

Introducing the Trait of Sentence Fluency

Lesson Series 12

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Sentence Fluency

Winter Tunnels — original

my brother and I were making snow tunnels. my brother's tunnel got broken. He thought I broke it. That's when it started. He ambushed me with snowballs. They flew through the air like jets. I slid in my tunnel. I get hit and get angry. I crawl out and throw ice at him. He catches the ice and throws it back. Snow was dripping down my shirt. Eventually I lose and go back inside.

Winter Tunnels — revised

My brother and I were making tunnels in a snow mound. My brother's tunnel broke. He stared at me, thinking I broke it. That's when it started. He ambushed me with snowballs. They flew through the air like jets. AAHHH! I ran, dove, and slid into my tunnel to stay away from him. I got hit. I got angry. I crawl out of the tunnel and start throwing giant pieces of ice back at him. He fired back. Snow and ice chips were dripping down my shirt. Eventually I lose and go back inside.

Strategies for adding words (and making sentences longer).

1. Add a descriptive detail (color, name, kind, etc.).

original— *The cat was playful.*

revised— *The charcoal gray cat was cute and playful.*

2. Add a description about smell, taste, touch, sound or sight.

original— *His bedroom was messy.*

revised— *His messy bedroom stunk like the boys' locker room.*

3. Add a phrase about how the character said something.

original— *"Get out!" she screamed.*

revision— *"Get out!" she screamed with her hands on her hips.*

4. Add a phrase that explains something or gives examples.

original— *"Plants need nutrients."*

revision— *"Plants need nutrients to grow, like water and fertilizer."*

Strategies for breaking a long sentence into multiple shorter sentences.

1. Take out any “and” or “and then” phrases and make the sentences separate.

original— *I’d put on my snow suit and my boots and then I would go outside and play in the snow.*

revision— *I’d put on my snow suit and my boots. I would go outside and play in the snow.*

2. If you have multiple adjectives in a row, substitute them for a single stronger one.

original— *His hair was bright red-ish orange and parts with gold.*

revision— *His hair was sunset orange.*

3. Take out parts of the sentence that say the same thing more than once.

original— *I would walk through the cold river and feel the freezing water on my ice cold feet.*

revision— *I would walk through the freezing river with ice cold feet.*

Varying Sentence Length for Impact

Do you feel rushed?

original — *Janet had to hurry because the bus was coming. She heard the wheels squealing and saw the bus coming down the street. She ran out the door and down the drive to catch only the stench of lingering exhaust fumes.*

To create a fast-paced mood, utilize several short sentences in a row.

revised — *Janet had to hurry. The bus was coming. She heard its wheels squeal. She saw its yellow face. It turned down her street. She had no more time. She ran out the door and down the drive to catch only the stench of lingering exhaust fumes.*

My Shiner!!

Crack! The Berne all stars played the Hardon all star team. We had to win or else we would be out of the championship. The first inning we were in the lead. Suddenly strike one, strike two, strike three, you're out. That was three outs for the Berne all stars. It was the fourth inning. The Berne all stars were in the lead 4-0. I was in the outfield. The batter hit the ball. The ball came my way. I tried to catch the ball but it hit my eye. I fell to the ground with a thump! Then I started to cry. The batter was still running. Then the umpire called time out. My dad rushed out to the field and carried me to the car. Then he rushed me to the hospital. I wanted to fall asleep in the car but my dad thought I had a concussion. At the hospital they said I was fine and I could go home. The next day my dad told me that we won the game.

Hurricanes vs. Tornadoes

Snap! Crack! Get down a tornado! Debris shot right through the walls. A tornado is much deadlier than a hurricane.

Now wouldn't you agree that people in mobile homes would be hurt? I have seen the damage it can do to them. It can obliterate a mobile home in a matter of seconds. It can throw debris straight through the walls. Imagine that as your morning wake up call.

Not Enemies... Not Friends

Once there was a kid. He wanted to fight. He threw rocks and cussed. He got on my nerves so bad. He thought he was tuff. We were not enemies, but we were not friends.

He thought he was funny, but he wasn't. He punched and kicked. He was rude. I didn't hate him. I just didn't like him. He would tease people. He moved out of state. I wonder what that kid is doing now.

Varying Sentence Length for Impact

Do you feel relaxed?

original — *Tiffany felt lazy. She grabbed a book. She flopped on the couch. She read.*

Long sentences create a slow pace.

revised — *Feeling lazy, Tiffany grabbed a book and flopped on the couch.*

Indiana

In the summer the woods are full of activity,
rivers glisten like a thousand jewels,
shafts of light peep through the trees,
woodpeckers, beavers and deer fill the woods
with noise,
and fish dance in the water.

In the fall the leaves are multi-colored,
the harvest is mouth watering,
frost sheets the ground,
pumpkins mysteriously form faces,
on a certain night ghosts, phantoms, and ghouls are reported,
and turkeys seem scarce.

Winter is when God puts frosting on the ground,
trees are naked,
nights are spent in front of the fire,
trees are clad in lights, and children seem to have extra toys.
And spring is the begging of new life.

Experimenting with Long & Short Sentence Writing

DIRECTIONS: Read the list of topics. Notice how the list on the left includes topics that create feelings of panic, urgency, and anger. The list on the right includes topics that create more calm and gentle, slow and relaxed feelings.

Select one topic from each list. Write several sentences about that event or topic using lots of short sentences for the “fast” topics and lots of long sentences for the “slow” topics.

FAST, ANGRY, URGENT TOPICS:	SLOW, CALM, RELAXED TOPICS:
Late for the bus	Riding in the car on a long trip
Running a race	Watching cookies bake
Getting in line for recess	Watching a boring event (piano recital, ballet recital, baseball game)
Fire alarm/fire drill	Floating on a raft in the lake/pond/pool
Frustrated at sibling	Sitting outside in a lawn chair, staring at a campfire
Being picked on or bullied	Cuddling a cat or bunny or other soft creature
Being grounded	Sleeping in on a Saturday morning
Told “no” when wanting to do something	Painting your nails
Angry dog chasing you	Eating a picnic outside
Hurrying to the car in a thunderstorm	Watching snowflakes fall
Giving a speech in front of strangers/adults	Relaxing while listening to music
Getting a shot	Reading a book
Taking a timed test	Coloring a picture
Rushing to the restroom in between classes	Blowing bubbles
Playing a fast-action video game	Slowly licking an ice cream cone
Being startled by a fast-moving snake	Watching a helium balloon float up

FAST WRITING WITH SHORT SENTENCES: _____

SLOW WRITING WITH LONG SENTENCES: _____

Varying Sentence Length for Impact

Do you feel the power?

original — *As soon as he threw it, Brad knew they were sunk. The baseball pierced the living room window. CRASH! Not a small, perfect hole, but a gaping void.*

Repeating the same word, phrase, or sentence increases the impact.

revised — *As soon as he threw it, Brad knew they were sunk. The baseball pierced the living room window. CRASH! Not a small, perfect hole, but a gaping void with hunks of glass continuing to fall. CRASH! One by one. CRASH! CRASH! CRASH! Every time another piece fell, their shoulders winced at the noise.*

We miss you!

The thought of you,
Is a beautiful thought,
Though we miss you so!

The thought of you,
May make us cry,
Because we miss you so!

The thought of you,
Can send chills up our spines.
We miss you that much!

The thought of you,
Brings me happiness.
When I miss you.

The thought of you,
Makes me cherish life.
I miss you that much!

The thought of you,
Is sometimes sad.
Missing you is sad.

The thought of you,
Makes me wonder,
Do you miss **me**?

Experimenting with Parallelism

Not parallel:

*In my locker I have books, a couple of coats for recess, and **three** pencils.*

Parallel structure:

ONE-WORD NOUN: *In my locker there are books, coats, and pencils.*

ADJECTIVE/NOUN: *In my locker there are **school** books, **spring** coats, and **sharpened** pencils.*

Not parallel:

*At the grocery, my mom shops for **some** grapes, a bunch of bananas, and a **crispy, red** apple.*

Parallel structure:

ONE-WORD NOUN: *At the grocery, my mom shops for grapes, bananas, and apples.*

ADJECTIVE/NOUN:

ADJECTIVE/ADJECTIVE/NOUN:

Recopy a sentence from your own writing that is NOT parallel.

Rewrite the sentence two different ways to make it parallel in structure.

1) _____

2) _____

Parallelism within Literature

See his pants... **brown baggy pants** with **two side pockets**, and two in back. There's candy in those pockets, **little chocolate candies** in **twisty silver wrappers**.

(from *Mr. George Baker*, by Amy Hest)

I don't care if they're **little pigs** or **big pigs**, with **long snouts** or **short snouts**, with ears that stick up or ears that flop down. I don't mind if they're **black** or **white** or **ginger** or **spotted**. I just love pigs.

(from *All Pigs are Beautiful*, by Dick King-Smith and Anita Jerman)

He had coins of many sizes and values... Some were **silver-colored with rough edges**. Others were **copper-colored with smooth edges**.

(from *Max's Words*, by Kate Banks)

Dinosaurs **giggled** and **shuffled** and **stared**, ready to party, but a little bit scared.

(from *Saturday Night at the Dinosaur Stomp*, by Carol Diggory Shields)

If kids ever crossed her, she'd **push 'em** and **smoosh 'em**, **lollapaloosh 'em**, **hammer 'em**, **slammer 'em**, kitz and **kajammer 'em**.

(from *The Recess Queen*, by Alexis O'Neill)

She **plunges** through slush ice and **laps** the chill water, **snaps** at a feather that **drifts** down from a goose wing, then **splashes** to shore and **shakes** herself like a dog.

(from *Walk with a Wolf*, by Janni Howker and Sarah Fox-Davies)

MY SCARECROW

There's a scarecrow out my window
It can't wait to dance around
It seems so very very high off the ground.

That scarecrow of mine,
I'm not quite sure
Is scary enough to scare a worm.

It sways in the wind
It rocks in the storms
I don't think it could survive much more.

The First Time I Got A Hamster

It was Saturday night. We just got out of Movies 12. We were all going crazy. We had lots of sugar and pop during the movie. Our moms were **laughing** and **talking**. Then they said let's go to the pet store and look at all the pets. We took off **hooten** and **hollerin'** like apes. We dashed inside. We stared at the animals like they were a new species of animals just found. We looked at the animals each one **studying** them, **holding** them, **playing** with them. I walked over to the hamsters...