

## 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 choked. (non-finite)

Let's look into the following sentences:

1. Because the ability to control others is often associated with the possession of certain resources, politicians and diplomats commonly define power as the possession of population, territory, natural resources, economic size, military forces, and political stability.

There are many Noun Phrases in this sentence. Let's see what they are:

- The ability to control others
- The possession of certain resources
- Politicians and diplomats
- The possession of population  
territory  
natural resources  
economic size  
military forces  
political stability

In such long sentences that contain many nouns and/or noun phrases, recognizing them would certainly help you to understand the sentence better and more easily. Or if you happen to break the sentence up into its chunks at the wrong points you might end up not understanding the sentence.

So, as we see this sentence has an Adverb Clause of Reason (= **Because** the ability to control others is often associated with the possession of certain resources) and the rest of the sentence is the Main Clause.

(Adverb clause of Reason) Because the ability to control others is often associated with the possession of certain resources,

(Main clause) politicians and diplomats commonly define power as the possession of population, territory, natural resources, economic size, military forces, and political stability.

And what does the sentence mean?

Politicians and diplomats have a definition of power, which is "the possession of population, territory, natural resources, economic size, military forces, and political stability".

Why? What's the *reason*? BECAUSE "the ability to control others is often associated with the possession of certain resources".

2. A combination of factors - *nuclear weapons that are too awesome to use, the difficulties of building empires in an age of nationalism, the unwillingness of western societies to send their troops into battle* - has conspired to make war a last resort for most advanced countries.

### conspire (v)

When you first saw this verb, it may have brought to your mind the word “*conspiracy*”, which means a secret plan made by two or more people to do something that is harmful or illegal. And, therefore, you may have reached the conclusion that “*conspire*” means “to secretly plan with someone else to do something illegal”, which is RIGHT! However, in this sentence “*conspire*” is used in its second meaning.

**conspire to do something:** if events conspire to do something, they happen at the same time and make something bad happen

E.g.: Pollution and neglect have conspired to ruin the city.

### re•sort (n)

Now, let's check what “resort” means in: “...has conspired to make war a last resort for most advanced countries”.

**1** a place where a lot of people go for holidays

**seaside/beach/ski etc resort**

*Aspen, a ski resort in Colorado*

*Lagoon Reef is one of the best resort hotels.*

**2**

**last/final resort :** what you will do if everything else fails

*The government will impose a state of emergency only as a last resort.*

**as a last resort**

*Drug treatment should only be used as a last resort.*

**of last resort**

*a weapon of last resort*

**in the last resort** *British English*

*Economic sanctions will be used only in the last resort.*

As seen clearly from the definitions above, the word “resort” is used in its second meaning in the sentence.

☛ The lesson to be learned out of all this information could be that sometimes we may need to double check the meaning of some words even if we think we know them.

Now, let's turn to the meaning of the sentence:

"A combination of factors". What are these factors? Actually there are three of them:

1. *nuclear weapons that are too awesome to use,*
2. *the difficulties of building empires in an age of nationalism,*
3. *the unwillingness of western societies to send their troops into battle*

And what have these three factors conspired?

They have conspired to make war a last resort for most advanced countries.

☞ Have you also noticed the punctuation mark "dash" (-)? For the detailed explanation of how it is used you can refer to another Handout prepared for Eng 101: <http://www.mld.metu.edu.tr/sites/default/files/Unit%203%20Text%202%20INPUT.pdf>

3. The world has witnessed the reign of the United States for some time as the leading superpower, but now, political leaders are starting to use the term "multipolarity" to imply the return to a balance among a number of states with roughly equal power resources analogous to that of the nineteenth century **when there were not one but many powerful countries.**

Before delving into this sentence, have a look at the language explanation below:

### Adjective Phrases

If the Adjective Clause contains only the verb "be" or "have", then these verbs and who/which/that are omitted; and as a result, the remaining chunk becomes an adjective phrase.

Examples:

- Air contains the carbon dioxide ~~which is~~ **necessary for photosynthesis.**
- The boxes ~~which are in the basement~~ must be thrown away.
- Murray Gell-Mann, a professor of physics, has been described as "The Man ~~who has~~ **with\* Five Brains**".

☛ Note that if you omit the verb "have" in the adjective clause you must use "with" in the adjective phrase to preserve the meaning of *possession*.

a. Now, with this information in mind, analyze the underlined parts in the sentence:

The world has witnessed the reign of the United States for some time as the leading superpower, but now, political leaders are starting to use the term “multipolarity” to imply the return to a balance among a number of states with roughly equal power resources analogous to that of the nineteenth century **when there were not one but many powerful countries.**

Can you see that all these chunks are Adjective Phrases? See below:

The world has witnessed the reign of the United States for some time as the leading superpower, but now, political leaders are starting to use the term “multipolarity” to imply the return to **a balance [THAT IS] among a number of states [WHICH HAVE] with roughly equal power resources [WHICH IS] analogous\* to that of the nineteenth century** when there were not one but many powerful countries.

\* **analogous to/with** (adj): similar to another situation or thing so that a comparison can be made. E.g.: *The report's findings are analogous with our own.*

b. As you know, Adjective Clauses can also define time periods.

“... a balance among a number of states with roughly equal power resources analogous to that of the nineteenth century **when there were not one but many powerful countries.**”

In this sentence, the adjective clause (in bold) defines “the nineteenth century”. And from this clause we understand that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were many powerful countries

4. Parents of teenagers have long known that if they have shaped their child’s beliefs and preferences, their power **will be greater and more enduring than** if they rely only on active control like cutting off allowances or taking away the car keys.

Comparison structures are generally very familiar and easy to understand. However, in the sentence above the parts preceding and following the comparison structure (in bold) are a bit different than simple comparison sentences. Therefore, it is worthwhile to analyze this sentence in this respect.

We know what a comparison structure looks like:

“A”      be      **adjective + er**      than      “B”  
                                 **more adjective**

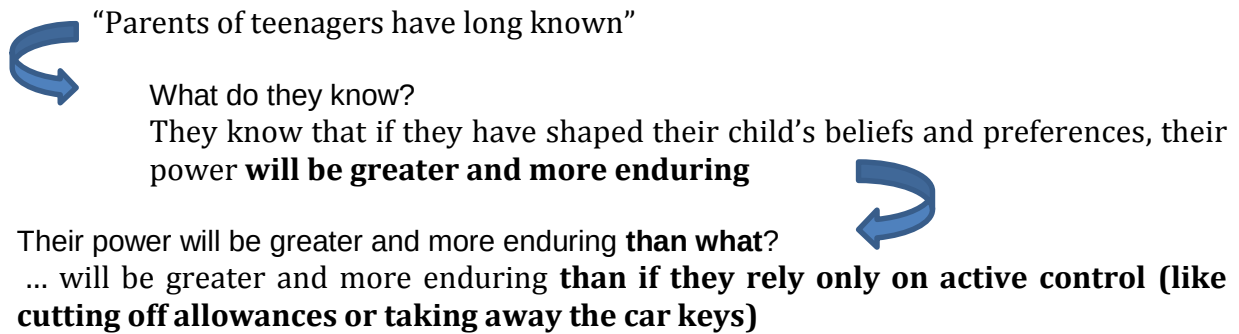
For example: *My children are more **hardworking** than my best friend's children.*

When the A and B parts of this chunk are just nouns or short noun phrases (like in the example above), it is considerably easier to understand the meaning.

However, when various or long clauses are inserted into the “A” and “B” parts of comparison structures, things get a bit difficult.

Let's analyze the sentence:

Parents of teenagers have long known that if they have shaped their child's beliefs and preferences, their power **will be greater and more enduring than** if they rely only on active control like cutting off allowances or taking away the car keys.



In other words,

... if they have shaped their child's beliefs and preferences, their power

**A**

will be greater and more enduring **than**

[their power] if they rely only on active control like cutting off allowances or taking away the car keys

**B**

●\* Note that “A” and “B” parts of comparison structures should be parallel. In other words, if “A” is a clause “B” should be a clause too.