

C. Sentence Forms

Male View

"And sometimes, when he and the other children were tired with too much playing, one of the old men of the pueblo could talk to them, in those other words, **of the great Transformer of the World, and of the long fight between the Right Hand and the Left Hand,...**"

Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*

"By "form", philosophers mean the look of the sock, by which you recognize it as a sock. ...**Form is thus visible shape, and the shaping force of the visible.** ...*form individualizes. What causes each person and each ... to be different from other persons and things is the active force of form.*"

James Hillman, *The Force of Character*

"I will tell you what I am talking about," he said. "Most kinds of power require a substantial sacrifice by whoever wants the power. There is an apprenticeship, a discipline lasting many years. Whatever kind of power you want. President of the company. Black belt in karate. Spiritual guru. Whatever it is you seek, you have to put in the time, the practice, the effort. You must give up a lot to get it. It has to be very important to you. **And once you have attained it, it is your power. It can't be given away: it resides in you. It is literally the result of your discipline.**

Michael Crichton, *Jurassic Park*, p.307

Discipline is the use and realization of form. To be "disciplined" is to be "in good form".

Female View

The quote below is an example of an expanded or extrapolated meaning of "form" to designate any distinct entity, period, quality, movement, artistic, or in this case, architectural style. It may be seen as representative of the more diffuse and intuitive awareness of women in general, and their tendency to interrelate and fuse concepts and ideas rather than the tendency of men (as seen above) to more clearly dramatize and focus on the separation and distinction between concepts and forms.¹

"'Very,' said Ursula, 'Very peaceful and charming.'
 'It has form, too – it has a period.'
 'What period?'
 'Oh, eighteenth century, for certain; Dorothy Wordsworth or Jane Austen, don't you think?'"

D.H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*

The "*sentence forms*" refers not only to the forms of entire sentences, but also to key or recognizable marks or features displayed within the sentence itself. **Form, in its most basic manner of designation or appellation, simply means the overt, distinguishable, and noticeable look or appearance of something** – in this case, a section of a sentence or even the entire sentence.

We call them *Sentence Forms* for a number of important reasons. In the idiom of Plato, they constitute ten fundamental *ideas or concepts* of sentences, under which all other sentences may be classified. Plato used the word **form** to indicate that something has a visible look or appearance that made it distinguishable and set it apart. The *form*, with its visible aspect, made the entity stand out, and the Greeks always relied on the sense of sight as the primary metaphor for their vision of the world and their understanding of the mind. The **ear** is *aural*, but the **reading eye** is *visual*, as the **hand** is *tangible*. **Sound** can be heard from any direction without turning the head, but **sight** must look in a single

¹ The work of leading scholars of women such as Deborah Tannen and Carol Gilligan have shed light on the tendency of men to separate, distinguish, and partition aspects of reality, whereas women tend towards a more relational emphasis which tends to merge, meld, and less clearly focus and differentiate the diverse aspects of reality.

With men, concepts and forms are always clearly defined and focused; with women they are more diffuse and vague, but still there, and perhaps more subtle and profound.

A summary of some of the more notable differences between men and women that has emerged from recent research has been summarized aptly by Ken Wilbur as follows:

"...feminists now champion the notion that there are generally speaking, very strong differences between the male and female value spheres – that is, in both sex and gender. Men tend toward hyperindividuality, stressing autonomy, rights, justice, and agency, and women tend toward a more relational awareness, with emphasis on communion, care, responsibility, and relationship. Men tend to stress autonomy and fear relationship; women tend to stress relationship and fear autonomy." Ken Wilbur in *A Brief History of Everything* (2000, Boston: Shambala, p.2)

direction at the object of focus. So, **we use the word *form* to help make us notice the visual aspect of the sentence.**

Form is indispensable for another key reason. All those who practice skills or the performing arts rely on the repeated performance of orchestrated **forms of action**. Thus, an ice skater performs first a set of established forms or shapes on the ice. These forms are identifiable by their look, their geometric appearance, their kinetic shape, their bodily motion. Each part of his or her routine is a part or component of the whole performance. A music video or movie is made with many short scenes or *shots*, each individually presented with its visual, spoken, and/or musical accents or components – fused together, and shown in rapid succession.

Performers must practice each of the parts or components separately at first, but then meld the components into an unconscious, fluid, integral movement. This applies to craft skills, the skills of the fine arts, as well as to all language and writing.

Recognition and mastery of form is the crucial key to effective performance. Shakespeare, in *Midsummer's Night Dream*, wrote "**Take pains; be perfect.**", which we may paraphrase as "**Take pains with the forms; and eventually you will hold the key to effective writing competence.**"

The absence of a comprehensive, but economically limited set of sentence forms, has been and remains the crucial missing link in methods aimed at teaching English composition.

It may be meaningful at this point to look at the all elements of our written expression, and to put them in a chart. A glance over the chart shows **the sentence to be the middle path, the minimum threshold level, the critical mass that we must coherently render or express if we are to fully convey both meaning and a complete idea. It is the sentence that is the fundamental unit of all our *written* communication, and the fundamental unit of most good *spoken* communication.** Any progressive system of language instruction must focus on forms within the sentence if it is to be an effective tool of instruction.

Below is a chart of all the ingredients of written expression arranged in a strata of increasing complexity.

THE STRATIFIED INGREDIENTS (THE STRATA) OF ENGLISH EXPRESSION					
	Construction Unit	Has Sound	Expresses Meaning	Expresses One Idea	Expresses Several Ideas
1	letter (grapheme) or phonetic letter (morpheme)	✓	(✓)	x	x
2	syllable	✓	(✓)	x	x
3	word	✓	✓	(✓)	x
4	phrase/string	✓	✓	(✓)	x
5	clause	dependent	✓	(✓)	x
		independent		✓	
6	sentence	✓	✓	✓	(✓)
7	paragraph	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	short essay or short story or anecdote	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	long essay or long story or long talk	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	book or long paper or series of lectures	✓	✓	✓	✓
✓ = yes (✓) = sometimes x = no					

TRIADIC LOOK AT THE LETTER-BOOK 12-GROUP		
In the following chart, there is a sequence of progression starting from the single letter to the book. The completed or whole part on one level serves as the beginning piece for the next level. All items in the middle occur only once, and all items at the left and right side occur twice – except <i>letter</i> and <i>book</i> . Many religions maintain that the <i>letter</i> and the <i>book</i> are inseparable. ²		
piece	part	whole
<i>letter</i>	syllable	word
word/phrase	clause	sentence
sentence	paragraph	essay
essay	chapter	<i>book</i>

This chart can be memorized by holding one's hand vertical with the fingers spread out. Use the palm of the other hand, and touch the thumb, first finger, etc of the left hand on the palm of the right hand, saying each of the lines above.

² A book is conceived and its physical life begins with the writing of a single letter. The single letter may indicate a very early stage in the completion of the book, but if the book has been conceived and envisioned with regards to its content and qualities, it is just a matter of time, determined effort, and attention to detail and form that separate the letter from the finished product, the book.

Two Hands Approach Sentence Complexity Levels

In the Two Hands Approach, there are ten main sentence forms, plus an additional one beyond the ten to accommodate less common forms and any additional forms that may be invented or discovered in the future. These ten main Sentence Forms are grouped into two levels of "complexity" below:

SIMPLE LEVEL	COMPOUND AND COMPLEX LEVEL
FIRST LEVEL	SECOND LEVEL
1 LETTER	2 LETTERS

The two levels of complexity include the traditional types of sentence: *simple*, *compound*, and *compound-complex*. Thus, the first level permits only simple sentences, while the second level uses all traditional types of sentences (*simple*, *compound*, *complex*, etc).

Levels of Sentence Complexity		
1	simple	<p>A simple sentence has only one <i>independent</i> clause. A clause is an independent clause in a sentence when it can do two things:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) it has a subject, stated or implied; (2) it can make sense or stand on its own, by itself. <p>An <i>independent</i> clause expresses a complete thought, and is therefore a sentence, in and of itself.</p>
2	compound	<p>A compound sentence contains two or more independent clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions or a semi-colon.</p>
3	complex	<p>A complex sentence possesses an independent clause and one or more <i>dependent</i> clauses. The independent clause must fit the definition we described above. A clause is dependent when it can be recognized by two features:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) it is introduced by a signifying word or conjunction of some kind (subordinate, relative conjunction), and it cannot stand on its own by itself; (2) it does not express a complete thought, and it doesn't make sense unless it is joined to an independent clause
4	compound-complex	<p>This type of sentence has two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses.</p>

First (Simple) Level

All sentences at the **first** level involve the use of only one independent clause with single or compound subjects and single or compound main verbs. All sentences at the simple level of complexity are **designated by one letter** to symbolize their simple character, possessing as they do **only one independent clause**.

At the simple level of complexity, students see what linguists might call *kernel sentences* in their simplest form without few or no discernible attachments or interruptions at the beginning, middle, or end of the sentence³.

Although the second form, the Series Form, may involve the use of commas and coordinate conjunctions and might seem to belong to a more complex level, they belong to the Simple level. This is so because when coordinating conjunctions are used in Series, they join words together, not clauses. All sentences at the simple level involve only one independent clause with a subject and a main verb (or a compound subject, or compound main verb). There are no dependent clauses at the simple level. Out of the more than 100 forms, there are four exceptions: *Repetition Form 5.3*, and *Correlatives Forms 4.2, 4.12, and 4.14*.

Second (Compound and Complex) Level

All sentences involving the use of compound sentences, complex sentences and compound complex sentences belong at the **second** level, and are designated **by two letters**. Sentence Forms at the **second level**, what we call the **compound and complex level**, involve the use of all the traditional types of sentences: *simple, compound, complex, compound-complex*.

Language will never fit into any straitjacket of rules or classifications. By its nature, language is fluid, subtle, and adaptable to the changing purposes and intentions of the people who use it, and all usage can never be perfectly defined or predicted in advance. There are always exceptions and surprises in language that defy all grammar systems and classifications schemes.

Ultimately, a grammar or classification scheme must be judged by its clarity, convenience, and user-friendly appeal and application.

The 2HA breaks down the sentence into forms, into identifiable features recognizable in sentences.

The chart on the next page outlines the forms according to the Form group title and the number of Forms within that group. The code on the "Left" lists the sentence forms that (except for elements in a series) that are *simple sentences*. The code on the "Right" lists sentences that are *complex, compound, compound-complex, or very complicated simple sentences*. We will explain later what we mean by a complicated simple sentence.

³ You may be understandably a little unclear about the meaning and pertinence of the discussion above, but it will become unmistakably clear as you see the examples of the sentence forms unfold.

At present, there are about 113 sentence forms in the 2HA, or 141 forms if you include the few forms that have sub-forms.

Number of Sentence Forms by Group		
Hand	Form Group Title Abbreviation	Number of Forms
<i>Left</i>	F Fundamental	5
	S Series	7
	V Verbals	5
	C Correlatives	15
	R Repetition	3
<i>Right</i>	CC Coordinate Conjunctions	7
	AC Subordinate Adverbial Clause	20
	RN Reference /Noun Clause	11
	PP Power Punctuation	28
	BS,MS,ES Beginning /Middle /End of Sentence	23
<i>Clap</i>	ADD Additional	8
TOTAL		132

TEN PLUS ONE BASIC SENTENCE FORMS

Ten Plus One Basic Sentence Forms	
<i>(first level)</i>	
1 F (fundamental)	6 CC (coordinating conjunction)
2 S (series)	7 AC (adverbial clause)
3 V (verbals)	8 RN (reference & noun clauses)
4 C (correlatives)	9 PP (power punctuation)
5 R (repetition)	10 BS/MS/ES (interrupting modifier at beginning, middle, end)
<i>(second level)</i>	
<i>(third level)</i>	
11 ADD (additional)	

These Ten Plus One Sentence Forms provide about 126 recognizable elemental sentence forms. The list may never be fully complete, but it has been designed to help students recognize most of the distinguishable features that occur within ordinary sentences.

SENTENCE FORMS		
Number	Symbol	Sentence Form
First Level		
1	F	Fundamental Form
2	S	Series Form
3	V	Verbal Form
4	C	Correlative Form
5	R	Repetition Form
Second Level		
6	CC	Coordinating Conjunction Form
7	AC	Subordinate Adverbial Clause Form
8	RN	Subordinate Reference and Noun Clause Forms
9	PP	Power Punctuation Forms
10	BS	Beginning / Middle / End of Sentence Forms
Odd Level		
11	ADD	Additional Forms