Start Sentences with Different Words

1. Focus

Explain Starting Sentences with Different Words

Say: When I write a procedural text, I use sentences that are clear and direct. But even so, I want to vary my sentences; I don’t want all of them to sound the same. For example, what if I wrote a series of sentences like these? “Now draw a rectangle. Now draw light lines. Now draw an arch.” That would be boring and, actually, not very helpful as a procedural text. We can vary sentences by starting them with different words. Today I’m going to show you how to start sentences with different words so you can keep the readers’ interest and write an effective procedural text.

Model Starting Sentences with Different Words

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to listen for sentences that start with different words as you read the passage from “How to Draw a Piece of Happy Toast.”

Modeling Text

Draw a horizontal rectangle. Use a delicate touch and draw light lines. Next, draw an arch in each upper corner.

Say: This paragraph is a great example of how a writer uses different words to start sentences. The author begins the first sentence with the command verb draw. The next sentence begins with the command verb use. I like this a lot because it tells me clearly and directly how to draw the rectangle. The next sentence begins with the word next. In a procedural text, it’s always helpful to use sequence words, such as next or then, that explain the order of the steps. I’m going to underline these words and label them “start with different words.” Underline and label the identified words.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

- Learn to vary sentence structure by starting sentences with different words.
- Practice varying sentence structure by starting sentences with different words.
- Discuss how they can 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 text and practice text onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson.
2. Rehearse

Practice Starting Sentences with Different Words

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

**Draw a circle. Draw another circle. Draw a line between the two circles to connect them.**

**Practice Text**

Ask students to work with a partner to revise the sentences so that they start with different words. (For example: “Draw a circle. Next, draw another circle. Connect the two circles with a line.”) Pairs should write down their sentences and be prepared to read them to the class and explain how starting the sentences with different words increases sentence fluency.

### 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 procedural text.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

**Say:** We learned that we can start sentences with different words to vary the sentences and to keep readers’ interest. Remember, a procedural text must be written so that the directions are easy to follow. Starting your sentences with different words will help readers follow the procedure. As you draft and revise your procedural text, look for opportunities to start sentences with different words.

Encourage students to find a section of their procedures in which they can vary their sentences by starting them with different words. 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 share examples of how they started sentences with different words.

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### Strategies to Support ELs

**Beginning**

While other students work with partners, or during independent writing time, work with students to practice orally using simple command verbs. Stand up. **Say:** *I stand up.* (Now tell the student to stand up.) **Stand up.** Guide the student to say, “I stand up,” as he or she stands. Practice with other simple commands. For example:

- I turn around. Turn around.
- I sit down. Sit down.
- I hold up my hand. Hold up your hand.

Encourage students to use command verbs to give you instructions, too.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity.

**All Levels**

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: *different/diferente; vary/variar.*