Use Compound Sentences to Vary Sentence Structure

1. Focus

Explain Compound Sentences

**Say:** Of course, you know how to write a short, simple sentence, such as “Mimi milked the cow.” But if that were the only type of sentence we could write, we’d never have any readers. It’s boring to read many sentences in a row that sound the same. So we can make things more interesting by writing compound sentences. A compound sentence is made up of two independent clauses joined by a conjunction (such as **and**, **but**, or **or**). For example, “Mimi milked the cow, and she gathered the eggs.” Both clauses are about the same subject, Mimi. Also, each clause is a complete thought that can stand on its own—this is the really important thing to remember about compound sentences. Today I’m going to show you how to vary sentence structure by writing compound sentences.

Model Writing Compound Sentences

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to listen as you read the passage from “Pro: Letters For” aloud.

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| No town can survive without jobs, and a project this big promises many new jobs. Construction workers, carpenters, electricians, and plumbers will be needed. And the good news doesn’t end there. |

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Modeling Text

**Say:** The first sentence is a compound sentence. It has two independent clauses, each of which can stand on its own as a complete sentence: “No town can survive without jobs,” and “A project this big promises many new jobs.” A comma follows the first clause, and the word **and** joins the clauses together. If the author had used two short sentences instead of the compound sentence, the writing would sound choppy—especially when followed by the other two sentences, which are short and simple. The compound sentence is perfect here.
2. Rehearse

**Practice Writing Compound Sentences**

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

**Practice Text**

Our young people go off to college. They never come back.

Ask students to work with a partner to revise the two sentences into one compound sentence. Then ask students to write their own compound sentence using the conjunction **or** or **but**. Pairs should write down their sentences and be prepared to read them to the class and explain how using compound sentences varies sentence structure.

**Share Practice Sentences**

Bring students together and invite partners to read aloud their sentences. Discuss the students’ choice of conjunctions, and point out how each part of the compound sentences could stand on its own. 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 how to write compound sentences to vary sentence structure. Sometimes short, simple sentences are the best ones to use. We just don’t want to use them all the time. To add complexity and variety to your writing, look for opportunities to use compound sentences when you draft or revise your persuasive letters.

Encourage students to use compound sentences to vary their sentence structures in their persuasive letters. 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 two or three students who used compound sentences in their letters to read aloud examples.

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**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

While other students work with partners, or during independent writing time, work with students to say and write simple complete sentences. Show students classroom objects and ask them to use the object in a sentence. For example, *The plant grows. The globe spins.* Guide students to write their sentences on paper. Reread the sentences with students.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity.