

Sentence Structure Overview

A sentence is a group of words that makes complete sense and has a least one clause. Sentences begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark. More complex sentences use sentence markers such as dashes, commas, semicolons and colons.

There are four functions for sentences:

1. Making statements (declaratives): *The girl shot a goal.*
2. Asking questions (interrogatives): *Did the girl shoot a goal?*
3. Commands (imperatives): *Shoot the goal!*
4. Voicing exclamations (exclamatives): *What a great goal!*

Most grammatical features within the sentence cluster around the noun and the verb. Words which build sentences describe the nouns (adjectivals) and the verb (adverbials).

High level writing includes the sophisticated use of a range of sentence types for effect. Students are able to enhance their writing using different types of sentences.

For more information on understanding sentence construction please view this PowerPoint presentation: [sentence_structure.ppt](#)

The following worksheet is used for exercises in the PowerPoint. Please have it printed before you begin.

Sentences worksheet

Activity 1

- The dog smelled disgusting. He was covered in mud and slime.
- The magician is very old. He knows many tricks.
- We landed with a bang. We fell out onto the ground. We were not hurt.

Activity 2

- Dark magic is all around us.
- Many princesses like to live in castles. Some princesses like to live in swamps.
- I had a suitcase full of weapons and I was incredibly strong.
- The king who was threatening me clicked his fingers at the guard.
- It was a very bad idea because the noise woke up the crocodile.
- Five minutes later I heard the noise again.
- I ran to the oval but I couldn't see them anywhere.
- While the others were sleeping I crept out and stole the diamond.
- After talking to him for a while I asked if he was my uncle.
- You must not go into that room because there is a monster in there that could kill you.
- Ducking for cover I found shelter under a rock.
- I entered the castle by crossing the drawbridge and was surprised by what the inside was like. It looked like a child's fantasy from a Disney animation.
- When they realised she was getting sicker, Jenny stopped to rest while Pete, who was a fast runner, went for help.
- The potion made me do strange things I did not understand.
- The tiger became vicious, slashing at the ropes.
- Caught in the trap, the tiger became vicious, slashing at the ropes with its claws and growling ferociously.
- I decided complaining wasn't the answer.

Skill Focus: Identifying a sentence

STAGE ES I

Strategy

Collaborative cloze can be conducted as a small multi-ability group activity or done as a read aloud strategy with the whole class. Either way, the text is first read aloud ensuring readers have the necessary scaffolding to access meaning from the text.

By collaborating and discussing options to complete the text, all students benefit from participating irrespective of their reading level. Less confident readers may bring a lot of prior knowledge to the discussion, whereas more competent readers may provide the necessary scaffolding to process the text.

Activities to support the strategy

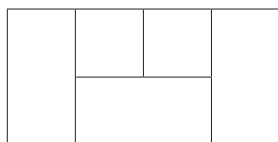
Modelled

Exploring metalanguage (QTF)

Select a short narrative text – fiction or non fiction – that is suited to the interests, ages and context of the students in the class.

A class big book is an excellent resource. Alternatively, enlarge the chosen text on the photocopier to A3 paper so that all the students can view the text. Text pages can also be transferred as an OHT or onto an interactive white board where words can be written on the screen.

When preparing the cloze, the first sentence establishes a context so it is left untouched. Cover over a word in every fifth sentence with post-it notes or coloured paper. If the text has been enlarged, the omitted word can be redrawn with a line. The lines match the size of the words so students use the size of words as a context clue. If a particular word is required, the shape of the word could replace the line. For example, *jump* would look like



The teacher reads the first page of the text and models what to do when students come to the missing word:

- I can read past the word*
- I can start at the beginning of the sentence*
- I think what will make sense*
- I cannot see the letters of the word so I cannot sound it out*
- I can look at the pictures to help me.*

Guided

Ask the students if they think they know what the missing word is. With every suggestion, read the sentence again with the substitution. Check whether it makes sense.

Exploring deep knowledge (QTF)

Ask open ended questions to prompt students to think about why the

K–6 Outcome

WESI.9: Student engages in writing like behaviour

Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 8
Sentence Structure



Item Descriptor

Constructing grammatically correct, structurally sound and meaningful sentences

Other links

http://www.myread.org/guide_collaborative.htm

sentence does not make sense and what is missing.
How do we know where the sentence starts and finishes?
What types of words do we need in a sentence so that it makes sense?
What can I do when I come to a word I cannot read?

Re-read the picture book when the substitutions are complete.

Students provide full, correctly punctuated sentences about the narrative which the teacher scribes on the board.

For example:

There's a Sea in my Bedroom by Margaret Wild

Student responses

David was frightened of the sea.
David liked to collect shells.
There were lots of beautiful shells.
His father took him to the beach to look for shells.
Water came out of the shell.
David liked the water in his room.
David played in the water.
He laughed and laughed.
David said there was a sea in his bedroom but there was no sea at all.

Independent

Exploring deep understanding (QTF)

Students highlight to identify parts of the sentences on the board such as:

- the capital letters
- the beginning of the sentence
- the end of the sentence
- the full stops.

Students choose their favourite part of the narrative and illustrate it using a sentence to describe the event.

Students can use the sentence on the board as a model, have their sentences scribed for them or edited in a joint teacher–student conference.

The bed is soft.
Mum is not happy.
The men ran up the hill.
My cat is sick.

Skill Focus: Constructing grammatically correct sentences

STAGES ESI–I

Strategy

Deconstructing sentences

Explicitly teach students:

- that a simple sentence names something and tells more (see page 98 English K–6 Syllabus for additional definition information)
- that a written sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop.

Explicit teaching involves:

- Explaining the purpose of every task or lesson and its value to the students' learning.
- Explaining to students what is required in fulfilling the purpose of the lesson or activity.
- Modelling and demonstrating the skills, knowledge and understanding required to complete a lesson or activity.
- Making aspects at all levels of a task explicit.
- Giving students opportunities to practise skills and enhance understanding.

Activities to support the strategy

Modelled

The teacher says:

Today we are going to learn about sentences.

A sentence gives us a complete idea and it makes sense.

A sentence names something and tells us more.

A sentence has a doing or thinking word in it.

The teacher writes one simple sentence on the board at a time so the students focus on just one sentence. For example: Tim went to the park.

The teacher points to the sentence and says:

This is a sentence.

It has a word that the sentence is about. It has a capital letter to tell me the sentence has begun and a full stop to tell me the sentence is finished.

The teacher reads the sentence, pointing to each word as she reads it : *Tim went to the park.*

The teacher asks the students to read the sentence aloud as she points to each word and reads it with them.

The teacher then says:

This sentence names Tim.

What does it name? (pause for students to respond)

I'm going to circle the word 'Tim'.

Repeat this with other simple sentences, one sentence at a time.

K–6 Outcomes

WS1.10: Uses most common punctuation marks for example spaces between words, capital letters and full stops

RS1.6: Uses knowledge of grammatical structure of language to understand texts

Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 8
Sentence Structure



Item Descriptor

Constructing grammatically correct, structurally sound and meaningful sentences

Guided

Activity one

Write a new simple sentence on the board. Use simple, clear words to talk about it. For example, *Listen while I read this sentence. The dog is sad.* (Point to the words while reading).

What does it name?

Allow students to respond. (dog)

Praise the students for a correct answer and ask one child to circle the words 'the dog'.

Give specific feedback: *Yes, this sentence names the dog.*

Next, write some additional sentences and repeat the format above.

Closely monitor students who are having difficulty:

- reading the words
- identifying the components of the sentence
- responding to the instructions.

Activity two

Share a picture book with the students, for example, *Black Dog* by Pamela Allen.

As the students retell the events from the narrative, the teacher records them in simple sentences on the white board such as:

Black dog played with Christina.

They played every day.

The wind blew.

They waited.

A bird came.

Students circle the naming words (the subject not the object of each sentence) in a guided activity.

Modelled

The teacher writes one simple sentence on the board. The teacher says the words as she writes them.

For example: *The girl is going to school.*

Let's read the sentence together.

Read the sentence with the class.

What does it name?

The students respond. (the girl)

The teacher continues by explaining aloud what she is doing.

I'm going to circle those words. (The teacher circles 'the girl'.)

This sentence tells us more about the girl. It says that she is going to school. I'm going

to underline the words that tell more. (The teacher underlines the rest of the sentence.)

The girl is going to school.

Repeat this with other simple sentences, one sentence at time.

Next, write some additional sentences and repeat the format above. Closely monitor the children who are having difficulty by watching their mouths. Give extra guided practice to relevant students in a small group.

Provide enough support so that the student succeeds in his or her attempts.

Next start some sentences and individual children complete them.

The dog ...

Praise and positive reinforcement as the children attempt and succeed in the guided activity is important.

Independent

Use the sample worksheet as a guide to develop relevant contextual sentences for students to deconstruct. Model the first few sentences and then the students can complete the worksheet independently. The teacher will need to carefully monitor the students to ensure they are answering the questions correctly. The worksheet can be marked together as a way of feedback and cumulative student assessment.

Name: _____			
A simple sentence names something and tells more.			
Circle the word that names something. Underline the part that tells us more. Draw a picture to show what the sentence is about.			
My dad likes to go fishing.	Kim can jump.	Tim sat on a mat.	Mum went to the shops.
The frog sat on the log.	This is my house.	Tom and Sam fed the pigs.	My dog can run fast.
Dad and Dan like to jog in the park.	The hen can run.	The baby is clapping.	The cat is going to the vet.

view and print

Create worksheets using simple sentences related to the students in the class in terms of:

- the topic they are working on in any KLA
- their guided reading book
- a recent real world experience the class has participated in such as an excursion, special event or ceremony.

This keeps the sentences contextual and meaningful to the students.

Give extra guided practice in a small group to students who are challenged by this skill.

Exploring deep understanding (QTF)

Play the ‘tell me more game’. Students who cannot read can still play the game if a peer or teacher reads the beginning of the sentence in the box that they land on.

TELL MORE GAME

START →	The dog ...	Sam ...	My hat ...	The bee ...	The drink ...	My skin ...	The crab ...
FINISH ☆	A simple sentence names something and tells more. Need: 1 dice 1 counter for each player						The skunk ...
I like to ...	Rules: 1. Throw the dice 2. You can move the counter that many spaces only if you tell more for every space you move along. Read what the sentence names and tell more . 3. If you land on the ¶ you can make up your own simple sentence. 4. Make sure the sentence names something and tells more.						The ant ...
Mum likes to ...							My house ...
☆							The bug ...
School is ...							Mum ...
My friend ...	¶	The frog ...	Grandma ...	Fred ...	The pup ...	The sun ...	My cat ...

[view and print](#)

Name: _____

A simple sentence names something and tells more.

Circle the word or words that name something. Underline the part that tells us more.

Draw a picture to tell what the sentence is about.

The bed is soft.

Mum is not happy.

The men ran up the hill.

My cat is sick.

The pup likes milk.

The sand is hot.

Sam was sent home.

My hat fell in the mud.

Ken and Tim went camping.

The duck likes to swim.

The flag is red and black.

The crab got stuck in the net.

[view and print](#)

Exploring deep knowledge (QTF)

Guided

Choose a new page in a book that only has sentences with simple punctuation. That is, that starts with a capital letter and ends in a full stop and does not contain questions, direct speech, commas or more complex punctuation.

Ask students to read a sentence.

Ask: *How can we tell if these words make a sentence?*

Modelled

Say: *Today we are going to learn more about a sentence. We already know that a sentence ... (give a clue then pause for a group response) names something and tells more. (Praise students for saying 'names something and tells more')*

When someone writes a simple sentence, it starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop.

Point to a sentence and say: *This sentence starts with a capital letter (point to the capital letter) and ends with a full stop (point to the full stop). Let's read the sentence. Repeat with 3 or more sentences.*

Guided

Ask individual students to find one sentence. Point out the capital letter and the full stop. Encourage students to say 'A simple sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop' while pointing. Give specific feedback, for example, *Yes the sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop*. Remember to prompt and praise. If a child points to something that is not a full stop, say *point to the full stop* (while pointing to the full stop on the page).

Independent

Young students may like to use a magnifying glass to find sentences, carefully looking for the capital letters and full stops.

Students can place an overhead transparency over a page in their guided reading book and circle the capital letter and full stop for each sentence.

Name: _____

A simple sentence names something and tells more.

Circle the word that names something. Underline the part that tells us more.

Draw a picture to show what the sentence is about.

My dad likes to go fishing.

Kim can jump.

Tim sat on a mat.

Mum went to the shops.

The frog sat on the log.

This is my house.

Tom and Sam fed the pigs.

My dog can run fast.

Dad and Dan like to jog in the park.

The hen can run.

The baby is clapping.

The cat is going to the vet.

TELL MORE GAME

START →	The dog ...	Sam ...	My hat ...	The bee ...	The drink ...	My skin ...	The crab ...
FINISH ☆	<p>A simple sentence names something and tells more.</p> <p>Need: 1 dice 1 counter for each player</p> <p>Rules:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Throw the dice 2. You can move the counter that many spaces only if you tell more for every space you move along. Read what the sentence names and tell more. 3. If you land on the ¶ you can make up your own simple sentence. 4. Make sure the sentence names something and tells more. 						The skunk ...
I like to ...							The ant ...
Mum likes to ...							My house ...
☆							The bug ...
School is ...							Mum ...
My friend ...	¶	The frog ...	Grandma ...	Fred ...	The pup ...	The sun ...	My cat ...

Name: _____

A simple sentence names something and tells more.

Circle the word or words that name something. Underline the part that tells us more.

Draw a picture to tell what the sentence is about.

The bed is soft.

Mum is not happy.

The men ran up the hill.

My cat is sick.

The pup likes milk.

The sand is hot.

Sam was sent home.

My hat fell in the mud.

Ken and Tim went camping.

The duck likes to swim.

The flag is red and black.

The crab got stuck in the net.

Skill Focus: Constructing grammatically correct sentences

STAGE 1

Strategy

Sorting and separating examples and non-examples of sentences

Conceptual understanding can be taught by providing a definition of the concept followed by classifying sentences into 'examples and non-examples'.

The teacher:

- identifies the concept
- provides a definition by clearly defining the attributes
- gives examples of the concept with all the defining attributes (i.e. examples of correct sentences)
- gives examples of the concept that have some of the defining attributes (i.e. examples of non-sentences)
- explains why the examples or non-examples define the concept
- tests or checks understanding with new examples and non-examples.

Activities to Support the Strategy

Modelled

Exploring metalanguage (QTF)

Preparation: Divide the white board into two sections. One section titled 'yes' (sentence) – for examples of sentences. The other side of the white board is titled 'No' (not sentences) – for examples that are not sentences.

Prepare sentences that can be shown one at a time (e.g. on flashcards or on an interactive white board). These sentences should be contextual and relevant to the students.

Yes (sentences)	No (not sentences)
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Say: *Today we are going to learn about sentences. A simple sentence names something and tells more. It starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. It must have a naming word and a doing word. It can have another naming word that is the object in the sentence.*

First, present 'examples' of written sentences one at a time. *This is a sentence.* (point to the sentence)

For example: Tim likes to swim in the pool.

My mum went to the beach.

The teacher places each sentence in the 'yes' section.

K-6 Outcomes

WS1.10: Uses most common punctuation marks, for example, spaces between words, capital letters and full stops

RS1.6: Uses knowledge of grammatical structure of language to understand texts

Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 8
Sentence Structure



Item Descriptor

Constructing grammatically correct, structurally sound and meaningful sentences

Statements of Learning for English (p. 6)

Students have the opportunity to draw on their knowledge of texts and language to use simple sentences in appropriate grammatical order for statements.

This procedure is repeated 6 times, using different sentences, one at a time.

Then read aloud 'non-examples' of sentences and place them in the 'no' column.

The teacher says *This is not a sentence* (emphasising the word not)

For example: my mum went to the beach (incorrect punctuation)

Likes to swim in the pool. (no subject)

The teacher places these examples in the 'no' (not a sentence) section. This procedure is repeated 4–6 times.

After 6 examples, and 4–6 non-examples, the teacher explains the concept by saying:

These are sentences. Each sentence names something and tells more. Each sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. (The teacher points to the yes section on the white board.)

The teacher then says:

These are not sentences. (The teacher points to the sentences in the no section on the white board.)

The teacher explains why each sentence is not a correct sentence.

For example:

- no naming word/subject
- no capital letter
- no full stop
- no doing word.

Guided

Provide the following teaching framework chart:

A simple sentence

- names something (has a noun.)
- can have an object
- tells more
- must have a doing word
- starts with a capital letter
- ends with a full stop

The teacher holds up one sentence and asks: *Is this a sentence or not a sentence?*

(pause for a group response)

The teacher asks for an individual response: *How do we know?*

All attempts are encouraged. The 'prompt and pause' strategy is used.

After a correct response the child puts the sentence in the appropriate section ('Yes'/'No').

The teacher gives the students specific relevant feedback, e.g *Yes, this is a sentence. It names something and tells more. It starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop.*

Repeat the procedure with examples and non-examples presented in random order.

Independent

Exploring deep understanding (QTF)

Each student sorts out some new sentences with examples and non-examples mixed up.

The activity can be done individually, in pairs or small groups. Students can use guided reading groups to categorise sentences and non-sentences from their reading texts.

The teacher monitors closely to ensure that all the students can sort examples and non-examples independently.

Students can also use this strategy to edit their daily writing or group edit students' writing.

Students can be supplied with a checklist (such as the one provided above) for their books or desk to assist their self checking skills. This aid is removed when the student feels they can use this skill without their framework support (reminder card).

Skill Focus: Identifying sentence types

STAGES 1–2

Strategy

Using role play and hot seating activities to reinforce knowledge about sentence types

Activities to support the strategy

Modelled

Activity one

This activity helps students to distinguish between statements, commands, exclamations and questions.

Introduce students to the sentence types through role-playing. Use content from a current topic to make up four sentences. Ask four students to read a sentence each, using expression and relevant actions:

Preserving water is important for our survival. (*statement*)

Don't waste water. (*command*)

Is water important? (*question*)

What a fantastic way to recycle water! (*exclamation*)

Examine the grammatical structures of a command with the students, e.g. subject-verb order, subject (you) that is understood (not stated).

Tell students that meaning is conveyed in speech not only through what we say (spoken words), but also through facial expression, vocal intonation, tone and body movements. In writing, different writing markers are used.

These writing markers include:

- the use of punctuation
- expressive speaking verbs.

Encourage the development of these understandings through talking and listening and writing in the literacy session.

Activity two

Exploring metalanguage (QTF)

Determine what students know about sentences by asking probing questions.

The teacher writes a simple sentence on the board and the students have to work out what the sentence says. The teacher then models the grammatical changes necessary to alter the statement into a command and a question. The teacher then writes the sentences on the board using the punctuation markers. The teacher then asks the students what was the same and different about the sentences.

Guided

Students work in pairs. One student reads their narrative to the other student. The second student devises a number of questions to ask about the narrative. The teacher supports the pairs as they work on developing questions around the texts.

K–6 Outcomes

- | WS1.14: Students can recognise a sentence
- | WS2.10: Students use correct punctuation
- | WS2.14: Identifies different types of sentences

Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 8
Sentence Structure



Language conventions

Year 3 Q: 29 and 41

Year 5 Q: 30 and 46

Year 7 Q: 38

Item Descriptor

Constructing grammatically correct, structurally sound and meaningful sentences

Statements of Learning for English (p. 17)

Students have the opportunity to draw on their knowledge of texts and language to clarify meaning. They know the function of statements, questions, commands and exclamations.

The students answer the questions their buddy has asked.

Discuss with the class how the questions helped to build the information about their narratives.

Independent

Hot Seating

Exploring deep understanding (QTF)

Write three topics that have been developed from the narratives on the white board.

For example:

1. dragons
2. lost
3. swimming in summer

Nominate four students for the hot seats. These four students randomly choose a chair to sit on, not knowing its label (exclamation, command, statement or question). Alternatively, distribute cards with sentence type labels according to each student's instructional need. For example, give the question card to a student whose language focus is forming questions.

Choose a class member to nominate a topic.

Each student in the hot seat, having looked at the label, must then give the type of response matching the label on the chair that the student is sitting on, e.g. an exclamation.

For example:

- an exclamation about dragons: I see a dragon!
- a question about dragons: Are you sure it is a dragon?
- a statement about dragons: It is a big dragon.
- a command about dragons: Catch that dragon!

Students have three seconds to answer or they lose their hot seat. They then nominate a replacement student.

Skill Focus: Developing ideas through language choices

STAGES 2–3 Supporting ESL Students

Strategy

Using a matrix to build sentences about characters and settings

Activities to support the strategy

Guided

Exploring deep knowledge (QTF)

Using character development strategies from Criterion 4, students brainstorm various scenarios involving a dragon as the main character.

Use the proforma matrix as a guide. This can be used as an OHT, a worksheet or as the matrix for recording on butcher’s paper or the white board.

Friendly Dragons	Evil Dragons
Actions	Actions
What do they do?	What do they do?
Thoughts and feelings	Thoughts and feelings
What do they think?	What do they think?



(Source: *Animalia* by Graeme Base)

An example is provided.

K–6 Outcomes

- RS2.8: Discusses the text structure and grammatical features of a range of text types
- RS3.6: Identifies adjectival clauses and adverbial phrases
- WS2.10: Identifies adjectives and how these add to the meaning of the text
- WS3.10: Uses a variety of adjectives

ESL Scales

- 3.1.1.12: Selects suitable descriptive words to enhance effectiveness of writing
- 4.3.8: Employs a small range of vocabulary to describe shades of meaning
- 4.10.6: Creates mood and feeling by use of appropriate words
- 5.10.6: Uses fitting detail in description

Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 3
Sentence Structure



Language Conventions
Year 3 Q: 34
Year 5 Q: 38
Year 9 Q: 45

Item Descriptor

Constructing grammatically correct, structurally sound and meaningful sentences

Statements of Learning for English

Students have the opportunity to draw on their knowledge of texts and language to:

- use vocabulary and word forms appropriate to the subject matter of the text
- use adjectives, adverbs and prepositional phrases to elaborate ideas.

Friendly Dragons	Evil Dragons
<p>Actions</p> <p>What do they do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – help people – cause no harm – don't attack humans – don't destroy property – afraid of dragon-slaying knights – wants to have friends and be friendly 	<p>Actions</p> <p>What do they do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – kidnap princesses – cause lots of harm – attack humans – destroy human property – seek to vanquish dragon-slaying knights – live alone, have rebel friends
<p>Thoughts and feelings</p> <p>What do they think or feel?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – afraid – frightened – shy – friendly – brave – 'Why can't people understand that not all dragons are bad?' – 'Why are people so frightened of me?' – 'I want to live in peace with everyone.' 	<p>Thoughts and feelings</p> <p>What do they think or feel?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – fearless – bold – unfriendly – invincible – powerful – 'I will vanquish all dragon-slaying knights.' – 'Those puny humans are no match for my fire-breathing power.' – 'I want to destroy all who stand in my way.'

Guided

Exploring metalanguage (QTF)

Using the matrix students create a sentence about a dragon.

For example:

The enormous green dragon reared its scaly body before blowing out red hot steam through its moonlike nostrils.

By the class as a whole, the sentence is then deconstructed in terms of its language use.

Ask students probing questions about the position of the words and the types of words, and draw conclusions about where words can be placed to build texts.

Article adjectives noun verb pronoun adjective noun

The enormous green dragon reared its scaly body

verb group adjectives noun
before blowing out red hot steam through

pronoun adjective noun
its moonlike nostrils.

For later stage three students sentences can be constructed at a more detailed level.

For example:

Article adjectives noun adverb verb possessive pronoun adjective noun
The enormous green dragon slowly reared its scaly body

verb group adjectives noun
before blowing out red hot steam

adverbial clause
relative verb possessive adjective noun
pronoun pronoun
which escapes through its moonlike nostrils.

As students analyse the text language, they create a fact file about the grammar, for example:

- *Adjectives describe nouns, personal and possessive pronouns
- * Every clause has a verb. The verb is central to the clause. Verbs sometimes need helpers to make them finite.
- * Nouns and pronouns can be subjects or objects in sentences.
- * Adverbs add to the verb.

Skill Focus: Building sentences

STAGES 2–3

Strategy

Sentence Makers

It is important to introduce the concept that a simple sentence usually has a subject, verb and object.

This will help students understand that a clause is a group of words that tell us about an action. It also gives the basic frame for building and reducing sentences. Sentence complexity can be developed by the use of vocabulary and content. This should be relevant to the context of the students.

Activities to support the strategy

Exploring metalanguage (QTF)

Use a holding strip and a handful of word cards to build a range of sentence structures.

Basic sentence making: use news sessions, exciting events, favourite books and word banks to stimulate word choice and encourage students to construct sentences.

The	car	broke down	this	morning	.
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Sentence expansion

Extend existing sentences by inserting additional adjectives, adverbs, causal connections, phrases and clauses:

The	car	broke down	on	the	way	this	morning	.
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The	car	broke down	on	the	way	this	morning	because
it	was	out	of	petrol	.			

Sentence reduction

Reduce a long sentence to its simplest form by removing one word at a time:

The	car	broke	down	.
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Sentence transformation

Have students transform existing sentences by taking turns to change one word at a time. A noun must be changed for a noun, a verb for a verb and so on:

Most	surfers	are	good	swimmers	.
Most	surfers	are	poor	swimmers	.
Most	surfers	are	poor	dancers	.

K–6 Outcomes

WS2.I4: Identifies different types of sentences

WS3.I4: Recognises the subject, object and verb of a clause

Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 8
Sentence Structure



Item Descriptor

Constructing grammatically correct, structurally sound and meaningful sentences

Statements of Learning for English (p. 6)

Students have the opportunity to draw on their knowledge of texts and language to use adjectives, adverbs and prepositional phrases to elaborate ideas.

Skill Focus: Building sentences – phrases and clauses

STAGES 2–3

Strategy

Sorting clauses and sentences

Deconstructing and analysing the metalanguage of word order in sentences through IRE (initiate-respond-evaluate) modelling and guided activities to provide frameworks and practice of skills.

Once the structures and language have been practised students move to higher-order activities which involve classifying sentences into categories and manipulating sentences to demonstrate and verbalise their understanding of the concepts.

Activities to support the strategy

Modelled

Exploring deep knowledge (QTF)

Shared book experience:

Use a picture book that contains both simple and complex sentences, for example: *Gorilla* by Anthony Browne.

On the second read, model the clauses within sentences by pausing and using intonation when reading.

Choose a section of the text for deconstruction and either:

- write text on white board
- enlarge onto A3 paper
- produce page as an OHT

Explain that each clause has a verb.

Ask students to identify the verbs in the sentences.

Practise identifying the verbs in sentences using IRE (initiate-respond-evaluate) strategy.

The teacher says: *Here is a sentence. This is the subject. This is the verb.* At this stage students are becoming familiar with action, saying, thinking and relating verbs.

K–6 Outcomes

WS2.14: Identifies different types of sentences

WS3.14: Recognises the subject, object and verb of a clause

Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 8
Sentence Structure



Item Descriptor

Constructing grammatically correct, structurally sound and meaningful sentences

Statements of Learning for English (p. 6)

Students have the opportunity to draw on their knowledge of texts and language use to write sentences in appropriate grammatical order.

Guided

Exploring metalanguage (QTF)

Write a series of clauses and phrases from the text onto cardboard strips. Include simple sentences without the punctuation, dependent clauses beginning with a conjunction and phrases beginning with a preposition.

phrases (not clauses)	clauses (dependent)	clauses (independent)
but the next day	swinging through the trees towards the zoo	he was busy
in the afternoon	when they arrived at the zoo	Hannah woke up
at the weekend	but I'm hungry now	Hannah was frightened
the night before her birthday	and saw a small parcel at the foot of her bed	they went straight to the primates

Independent

Exploring deep understanding (QTF)

Direct students to sort the cardboard strips into two groups, dependent and independent clauses, and justify their decisions.

Then direct students to sort the pile of clauses into two groups, 'sentences' and 'not sentences', and justify their decisions.

In small groups, students can put together the clauses and phrases to form sentences that reconstruct the visuals from each page of the picture book. Students should identify the symbols and images important to them. The story can be re-told and presented as a *PowerPoint*. To view a sample *PowerPoint* click on the link below.

Skill Focus: Building sentences – phrases and clauses

STAGE 3

Strategy

Modelled sentence patterns act as a scaffold as students analyse short extracts by paying particular attention to the variety of ways authors construct sentences.

Find a short descriptive paragraph from a familiar literary text and use it to demonstrate to students how to use the author’s sentence patterns as a model to create a new text to suit a different context.

Provide paragraphs from selected narrative texts to students using the scaffold shown below.

Ask students:

How would this be helpful?

When would we need to know this?

Who might be the audience for the work we produce?

Give students paragraphs to innovate, first in pairs and later individually. This technique gives students the opportunity to successfully write high quality, sophisticated texts with a variety of sentence structures.

Activity to support the strategy

Guided

Exploring metalanguage (QTF)

<p>ORIGINAL an extract from <i>The Wind in the Willows</i> by Kenneth Grahame</p>	<p>INNOVATION new context: someone returning home after many years</p>
<p>Arriving within sight of his home, he rested his oars and surveyed the land cautiously. All seemed peaceful and deserted and quiet.</p>	<p>Parking in front of his childhood home, he leaned back and scanned the front yard hesitantly. Everything seemed run down and neglected and overgrown.</p>
<p>ORIGINAL An extract from <i>Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes</i> by Eleanor Coerr.</p>	<p>INNOVATION new context: two children eating breakfast before going to the Royal Easter Show</p>
<p>At breakfast Sadako noisily gulped down her soup and rice. Masahiro began to talk about girls who ate like hungry dragons. But Sadako didn’t hear his teasing. Her thoughts were dancing around the Peace Day of last year. She loved the crowds of people, the music and fireworks. Sadako could still taste the spun cotton candy.</p>	<p>Over the breakfast table Catherine loudly munched her bacon and eggs. James began to talk about girls who ate like horses eating hay. But Catherine tuned out his teasing. Her thoughts were skipping around the Royal Easter Show last year. She was thrilled by the rides, the animal parades and the fire-eaters. She could still taste the freshly made popcorn.</p>

Place an excerpt from a text being studied in class on an OHT or interactive white board.

K–6 Outcomes

WS3.10: Uses knowledge of sentence structure, grammar and punctuation to edit own writing

WS3.13: Reflects, analyses and evaluates their own writing and that of others

WS3.14: Writes demonstrating variety and competence in complex sentence

Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 8
Sentence Structure



Language Conventions

Year 7 Q: 53

Year 9 Q: 33

Item Descriptor

Constructing grammatically correct, structurally sound and meaningful sentences

Statements of Learning for English (p. 22)

Students have the opportunity to draw on their knowledge of texts and language to use compound and complex sentences to elaborate ideas.

Ensure that the last sentence is covered.

The teacher reads and then discusses the type of sentences and language the author has used and the mood it sets with the students by asking probing questions.

The teacher draws the attention of the students to the covered last sentence. The teacher asks students to write the next sentence in the story.

When the students have finished their sentence they share them in a writers' circle.

The teacher then reveals the next sentence on the OHT and discusses how this compares/contrasts to their sentence and why the author made the choices he or she did in terms of:

- sentence length
- complexity
- choice of language
- theme (outcome).

Independent

Exploring deep understanding (QTF)

Ask students to write an alternative ending for a known text or a narrative written by a student in the class.

Skill Focus: Building sophistication of complex sentences – phrases and clauses

STAGE 4

Strategy

Identifying some trigger words for dependency in complex sentences

Identifying key words in complex sentences can assist students to understand the construction of these sentences.

Some trigger words for dependency in contextual topics and texts include:

Place	where, wherever
Time	after, before, when, while, as long, since, until, while, whenever, each time
Manner	the way that, by, through, as, as if, like, as though
Condition	as long as, in case of, unless, on condition that
Cause	because, since, in case, in order to, so as to, so that
Concession	although, even if, even though, whereas, despite, while

Activities to support the strategy

Guided

Exploring deep knowledge (QTF)

Ask students:

What does the word dependency mean?

What would it mean then if one clause was dependent on another?

How would being able to identify these dependencies help us to gain meaning from texts?

Exploring metalanguage (QTF)

Provide a copy of the matrix above as a guide for students.

Provide a passage from the novel of study.

Students highlight the connectives that are acting as triggers for dependency in the passage as they read together.

Discuss:

- *what effect the variety has on the quality of the text*
- *what type of connective is most common and why they think this is the case*
- *how the type of text being written would affect the type of connectives being used.*

KLA Outcomes

English 4.4.2: Students learn to create and ensure coherence of medium, form and content through specific language conventions and vocabulary appropriate to particular subject matter or contexts

English 4.4.8: Students learn about the ways in which specific language forms, features and structures of a text are used to shape meaning including sentence structures, grammar and punctuation

Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 8
Sentence Structure



Language Conventions

Year 9 Q: 44 and 52

Item Descriptor

Constructing grammatically correct, structurally sound and meaningful sentences

Statements of Learning for English (p. 27)

Students draw on their knowledge of texts and language to use dependent and independent clauses to extend and elaborate ideas and information.

Modelled

Make an overhead transparency of sentences. Use different colour overhead markers to indicate the breaks between the main clauses such as in the example below.

I stare out of the window of my farmhouse and the winds lash leaves against the glass and there is stomping rain on my tin roof. It is difficult to hear the evacuation procedures on the radio. The fierce lightning strikes and it wakes the darkness and I can see the floodwaters rising.

Work with the students to reconstruct the sentences to create complexity. An example of an edited script is below:

As I stare out the window of my farmhouse the winds lash leaves against the glass. The stomping rain on my tin roof makes it difficult to hear the evacuation procedures on the radio. As the fierce lightning strikes, it wakes the darkness so I can see the floodwaters rising.

Independent

Exploring deep understanding (QTF)

Give students some main clauses from the text being studied and ask them to add as many different types of dependent clauses as they can in a limited time.

Then discuss their choices and reasons for their choices.

Ask students to underline the verbs, draw arrows to the subject and circle the conjunctions in passages provided, then to rewrite the sentence, using different conjunctions and/or breaking the sentence into shorter sentences. If possible use examples from current subject content.

Skill Focus: Understanding complex sentences

STAGE 5

This PowerPoint presentation: [sentence_structure.ppt](#) can be used as a lesson for stage 5 students to increase understanding of sentence structure.

KLA Outcomes

English 5.1.8: Students learn about the features of increasingly complex imaginative texts including the linguistic and structural features

Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 8
Sentence Structure



The Box

Today you are going to write a narrative or story. The title for your story is "The Box". What is inside the box? How did it get there? Is it valuable? Perhaps it is not!

The box might contain a message or something that was hidden.

What happens in your story if the box is opened?

Think about:

- the characters and where they are
- the complication or problem to be solved
- how the story will end.

Remember to:

- plan your story before you start
- write in sentences
- pay attention to the words you choose, your spelling and punctuation, and paragraphs
- check and edit your writing when you have finished.

Item Descriptor

Constructing grammatically correct, structurally sound and meaningful sentences

Statements of Learning for English (p. 30)

Students have the opportunity to draw on their knowledge of texts and language to use different sentence and clause structures to expand ideas or foreground certain information.

Name: _____

A simple sentence names something and tells more.

Circle the word that names something. Underline the part that tells us more.

Draw a picture to show what the sentence is about.

My dad likes to go fishing.

Kim can jump.

Tim sat on a mat.

Mum went to the shops.

The frog sat on the log.

This is my house.

Tom and Sam fed the pigs.

My dog can run fast.




Dad and Dan like to jog in the park.

The hen can run.

The baby is clapping.

The cat is going to the vet.

TELL MORE GAME

START 	The dog ...	Sam ...	My hat ...	The bee ...	The drink ...	My skin ...	The crab ...
FINISH 	<p>A simple sentence names something and tells more.</p> <p>Need: 1 dice 1 counter for each player</p> <p>Rules:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Throw the dice 2. You can move the counter that many spaces only if you tell more for every space you move along. Read what the sentence names and tell more. 3. If you land on the ¶ you can make up your own simple sentence. 4. Make sure the sentence names something and tells more. 						The skunk ...
I like to ...							The ant ...
Mum likes to ...							My house ...
							The bug ...
School is ...							Mum ...
My friend ...	¶	The frog ...	Grandma ...	Fred ...	The pup ...	The sun ...	My cat ...

Name: _____

A simple sentence names something and tells more.

Circle the word or words that name something. Underline the part that tells us more.

Draw a picture to tell what the sentence is about.

The bed is soft.

Mum is not happy.

The men ran up the hill.

My cat is sick.

The pup likes milk.

The sand is hot.

Sam was sent home.

My hat fell in the mud.

Ken and Tim went camping.

The duck likes to swim.

The flag is red and black.

The crab got stuck in the net.