

Teaching Sentence Fluency and Language Skills

The Demonstration and Shared Demonstration stages of the Optimal Learning Model provide excellent opportunities for mini-lessons on Sentence Fluency and Language Skills. As the class works to generate sentences for the events, students can learn:

- to identify subjects and predicates
- to create compound sentences or compound predicates
- to use pronoun substitution (while maintaining clarity – easy to infer who/what the pronoun is referring to)
- to use commas in a list

In addition, students can be exposed to a variety of tricks that improve the rhythm and flow of how one event can lead more effectively to the next:

Examples of Variety in Sentence Structure:

- Effective sentence combining (compound sentences, compound predicates)
- Effective sentence expansion (i.e. prepositional phrases and dependent clauses – adding details, answering questions: When? Where? Why? etc.) – placed in a variety of positions in sentence (beginning, middle, end – set off by commas when necessary for the writing to have a natural rhythm and flow)

Examples of Variety in Sentence Beginnings:

- Beginning a sentence with a dependent clause that sets the context for the sentence, or helps it flow from the previous sentence. (Beginning with subordinate conjunctions such as: When, While, Instead of, After, Because, Although, Even though, Unless, Whenever, Since, Wherever)
- Beginning with a transitional word or phrase (i.e. First, Next, After that, Later, Finally, Now, As you can see, In summary, Hence, Also, In addition, To begin with,) or a prepositional phrase

Some Tricks for Making Cause – Effect Sentences

1. _____ happens, **so** _____ happens

- Bear always brags about his tail, **so** Fox decides to play a trick on him.
- Opossum always brags about his tail, **so** Rabbit decides to play a trick on him.
- Rabbit suggests that Opossum let Cricket trim his tail **so** it will look nice for the dance.
- The other birds noticed that the three feathers belonged to them, **so** they took them away from the cockatoo.
- Sun and Moon have to move, **so** they fly up to the sky.

2. _____ is **so** _____ **that** he/she/it _____

- The sun was **so** hot **that** it made the cockatoo's crest yellow.
- Iguana is **so** annoyed with Mosquito's talking **that** she forgets to say hello to Snake.
- Rabbit is **so** terrified of Snake **that** she scurries out of her hole.
- Bear fell asleep for **so** long **that** the ice hole froze over.

3. **if** _____ happens, **then** _____ happens

- The sky warns the king that **if** people don't stop wasting its gifts, it will take the gifts away.

4. **Since** _____ happens, _____ happens

- **Since** the people don't listen to the sky's warning, the sky fills with clouds and moves away.

5. **When** _____ happens, _____ happens

- **When** Bear jumped up, his tail snapped off.