.e., what or whom the sentence is about) and the main verb (what that person or thing did).
- Break up the sentences into smaller chunks of meaning.
- Identify the main clause (the one that makes sense by itself) when there is more than one.
- Don't skip sentences because they look long and complicated.
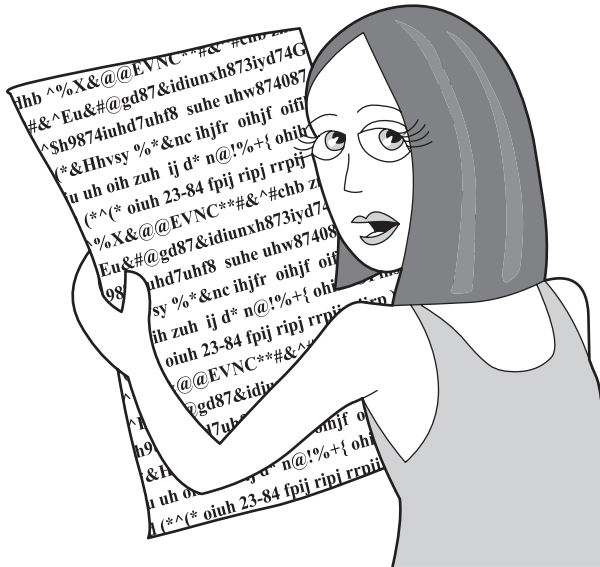
◎ Why?

Complex sentences occur in all kinds of writing. They are particularly common in information texts and in some kinds of newspaper articles.

While many texts written for school students are written quite simply, you will often have to read texts written for an adult audience when you are researching an assignment topic. These texts will certainly include complex sentences.

In Part 2, there are many activities which require you to understand complex sentences in order to answer the questions.

⊚ PRACTICE

These activities will raise your awareness of the skills needed to understand complex sentences.

1   In these sentences underline the **main clause**—the clause that makes sense by itself. The clauses have been separated with a slash mark (/). Following are three examples.

> Examples:
>
> <u>You can listen to radio</u> / while doing other things.
>
> When an event is actually occurring, / <u>people usually turn on the radio first for information</u>.
>
> <u>Radio is more accessible</u> / because it is easier to find one and turn it on.

a   Radio can report on events / as they are happening.

b   Because radio journalists need very little equipment, / radio can often be first with the news.

c   Radio can abandon all its other programs / to concentrate on an important story / and to provide a community service.

d   In wildfire disasters, radio informs people about the location of fires, / as well as running appeals / to collect clothing and food for people affected.

e   Now that talk radio is so popular, / many radio stations in the country incorporate a call-in segment / to give listeners a chance to have their say.

2   In these sentences underline the noun which is the subject of the verb (in italics). The following are three examples.

> Examples:
>
> Theme <u>music</u> usually *introduces* a news program.
>
> The <u>newscaster</u> *reads* the introduction and *passes* the story to a reporter.
>
> A <u>participant</u> in the event being reported *might tell* what happened or *offer* an opinion.

a   News programs on most major TV channels *try* to cover news of national and international interest as well as local issues.

b   Some news programs, especially those on commercial channels, *can appear* to be more interested in entertainment than information.

c   Stories about lost kittens, cute children, or unusual human behavior *should not be allowed* to dominate news programs.

d   A good example of the importance of conflict in news stories *was* a recent item about a student protest.

e   The competition between television channels to film the best pictures *is* intense.

f   Most news programs, even those whose networks regularly broadcast violent drama series, *will not show* film with victims of accidents, murders, or wars.