

This activity is designed to be a building block task, geared towards students being able to create their own complex sentences and begin to understand how writers use sentence variety for effect.

Each slide has a short task on it and a question or discussion point. Depending on the ability and needs of the group, these can be completed as a class, in pairs or groups or students can be asked to complete them on their own first and then feedback be taken as a class.

Answers:

### Slide 1

- The house was overgrown and dilapidated.
- The lively little dog wagged its tail.

**Clues:** punctuation, use of verbs, there is usually a subject.

### Slide 2

**Simple:**

- The house was haunted.
- The man was quiet.

**Compound:**

- The house was haunted and nobody lived there.
- The man was quiet and he read a book.

**Complex:**

- Watching carefully from over the hills, the old man waited for his visitor.
- Whilst sitting quietly and reading his book, the man watched the minutes on the clock tick slowly by.

### Slide 3

- Kate missed her bus so she rang for a taxi.
- Sally had a headache and she was full of cold.
- It started to rain but Claire had remembered her umbrella.

**Punctuation** - students need to remember to remove the first full stop and change the uppercase letters to lowercase in the middle of a sentence, unless it's a proper noun.

## Slide 4

- Carol, forgetting to set the alarm, was late for work again.

**Punctuation** - students need to remember to use parenthetical commas around the subordinate clause.

## Slide 5

Hopefully, students will come up with lots of weird and wonderful examples of their own. If they are struggling, you could suggest:

- Rudolph, whose nose is very red, helped Santa see through the fog.
- The chicken, which I didn't like the look of, had been left out of the fridge all day.
- Hearing his gentle voice, that made me want to cry, I hugged my dad very tight.

Importantly, they need to remember their parenthetical commas.

## Slide 6

"I felt something warm against my ankle and, looking down, saw that it was Spider, very close to me and gently licking my skin. When I stroked her, I realised that she was calm again, her body relaxed, her ears down. I listened. There was no sound in the house at all. After a while, I went back along the passage to the closed door. Spider came quite happily and stood obediently there, perhaps waiting for the door to be opened. I put my head close to the wood. Nothing. Absolute silence. I put my hand on the door handle, hesitated as I felt my heart again begin to race, but drew in several deep breaths and tried the door. It would not open, though the rattling of it echoed in the room beyond, as if there were no carpet on the floor. I tried it once more and pushed against it slightly with my shoulder. It did not give.

In the end I went back to bed. I read two further chapters of the Scott novel, though without fully taking in their meaning, and then switched out my lamp. Spider had settled again on the rug. It was a little after two o'clock.

It was a long time before I slept."

Simple sentences are in yellow. Complex sentences are in red.

You can use the examples, "nothing." or "Absolute silence." to discuss fragments. Show how good authors use them sparingly for effect.