

## #2 INTERESTING SENTENCES

### Skill: CREATIVE

It may take you three days to learn to make your writing more interesting by:

1. Adding detail to sentences
2. Eliminating patterns in sentence structure

### PREWRITING

#### Days One and Two:

As a creative writer, you have two jobs. The first is to give your reader information. The second is to entertain your reader, or at least make your writing interesting. (This's the hard part.)

This exercise is designed to give you practice in making what you write more interesting than it would be if you were to use it just to pass on information.

The following sentence is all that is needed to pass on the information that a very old man was mad:

*The old man was mad.* (That's straight information and not very interesting.)

If we were to want to make that sentence more interesting, we'd have to add to that basic piece of information. There would have to be descriptions that would let our reader see the mad old man, understand why he was mad and make us feel some way about him being mad. Watch what happens to that sentence when we add detail about how the old man acts when he's mad:

*The old man was so mad he couldn't speak; he just jumped up and down in one spot.* (A more interesting old man, right? But still not too gripping.)

Watch what happens when we add detail about why the old man was mad:

*When the old man woke up and found his bridge was gone, he was so mad he couldn't speak; he just jumped up and down in one spot.* (Better?)

We have given our reader an idea about how the old man feels about his bridge being gone and how he acts. Now see what happens when we add detail about why he feels so strongly about his bridge:

*The old man was homeless and lived under the bridge and called it his home, so, when he woke up and found his bridge gone, he was so mad he couldn't speak; he just jumped up and down in one spot. (Now that we know why he was so mad, his reaction to his bridge being gone is much more interesting.)*

Let's add one more bit of information to this sentence. Let's add who's watching him and see what that does:

*Bill watched the old man who lived under the bridge wake up and find his home gone, which had made the old man so mad he couldn't speak; he just jumped up and down in one spot. (We have added another person reacting to the old man's anger. Much better, right?)*

## WRITING

(If you don't write in this book, you can give it to your younger brother or sister to use. Use the outlines to guide you and use your own paper. If your parents want you to write here, fine. Always do as they suggest.)

Now it's your turn. Here's just basic information in sentence form.

*The old man lost his bridge.*

Your job is to give your reader this information but in a way that makes it interesting.

Add the reason the old man lost his bridge.

---

---

---

Add the length of time the old man had to be without his bridge.

---

---

---

---

Now write a short sentence that gives your reader nothing but basic information. Then write it two more times on another page and add new details to it each time. When trying to think about what interesting details to add, try **how**, **why**, **when**, and **where**.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

You've found you can write a sentence that's interesting. Now you can learn how to write a number of sentences and not have them sound alike.

Young writers sometimes create patterns with their sentences by starting them all in the same way. Listen to how this sounds:

*Bill saw the old man standing in the stream. Bill asked him why he was standing there. The old man said he was looking for his bridge. Bill thought this was strange. He asked the old man, "How did you lose your bridge?"*

*The old man answered, "When I went to sleep it was over me, and when I woke up it was gone."*

*Bill looked closely but could not see anything that looked like part of a bridge.*

All of these sentences begin with a **subject** which is followed immediately by a **verb**. This is pretty boring reading, even when the subject's interesting. Read the sentences again, but see how much better they sound when the subject-verb pattern is broken:

*When he looked toward the stream, Bill saw the old man standing in the water. Bill asked him why he was standing there. The old man, looking up and down the stream, said that he was looking for his bridge. Bill thought this was strange. "How did you lose your bridge?" he asked.*

*"When I went to sleep," the old man answered, "it was over me, and when I woke up it was gone."*

*Even when he looked closely, Bill could not see anything that looked like part of a bridge.*

You can see that the subject-verb pattern of the sentence structuring in the second version of that passage has been broken. This gives the writing variety. You can do this as easily as any author. All you have to do is look at what you have written and change the structuring of your sentences.

Here's another example of how variety can be put into sentences structures. Notice that each of the following sentences contains the same information. It's the structuring of the sentences that's different.

- 1. Bill saw a field of blue flowers, and in the center of this large area there was an old bridge.*
- 2. In the center of a large field of blue flowers, Bill saw an old bridge.*
- 3. In front of Bill an old bridge rose over a large field of blue flowers.*
- 4. Blue flowers covered the large field in front of Bill, and in the very center was an old bridge.*
- 5. An old bridge rose from the large field of blue flowers that lay before Bill.*

You're to write, on another sheet of paper, the sentence below five different ways. Change the structure of the sentence each time.

*Bill walked back to the stream to tell the old man that he might have found his bridge for him.*

### **Day Three:**

You'll have a chance to combine the skills you practiced on days one and two. You learned to add detail to your sentences and then to put variety into their structuring. I'll give you a group of sentences and your job will be to make them interesting by adding detail and to make the reading of them interesting by restructuring them. For the first part, think of **how**, **why**, **when**, and **where**. For the second part, break the **subject-verb pattern**.

- 1. Bill found the old man by the stream.*
- 2. Bill told the old man that he might know where his bridge was.*
- 3. The old man said he would give Bill anything to get the bridge back.*
- 4. Bill thought this would be a good way to get the old man to eat a good dinner.*
- 5. The old man agreed to eat a good dinner if Bill got his bridge back for him.*

Fill out the "Record of Progress" on the next page. I recommend you now take a week off from writing and concentrate on reading and discussing ideas with your parents.

## RECORD OF PROGRESS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Exercise #2 INTERESTING SENTENCES

This is the best sentence I wrote this week.

---

---

This mistake I made this week and I will not make it next week.

---

---

This is the sentence that had this mistake in it.

---

---

This is the sentence again showing how I fixed this mistake.

---

---

Comments: