

A closer look at long sentences

English language has three clauses: Adjective, Noun and Adverb Clauses, and these clauses have different types and functions. If you can detect them when reading long sentences, you can divide the sentences into chunks more easily; and this may help you understand the sentences better. What is more, identifying these clauses may help you write structurally more accurate sentences and express yourself better.

For better understanding of these worksheets, note the following:

- SVO = subject + verb + other elements
- Phrase = a group of words.
 - a. Verb Phrase – study biology
 - b. Adjective Phrase – very excited
 - c. Noun Phrase – the massive ship
 - d. Adverb Phrase – too slowly
 - e. Prepositional Phrase – during dinner
- Clause = a clause can be constructed with “that, which, after, since, so that, etc.” OR verb forms “Ving, V3, toV”. For example:

... **who** studies in the US.

... **that** she will see London at last.

... **when** the parcel was delivered to the wrong address.

☞ The verbs in these clauses have a tense; therefore, these clauses are called “finite”.

... the student **studying** in the US.

... **to see** London at last.

... **delivered** to the wrong address.

☞ The verbs in these clauses don't have a tense; therefore, these clauses are called “non-finite”.

Types of Clauses:

A. Adjective Clause

Celebrations such as weddings are often times **when families gather together**.

The girl **eating ice-cream** is my daughter. (non-finite)

B. Noun Clause

When families gather together is what sociology is interested in.

Eating / To eat ice-cream on a hot day is delightful. (non-finite)

C. Adverb Clause

When families gather together, there is either a wedding or a funeral.

Eating ice-cream, she nearly got chocked. (non-finite)

Let's look into the following sentences:

1. Among those who want the media to tell readers, listeners, and the viewers less than the full story may be government officials, businessmen in a local community, community boosters who do not want anything to upset the status quo, special interest groups that will profit from publicity, or militants of both left and right who want to advance their causes.

This sentence looks like a mini paragraph! But what makes it too long? Let's first divide it into SVO.

Subject = Among those *who want the media to tell readers, listeners, and the viewers less than the full story*

Verb = may be

Other Elements = government officials, businessmen in a local community, community boosters *who do not want anything to upset the status quo*, special interest groups *that will profit from publicity*, or militants of both left and right *who want to advance their causes*.

The subject of the sentence is actually "those", but "those" alone does not mean anything and therefore, it is defined with an adjective clause. Who are "those"? (= those *who want the media to tell readers, listeners, and the viewers less than the full story*).

The "Other Elements" part also has some adjective clauses and these clauses make the sentence rather long! Can you detect each of them?

- community boosters *who do not want anything to upset the status quo*
- special interest groups *that will profit from publicity*
- militants of both left and right *who want to advance their causes*

What if we excluded them temporarily?

government officials, businessmen in a local community, community boosters, special interest groups, or militants of both left and right.

You see? The meaning would not change; only the details would be left out. When we simplify such a long sentence by focusing on the essential parts, it gets easier to understand the meaning. But this comment certainly does not mean that we do not need those adjective clauses or we can omit them as we like.

2. Although the powerful want to keep the media discreet and are tempted to mold the news **to serve their own interests**, they also desperately need it **so as to ensure their position in the society**.

a. The + Adjective

Examples: the blind, the mentally-ill, the poor, the unemployed, the young

“The + adj” is used to refer to a group of people with certain characteristics. The verb that follows such a subject is always plural.

Now, keeping this information in mind, we can understand that the subject of the Adverb Clause of Concession in the sentence above is “the powerful”. And, as you see, the verb “want” is in its plural form.

(Adverb Clause of Concession) Although the powerful **want** to keep the media discreet and are tempted to mold the news to serve their own interests, ... (this is a type of clause which tells us despite what the action in the main clause happens.)

b. In order to + V₀ = so as to + V₀ = to V₀

Example: *In order to understand how the human body works, you need to have some knowledge of chemistry.*

As you know, “in order to + V₀” is used to mean “Purpose”; in other words, in order to do something means for the purpose of doing something.

And it has synonyms as indicated above.

Now, let’s turn to the whole sentence:

Although the powerful want to keep the media discreet and are tempted to mold the news to serve their own interests, they also desperately need it so as to ensure their position in the society.

Adverb Clause of Concession
Main Clause

As indicated in bold, the sentence contains two chunks that mean Purpose. One of these is in the Adverb Clause and the other is in the Main Clause.

Why are the powerful tempted to mold the news?

To serve their own interests

Why do the powerful need it [the media]?

So as to ensure their position in the society.

How about the common structure in all of them? Can you spot it?

- Do your parents ever *let you stay out late*?
- Mary always *helps Mrs. Robinson do the dishes*.
- Mrs. Dawn *asked Helen not to be late again*.
- What did Mr. Smith *force his business partner to do*?
- This new application *will enable us to communicate more easily*.

In each, there is a kind of a CAUSE. Thus, these are all examples of CAUSATIVE sentences. We use it when we want to say who/what causes what? This causation can sometimes be in the form of help, or sometimes by force, etc. For example:

A wife can **force / beg / request / permit / order / enable** her husband **to buy a car for herself**.

Who enabled who? To do what?

Who = A wife

Who = her husband

To do what? = to buy a car for herself

From this perspective, now it should be easier to understand the meaning of the sentence.

Let's ask **Who enabled who? To do what?**

“Escalated public literacy coupled with an increase in newspaper publications **enabled** a growing percentage of the population, formally disenfranchised, to obtain the right to vote and guide government policy.”

Who = Escalated public literacy coupled with an increase in newspaper publications

Who = a growing percentage of the population, formally disenfranchised

To do what? = to obtain the right to vote and guide government policy.

In short, in Causative, there are some verbs that need to be used with a toV. Example:

Beg / force / enable / permit / order / etc SOMEBODY **TO DO** SOMETHING

4. As these elites desperately needed media coverage and publicity, **either to be elected, to impose their political vision, or to make higher profits**, they acknowledged the necessity to make peace with the media.

a. **AS**

This simple word, in fact, has 3 different functions:

- a. Preposition Nathan works as an industrial engineer.
- b. Adverb We all need regular exercise, but a healthy diet is just as important.
- c. Conjunction In Adverb Clauses to express TIME, REASON and CONCESSION.

AS as a CONJUNCTION (Adverb Clause)

TIME As the suspect was approaching them, he was dragging his rifle behind him and brought it up and shot Deputy Maxwell in the head.

REASON She chose to study psychology as she felt that her own personal experiences would be beneficial in helping her to understand others.

CONCESSION Strange as it may seem (=Although it may seem strange), I never really wanted to be rich.
Much as I sympathize with your difficulties (= Although I sympathize with your difficulties), there is little I can do to help you.

“As these elites desperately needed media coverage and publicity ...”

This chunk is an Adverb Clause of Reason. (a clause which tells us why the action in the main clause happened.)

Why did the elites acknowledge the necessity to make peace with the media? = Because they desperately needed media coverage and publicity.

b. **“... either to be elected, to impose their political vision, or to make higher profits ...”**

In this chunk, we need to focus on two things for better comprehension:

1. **Either ... or ...**

Generally, we see such combinations as: **either X or Y**

But in the chunk above, as you can see, there is more than one thing after “either”.

Either to be elected, to impose their political vision **or** to make higher profits

x

y

z

2. **toV** (indicating PURPOSE)

Remember? One function of “toV” is to indicate PURPOSE.

Why did these elites desperately need media coverage and publicity?

To be elected

To impose their political vision

To make higher profits