Vary Sentence Beginnings
(Sentence Fluency)

A part of sentence fluency is varying your sentence beginnings. If you start out with the subject all the time, your sentences begin to sound monotonous, decreasing the fluidity. (NOTE: This does not mean you start out with the same word, but rather the same part of speech)

Example of Bad Sentence Fluency: I love shopping. My friend and I will go shopping all the time. We love to buy clothes. She likes buying jeans. I like buying shoes best.

To vary the subject-verb pattern, I have compiled 6 different sentence starters:

**Sentence Pattern 1 - Begin with a Prepositional Phrase:**

- With a smile on his face, the lion devoured the boy.
- Across the bay, the light flickered and went out.

**Sentence Pattern 2 - Begin with a Participle or Participial Phrase (“ing” or “ed”)**

- Slithering down the trunk of the tree, I ripped my best pants.
- Hoping to escape the teacher’s attention, Matt crawled into the classroom.

  *Past Participial Phrase (use an “ed” word):*

- Impressed by the ceremony, we left the room in silence.
- Depressed by the amount of homework, the student collapsed into tears.

**Sentence Pattern 3 – Dependent Clauses (begin with a subordinating conjunction)**
(These help express relationships such as compare/contrast or cause/effect.):

- Though some critics have complained about her lack of personal warmth, Hillary Clinton is doing well in the presidential race.
- While I was taking the test, my pen ran out of ink.
Sentence Pattern 4 – Use the appositive (after subject noun or object noun)

A well-respected Mayor, Bill knew he could run for president.

A struggling magician, Tom wandered from street to street.

Sentence Pattern 5 - Infinitive Phrase: (“to plus verb”)

To cope with the new tax law, taxpayers must comprehend subtle variations in meaning.

To reduce expenses, the newspaper had to trim its editorial staff from twenty-one to twelve.

Sentence Pattern 6-Begin with a single word modifier

Usually, someone takes attendance in my class.

Fuming, he arises from his relaxing position, and begins to look around him in a vigorous manner.

List of Prepositions

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List of Subordinating Conjunctions

after                             although                             until                             while
in order (that)                  insofar as                           as                                 if
unless                            in that                              no matter how                       before
when                             lest                                 no matter how                       though
as far as                        whenever                             where                              even though
as if                            as though                             whether                            till
now that                         as soon as                            because                             since
wherever                         once                                 inasmuch as                         so that
                                      even if

SENTENCE FLUENCY IN ACTION

Old Sentence:  Katie walked briskly to the movies. She wanted to see the new Transformers.

---*To use a participial take out the verb (walk or want) and start with it.*

Revised Sentence:  Walking quickly to the movies, Katie was excited to see the new Transformers.

Revised Sentence:  Wanting to see the new Transformers, Katie walked briskly to the movies.

---*To use a dependent clause. Create a cause and effect relationship or compare/contrast*

Revised Sentence:  Because Katie wanted to see the new Transformers, she walked quickly to the movies.

Old Sentence:  She saw the lights across the bay.

---*To use a preposition take out the prep phase and put it at the beginning.*

Revised Sentence:  Across the bay, she saw the lights.