MAIN CLAUSES & SENTENCE STRUCTURE

CEFR Level B2 — Upper-Intermediate

English Language Worksheets | 4 Worksheets + Answer Key

Worksheet 1: Clause Elements & Sentence Patterns

Subject, verb, object, complement, adverbial — and the patterns they form.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Look and learn**

Pattern	Elements	Example
SV	subject + verb	The audience laughed.
SVO	+ direct object	She wrote a novel.
SVC	+ complement (describes S)	The result was surprising.
SVA	+ obligatory adverbial	He lives in Prague.
SVOO	+ indirect + direct object	They offered her a job.
SVOC	+ object complement	The board declared him unfit.

PART B — **Identify the pattern**

Write the pattern (SV, SVO, SVC, SVA, SVOO or SVOC) for each sentence.

1. The committee elected her chairperson. → _____
2. Nobody moved. → _____
3. The soup tastes bitter. → _____
4. My cousin sent me a postcard. → _____
5. The keys are in the drawer. → _____
6. The engineers rebuilt the bridge. → _____

PART C — **Fronting & inversion**

Standard order is S-V-O. Moving an element to the front changes emphasis, and some fronted elements force inversion. Rewrite each sentence by fronting the underlined part.

1. We had <u>never</u> seen such chaos.
   → _____
2. A small bookshop stood <u>on the corner</u>.
   → _____

3 She realised the truth only then.
→ _____

4 I will not tolerate this under any circumstances.
→ _____

Score: _____ / 14

Worksheet 2: Coordination vs Subordination

Equal weight, or a hierarchy of ideas?

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Look and learn**

	Coordination (parataxis)	Subordination (hypotaxis)
Structure	main + main	main + subordinate
Weight	two ideas of equal rank	one idea framed by another
Effect	even, additive, plain	hierarchical, analytical
Example	He apologised, and she forgave him.	Although he apologised, she never forgave him.

Rewrite each coordinated sentence as a subordinated one, and say what changes in emphasis.

1. "The funding was cut, and the project collapsed."
   Subordinated: _____
   Change: _____

2. "She was exhausted, but she kept working."
   Subordinated: _____
   Change: _____

3. "The evidence was thin, so the case was dropped."
   Subordinated: _____
   Change: _____

PART B — **Combine efficiently**

Combine each set of short sentences into ONE well-structured sentence. Subordinate the less important ideas.

1. The storm hit at dawn. It damaged the pier. The pier was rebuilt last year.
   _____

2. Maria studied economics. She now works in publishing. She has no regrets.
   _____

3. The report was leaked. It named three officials. None of them has resigned.
   _____

Score: _____ / 12

Worksheet 3: Punctuation, Sprawl & Precision

Semicolons, colons, dashes — and cutting a sentence down to size.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Choose the punctuation**

Mark	Joins / introduces	Example
semicolon ;	two closely linked main clauses	The lab closed; the research stopped.
colon :	an explanation, list or expansion	One thing remained: the money.
dash —	an abrupt aside or afterthought	He resigned — nobody was surprised.
comma + coordinator	two main clauses	It was late, so we left.

Insert the correct punctuation in each sentence. There may be more than one acceptable answer.

1. The verdict was unanimous the defendant was acquitted.
   _____
2. She had only one ambition to sail around the world.
   _____
3. The train was cancelled again the third time this week.
   _____
4. He studied for months and he passed with distinction.
   _____
5. The plan had a fatal flaw nobody had costed it.
   _____

PART B — **Cut the sprawl**

Each sentence is overloaded. Rewrite it as TWO or THREE clear sentences without losing information.

1. “The council, which had promised consultation, approved the scheme in March, and residents, who had not been told, only discovered it in June, so they lodged a formal complaint, but it was rejected.”

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. “Although the data were incomplete and the sample was small, the authors, who had previously published on the topic, drew firm conclusions, and these were widely reported.”

   _____

   _____

   _____

Score: _____ / 11

Worksheet 4: Reading & Writing

How sentence structure carries pace and argument.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Analytical reading**

> *For thirty years the factory defined the town: it paid the wages, it filled the pubs, and it set the rhythm of every household's day. Then it closed. The announcement came on a Tuesday, and although the union had feared it for months, nobody was ready. Shops emptied. Young people left, for there was nothing to stay for, nor did anyone pretend otherwise. What remains is a high street of shuttered fronts and a generation that measures time by an event it did not choose — an ending that arrived, as endings do, on an ordinary afternoon.*

1. Identify the sentence pattern or type of the first sentence, and explain how the colon and the three coordinated clauses work together.

_____

_____

_____

2. ‘Then it closed.’ and ‘Shops emptied.’ are both very short. What do they achieve?

_____

_____

3. Find the sentence using ‘for’ and ‘nor’. What register do these coordinators create, and what happens to the word order after ‘nor’?

_____

_____

4. The final sentence is long and heavily subordinated. Why end this way?

_____

_____

PART B — **Write with structural control**

Write a paragraph (120–150 words) about a place that changed. Deliberately vary your sentence structure: include at least ONE compound-complex sentence, TWO very short simple sentences for emphasis, ONE semicolon or colon, and ONE fronted or inverted element. Underline each.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Word count: _____ Features underlined: _____ / 5

Score: _____ / 17

ANSWER KEY & TEACHER NOTES

For teacher use only — B2 Level Worksheets

Main Clauses & Sentence Structure | English Language Worksheets

Worksheet 1 – Clause Elements & Patterns

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
B	Patterns 1–6	**1 SVOC, 2 SV, 3 SVC, 4 SVOO, 5 SVA, 6 SVO**
C1	front ‘never’	**Never had we seen such chaos. (negative fronting → inversion)**
C2	front the adverbial	**On the corner stood a small bookshop. (full inversion)**
C3	front ‘only then’	**Only then did she realise the truth. (inversion)**
C4	front the negative adverbial	**Under no circumstances will I tolerate this. (inversion)**

Worksheet 2 – Coordination vs Subordination

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
A1	funding / project	**‘When/Because the funding was cut, the project collapsed.’ Change: the cut becomes background cause; the collapse is foregrounded as the main event.**
A2	exhausted / kept working	**‘Although she was exhausted, she kept working.’ Change: exhaustion is demoted to a concession; her persistence becomes the point.**
A3	evidence / case	**‘Because the evidence was thin, the case was dropped.’ Change: the causal link is made explicit and the outcome is emphasised.**
B1	combine	**e.g. ‘The storm that hit at dawn damaged the pier, which had been rebuilt only last year.’**
B2	combine	**e.g. ‘Although Maria studied economics, she now works in publishing, and she has no regrets.’**
B3	combine	**e.g. ‘The leaked report named three officials, none of whom has resigned.’**

Worksheet 3 – Punctuation & Sprawl

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
A1	two main clauses	**The verdict was unanimous; the defendant was acquitted.**
A2	expansion	**She had only one ambition: to sail around the world.**
A3	afterthought	**The train was cancelled again — the third time this week.**
A4	comma + coordinator	**He studied for months, and he passed with distinction.**
A5	explanation	**The plan had a fatal flaw: nobody had costed it.**
B1	sprawl	**e.g. ‘The council had promised consultation, but it approved the scheme in March. Residents were never told and only discovered it in June. They lodged a formal complaint; it was rejected.’**

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
B2	sprawl	**e.g. ‘The data were incomplete and the sample was small. Nevertheless, the authors, who had published on the topic before, drew firm conclusions. These were widely reported.’**

Worksheet 4 – Reading & Writing

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
A1	first sentence	**Compound (after the colon): the colon introduces an expansion of ‘defined the town’, and the three parallel coordinated clauses (‘it paid …, it filled …, and it set …’) enact the factory's pervasiveness through accumulation.**
A2	short simple sentences	**They break the accumulated rhythm abruptly, mimicking the suddenness of the closure and the emptying that followed — form imitating event.**
A3	‘for’ and ‘nor’	**Both are formal, literary coordinators that raise the register to something elegiac. After ‘nor’ the word order inverts: ‘nor did anyone pretend otherwise’.**
A4	the long final sentence	**The heavy subordination slows the close and enacts the lingering aftermath; the dash delivers the deflating observation last, so the paragraph ends on the ordinariness of the ending.**
B	Paragraph (120–150 words)	**Up to 10 marks: 5 for the five required structural features used deliberately, 3 for effect and pacing, 2 for punctuation and accuracy.**