

**Varying Sentence Structure for Effect**

**Name: ……………………………**

**Grade: 8 CS:…………………….**

**Sentence Style and Variety**

What happens when you listen to a speaker who never varies his tone or sentence length? You

get bored. And what happens when speakers emphasize the wrong words? You get confused. When you revise, think about ways to vary the structure and length of your sentences so that you can properly emphasize key ideas and maintain your reader’s interest. Since sentence variety helps to clarify relationships between ideas and to maintain the reader’s interest, consider using non-conventional ways to express your thoughts.

The conventional sentence in English is structured with the subject first and then the verb.

`Below are some ways of varying your sentences. Sometimes this will affect the meaning; sometimes it will alter the emphasis or impact.

1. **Changing the order of clauses in a coordinated sentence.**

Example:

He was surprised and reached out to touch the dolphin.

Revised sentence:

He reached out to touch the dolphin and was surprised.

**What is the difference in meaning and effect between the two sentences?**

The answer:

The first sentence demonstrates surprise before he reaches out to the dolphin and places emphasis on this because it is at the beginning of the sentence. The second sentence shows surprise after he has reached out to touch the dolphin, so highlights the action as causing the surprise.

1. **Changing the position of the subordinate clause in a complex sentence.**

Example:

Although they sometimes take risks, explorers help us to understand more about the world we live in.

Revised sentence:

Explorers, although they sometimes take risks, help us to understand more about the world we live in.

Revised sentence:

Explorers help us to learn more about the world we live in, although they sometimes take risks.

**What is the difference in emphasis between the three sentences?**

**The answer:**

The first sentence places the emphasis on the idea of ‘risks’, the second places the emphasis on explorers taking risks by placing the subject ‘explorers’ first, followed by the subordinate clause. The final sentence places emphasis on explorers aiding knowledge of the world because the subordinate clause on ‘risks’ is placed at the end of the sentence.

1. **Putting the subject near the end of the sentence.**

Example:

A massive alligator lurked several yards away from them in the depth of the water.

Revised sentence:

In the depth of the water, several yards away from them lurked a massive alligator.

**What is the effect of putting the subject at the beginning of the sentence?**

By placing the subject at the beginning, this has a different effect because the emphasis is now placed on the alligator, and the reader is immediately aware of the danger faced.

**What is the effect of putting the subject at the end of the sentence?**

By placing the subject at the end of the sentence, it helps to build the tension for the reader as the emphasis is on the surroundings, and the danger is not revealed straight away.

1. **Starting with a non-finite / - ing verb**

Example:

She walked into the room, and she was crying.

Revised sentence:

Crying, she walked into the room.

**What is the effect of using non-finite at the beginning of the sentence?**

Using the non-finite spares, you the weak and boring structure of the sentence as it adds more fluency of writing.

1. **Starting with an adverb or adverbial.**

Example:

They tried to rebuild their boat for many weeks.

Revised sentence:

For many weeks, they tried to rebuild their boat.

**Practice:**

**It looked as though it was smiling**

**The river was dark**

**The trees looked as though they were moving**

**The trees hung over the river**

**Trees whispered in the breeze**

**He saw an alligator**

**The alligator was sliding**

**On either side was the jungle**

**We drifted along the river**

**The boat drifted**

**The river was deep**

**Alex leaned over the side**

**The alligator was sliding through the mud**

Combine the clauses above into sentences. Aim to use some of the different structures and try out different ways of combining the clauses.

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