SENTENCE TYPE EXERCISES

Exercise 1: Identify which of the following sentences are simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex:

• Biomedical engineers created the first bionic arm.
• Through the use of motors and pulleys, users of the bionic arm could actually grip onto items.
• Mechanical hearts can replace real hearts, so biomedical engineering saves lives.
• As we get older, gravity compresses our spines, so biomedical engineers are working on ways to regenerate spinal discs.
• Anthracite is unique to Pennsylvania, and it is the hardest coal.
• Although many chemical engineers work for public universities, many put their abilities to use in the private sector, and some chemical engineers even work for companies like Coca-Cola.
• Despite seeming insignificant, the Great Lakes contain over 20 percent of the planet’s freshwater supply.
• Nitrogen is the most abundant chemical in our atmosphere.

Exercise 2: Invent/write a simple sentence, a compound sentence, a complex sentence, and a compound-complex sentence. Generate sentences involving the material discussed in your class, or write about whatever you would like.

Exercise 3: Go through a paper you have already written and see what kinds of sentences you have composed. See, for example, if you can rewrite a simple sentence as a complex sentence, etc.
Answer Key

Identify which of the following sentences are simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex.

Notice that independent clauses are marked with dark blue, dependent clauses are marked by orange; conjunctions are in grey.

Simple
Biomedical engineers created the first bionic arm.

Complex
Through the use of motors and pulleys, users of the bionic arm could actually grip onto items.

Compound
Mechanical hearts can replace real hearts, so biomedical engineering saves lives.

Compound-complex
As we get older, gravity compresses our spines, so biomedical engineers are working on ways to regenerate spinal discs.

Compound
Anthracite is unique to Pennsylvania, and it is the hardest coal.

Compound-complex
Although many chemical engineers work for public universities, many put their abilities to use in the private sector, and some chemical engineers even work for companies like Coco-Cola.

Complex
Despite seeming insignificant, the Great Lakes contain over 20 percent of the planet’s freshwater supply.

Simple
Nitrogen is the most abundant chemical in our atmosphere.