Sentences from Scratch

I. Teaching Parts of Speech for Sentence Development
   - the warm-up
   - what guides instruction
   - activities that make sense

II. Using the Clause to Build Sentences of Varying Structure
   - building blocks of sentence writing
   - the clause
   - components of a lesson
Keep two things in mind:

- We teach grammar to improve writing. If you cannot justify teaching a particular concept in terms of improving a student’s writing, don’t teach it.
- The best sentence-level activities involve having students write sentences that practice/contain taught concepts.

Parts of Speech: Consider the job the word does in the sentence.

- noun names a person, place, thing, or idea
  - boy, school, bench, peace
- verb action, linking, or helping word
  - jump, am, seem
- pronoun takes the place of a noun (stands for a noun)
  - he, you, they, me
- adjective describes a noun or pronoun
  - ugly, ignorant, silly
- adverb describes a verb (or an adjective, or other adverb)
  - quickly, soon, never
- preposition begins a phrase (shows position)
  - in, during, around
- conjunction joins 2 words or 2 groups of words
  - and, whenever
- article teach in adjective family
  - a, an, the
- interjection expresses emotion - not useful for instruction
  - whoa!

Sentence Parts: Clauses are the building blocks to all sentence writing.

- simple subject who/what is doing the action
  - The elderly man went to the store.
- complete subject subject with its baggage (the “doer”)
  - The elderly man went to the store.
- simple predicate main verb
  - The elderly man went to the store.
- complete predicate verb with its baggage (the “do”)
  - The elderly man went to the store.
- direct object receives action of predicate (verb)
  - John threw the ball.
- indirect object tells to whom/for whom action is done
  - John threw Mark the ball.
- predicate noun follows linking verb and renames subject
  - John is a pilot.
- predicate adjective follows linking verb and describes subject
  - John seems exhausted.
- object of preposition noun/pronoun that ends prepositional phrase
  - John sat on the chair.
- clause group of words with subject and predicate
  - - John went to the store
  - - because she is finished
- independent clause clause that can stand by itself
  - I John went to the store
- dependent clause clause that cannot stand by itself
  - D because she is finished
- simple sentence one independent clause
  - I John went to the store.
- compound sentence 2 independent clauses joined by comma
  - I,fanboysI, fanboysI John went to the store, but it was closed.
- or 2 independent clauses joined by ;
  - I,I John went to the store; it was closed.
- complex sentence 1 independent clause and 1 or more dependent clauses
  - ID John went to the store because he needed milk.
  - D,I When John went to the store, he forgot his wallet.
  - John, who was selected as our leader, rarely smiled.
**Displaying grammar vocabulary cards:** During the warm-up and any identifying activities, the teacher (and ideally the students) should display their cards using the layouts below. Students should learn to organize the cards as such independently. This practice will help students internalize the relationships between the different parts of speech. They will understand the way words, phrases, and clauses work together, improve their syntax comprehension, and develop sentence writing and expanding skills.

- Noun
- Pronoun
- Adjective
- Verb
- Adverb
- Preposition
- Conjunction

Parts of Speech

- Subject
- Verb
- Clause
  - Independent clause
  - Dependent clause

Sentence Parts

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**On the next page:** This activity sheet (and similar sheets) have several advantages.

1. They move students quickly from “identify” to the text generation activities that truly benefit writing.
2. They are interactive, allowing students to work together, share results, and check their work with each other -- in a non-punitive way.
3. They are instructive (a rarity for a “worksheet”).
Now It’s Your Turn!
IECC: Identify, Expand, Combine, Create

Adjectives

Identify: Underline the adjectives in the following sentences. (Do not include articles.)

1. The hungry green alligator slithered up the muddy shore. (3)
2. The young girl was scared but brave. (3)
3. The frightened girl called to her father in a loud voice. (3)

Check your work!

Expand: Add at least 3 adjectives to each sentence to make it more descriptive.

1. The children and their leader took vans to a campground.

2. Over a campfire, the children roasted hotdogs and sang songs.

Share: Choose #1 or #2 to share with your group.

Combine: Combine the following short sentences into one longer sentence.

1. My grandfather told jokes at the table. He is friendly. His jokes were funny.

2. My sisters and I listened to the jokes and ate snacks. My sisters were hungry. The snacks were sweet.

Check your work!

Create: Write your own sentences.

1. Write a sentence using these adjectives: happy, energetic

2. Write a sentence with at least two of your own adjectives in it:

Share: Choose #1 or #2 to share with your group.
The mother and her daughter bought tickets to see the show. The nasty troll lived under the wooden bridge. A rusty nail stuck out of an old board at the local playground.

Topic: __________________________________________________________________________________

Use good nouns in your own sentences below:

1. __________________________________________________________________________________

2. __________________________________________________________________________________

3. __________________________________________________________________________________

4. __________________________________________________________________________________

Sentence Check:
___ Do your sentences start with capital letters?
___ Do your sentences end with proper end punctuation?
### Five-Point Instructional Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Concept</th>
<th>Review Concept</th>
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<tr>
<td>a. Teacher introduces concept and then asks students to explain it, proving <strong>understanding</strong>. In most instances, introducing a part of speech or sentence part to your students should take just a few minutes. Students should create (or you should provide) a vocabulary card with term on front, definition and examples on back; explain the term and its definition; and have them explain it back to you or, in the case of large group instruction, to each other. Students can illustrate their cards as well.</td>
<td>a. Students explain concept, proving <strong>understanding</strong>. The emphasis here is on information your students have learned and can share. With most concepts this will take only a few minutes. Students should begin by verbalizing what they know from memory and then use the concept vocabulary card to elaborate on their understanding.</td>
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<td>b. <strong>Students identify examples of the concept in context.</strong> Have students sort words, sentence parts, or sentences to help them recognize the concept you are teaching. Have them identify examples of the studied element in a larger context. Professionally written sentences, from both textbooks and good literature, sometimes serve this purpose well and also offer material for further discussion.</td>
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<td>c. <strong>Students create their own examples in isolation.</strong> Students must focus primary attention on creating examples of the concept, in isolation and in applied context. Keep the emphasis on student-generated work.</td>
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<td>d. <strong>Students share their examples with the instructor and their classmates.</strong> When the students complete independent practice of a concept at their desks, always allow time to share results. This (a) validates the students’ writing, (b) encourages them to write at a more sophisticated level since they anticipate an audience, (c) allows the instructor to check for competence, and (d) provides student-generated examples (whether correct or not) for further discussion and analysis.</td>
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<td>e. <strong>Teacher uses examples, both correct and incorrect, for clarification and further instruction.</strong> As the students share, the teacher writes any incorrect examples as well as any examples that show a new or interesting development that warrants discussion. Since the examples come from the students’ own writing on the day in question, the teacher is able to target student difficulties immediately and strengthen class understanding. Using student examples rather than prefabricated, professionally written sentences connects students to the assignment, provides immediacy and relevance, and gives the teacher valuable information about where the students are and what they need next in order to further their writing.</td>
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**Sentence Developing Activities**

As your students develop an understanding of parts of speech and sentence parts, here are some activities designed to improve writing at the sentence level. Independent sentence writing (I) is the ultimate goal.

**A. Phrase/Clause & Independent/Dependent Clause Sorting - ESSENTIAL**
- sort groups of words by whether they are clauses or phrases
- sort clauses by whether they are Independent (main) or Dependent (subordinate)

**B. Sentence parts matching - join sentence parts to make sentences**

**C. Sentence unscrambling - unscramble sentence chunks to make logical sentences**

**D. Sentence imitating - write a sentence similar in structure to a provided model**

**E. Sentence combining - combine sentences to create more sophisticated sentences with increased variety (in activities/exercises & your own writing)**

**F. Sentence expanding - using bare bones sentence expanders**
- provide simple subject and verb and use questioning to prompt sentence expansion (e.g., John ate. when? where? why? how?)
- provide simplistic sentence with nouns, verbs, and phrases and ask student to add adjectives and adverbs

**G. Tandem writing**
- student writes first half of sentence, trades papers with a classmate, and finishes classmate’s sentence (subject to predicate or first clause to second clause)

**H. Writing sentences from prompts**
- “begin a sentence with the word ___________” (sub. conj., transition word, etc.)
- “write a sentence that contains ___________” (sub. conj., prep., noun, etc.)
- provide student with first sentence and transition word that is to begin second sentence

**I. Sentence writing - ESSENTIAL**
- as a class starter
- for class work and homework, even instead of paragraph writing
Clause/Phrase Activities I

Identify each group of words below as a clause (C) or a phrase (P). Remember that a clause must contain a subject and its verb (or predicate):

1. if the rain never stops
2. for breakfast
3. under the window
4. since I slept
5. beside the grocery store
6. before she finished the pie
7. as soon as the temperature drops
8. because Mike could drive
9. if we see another ant
10. after careful consideration
11. between two slices of bread
12. since yesterday
13. until you hear back from me
14. when the manager organizes the team
15. through the woods by the river
16. the party ended at midnight
17. as long as you study before the game
18. if I finish the book
19. as soon as the painter finished
20. when the exercise was over
21. at the end of the long road
22. beneath the deep blue sea
23. we both finished eating breakfast in time
24. because of the number of boxes
25. though I gave you three warnings
26. until I receive your donation

All the groups of words below are clauses. Identify each as I (independent or main) or D (dependent or subordinate):

1. Constantine joined the sports club
2. since Abraham Lincoln was elected
3. school lets out in June
4. the play begins at 9 a.m.
5. after we purchased the new car
6. if we can handle the time change
7. we ate the purple potato chips
8. water is the most healthy drink
9. if my migraine doesn’t linger
10. as long as the schedule will be kept
11. if I worry too much about the trip
12. the postal carrier delivered the mail
13. whenever we have a chance to play golf
14. before I will clean out the closet
15. if T.V. remained black and white
16. my family is coming for the holidays
17. the doe was brown with a white tail
18. cleats were left on the radiator to dry
19. although asparagus is out of season
20. the black panther pounced at the crowd
21. when the strawberries arrived
22. before I considered my sister’s request
23. where our cousins live
24. whenever the detective catches the crook
B  Sentence Part Matching

Subject  Predicate

1. The little boy with dimples    landed on the feeder in our yard.
   A chirping blue jay    smiled at the doctor’s offer of candy.
   My grandmother    used to bake me cookies each weekend.

2. A swarming nest of bees    caused the family to leave the picnic early.
   A pair of monarch butterflies    awkwardly bent down to reach the pond.
   Two long-legged giraffes    fluttered near me on my Saturday walk.

Subject  Verb  Object

1. The grasshopper  was ruined  on a green leaf in our yard.
   Our dinner  landed  the antique vase.
   The rambunctious child  toppled  by a loud family argument.

2. An outstanding performer  announced  the national anthem.
   The diver  sang  on the board.
   Our president  bounced  a new plan for the country.

C. Sentence Unscrambling

1. At the word cluster level:
   a. in our house  we discovered  much to our surprise  $10,000
   b. to get ice cream  we rode  at noon  our new bicycles  to the store

2. At the word level:
   a. frog  brown  rock under a crawled the large
   b. friend  night  all  we and  video  new a  my got  game played
D. SENTENCE IMITATING

Write a sentence that is similar in form to the provided sentence:

1. Our friends came for dinner.

2. At the game we saw a home run.

3. While I was riding my bike, I saw a streak of lightning.

E. SENTENCE COMBINING

1. Delete the 2nd and 3rd sentences by putting their information in the 1st sentence:
   The man and woman went to the mall. The man was tall. The woman was short.
   The dinosaur stomped. He did it over the rocky ground. He did it to chase food.

2. Make each pair of sentences into a compound sentence using the provided keyword:
   The new video game hit stores yesterday. We were the first ones to get it. (and)
   Make each pair of sentences into a compound sentence. Use a conjunction:
   Two rivers surrounded the town. There was still not enough water to drink.

3. Make each pair of sentences into a complex sentence using the provided keyword:
   She was a good teacher. She yelled a lot. (although)
   Make each pair of sentences into a complex sentence. (Use a subordinating conjunction.):
   You do your homework. You will pass every test.

4. Combine into one sentence. Do not leave out any information:
   The movie was excellent. It ran quite late. It starred Denzel Washington.
   We were hungry. We went to my favorite restaurant. I ordered a burger and fries.
   My cousins are from Australia. They visited us last month. We had a blast.
F. Sentence Expansion Questions With Student Responses

The crocodile snapped.
when? this morning
where? in the lagoon
how? with strong jaws
why? because he was hungry
collision... despite the fact that the tourists were careful
what kind? ancient, wise
which one? with a nasty attitude
how many? the (already included)

The man ate.
when? _______________________
where? _______________________
how? _______________________
why? _______________________
concession? _______________________
what kind? _______________________
which one? _______________________
how many? _______________________
I. **Sentence Writing (Just Write Sentences!)** Content-Based Sentence Review Activity that can be modified according to skill level.

1. List six things about ___________________________ (content topic):

2. Write sentences using elements from the above list:
   - Use 2 in a compound sentence with a comma and coordinating conjunction: ______
   - Use 2 in a compound sentence with a semi-colon and a conjunctive adverb: ______
   - Use 2 in a complex sentence (D,I): ____________________________________
   - Use 2 in a complex sentence (ID): ____________________________________

**Other Sentence Building Activities**

A. Prepositional Phrase Placement: Put a ^ in each spot where the given prepositional phrase could be placed. (This can also be done by giving students in a group setting their own cards, each with a word on it, and having them sort themselves into a logical sentence. An additional student, armed with the phrase, can stand in various places along the sentence’s route where the phrase could logically be inserted):

1. The angry troll gobbled the mischievous children. under the bridge
2. The doctor prepared for a difficult surgery. in the operating room
3. My friend came to stay with me. over the weekend

B. Write each sentence two ways, one beginning with the dependent clause and the other ending with it. Be careful to use a comma when necessary.

1. my friend gave me a present because she is a nice person
   - version a: ____________________________________
   - version b: ____________________________________

2. I moved the boxes into the garage when my brother agreed to help
   - version a: ____________________________________
   - version b: ____________________________________
### Conjunctions

**coordinating** (for compound sentences): I, fanboy I
for and nor but or yet (so)

**subordinating** (for complex sentences to begin adverb clauses - grouped by purpose): D, I ID

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>time:</th>
<th>cause:</th>
<th>manner:</th>
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<td>after</td>
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| place:              |       |         |
| where              |       |         |
| wherever           |       |         |

### Prepositions

**concrete prepositions** (to begin prepositional phrases):
- above
- across
- around
- at
- behind
- below
- beneath
- beside
- between
- beyond
- by
- close to
- down
- far from
- from
- in
- in front of
- inside
- into
- near
- on
- at
- off
- out
- prior to
- subsequent to
- without

**advanced prepositions** (to begin prepositional phrases):
- aboard
during
- about
except (for)
- according to
for
- after
in addition to
- against
in case of
- ahead of
in place of
- alongside
in spite of
- among
instead of
- amongst
of
- along
off
- aside from
on behalf of
- atop
out
- because of
prior to
- before
subsequent to
- besides
with
- despite
with regard to
- due to
without

### Relative Pronouns

(for complex sentences to begin adjectival clauses):
- who
- which
- that
- whom
- whose

### Conjunctive Adverbs

(optional for I;I compound sentences* - grouped by meaning):
- additionally
- accordingly
- afterwards
- also
- as a result
- later
- furthermore
- consequently
- next
- hence
- subsequently
- therefore
- then
- moreover
- thus
- alternatively
- similarly
- instead
- in addition
- actually
- during
- hence
- afterwards
- therefore
- next
- thus
- alternatively
- in
- instead
- of
- amongst
- off
- across
- on behalf of
- alongside
- on
- among
- in
- of
- on
- in
- subsequently
- to
- beside
- with
- below
- on top of
- besides
- on
- beneath
- outside
- behind
- off
- below
- out
- before
- on
- beside
- on
top
- between
- over
- beyond
- past
- by
- through
- close to
- throughout
- down
to
- far from
toward
- from
towards
- in
under
- in front of
underneath
- inside
- up
- into
- upon
- near
- within
- wherever

*Use a semi-colon before and a comma after the conjunctive adverb.