

Sentence Beginnings

1

LOOK AT THE BEGINNINGS OF YOUR SENTENCES.

Do they all start the same way? Spend some time changing this. Work to vary your sentence beginnings, so that each one starts in a different way.

Ways to vary your sentence beginnings

Start with a PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE:

With a smile, Ken ran the race knowing he would win.

Start with a PARTICIPLE (-ing / -ed) PHRASE:

Knowing he would win, Ken ran the race with a smile.

Start with a DEPENDENT CLAUSE:

Because he knew he would win, Ken ran the race.

Start with an ADJECTIVE / ADVERB:

Happily, Ken ran the race knowing that he would win.

Start with an INFINITIVE:

To win, Ken ran the race smiling, sure of his success.

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Varied Sentence Types

2

ARE YOUR SENTENCES ALL SIMPLE?

Just take one paragraph of your writing and examine it in terms of sentence types. Take out four different colored pens and do the following:

- » Underline all the simple sentences in one color.
- » Underline the compound sentences in another color.
- » Underline the complex sentences in another color.
- » Underline the compound-complex sentences in the last color.

Is there a good variety? If not, spend some time reworking your writing and combining the simple sentences.

Transition Words & Phrases

3

HAVE YOU USED TRANSITIONAL WORDS AND PHRASES BETWEEN YOUR SENTENCES AND PARAGRAPHS TO LINK THEM TOGETHER?

Have at look at your writing and add in transitional words and phrases where you think that your writing needs more linking to make it flow better.

Examples of transitional words and phrases:

- » In the meantime
- » Afterwards
- » In an instant
- » Subsequently
- » Soon after
- » Meanwhile
- » Simultaneously
- » All of a sudden
- » Before I knew it
- » Instantly
- » Suddenly
- » Without warning
- » In the distant
- » Earlier
- » Shortly after
- » As soon as
- » At last
- » Later on

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Playing with Sentence Length

4

USE SENTENCE LENGTH TO ADD TO THE TONE OF YOUR WRITING.



Examine your writing; are all of the sentences the same length?

Are there any points in your story which could use a **short simple sentence** to shock your reader? Add this in now.

Are there any points in your story in which you are describing movement? Add in some **longer, complex sentences** there to add flow and rhythm.

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Imagery and Description

5

HAVE YOU USED FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN YOUR WRITING TO MAKE IT MORE DESCRIPTIVE?

Turn to your writing and circle any figurative language used.

Spent some time making sure you have a few of these in your writing.

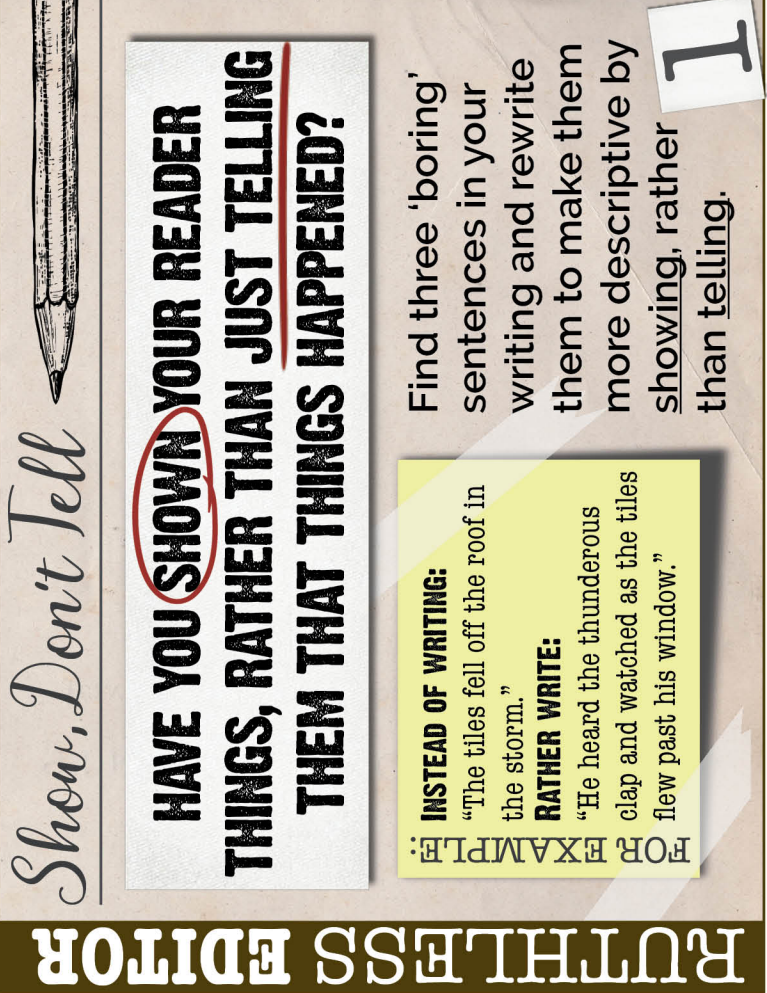
METAPHOR A comparison between two relatively unlikely things.	HYPERBOLE Extreme exaggeration used to emphasize a point.
SIMILE A comparison made using 'like' or 'as'.	ONOMATOPEIA Words which sound like the sound they describe.
PERSONIFICATION The giving of human characteristics to an object or idea.	ALLITERATION / ASSONANCE The repetition of consonant/vowel sounds.

HAVE YOU SHOWN YOUR READER THINGS, RATHER THAN JUST TELLING THEM THAT THINGS HAPPENED?

INSTEAD OF WRITING:
"The tiles fell off the roof in the storm."
RATHER WRITE:
"He heard the thunderous clap and watched as the tiles flew past his window."

Find three 'boring' sentences in your writing and rewrite them to make them more descriptive by showing, rather than telling.

1



Time To Cut Down

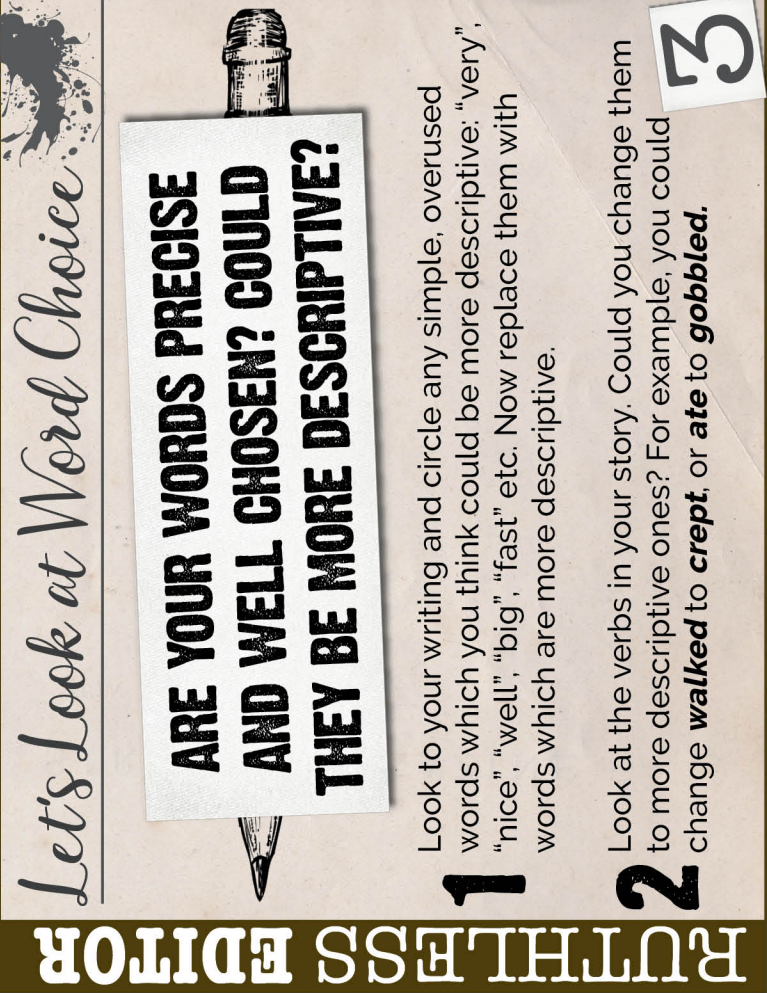


ARE THERE ANY UNNECESSARY WORDS, SENTENCES OR SECTIONS?

Examine your writing and apply these 3 steps:

- 1 Read through your writing and cut out any sentences which are not absolutely needed to tell the story (be ruthless).
- 2 Take a group of sentences; is there a way to delete them all and put one, more concise sentence in their place?
- 3 Cut out any unnecessary descriptive words (adjectives and adverbs).

2



Let's Look at Word Choice.

ARE YOUR WORDS PRECISE AND WELL CHOSEN? COULD THEY BE MORE DESCRIPTIVE?

1 Look to your writing and circle any simple, overused words which you think could be more descriptive: "very", "nice", "well", "big", "fast" etc. Now replace them with words which are more descriptive.

2 Look at the verbs in your story. Could you change them to more descriptive ones? For example, you could change **walked** to **crept**, or **ate** to **gobbled**.

3

Direct or Indirect Speech?

HAVE YOU USED ANY DIALOGUE IN YOUR WRITING?

YES: Ask yourself if it would be more effective written as indirect speech or not? Is there too much of it or is it all extremely effective?

NO: Ask yourself, is there any point in the story when dialogue would be effective? If so, add some in.

DIRECT SPEECH is the reporting of speech by repeating the exact words used by a speaker.

INDIRECT SPEECH is the reporting of what was said without using the speaker's exact words.

4

Repetition, Repetition, Repetition

EXAMINE YOUR WRITING TO SEE IF IT IS AT ALL REPETITIVE.

Do you overuse any particular words? Try to replace some of them.

Is there any repetition in your content? Perhaps whole sentences? Delete any redundant phrases.

5

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Using Tense Consistently

HAVE YOU USED THE SAME TENSE THROUGHOUT YOUR WRITING?

Spend some time reading through your story, and ask yourself: are all the verbs written in the same tense? If not, make sure to correct this.

Also make sure that you have used the most effective tense. Would your story be more effective if it were written in a different tense?

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Correct Comma Usage

HAVE YOU USED COMMAS CORRECTLY IN YOUR WRITING?

Work through your writing and wherever there is a comma, ask yourself if it is being used correctly.

These questions might help you.

Is it between two independent clauses without a coordinating conjunction? If so, it is incorrectly used - that is a comma splice!

Have you always placed a comma after a subordinate clause and before an independent clause? If not, you are going to want to correct that!

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2

Appropriate Apostrophes

3

HAVE YOU USED APOSTROPHES CORRECTLY IN YOUR WRITING?

Spend some time reading through your story, and ask yourself: are there apostrophes in all the right places?

An apostrophe is a punctuation mark (') used to indicate either **possession** (Harry's book / boys' coats) or the **omission** of letters or numbers (can't / he's / class of '99).

Punctuating Dialogue

4

IF YOU HAVE USED DIRECT SPEECH, YOU NEED TO MAKE SURE IT IS CORRECTLY PUNCTUATED.

Have a look at your use of dialogue and correct any mistakes in terms of punctuation. Use the following as a guide:

HOW TO PUNCTUATE DIRECT SPEECH

Use inverted commas to enclose the quoted words.
You must end the quotation with some form of punctuation inside the inverted commas (full stop, comma, exclamation mark etc.)

"Would you like tea?" asked Sam.

"Yes," replied Sally. Then she added, "Milk, no sugar!"

If direct speech comes after information about who is speaking, use a comma before the quotation.
The first word of the quotation must be capitalized.

Start a new line whenever you change speaker.

Let's Focus on Spelling

5

SPEND SOME TIME MAKING SURE YOU HAVE NO ERRORS IN SPELLING.

Read through your work and circle any words you think you may have misspelled; then look them up in a dictionary.

Watch out for words such as "their" | "there" and "your" | "you're".
Make sure you use the correct one!

Focus On That First Line

1

DOES YOUR FIRST LINE HOOK YOUR READER AND COMPEL THEM TO READ ON?

Write two or three different versions of your opening line. Try to make each one more exciting and interesting than the one before.

Now pick the one you like the best and insert it into your writing.

Look Closely at Point of View

2

HAVE YOU USED NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE EFFECTIVELY IN YOUR STORY.

Examine your writing and apply these 3 steps:

- 1 Circle three pieces of evidence which clearly show the narrative perspective used.
- 2 Rewrite one sentence from another narrative perspective and see if it sounds better.
- 3 Decide if you have used the most effective point of view for your purpose. If not, you may want to change it.

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How About that Plot?

3

LOOK AT YOUR STORY AND MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE A CLEAR PLOT DEVELOPMENT.

- » Underline the portion of your story which contains the climax of the action.
- » Highlight the sentences which clearly identify (or at least hint at) the protagonist's conflict.
- » Put a star next to any elements of foreshadowing.

See if you can do all of these:

If you struggled with any of these, spend some time making those elements clearer in your writing.

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Paragraph Structure

4

IS YOUR STORY WRITTEN AS ONE LARGE PARAGRAPH? IF SO, YOU HAVE WORK TO DO.

Spend some time looking at how you have divided up your paragraphs.

Every time you shift tone, or move to talk about something new, you should start a new paragraph.

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Overall Story Structure

5

DO YOU HAVE A CLEAR BEGINNING, MIDDLE AND END IN YOUR STORY?

HAVE YOU CLEARLY DESCRIBED THE SETTING?

DOES YOUR STORY MAKE COMPLETE SENSE TO SOMEONE WITH NO PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF IT?

If you honestly answered "no" to any of the above, spend some time trying to correct this.

?

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