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Revising for Sentence Fluency

Why: Students are often told their work is "choppy" or "doesn't flow", yet don't have specific tools on how to fix it. This exercise gives them specific steps to do in order to help the fluency and cohesiveness of their work.

How: First, explain what sentence fluency is.

Sentence Fluency means:

- Sentences flow easily from one to the other with transitions.
- Sentences sound natural.
- Some sentences are long; some are short.
- Simple and complex sentences provide rhythm.
- Sentences start in different ways.

 Then explain the four different ways sentence fluency can be fixed and when you know your fluency is an issue (anytime you write and your paper sounds choppy, awkward, unclear or even just dull).

Ways to Fix Sentence Fluency

1. Look at the start of every sentence. Circle each first word, than make a list of types of words you typically start with. Switch it up.
2. Look at the punctuation of your sentences. Make sure you are not always using the same type; semi-colons will become your best friend!
3. Look at the length of your sentences. Some should be short, others long.
4. Check your transitions – are they the best kind for the thought you are trying to convey? Have you made sure to use a variety of different types?

For the first way to edit for sentence fluency, walk students through the process detailed on the attached page. I usually do a presentation first reminding students of what the different parts of speech are. I also use an example of my own writing that is choppy, and we fix it together for a practice.

Parts of Speech Rap

Chorus

So you wanna know about _____, you wanna know about _____

And you probably know that there are several other types of words

So if you yearn to learn, hey, we're psyched to teach

Now listen up and let me tell you about the _____ _____ _____

Verse I

A _____ is a person or a place or at thing

Like you or _____ _____ or all your bling-bling

But the tricky kinds of nouns are ideas and _____

Like your _____ or intelligence

Man there are lots of these nouns

To list them all, that would be impressive!

But to describe them, all we need are _____

Like _____ , cool, false, true, spicy, or _____

And now I think you understand

Chorus

Verse II

_____ That's what we call the _____ words

Anything you can do, even if it's absurd

Whenever you eat, drink, move, think, go, or stop

Even if you just are, that's a verb that you've got

"But, Mr. Jackson, how do I describe these words?"

You use another part of speech we call _____

Like loudly, proudly, and well, _____ _____ _____ _____, but

Most of them end in -ly

Chorus

Verse III

A _____ gives location, just so you know

Whether an object is between, in, by, or _____

But it can also talk about time, as a matter of fact;

If something happened before this, or is gonna happen after that

They always have a prepositional _____

it's the traditional way that every preposition _____

So just make sure that the object is there

Or else you'll never know what goes where

Chorus

Verse IV

A _____ joins phrases or words together

Like and, but, or, as, if, and whether

Some appear in pairs, like _____ and _____,

You know I'd love to list them all but there are so many more

So let's go on to _____ , they replace _____

So you can say _____ instead of saying the same noun again

It can be just a breeze, you see

Instead of names, saying _____ or _____

Chorus

Verse V

Hold up! Almost forgot about the next one

I'm speaking, of course, of the _____

Whoa!, yo!, yikes!, holy cow!

You know the parts of speech? Well, I think you do now

Self-Edit

An important part of the writing process is editing and revising. You are going to write the following revisions that could be added and/or changed about your paper. If you end up NOT including the revisions, that is fine! What is important is that you have attempted to see how your paper could be improved.

Editing for sentence fluency:

1. Pick a body paragraph that sounds choppy or seems difficult to follow.
2. Circle the first word in every sentence. Write them here:
3. Write the parts of the speech for each word.
4. What are the two most common parts of speech that you have used?
5. Pick two sentences and re-write them keeping the message the same but starting off with a different part of speech.
    a. **Original Sentence Example:** MLK jr. changed the world by helping equality between different races in America.
    b. **Changed Sentence with a different part of speech Example:** Helping equality between different races in America, MLK jr. changed the world.

Your sentences:

1.

2.

Pick a different paragraph and repeat the process above.

1. Parts of speech for every first word:
2. Two most common parts of speech used:
3. Two sentences re-written:
    a.

    b.

Extra: You also want to switch up the punctuation and sentence length of your sentences. In those paragraphs, try adding a semi-colon to connect sentences that are related. Try varying the length of sentences.