

Vary Sentence Beginnings

(Sentence Fluency)

A part of sentence fluency is varying your sentence beginnings. If you start out with the subject all the time, then your sentences begin to sound monotonous, and your sentences do not flow well. (NOTE: This does not mean you start out with the same word, but rather the same part of speech)

Example of Bad Sentence Fluency: I love shopping. My friend and I will go shopping all the time. We love to buy clothes. She likes buying jeans. I like buying shoes best.

To avoid the subject-verb pattern, I have compiled 5 different sentence starters:

Sentence Pattern 1 - Begin with a Prepositional Phrase:

With a smile on his face, the lion devoured the boy.

Across the bay, the light flickered and went out.

Sentence Pattern 2 - Begin with a Participle or Participial Phrase (“ing” or “ed”)

Slithering down the trunk of the tree, I ripped my best pants.

Hoping to escape the teacher’s attention, Matt crawled into the classroom.

Past Participial Phrase (use an “ed” word):

Impressed by the ceremony, we left the room in silence.

Depressed by the amount of homework, the student collapsed into tears.

Sentence Pattern 3 – Dependent Clauses (begin with a subordinating conjunction) (These help express relationships such as compare/contrast or cause/effect.):

Though some critics have complained about her lack of personal warmth, Hillary Clinton is doing well in the presidential race.

While I was taking the test, my pen ran out of ink.

Sentence Pattern 4 – Use the appositive (after subject noun or object noun)

A well-respected Mayor, Bill knew he could run for president.

A struggling magician, Tom wandered from street to street.

Sentence Pattern 5 - Infinitive Phrase: (“to plus verb”)

To cope with the new tax law, taxpayers must comprehend subtle variations in meaning.

To reduce expenses, the newspaper had to trim its editorial staff from twenty-one to twelve.

List of Prepositions

about	against	around	before
above	along	as	behind
according to	along with	as for	below
across	among	at	beneath
after	apart from	because of	
beside	concerning	except for	in addition to
between	despite	excepting	in back of
beyond	down	for	in case of
by	during	from	in front of
by means of	except	in	
in place of	like	on	outside
inside	near	onto	over
in spite of	next	on top of	past
instead of	of	out	regarding
into	off	out of	
round	to	until	within
since	toward	up	without
through	under	upon	
throughout	underneath	up to	
till	unlike	with	

List of Subordinating Conjunctions

after	in order (that)	unless	although
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insofar as		in that	if
	as	while	
until			before
	lest		though
when		no matter how	
	whenever		even though
as far as		where	since
	as soon as		
as if		whether	
	as though		till
now that		because	
	once		
wherever		inasmuch as	so that
		even if	

SENTENCE FLUENCY IN ACTION

Old Sentence: Katie walked briskly to the movies. She wanted to see the new Transformers.

---To use a participial take out the verb (walk or want) and start with it.

Revised Sentence: Walking quickly to the movies, Katie was excited to see the new Transformers.

Revised Sentence: Wanting to see the new Transformers, Katie walked briskly to the movies.

---To use a dependent clause. Create a cause and effect relationship or compare/contrast

Revised Sentence: Because Katie wanted to see the new Transformers, she walked quickly to the movies.

Old Sentence: She saw the lights across the bay.

--To use a preposition take out the prep phase and put it at the beginning.

Revised Sentence: Across the bay, she saw the lights.