**Vary Sentence Patterns by Combining Sentences**

**1. Focus**

**Explain Combining Sentences**

*Say:* To engage readers, writers must vary their sentences. You can vary sentences by starting with different words or writing sentences of different lengths. Another way to vary sentences is to create more complex sentences by combining two sentences. For example, I could write, “The lightning came quickly. Its fire flashed across the sky.” But instead, I can combine the sentences and write a more interesting, complex sentence such as, “The lightning came quickly, its fire flashing across the sky.” I’ve connected the two ideas more closely, and given the reader a more appealing reading experience. Today I’m going to show you how to vary sentence patterns by combining sentences.

**Model Combining Sentences to Vary Sentence Patterns**

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to listen for combined sentences as you read the sentences from “A Highway for the Ages” aloud.

One camel could carry about 1,100 pounds (500 kilograms) of goods at a time and go for two weeks without water. Merchants often walked alongside their beasts of burden in order to get the most goods possible on their camels’ backs.

*Modeling Text*  

*Say:* Instead of the first sentence, the author could have written two different short sentences about the camel’s abilities. However, she realized she could combine them into one sentence with a compound predicate. The camel could do two things—carry 1,100 pounds of goods and go for two weeks without water, so it makes sense to tell us both things in the same sentence. Combining sentences also helps the author avoid repetition. If she wrote two sentences, both would need to start with similar words. In the second sentence, the author tells us what the merchants did—they walked alongside their camels. She could have stopped there and started a new sentence explaining why. But these ideas have a cause and effect relationship, and it makes the relationship between the ideas clearer to include them both in one longer sentence. The sentence tells us that the merchants walked alongside their camels so the camels could carry more goods. In each of these examples, the combined sentence is a more elegant solution than using two shorter, simpler sentences.
2. Rehearse

Practice Combining Sentences to Vary Sentence Patterns

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

It was like a long, slow relay race. It was a journey that took over a year to complete.

Practice Text

Ask students to work with partners to combine the sentences to create one complete sentence. Pairs should write down their sentence and be prepared to read it to the class and explain how they combined the sentences.

Share Practice Sentences

Bring students together and invite partners to read aloud their sentences and explain their revisions. Record students’ sentences and post these as models for students to use as they draft or revise their research reports.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that we can vary sentence patterns by combining sentences. Combining sentences allows us to write more sophisticated sentences that are clearer and more interesting to read. As you work on your research reports, look for sentences that you can combine to help vary your sentence patterns.

Encourage students to choose a section of their research reports in which they can vary their sentence structures by combining sentences. 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 from their research reports of sentences they combined.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

While other students complete the partner practice activity, work with beginning ELs to practice oral conversational questions and answers. Invite students to talk with you or with a partner using questions and answers such as the following:

How are you?/I am fine. How are you?
What is the weather like?/It is sunny/rainy.

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: combine/combinar, structure/la estructura.