Vary Sentences by Starting with Different Words

1. Focus

Explain Using Varied Sentence Structures

Say: As informational report writers, it is important for us to present facts accurately and to clearly describe the topic. It is also important that we write interesting sentences. One way to engage readers is to change the way our sentences look and sound, or vary the sentence structure. One way we can do this is by using different words to begin our sentences. Today I’m going to show you how to write more interesting informational reports by using different words to start your sentences.

Model How Writers Vary Sentence Structure by Starting with Different Words

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

Modeling Text

Far across the world, fall is also when caribou leave their homes. Caribou are large deer, related to the reindeer. They spend summer near the Arctic Circle. But in the fall, the temperature drops. It gets very cold, and a lot of snow falls.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
• Learn to vary sentence structure by varying the way sentences begin.
• Practice varying sentence structure using different words to begin sentences.
• Discuss how to apply this strategy to their independent writing.

Preparation

Materials Needed
• Chart paper and markers
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation
If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling and practice texts onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson.
2. Rehearse

**Practice Varying Sentence Structure by Starting with Different Words**

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

The caribou travel south in the fall. The caribou try to stay safe from wolves. The caribou have to swim across rivers. The caribou live in the forests in winter.

**Practice Text**

Point out that each of the sentences in the paragraph starts in the same way—with the subject of the sentence. Ask students to work with a partner to rewrite the sentences to vary the way they begin. Each pair of students should write down its sentences and be prepared to read them to the class.

**Share Practice Sentences**

Bring students together and invite partners to read their sentences aloud. Encourage students to compare the different ways pairs of students begin their sentences and decide which sentences sound most interesting. Record some of the best examples and post these as models for students to use as they revise their own informational reports.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

**Say:** We learned that we can make our sentences more interesting if we vary the way we begin our sentences. We can start our sentences in different ways. Remember to vary the way you begin your sentences when you write your informational reports.

Encourage students to think about their sentence beginnings as they draft and revise during independent writing time. During student conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to read aloud examples of sentences with different beginnings.

**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

Beginning ELs are still learning to articulate complete sentences in English. While other students work with partners, or during independent writing time, work with students to orally generate complete sentences, such as *We read books, We write sentences,* and *We listen.* Write students’ sentences on chart paper and read them with students.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity. Provide suggested ways to vary sentence beginnings. Encourage ELs to orally create sentences using the different sentence beginnings. Write their sentences on chart paper and read them with students, underlining the beginning of each sentence.

Sometimes _____.
In the spring, ______.
Because _____.
During ______.
After ______.

**All Levels**

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: caribou/el caribú; migrate/migrar; temperature/la temperatura; variety/la variedad.