

SENTENCE STRUCTURE 英文句子的结构: OK 合格 & NOT OK 不对

The structure of English sentences with proper grammar may be categorized as 1. Simple 单句, 2. Complex 复合句, 3. Compound 并列句, or 4. Compound-Complex

For example... 1. This is a very simple, simple sentence. This, despite your expectations and apparent logic, is an obviously longwinded and complicated but still also simple sentence with only one clause, no matter with or without an optional object 宾语, regardless of the number of prepositional phrases or other additions without a verb, and inadvisable for your writing. 2. This is a complex sentence because it has an independent and dependent clause. 3. Those were simple and complex sentences, and this is a compound one. 4. This is a compound-complex sentence because it has multiple clauses before the comma, but there are many other ways to form them, all of which take practice.

When joining sentences together with a conjunction 连词 to make a compound or compound-complex sentence, when is a comma necessary or unnecessary? Use a comma when the subjects 主语 in the first and second parts are different, or when the subject is repeated (especially when the sentences are longer). When the subject is the same in both and not repeated, do not add a comma. If both sentences are very short, a comma may not be necessary, even with different subjects. There is usually no comma used when "because" connects clauses, unless they are quite long. There are some "gray areas" 灰色地带 on this, but it's very important to avoid omitting the comma when it's required or adding one when it would be incorrect to do so.

Are the commas necessary or incorrect in these examples? Answer for each (,?).

1. Like most teachers' colleges, NENU has many more female students than males (,?) and this may make it hard for some to find a date.
2. China is the most bordered country in the world (,?) and has even more international borders than Russia, the largest country in the world.
3. Pres. Xi Jinping and Pres. Joe Biden may be "old friends" (,?) but also face many conflicts between them that go far beyond their interpersonal relationship.
4. Russia might like the USA to break up along racial lines (,?) and may actually think it will happen (,?) however, as an American, I strongly hope not (,?) and think that is extremely unlikely.
5. The USA prides itself on "freedom of speech" (,?) so the decisions to ban former Pres. Trump from Twitter and other social media have been very controversial.

Two common mistakes for Chinese learners writing in English are sentence fragments and run-on sentences. These are NOT OK and must be edited and revised to be considered grammatically correct.

SENTENCE FRAGMENTS (FRAG): In general, don't start a sentence with a preposition 介词 or conjunction, which creates a "dependent clause," unless there will be a second, "independent clause" which could stand alone without the dependent clause.

These are sentence fragments, not OK to stand alone in an essay: Because my English is very poor. Which is why we think so. And so do I. The man most responsible for building a "new China," whom we all know and revere greatly.

RUN-ON SENTENCES (R-O): In Chinese (and many other languages), it seems to be OK to continue sentences by adding commas as long as the clauses are closely related. There are very strict rules about this in formal English writing. Do not add ", conjunction 连词" more than once to any sentence.

Exception: If you're treating individual sentences like items in a list, you may combine them in one (likely very long sentence) as long as ", and" precedes the last one in the list. It may also be best to have a short sentence before the list to explain what will be listed.

For example... China faces several demographic challenges which may prevent its long-term development. Much of the large, working-age population will soon retire and outnumber "productive" young people, marriage prospects and new household formation may be impossible for the more than 30 million "unmarriageable" men who outnumber Chinese women, and wealth is largely concentrated on the prosperous eastern and southern coastlines.

EXERCISE: Are the following OK, complete sentences or not? If not (incomplete or not OK), note whether FRAG or R-O.

1. With the passage of time, no longer so, nor ever again.
2. China no longer seeks to “bide time and keep a low profile” 韬光养晦 but rather have a more ambitious foreign policy under Xi Jinping, who began the Belt & Road Initiative to expand Chinese influence across the globe.
3. The USA, having long committed many military resources to both the Middle East and the general pre-emption as well as prevention of terrorism, remains in a dilemma about whether to pull back, maintain the status quo, or expand its commitments further under a new, more interventionist president than the previous holder of the title “Commander in Chief.”
4. We love China, and we love Chinese food, and we love Chinese culture.
5. We like the quality of Japanese products and are impressed by Japan’s successful development in the 20th century, but we don’t think Japan has apologized enough for its imperial history, which negatively affected most of Asia.
6. Developing the West, The Belt and Road Initiative, opening China’s first overseas military base in Djibouti, and defending territorial claims in the South China Sea, all of the above.

COMBINING SENTENCES: The following sentences are grammatically OK, but as written they feel “stilted,” choppy 支离破碎的, and unpleasant to read. A skilled writer would combine them into one (or two) without losing information to make them flow better. Can you do it? Have a try!

EXAMPLE: Pres. Biden is very old. He will turn 79 years old in Nov. 2021. That is the oldest any first-term president has ever been in the USA. It is even older than Trump. Trump used to be the oldest ever. —> At 78, Pres. Biden set a new record for the oldest first-term U.S. president, a distinction previously held by his predecessor, Pres. Trump.

1. I am a politics major. At first my major did not interest me. After learning about the importance of politics, I have come to enjoy it now.
2. The PRC is the current Chinese regime. PRC history could be divided into two eras. The two eras lasted about thirty years each. The eras are the Maoist/Revolutionary Era and the Post-Mao/Reform Era. Xi Jinping may have begun a third historical era. All eras have been led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).
3. Chinese people consider China a developing or “middle-income” country at most. China is fully industrialized and has the largest economy in the world at PPP, a space program, a high-tech sector, the world’s best high-speed rail system, mostly replaced other forms of currency with phone payments, more billionaires and a higher life expectancy than the USA, and a military befitting a global superpower. A growing number of Americans doubt China is still a developing country today.
4. Some think politics is only about opinions. Political scientists disagree. They think there are some true political facts. Facts about politics can be used like in other sciences. Other sciences like math, physics, and chemistry use facts and data to build theories and even laws.