**Elements of Style Workshop**

**--Syntax--**

**(Creating Sentence Variety)**

**Directions**: The importance of this workshop is to take a closer look not necessarily at WHAT you say (*Content*) but more so HOW you say it (*Form*). One effective (and quick) way to better your writing is to simply vary your sentences—not only in terms of length (short, medium or long) but style (sentence beginnings). Follow this simple process *after* you have completed a draft: 1) ***COUNT*** 2) ***CATEGORIZE*** 3) ***PLAN*** & set ***GOALS*** 4) ***REVISE*** (annotate you first draft) 5) ***REWRITE*.**

**What you need**:

* This handout!
* Basic Elements of Style packet (mainly for the syntax terms)
* Applied Grammar handout & Punctuation Packet (with cheat codes & basic rules)
* A written text/prose of some sort (essay, speech, narrative etc…) that you have constructed
* A willingness to take control of you writing and a willingness to get better

**Part 1: *Types of Sentences***

**1. *COUNT* your sentences. Write the number down here: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**2. Now, for *each* sentence, tally and *CATEGORIZE* what *type of sentence* each one is and put it in the specified box below. (You may want to refer to your Applied Grammar handout)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Length** | **Type** | **Examples** | **Tally your sentence types here** | **My New**  ***GOALS*** |
| **Short** | **Fragments\***  **(FR)**  -and incomplete sentence, lacking either a subject or verb/predicate | -Never again.  -Nights dark beyond darkness.  -Until the day is over. |  |  |
| **Simple**  **Sentences (SS)**  - made up of a subject and a verb phrase or predicate | -Jose waited for the train.  -The train was late.  -Jose and Rebecca took the bus. |  |  |
| **Medium** | **Compound**  **Sentences (CD)**  - made up of two independent clauses (or complete sentences) connected to one another with a coordinating conjunction | -Jose waited for the train, but the train was late.  -I looked for my friends at the bus station, but they arrived at the station before noon and left on the bus before I arrived. |  |  |
| **Complex (CX)**  - made up of an independent clause (a clause that can also stand alone as a simple sentence) and one or more dependent clauses connected to it | -Seeing Rebecca after a long time, Jose realized she had changed a lot.  -Jose wondered why the train was late.  -To get to the train station on time, Jose left home an hour early. |  |  |
| **Long** | **Compound Complex Sentences (CDX)**  -made up of a complex sentence joined to a simple sentence with a conjunction | -Although thought to be indestructible, the Twin Towers fell on Sept. 11, 2001, and that forever changed the NYC skyline. |  |  |

**\*Remember: There is nothing wrong with the carefully placed (controlled) fragment. But you better know what you doing!**

**3. Now, look at your results. What do you notice? Balanced? Lopsided? Write down what you notice:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**4. OK, now *PLAN* (in your head) by setting some sentence variety *GOALS* for your revision. Write down your new GOALS in the far right column above.**

**Part 2: *Sentence Beginnings* (Process: Same as above)**

**1. *COUNT* your sentences. Write the number down here: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**2. Now, for *each* sentence, tally and *CATEGORIZE* what type of *sentence beginning* each one is and put it in the specified box below. (Again, you may want to refer to your Applied Grammar handout)**

**Sentence Beginnings**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sentence Beginning**  **Types** | **Example/s** | **Tally Your Sentence Beginnings Here** | **Tally Your New**  ***GOALS***  **Here** |
| **Subject** (S): Usually starts with a Art, N, NP or a PRO  (this type of beginning is the most popular) | The friendly student welcomed me to the school because I felt confused  I left the room and felt…  *Revision Suggestion*: Reverse the sentence to begin with the dependent subordinate/adverbial clause: Because I felt confused, the friendly student welcomed me to the school. |  |  |
| **Adverb** (ADV) | Joyfully, the friendly student welcomed me to the school.  Regretfully, I left my teddy bear at home. |  |  |
| **Preposition** (Prep) **or Prepositional Phrase** (PP) | In September, the friendly student welcomed me to the school.  From out of nowhere came a helpful student. (see preposition list for additional help) |  |  |
| **Gerund** (G) | Welcoming me to school was a pleasure for the friendly student. |  |  |
| **Subordinate/Adverbial Clause** (SC) | Because I felt confused feel lonely, the friendly student welcomed me to the school. |  |  |
| **Verb** (V) | Welcome the new student to the school. |  |  |
| **Infinitive** (I) | *As a subject*: To welcome me was a pleasure for the friendly student.  *As an adverb*: To get a head start, he arrived at school 20 minutes early. |  |  |
| **Conjunction** (CONJ) | And the friendly student welcomed me to the school.  But that was not the end of my day. |  |  |
| **Participle** (Part) **or participial phrase** (Part P) | *Begin with an "ing" participial phrase*: Muttering to himself, the new student shuffled throughout the campus.  *Begin with an "ed" participial phrase*: Irritated by the long wait before class, the new student… |  |  |
| **Adjective** (ADJ) | Afraid about being alone at school, the young student laid down and waited by the entrance. |  |  |
| **Transitional Word** | Finally, he was able to relax and settle into my surroundings.  Lastly, he began… (See transition list for additional examples) |  |  |
| **Appositive Phrase** (noun phrases that identify adjacent nouns. Usually start with an article) | *An overachiever, Jeff practiced bowling every day.*  The bowler in the purple suit, a man named Quintana, was Jeff’s arch rival.  Hour after hour Jeff played, a man determined to dictate his fate. |  |  |
| **Absolute Phrase** (Sentence parts in which they describe the rest of the sentence in which they appear. Usually starts with a pronoun) | *His fingertips bleeding, Jeff continued until he became weak.*  *Trying not to give up, his determination waning, Jeff continued and miraculously bowled his way into the semis.*  *Quintana and his partner watched, their eyes bleeding.* |  |  |

**3. Now, look at your results. Balanced? Lopsided? Write down what you notice:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**4. OK, now *PLAN* by setting some *GOALS* for your revision (regarding types of sentences).**

What’s next? ***REVISE*** and ***REWRITE*** your essay, making the necessary changes to ensure that your sentences are as varied and complex as you (yourself) are.

NOTE: If you are having difficulty with this assignment, I would recommend you focus on either Part 1 or Part 2 exclusively—as there may be a lot to do and modify. Take it slow. Don’t set and outrageous goal. Take in stages. Good luck.