Revise to Vary Sentence Structure

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
- Learn to revise an informational report to strengthen sentence fluency by varying sentence structure.
- Practice revising the sentence structures within a report excerpt.
- Share their revisions with the class.
- Discuss how they can apply this skill to their own 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 text and practice text onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson. Leave enough space between lines to allow you to insert new text.

1. Focus

Explain Revising to Vary Sentence Structure

Ask: After we’ve drafted our reports, what do we need to do next? (Allow responses.) That’s right, we need to go back and revise them to make them even better. When I revise an informational report, one thing I do is make sure my sentences are not all the same, for example, that they don’t all begin with the same words, that the length of my sentences varies, and that they include details that provide interest and clarity. Today I’m going to show you how I revise an informational report to make sure that I have varied and interesting sentence structures.

Model Revising to Vary Sentence Structure

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to listen as you read the uncorrected passage aloud and to pay attention to the sentences.

Modeling Text

Say: I think we can make the sentences stronger in this text.

Reread example 1. Say: The word babies doesn’t tell readers what kind of babies I’m talking about, so I need to name the bird. I’ll add the words Arctic tern to the beginning of the sentence. And I need to add a detail about what the parents feed the babies. I’ll add the words of fish.

Reread example 2. Say: These sentences start with the same word and they are also about the same length. In fact, they are about the same length as the previous sentence and the following sentences. I need to vary my sentence length and the way I begin these sentences. Who does they refer to here? The terns. I need to make that clear. I’m also going to combine these two sentences into one so I can make a longer, more interesting sentence.

Reread example 3. Say: These sentences also start with the word they. And I think I can combine the two sentences together to make the text sound more
Strategies to Support ELs

**Beginning**

Work with students one on one to compose two simple sentences that can be joined by **and**. For example, model yawning and then stretching. **Say:** I yawn. I stretch. Write the sentences on chart paper. **Say:** I yawn and stretch. Write this sentence on chart paper and circle the word **and**. Ask students to repeat the actions while they say, “I yawn and stretch.” Repeat with other actions; for example, “I nod and smile,” “I raise my hand and speak,” etc.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during partner practice.

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**Reread example 4. Say:** Here are two more sentences of about the same length, both starting with the word **they**. I can combine the ideas in these two sentences into one: “The birds only land rarely and for just a short time.” This sentence means the same thing as the two shorter sentences and it sounds better.

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**Practice Revising to Vary Sentence Structure**

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

**Practice Text**

It is fall. It is getting cold. The birds fly south. The birds fly far. The birds land in a country far away.

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**2. Rehearse**

Invite students to work with a partner to revise the text by varying the sentences. Partners should write down their sentences and be prepared to read them and explain what they did.

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

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**Share Practice Revisions**

Bring students together and invite partners to read aloud their revised sentences.

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**3. Independent Writing and Conferring**

**Say:** We learned how to revise our informational reports to make our sentences stronger. Remember that a good informational report includes details about the topic and is written to hold your readers’ interest. As you revise your informational reports, remember to vary your sentences by adding details, combining short, choppy sentences, and beginning your sentences with different words.

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

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**4. Share**

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to read aloud a section of their draft to show how they have varied sentence structure.