Revise: Vary Sentence Beginnings

Objectives

Concepts About Print
• Apply print concepts and conventions during writing.

Oral Language and Grammar
• Retell information orally.
• Use nouns, verbs, adjectives, and personal pronouns in complete sentences.

Purposeful Phonics Connections
• Apply phonics knowledge to encode unknown words.
• Write high-frequency words.

Reflecting Reading in Writing
• Ask questions.
• Identify main idea and details.
• Use texts as sentence models for writing.

Writing
• Revise an informational report for sentence beginnings.

Materials
• Modeling text prepared prior to lesson (see Focus)
• Students’ drafts of informational reports (from Weeks 20 and 21)
• Chart paper, markers, and highlighters
• Interactive whiteboard resources

1. Focus (15 minutes)

Display the modeling text without revisions on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Read it aloud, asking students to follow along as you read.

All plants have needs. They plants need water. They plants need light and air. Every plant plants needs a place to grow, too.

Modeling Text

Ask: What do you notice about this text? (Allow responses.) That’s right. The writer used the word Plants at the beginning of every sentence. This makes the text sound dull and repetitive. We learned that we want to vary the way our sentences begin so that readers will want to read our writing. Today I want you to help me revise this text so that the sentence beginnings are more varied and interesting.

Sentence 1. Say: This is our topic sentence, so we definitely need the word plants in this sentence. We know that every plant has needs. What could we add in front of the word plants to tell this? (Allow responses.) That’s right. We could write “Every plant” or “All plants.” I’ll use All plants. Model making the revision.

Sentences 2 and 3. Ask: Do we want to use the word Plants again in these two sentences? What pronoun could we use instead of the word Plants? (Allow responses.) Say: Let’s use the word They to start these sentences. Notice that we can use the word They in two sentences in a row. It’s okay to have some repetition in the way your sentences begin. It’s just when you have many sentences that start the same that you really need to work on them. Model making the revisions.

Sentence 4. Say: We know that all plants have needs. Do all plants need a place to grow, too? (Allow responses.) How could we start this sentence to say that? (Allow responses.) We could write “Every plant” so that the sentence starts in a different way than our first sentence. When we write “Every plant,” we have to change the verb from need to needs to match the subject of our sentence. Model making the revisions.
2. Rehearse (10 MINUTES)

Distribute highlighters and students’ writing folders. Ask each student to choose an informational report he or she wrote and would like to revise. Ask students to work in pairs. **Say**: Decide which report you will revise first. Read the report together and highlight the first word in each sentence. If you see the same word over and over, ask each other questions to help you think of other words you could use. When you are done, do the same thing with the other report. Move among the pairs of students to monitor and support their efforts.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring (15 MINUTES)

**Say**: Now make the changes you talked about with your partner. You don’t need to revise every sentence. Replacing or adding one or two words is fine. If any students have difficulty figuring out what to revise, ask questions to guide them in the right direction. In addition use the Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to help you provide differentiated support to individual students based on your observations. As students finish, **say**: Reread your report to your partner to show how the new sentence beginnings you wrote make your report sound more interesting.

4. Share (5 MINUTES)

Use the Share time in one of the following ways depending on your observations of students during Independent Writing and Conferring:

- Invite volunteers to read aloud their revised drafts. Encourage students who are listening to comment on the revisions and talk about other ways the writers could change the sentence beginnings.
- If students have difficulty substituting pronouns, refer to the pronoun chart from Day 2 (in the Teacher Tip). Also make a list of quantitative describing words that students could use to begin their sentences, such as some, all, none, a few, many, several, etc.
- Invite students to share how they decided which words to change and what words to use in place of these words.

**Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to Support and Scaffold Writers**

**Goal Oriented**
- I will use pronouns in place of words that I repeat.
- I will add a describing word to vary sentence beginnings.

**Directive and Corrective Feedback**
- What is a word that describes ______? Could you start your sentence with that word?
- What pronoun could you use for ______?
- What is another word for ______?

**Self-Monitoring and Reflection**
- Check to see if you used a word several times. Think about how to fix that.
- Show me where you revised your writing. How do you think it sounds now?
- Tell me what strategies you used to think of a new way to start your sentences.

**Validating and Confirming**
- I like the way you started your sentences with different words. That’s what strong writers do.
- You thought about several different words and chose ______. That will make your report sound even more interesting.
- You used the word ______ to describe ______. That makes the sentence more interesting, and it helps writers understand what you are writing about.

**Teacher Tip**

Reinforce the concept of varied sentence beginnings by pointing out examples in your daily read-alouds. Think aloud about how an author’s word choice makes writing sound more interesting.