

Sassy Sentences

(tips for adding variety to boring sentences)

WHY USE VARIETY IN YOUR SENTENCES?

- Sentence variety is necessary for a number of reasons:
 - * Sentence variety makes your writing more interesting to read!
 - * Sentence variety adds style to your writing!
 - * Sentence variety will help develop your writing skills!

TRY THIS SIMPLEST SENTENCE
PATTERN FOR FUN AND EFFECT!
THE TWO-WORD SENTENCE
SMACKDOWN
SUBJECT + POWERFUL VERB

- *They race.* (Jerry Spinelli, *Loser*)
- *Maria flinched.* (Nancy Farmer, *House of the Scorpion*)
- *Blood flew.* (Stephen King, *Cujo*)
- *He sprung.* (Stephen King, *Cujo*)

Your turn for a
“Two-Word Sentence”
Smack Down

- Subject: **Dog Breed** (You pick the subject and add the verb!)
 - Subject: **Story Character**
 - Subject: **Body Part** (i.e., *tongues*)
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8. TWO-ADJECTIVE BEGINNINGS:

- Tall, handsome lifeguards flirt wildly with the pretty girls.
- Rickety and dilapidated, the old schoolhouse didn't stand a chance in an earthquake.

NOW
YOU
TRY:



8. “-ly” at beginning

- Cheerfully, she answered the phone for her mother.
 - Slowly opening the door, the servant tried not to wake his master.
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- Begin sentences with an adverb.
 - Luckily, I won the lottery last night.
 - Unfortunately, no one passed the exam.
 - Yesterday, we went to the zoo.
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Now let's get more complicated:
Three Basic Scaffolds
for Complex Sentence Patterns

Opener, **Sentence** ■

Sent, interrupter, **ence** ■

Sentence, closer ■

2. Begin sentences with a prepositional phrase.

- In the morning, I hope to feel better.
 - At lunchtime, I'm going to meet some friends at Red Lobster.
 - Under the desk, you'll find your notebook.
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PREPOSITIONS

- above, after, across, against, along, among, around, at, behind, below, beside, between, beyond, by, down, from, in, inside, into, near, off, on, out, outside, over, past, through, to, toward, under, underneath, up, within, after, as, before, during, since, until, about, despite, except, for, like, of, per, than, with, without
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WITH PREPOSITIONS AS STARTERS

- About the time I got to San Antone, I never wanted to see another dead armadillo.
- Despite his bulk, Lester sounded like a girl every time he opened his mouth.
- Underneath the seven layers of urine-soaked newspaper, rat poo, and seed jackets, Gilbertina was quite cozy and contented.

NOW, YOU TRY



3. Opener, Sentence:

Examples with AAWWUBBIS

- **Before** the plate hit the table, Louie leaned forward like a snake striking and hit the stack of pancakes with his fork. (Gary Paulsen, *Harris and Me*)
- **When** I pop in a Bird CD, it's like I feel myself filling up with Zeke. (Tracy Mack, *Birdland*)
- **If** there was an Olympic contest for talking, Shelly Staffs would sweep the event. (Wendelin Van Draanen, *Flipped*)

5. “-ing” at beginning

- Running like the wind, Forrest Gump made national headline news.
- Saving the best for last, Lisa finally ate her Reese’s peanut butter cup.

- Join ideas using an –ing verb form.
 - Two sentences:
 - She studied all night.
 - She passed the exam.
 - Combined:
 - Having studied all night, she passed the exam.
-



PRESENT PARTICIPLE PHRASES

- Present participles are words that end in “-ing.”
- A participial phrase commonly functions as an adjective.
- a present participle phrase may begin the sentence.

Running home quickly, the dog got soaked in the pouring rain.

Shivering violently, Rover stopped in front of the porch stairs.

Bounding up the steps, Rover shook out his water-logged coat.

Sitting on the porch, Rover licked his wet fur.

- Past participles are introduced by participles ending in ed rather than ing.
 - They can be used anywhere ing participles are used.
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4. Use an -ed Verb Form

Jenny was renowned for her landscape paintings. She also had a reputation as a skillful portrait artist.

Revised: Renowned for her landscape paintings, Jenny also had a reputation as a skillful portrait artist.



“-ing” at end

- He trudged along the hot desert for days, wishing he had brought more water.
- Sandy gave the homeless man all the money she had, hoping that her small act of kindness might bring him some comfort.

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10. INFINITIVE PHRASES

- An infinitive is a root form of the verb preceded by *to*.
 - to learn
 - to assemble
 - to make
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9. INFINITIVES

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- Please contact the executive director to apply for a job.
- To apply for a job, please contact the executive director.
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- Look on the SOLV website to find the nearest location.
- To find the nearest location, look on the SOLV website.

NOW
YOU
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7. IN IDEAS USING AN APPOSITIVE

What is an appositive? An appositive is a noun phrase that renames a noun.

- Two sentences:
 - Ms. Bonnie helped me with my paper.
 - Ms. Bonnie is our class tutor.
- Combined:
 - Ms. Bonnie, our class tutor, helped me with my paper.

Appositives

add information by renaming nouns

- Frank's house looked like it had been drawn by a kindergartener with only two crayons, lime green and sunflower. (Paul Acampra)
- It was twilight, that time of day when shadows grow long and the lights start to fade and a dog's eyes can play tricks on her. (Ann Martin)
- Joey was in their grade, a big pudgy kid with a cowlick that stood up at the back of his head like a blunt Indian feather. (Peter Abrahams)

INFORMATIVE INTERRUPTERS

- The fish, a slimy mass of flesh, felt the alligator's giant teeth sink into him as he struggled to swim away.
- The child, face covered with chocolate doughnut, asked his mother if he could have some milk.

How do I use sentence variety?

- Join ideas using a relative clause.
 - Review: What is relative clause? A relative clause is a group of words that begins with *who*, *which*, or *that*, has a subject & a verb, and modifies or describes a noun.
- Two sentences:
 - Ms. Bonnie helped me with my paper.
 - Ms. Bonnie is our class tutor.
- Combined:
 - Ms. Bonnie, who is our class tutor, helped me with my paper.



USE AN APPOSITIVE

A noun or
noun
phrase that
identifies
something
or someone

Margaret was an avid reader. She would devour two or three books every weekend.

Revised: An avid reader, Margaret would devour two or three books every weekend.

OR

Margaret, an avid reader, would devour two or three books every weekend.

Appositive vs. Relative Clause

- Two sentences:
 - The Simpsons is my favorite show.
 - The Simpsons comes on Sunday nights.
- Combined with an appositive:
 - The Simpsons, my favorite show, comes on Sunday nights.
- Combined with a relative clause:
 - The Simpsons, which is my favorite show, comes on Sunday nights.

NOW
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PARALLEL SENTENCES

- He runs onto the baseball field, spins around second base, and looks back at the academy.
 - Choosing a Christmas tree, putting up Christmas lights, and baking Christmas cookies are all included in my December traditions.
-

ANOTHER POWERFUL SENTENCE PATTERN: THE SERIAL COMMA SENTENCE

Sente **n**, **c**, **and** **e** .

AKA “The Magic Three”

A Serial Comma Sentence adds three pieces of information to a sentence.

Examples of the
Serial Comma Sentence Pattern

Sente n , c , and e .

AKA “The Magic Three”

- **Pick up your tennis shoes, your potato chip bag, and your sweaty self** off my white rug. (Betsy Anderson)
- With a malicious gleam in his eye, he **kicks back the chair, pulls out his shirt tails, and adopts the high-volume grunting and braying tones of a Mississippi Delta evangelist.** (Rob Thomas, *Slave Day*)

More Examples of the
Serial Comma Sentence Pattern

Sente n , c , and e .
AKA “The Magic Three”

- The soup was a delicious mingling of **chicken, watercress, and garlic**. (Rob Thomas, *Slave Day*)
- Can you imagine your father selling you for **a tablecloth, a hen, and a handful of cigarettes**? (Kate DiCamillo, *The Tale of Despereaux*)

PARALLELISM IS MAKING THINGS MATCH.

- His room smelled of cooked grease, Lysol, and age. (Maya Angelou)
- I had three places I wanted to visit, six things I wanted to make, and two conversations I wanted to have before dinner. (Katherine Hannigan)

You try:

NOW
YOU
TRY:



3. DEPENDENT CLAUSES

- Because it rained, the garden party was postponed.
- Since the road construction is complete, Jim can make it home in only ten minutes.