1. Focus

Explain Starting Sentences with Different Words

Say: When I write a persuasive letter, I want to hold my readers’ attention. I try to make my sentences sound interesting and different. If every sentence sounds the same, readers will get bored, and they won’t want to read my letter. For example, listen to this letter:

Example Text

Dear Mom and Dad,
I really want a dog. I really hope you will let me have one. I will take good care of my dog. I will walk him. I will bathe him. I will feed him every day.

Example Text

Dear Mom and Dad,
I really want a dog. Will you let me have one, please? If so, I will take very good care of him. I will walk and bathe him. Every day I will feed him, too.

Say: Which letter would you rather read? (Allow responses.) Good writers don’t start every sentence the same way. They know that readers will get bored if they do that. It’s okay to start some of my sentences with the same word, but I try not to have too many sentences in a row that start with the same word. Today I’ll show you how I start sentences with different words to keep my letters interesting.

Model Starting Sentences with Different Words

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Modeling Text

I read a study about food ads. The study said some kids saw more than twenty food ads per day on TV. Thirty-four percent were for candy or snacks.

Ask students to listen to the way the sentences start as you read the passage from “Stop Junk Food Ads for Kids” aloud.
2. Rehearse

Practice Starting Sentences with Different Words

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Practice Text

Fast food chains give kids toys with their meals. Fast food chains know what they are doing. Fast food chains know junk food is not good for kids.

Ask students to work with a partner to rewrite the sentences so that each one starts in a different way. Each pair should write down their sentences and be prepared to read them to the class and explain how the different words keep the text interesting.

Share Practice Sentences

Bring students together and invite partners to read aloud their sentences and explain how they changed them. Record students’ sentences and post these as models for students to use as they draft or revise their persuasive letters.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned one way to keep our sentences interesting is to start them in different ways. Remember, readers won’t want to keep reading if every sentence sounds the same. As you revise your persuasive letters, look for opportunities to start sentences with different words.

Encourage students to think about starting their sentences with different words during independent writing time. During conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers who have varied their sentence structures by starting sentences in different ways to read sample sentences they’ve written.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Provide practice with simple sentences during independent writing time or while other students work with partners. Point to a student. Say: [Student’s name] is a student. She likes to read. Write the sentences on the interactive whiteboard and underline the beginning words. Ask students to talk about other students using the sentence models.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity.