Revise to Vary Sentence Structure

1. Focus

Explain Revising to Vary Sentence Structure

Say: We’ve written the drafts of our research reports, but we’re not done writing yet. Now we need to go back and revise to make our writing as good as it can be. When I revise a research report, I want to make sure my information is accurate and correct and that I’ve presented the information in an organized way. I also want to write in a way that keeps my readers interested. One way to do that is to make sure my sentences are not all the same—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 to revise your sentences to make them more interesting.

Model Revising to Vary Sentence Structure

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Read aloud each example one at a time and discuss how varying sentence structure can improve the writing.

1. The Great Sphinx is a large stone sculpture. It is carved from one outcrop of limestone. It has the head of a man and the body of a lion. It’s located on the Giza Plateau near Cairo.

2. Carved from one outcrop of limestone, the Great Sphinx waits silently and majestically on the Giza Plateau near Cairo. This massive stone sculpture has the head of a man and the body of a lion.

Modeling Text

Read example 1. Say: The problem with these sentences is that they are all about the same length. There is no variation in the way that they begin, with all of the sentences starting with the pattern of subject followed by verb. The ideas in these sentences can be combined into longer, more interesting sentences. We can also add more expressive words to describe the Sphinx. Let’s look at how we can revise these sentences.

Read example 2. Say: This example says the same thing as the first example, but in a more interesting way. The ideas of where the Sphinx is and what it is have been combined into one sentence. More vivid descriptive words such as waits silently and majestically add interest to the sentence and help the reader understand just how amazing the Sphinx is. The second revised sentence reinforces that the Sphinx is a large stone sculpture, but the word massive is more visual than the word large. We now have a sentence that starts with a phrase and a second sentence that starts with the subject/verb pattern.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

- Learn to revise a research report by varying sentence structure.
- Practice revising sentence structure.
- 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 and practice texts onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson.
2. Rehearse

**Practice Revising to Vary Sentence Structures**

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

The Sphinx is one of the largest single-stone sculptures in the world. It is 240 feet long and 66 feet high. Its paws are fifty feet long. It is the oldest known monumental sculpture.

**Practice Text**

Invite students to work with partners to revise the practice text by varying the sentences. Remind students that they may combine sentences, use different words to begin sentences, and add details. Each partner should write down their sentences and be prepared to read them to the class and explain how and why they revised the sentences.

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

**Share Practice Revisions**

Bring students together and invite partners to read aloud their revised sentences. Ask the class to discuss how or if the changes in the sentence structure improved the original example.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned how to revise our research reports by varying the sentence structure and adding more interesting descriptive details. As you revise your research reports, think about how you can improve the structure of your sentences.

Encourage students to think about sentence structure as they revise their research reports during independent writing time. During 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 a section of their drafts before and after revising for sentence structure.

**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

While other students work with partners or independently, work one on one with beginning ELs to help them take simple sentences from their own writing and revise them to make them more interesting.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during partner practice.