Increasing Sentence Complexity

A simple but complete sentence...
- ends with a period (.), a question mark (?), or an exclamation point (!)
- cannot end in a comma (,)
- contains a subject
- contains a main verb
- expresses a complete thought.

With those elements, a simple sentence is complete (grammatically correct). It is an independent clause (in other words, it can stand alone).

However, there are some ways to increase the sophistication of sentences, and one way is to attach a dependent clause to it. A dependent clause makes an incomplete thought, so it will “depend on” the independent clause, and, therefore, they must be attached to each other in the same sentence.

Here is one way to create a dependent clause:

1. Use a subordinate conjunction (subordinator) such as if, although, because, since, unless, before, after, while, until, whether, as much as, and as long as.

   Example 1) You have two related ideas: He never joins us at the club. He is always tired. One is a cause, and one is an effect, so you can use since or because as your subordinator.
   - Because he is always tired, he never joins us at the club.
   - He never joins us at the club because he’s always tired.
   - Since he is always tired, he never joins us at the club.
   - He never joins us at the club since he’s always tired.

   Example 2) The application deadline is June 12, 2010. This suggests a strong condition, so you can use if or unless as your subordinator.
   - Unless the application is received by June 12, 2010, it will not be considered.
   - The application will not be considered unless it is received by June, 12, 2010.
   - If the application is received after June 12, 2010, it will not be considered.
   - The application will not be considered if it is received after June 12, 2010.