

Improving Written Compositions -- One Sentence at a Time

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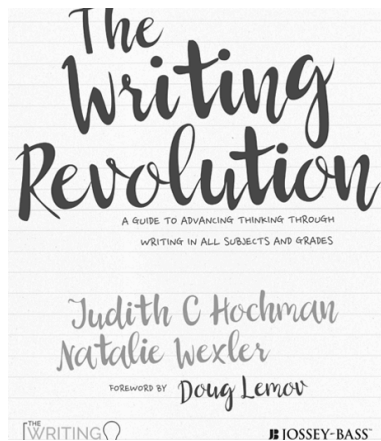
Why?

- Sentences are the **foundation** of all written products.
- Even when students master the structure of an essay, the composition will be weak if the **sentences are weak**.
- Instead of writing with **formal English** and academic vocabulary, students use **conversational English**.

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Recommended Book

Hochman, J. C. & Wexler, N. (2017) *The writing revolution: a guide to advancing thinking through writing in all subjects and grades*. Jossey-Bass.



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The Writing Revolution Principles

- Explicit instruction on writing
- Sentences – building block
- Embed in curriculum content
- Embed grammar in context of student writing
- Emphasize planning and revising

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Explicitly Teach Types of Sentences

Narrative Examples based on *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst
 Informative Examples based on *Extreme Weather* by Leanne Annett

Declarative Sentence Statement	Examples: Narrative – Alexander had a very bad day. Informative – Thunderstorms are loud, powerful storms.
Imperative Sentence Command	Examples: Narrative - Describe why it was a horrible, very bad day. Informative – Be careful in a thunderstorm.
Interrogative Sentence Question	Examples: Narrative – Why did Alexander have a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day? Informative – What causes thunder?
Exclamatory Sentence Exclamation	Examples: Narrative – I HATE kissing! Informative – Swimming during a thunderstorm is VERY dangerous!

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Complete Sentence or Fragment

Example: Read Aloud *Baby Animals of the Desert* by Carmen Bredeson

1. are very dry

1. What is very dry? *deserts*

This is not a complete sentence.

Make this a complete sentence.

Deserts are very dry.

2. deserts can get very hot

2. What gets very hot? *deserts*

What happens to deserts? *They can get very hot.* This is a complete sentence.

To show the reader that this is a complete sentence, what do we need to add? *A capital at the beginning and a period at the end.*

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Complete Sentence or Fragment

Example: Read Aloud *Baby Animals of the Desert* by Carmen Bredeson

Sentence or Fragment

1. young baby kit foxes

2. kit foxes have big ears

3. the father sandgrouse can

4. a baby elephant has

Corrected Sentence

Young baby kit foxes stay in the den.

Kit foxes have big ears.

The father sandgrouse can carry water in his belly feathers.

A baby elephant has very big feet.

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The Three Little Pigs



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Sentence – Unscramble (I do it.)

Statements

first **The** built a pig house
straw.

wolf down house **The**
the blew straw.

Unscrambled Statement

The first pig built a straw
house.

The wolf blew the straw
house down.

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Sentence – Unscramble (We do it.)

Statements

The pig sticks a house of
second built.

The down blew the wolf
stick house.

Unscrambled Statement

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Sentence – Unscramble (We do it.)

Feedback

Statements

The pig sticks a house of
second built.

The down blew the wolf
stick house.

Unscrambled Statement

The second pig built a
house of sticks.

The wolf blew the stick
house down.

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Sentence – Unscramble (You do it.)

Statements

carefully built pig
The third house brick a.

blow house brick the **The**
wolf not could down.

Unscrambled Statement

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Sentence – Unscramble (You do it.)

Feedback

Statements

carefully built **The** pig
third house brick a.

blow house brick the **The**
wolf not could down.

Unscrambled Statement

The third pig carefully
built a brick house.

The wolf could not blow
the brick house down.

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Sentence – Unscramble

Scrambled Questions

blow to **Who** down tried
houses the?

wolf blow house brick the
Did down the?

Unscrambled Questions

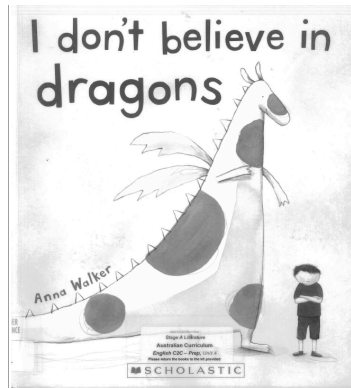
Who tried to blow the
houses down?

Did the wolf blow down
the brick house?

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Sentence - Picture

Write two questions
about this picture.



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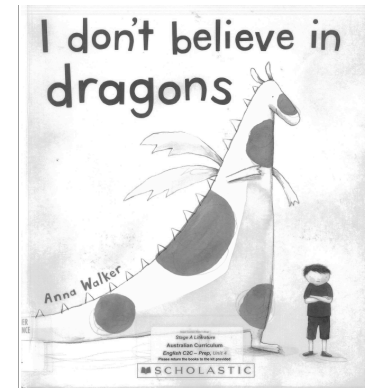
Sentence - Picture

**Write two questions
about this picture.**

Who doesn't believe in
dragons?

Why doesn't the boy
believe in dragons?

Is the dragon real?



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Sentences with Conjunctions

because, but, so

The teacher was happy **because** the children listened carefully. (*Because explains WHY something is true.*)

The teacher was happy, **but** the children wanted class to end. (*But indicates a change in direction.*)

The teacher was happy, **so** the teacher praised the children. (*So tells us what happens as a result of something else.*)

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Sentences with Conjunctions

because, but, so

The dog barked **because** a stranger was in the yard. (*Because explains WHY something is true.*)

The dog barked, **but** the dog could not get outside. (*But indicates a change in direction.*)

The dog barked, **so** the stranger quickly left the yard. (*So tells us what happens as a result of something else.*)

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Sentences with Conjunctions

because, but, so

Many people came to Megan's birthday party **because**

(*Because explains WHY something is true.*)

Many people came to Megan's birthday party, **but**

(*But indicates a change in direction.*)

Many people came to Megan's birthday party, **so**

(*So tells us what happens as a result of something else.*)

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Sentences with Conjunctions

because, but, so

Many people came to Megan's birthday party **because** she had friends from school, church, and soccer.

(*Because explains WHY something is true.*)

Many people came to Megan's birthday party, **but** her grandparents were out of the country and could not return for the party.

(*But indicates a change in direction.*)

Many people came to Megan's birthday party, **so** her parents had to order TWO birthday cakes.

(*So tells us what happens as a result of something else.*)

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Sentences with Conjunctions

because, but, so

The family grew many vegetables **because**

(Because explains WHY something is true.)

The family grew many vegetables, **but**

(But indicates a change in direction.)

The family grew vegetables, **so**

(So tells us what happens as a result of something else.)

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Sentence Checklist

_____ My sentence begins with a capital letter.

_____ My sentence ends in a period.

_____ My spelling is correct.

_____ My handwriting is neat.

_____ My sentence is a complete sentence.

_____ My sentence makes sense.

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Sentences with Conjunctions

because, but, so – content example

Snow storms can be fun **because** children can make snowmen or snowballs.

Snow storms can be fun, **but** storms can also be very dangerous if the temperatures get very cold.

Snow storms can be fun, **so** children should have clothing that will keep them warm when they play outside.

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because – but - so

Kenya is an independent nation today **because** Kenya gained independence from Great Britain in 1963.

(Because explains WHY something is true.)

Kenya is an independent nation today, **but** there are still major conflicts in the nation due to different languages, histories, cultures, and traditions.

(But indicates a change in direction.)

Kenya is an independent nation today, **so** the court system can make important decisions. For example, the Supreme Court found that the August election was not held according to the law, **so** a new election will be held in October, 2017.

(So tells us what happens as a result of something else.)

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Sentences with Subordinating Conjunctions

Provide stem with subordinating conjunctions

1. before
2. after
3. if
4. when
5. even though
6. although
7. since
8. while
9. unless
10. whenever

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Sentences with Subordinating Conjunctions

Useful conjunctions when writing an opinion/argument.

1. before
2. after
3. if
4. when
5. **even though**
6. **although**
7. since
8. **while**
9. unless
10. whenever

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Sentences with Subordinating Conjunctions

(content based on *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes)

Provide stem with subordinating conjunctions.

Chapter Title – Wanda

Since Wanda had muddy shoes every day, she had to sit in the corner of the room with the rough boys.

When Wanda was absent on Monday and Tuesday, no one really noticed.

After waiting for many minutes to tease Wanda before school, Maddie and Peggy gave up, ran to school, and were late.

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Sentences with Subordinating Conjunctions

(content based on *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes)

Provide stem with subordinating conjunctions.

Chapter Title – The Dress Game

Even though Wanda wore the same blue dress everyday, it appeared to be clean.

Although Wanda had no friends, many of the girls talked to her and bullied her.

When the girls asked how many dresses she had, Wanda said that she had 100 dresses.

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Sentences with Subordinating Conjunctions

(content based on *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes)

Provide stem with subordinating conjunctions.

Chapter Title – A Bright Blue Day

When Cecile wore a new red dress, everyone admired the beautiful dress, matching cap and socks.

After admiring Cecile’s crimson dress, Wanda told Peggy that she had one hundred dresses in her closet.

Whenever the girls saw Wanda, they would ask about her dresses, shoes, hats, or coats, poking fun at Wanda.

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Sentences with Subordinating Conjunctions

(content based on *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes)

Provide stem with subordinating conjunctions.

Chapter Title – The Contest

While Maddie wanted to stop teasing Wanda , she didn’t have the courage to ask Peggy to stop mocking Wanda.

Since Peggy was the best artist in the class, Wanda was sure that Peggy would win the dress design contest.

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Sentence Expansion

Expand each sentence using three of the following question words: **who, what, when, where, why,** and/or **how.**

Start Sentence: *The children raced.*

When: *one spring day*

Where: *down the road*

Why: *celebrate the last day of the school year*

Create Sentence: *One spring day, the children ran down the road to celebrate the last day of the school year.*

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Writing Foundations – Sentence Expansion

Example from *The Writing Revolution*

Expand the following sentence using the question words.

Pyramids were built.

When: *ancient times*

Where: *Egypt*

Why: *protect body of deceased pharaoh*

Expanded Sentence: *In ancient times, pyramids were built in Egypt to protect the body of the deceased pharaoh.*

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Sentence Expansion

Name _____ Date _____

Expand each sentence using three of the following question words: **who, what, when, where, why,** and/or **how.**

Sentence: Andrew Jackson and his American forces won.

What *The Battle of New Orleans*

When *January 8, 1815*

Why *wanted to keep British from seizing
New Orleans and Louisiana Purchase*

Expanded Sentence:

On January 8, 1815, Andrew Jackson and his American forces won the Battle of New Orleans, stopping the British from invading and seizing New Orleans and the vast Louisiana Purchase.

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Sentence Combining

(Examples taken from **REWARDS Writing – Sentence Refinement** published by *Sopris Learning*)

Start: Linda grabbed a seat.

Add: Bobby grabbed a seat.

Add: The seats were adjoining.

Add: The seats were on the bus.

Add: The bus was crowded.

Create: _____

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Sentence Combining

(Examples taken from **REWARDS Writing – Sentence Refinement** published by Sopris)

Start: As the cubs grow fur, they spend periods of time outside the den.

Add: The fur is thicker.

Add: The periods of time are short.

Add: The den is warm.

Add: The den is protective.

Create: _____

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Sentence Combining

(Examples taken from **REWARDS Writing – Sentence Refinement** published by Sopris)

Start: Jared will finish shopping for school supplies.

Add: He will shop this afternoon.

Add: He will shop at the mall.

Create: _____

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Resources

