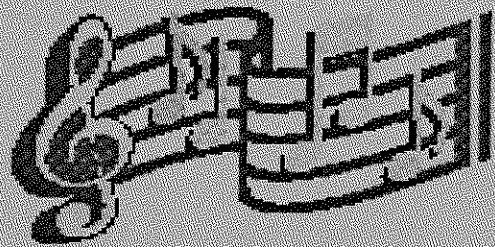


Sentence Fluency

- ♦ Graceful, easy to read aloud
- ♦ Natural sounding
- ♦ Variety in length and type/structure that creates a pleasant rhythm
- ♦ clear
- ♦ Effective, smooth phrasing
- ♦ Effective use of sign posts/conjunctions and transitions



Sentence Fluency is the rhythm and flow of the language the sound of word patterns, the way in which the writing plays to the ear—not just to the eye. How does it sound when read aloud? That's the test. Fluent writing has cadence, power, rhythm, and movement. It is free of awkward word patterns that slow the reader's progress. Sentences vary in length and style, and are so well crafted that reading aloud is a pleasure.







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Summer 2004

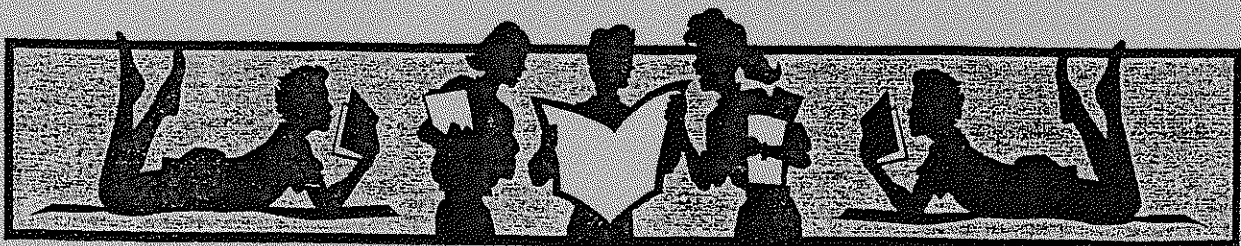
SENTENCE FLUENCY

What to look for. . .

-  Experimenting with word strings to form sentences
-  Rudimentary sentences - subject and verb
-  Use of more complex sentences
-  Multiple sentences with different beginnings, varied lengths
-  Rhythm, cadence in oral or written language
-  Long and short sentences

To reinforce SENTENCE FLUENCY, YOU COULD SAY. . .

-  I read this aloud and I love the sound of it!
-  You seem to know what a sentence is - good for you!
-  You have a long sentence, then a short one-I like that.
-  Your sentences begin in different ways - that's great.
-  I like this phrase - After a while - it helps me understand when things happened.
-  Listen to this piece (read a fluent piece aloud). Now, listen to this one (read the same one chopped into 3- or 4-word sentences that all begin the same way). Do you hear a difference? Which one do you like?
-  Here's one of my favorite pieces (choose one to read aloud). I think it has rhythm. See if you hear it, too.



Sentence Fluency

Clarity. Clarity. Clarity. When you become hopelessly mired in a sentence, it is best to start fresh . . .

—Strunk and White
The Elements of Style

Read what you write aloud and **listen to the rhythm of the language**. Do you like what you hear? Does it make you sit up and take notice, or are you lulled to sleep by the sing-song sameness of each sentence pattern? Writers who read a lot notice that they develop a feeling for sentences that some people call "sentence sense." It's that sense that there's more than one way to say a thing—but some ways just sound better than others.

Your sentences should be clear; they should make sense. **Cut the deadwood**. Don't say: "At this point in time, we feel we are about ready to begin to fight." Say, "Now we're ready to fight." Make every word work hard and your sentences will be powerful, full of punch.

Notice how your sentences begin. These beginnings are repetitive and boring: "We went to the beach. We had fun. We saw seagulls. We went home." Yawn! Vary the openings and combine very short sentences: "Despite being overrun with pesky seagulls, we had fun at the beach."

Don't let sentences drift on too long, either. If a sentence feels unwieldy, out of control, slice it in half. Make two sentences. As William Zinsser tells us, "There is no minimum length for a sentence that's acceptable . . . Among good writers it is the short sentence that predominates."

Read your work aloud and listen to the rhythm and flow of the words. Does the fluency match the mood and content? Long and flowing where the piece is descriptive and thoughtful; short and snappy where you need to make a point.

To write is to write is to write is to write is to write is to write is to write is to write.

—Gertrude Stein

1. I live in a house.
2. The house is made of brick.
3. The brick is red.
4. The house has a garage.
5. The garage is brown.
6. The garage is made of wood.
7. There is a fence.
8. The fence is high.
9. The fence goes around the house.
10. I like the backyard.
11. The backyard has trees.
12. The trees have oranges.
13. The backyard has grass.
14. The backyard has plants.
15. The backyard has flowers.
16. The flowers are colorful.

6+1 Traits of Writing

Suggested steps on how to introduce and teach the individual traits.

By Jim Blasingame

1. Start class with a warm up that introduces the concept.

Think of this as an anticipatory set, an attention grabber that engages the students without even telling them yet the trait or trait focus.

2. Illustrate it through interesting literature or other age-appropriate written product.

3. Do hands-on activities to help students understand what it is and how to improve it in their own writing.

This is guided practice: an exercise that specifically breaks the trait down into its components and shows them how to manipulate these components.

4. Guide them through the analysis of anonymous sample papers.

5. Follow with a writing assignment that facilitates that trait.

6. Use the 6-trait rubric to provide useful feedback.

7. Guide students through revising their papers based on that feedback.

8. Use a pre-identified rubric to assign a grade to the paper.



Eleven by Sandra Cisneros

What they don't understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don't. You open your eyes and every-thing's just like yesterday, only it's today. And you don't feel eleven at all. You feel like you're still ten. And you are — underneath the year that makes you eleven.

Like some days you might say something stupid, and that's the part of you that's still ten. Or maybe some days you might need to sit on your mama's lap because you're scared, and that's the part of you that's five. And maybe one day when you're all grown up maybe you will need to cry like if you're three, and that's okay. That's what I tell Mama when she's sad and needs to cry. Maybe she's feeling three.

Because the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other, each year inside the next one. That's how being eleven years old is.

You don't feel eleven. Not right away. It takes a few days, weeks even, sometimes even months before you say Eleven when they ask you. And you don't feel smart eleven, not until you're almost twelve. That's the way it is.

Only today I wish I didn't have only eleven years rattling inside me like pennies in a tin Band-Aid box. Today I wish I was one hundred and two instead of

eleven because if I was one hundred and two I'd have known what to say when Mrs. Price put the red sweater on my desk. I would've known how to tell her it wasn't mine instead of just sitting there with that look on my face and nothing coming out of my mouth.

"Whose is this?" Mrs. Price says, and she holds the red sweater up in the air for all the class to see. "Whose? It's been sitting in the coatroom for a month."

"Not mine," says everybody. "Not me."

"It has to belong to somebody," Mrs. Price keeps saying, but nobody can remember. It's an ugly sweater with red plastic buttons and a collar and sleeves all stretched out like you could use it for a jump rope. It's maybe a thousand years old and even if it belonged to me I wouldn't say so.

Maybe because I'm skinny, maybe because she doesn't like me, that stupid Sylvia Saldivar says, "I think it belongs to Rachel." An ugly sweater like that, all raggedy and old, but Mrs. Price believes her. Mrs. Price takes the sweater and puts it right on my desk, but when I open my mouth nothing comes out.

"That's not, I don't, you're not...Not mine," I finally say in a little voice that was maybe me when I was four.

"Of course it's yours," Mrs. Price says. "I remember you wearing it once." Because she's older and the teacher, she's right and I'm not.

Not mine, not mine, not mine, but Mrs. Price is already turning to page thirty-two, and math problem number four. I don't know why, but all of a sudden I'm feeling sick inside, like the part of me that's three wants to



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Located in: Sandra Cisneros; *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*; New York, NY: Vintage Contemporaries, Vintage Books, a division of Random House, Inc.; 1991; pages 6-9. *Reading the Lines*

come out of my eyes, only I squeeze them shut tight and bite down on my teeth real hard and try to remember today I am eleven, eleven. Mama is making a cake for me for tonight, and when Papa comes home, everybody will sing Happy birthday, happy birthday to you.

But when the sick feeling goes away and I open my eyes, the red sweater's still sitting there like a big red mountain. I move the red sweater to the corner of my desk with my ruler. I move my pencil and books and eraser as far from it as possible. I even move my chair a little to the right. Not mine, not mine, not mine.

In my head I'm thinking how long till lunchtime, how long till I can take the red sweater and throw it over the schoolyard fence, or leave it hanging on a parking meter, or bunch it up into a little ball and toss it in the alley. Except when math period ends, Mrs. Price says loud and in front of everybody, "Now Rachel, that's enough," because she sees I've shoved the red sweater to the tippy-tip corner of my desk and it's hanging all over the edge like a waterfall, but I don't care.

"Rachel," Mrs. Price says. She says it like she's getting mad. "You put that sweater on right now and no more nonsense."

"But it's not—"

"Now!" Mrs. Price says.

This is when I wish I wasn't eleven, because all the years inside of me—ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one—are pushing at the back of my eyes when I put one arm through one sleeve of the sweater that smells like cottage cheese, and then the other arm through the other and stand there with my arms apart like

if the sweater hurts me and it does, all itchy and full of germs that aren't even mine.

That's when everything I've been holding in since this morning, since when Mrs. Price put the sweater on my desk, finally lets go, and all of a sudden I'm crying in front of everybody. I wish I was invisible, but today I'm not. I'm eleven and it's my birthday today and I'm crying like I'm three in front of everybody. I put my head down on the desk and bury my face in my stupid clown-sweater arms. My face all hot and spit coming out of my mouth because I can't stop the little animal noises from coming out of me, until there aren't any more tears left in my eyes, and it's just my body shaking like when you have the hiccups, and my whole head hurts like when you drink milk too fast.

But the worst part is right before the bell rings for lunch. That stupid Phyllis Lopez, who is even dumber than Sylvia Saldivar, says she remembers the red sweater is hers! I take it off right away and give it to her, only Mrs. Price pretends like everything's OK.

Today I'm eleven. There's a cake Mama's making for tonight, and when Papa comes home from work, we'll eat it. There'll be candles and presents, and everybody will sing Happy birthday, happy birthday to you, Rachel, only it's too late.

I'm eleven today. I'm eleven, ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one, but I wish I was one hundred and two. I wish I was anything but eleven, because I want today to be far away already, far away like a runaway balloon, like a tiny *o* in the sky, so tiny-tiny you have to close your eyes to see it.



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Located in: Sandra Cisneros; *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*; New York: NY: Vintage Contemporaries, Vintage Books, a division of Random House, Inc.; 1991; pages 6-9.

Reading the Lines

Sentence Fluency

①Read it aloud. Is it easy to do? Do you have to pause anywhere? If you do, take a second look. How could you smooth out the bumps?

②Hear it in another voice. Have someone read it to you. Listen to your paper. Is it easy on the ear? Do you like the sound? Does the reader have an easy time? Does s/he stumble? Fumble? Re-read? If so, you need to smooth some wrinkles.

③Check out the first 4. Get a sheet of paper. Write out the first 4 words of every sentence in your paper. See BIG DIFFERENCES? Great! That's what you want: variety. See a PATTERN? Not so good. See if you can begin in different ways.

④Get the shorties. Got a lot of very short choppy sentences? *We went to the beach. It was fun. We met friends. We stayed all day. We had lunch. The day went fast. We went home.* (Chop, chop, chop, blah, blah, blah...)

Try combining: Last Saturday, we met friends at the beach for some kite flying fun. The day went so fast, it seemed we had just finished the last bite of our fish and chips lunch when it was time to pile in the car for home.

⑤Sentence stretching. Start with a short sentence or group of words. Pass it around to about 6 people, with the rule that each person must add or change ONE word to make the sentence more specific and interesting: *She ate dinner* became, for some first graders, *A hungry ballerina gobbled her sloppy green soup.* Sixth graders turned it into: *A ravenous sow slurped mush and slop with uncouth gulps.*

-Marjorie Frank, *If You're Trying to Teach Kids to Write, You've Gotta Have This Book*

⑥Long sentence, short sentence. Writers often learn pacing instinctively through their reading, but teachers can help by pointing out the rhythm of sentences. Have students write about a dramatic moment in a horror story when their character is about to discover something scary...begin their

writing with 1 or 2 long sentences and end the paragraph with 3 short sentences. Example: *Giles walked into the hallway, noticing the crystal chandeliers, the gilded wallpaper, the polished imitation marble tiled floor that appeared to be waxed this morning. The scream pierced his brain. He turned to the door. The bullet zipped past his ear. Fear.*

-Barry Lane, *After the End*

⑦A possible sequence of sentence-combining exercises for grades 3-6.

Grade 3:

1. Inserting adjectives and adverbs
2. Producing compound subjects and objects
3. Producing compound subjects and objects with pronouns

Grade 4:

1. Producing compound sentences with *and* and *but*
2. Producing parallel sequences
3. Producing possessive nouns
4. Producing sentences with adverbial clauses using connecting words such as *because*, *after*, *until*, and *when*

Grades 5 and 6:

1. Producing sentences with relative clauses
2. Inserting participial phrases
3. Inserting appositives
4. Multiple combinations (with more than 1 possible answer)

-Irene Thomas, *Practical Ideas*



SENTENCE FLUENCY

*Any activity that allows students to practice . . .
developing an ear by reading aloud
practicing free-writing to make writing flow
using choral reading to hear phrasing
writing poetry
playing with sentences*

1. People Sentences

Print individual words or short phrases (e.g., laughing like crazy, behind the barn, careening around the corner, Jonas and Isabella began, just then, etc.) on large cards, and deal them to students. Ask them to form sentences by lining up with the cards showing face out. Move students around to change the results. Ask observers to read aloud as the players move. Discuss which phrases are movable and which are not and WHY. See if students can figure out for themselves which people (cards) can be eliminated without ruining the sentence.

2. Choral Reading

Nothing helps kids see the difference a pause or inflection can make than to try to read a passage or poem aloud with other people—simultaneously. They have to carefully plan where to breathe, stop, start, raise, and lower their voices. They must study the text for clues that will help them decide how best to read the sentence or phrase. This is a terrific place to use some of your favorite poetry. One of mine is Paul Fleishman's *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices*.



3. Hunt for the Longest and Shortest

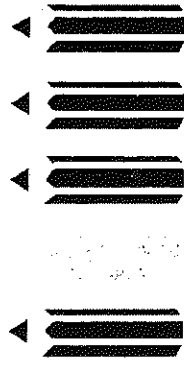
Give students a stack of books—texts as well as novels, and comb through them for the longest sentence they can find. Once small groups have found some, read them aloud. Whose sentence is long, but still makes sense? Whose doesn't? Now do the same thing with the shortest sentence. Chances are, someone will come up with the idea that one word is sometimes used as a complete sentence. What do you think—is it or isn't it? This is a good time to discuss the basics of what sentences are and aren't and how fragments and other devices are used for stylistic effect.

4. Grammar Crammer

Give students 4-5 well-constructed sentences. Ask them to take out all the prepositional phrases and read back what is left. (If they don't know what prepositional phrases are—this is a teachable moment!) Then ask them to take out all the adverbial phrases. (Don't know what those are? This is the teachable moment!) Now go after adjectives, conjunctions, adverbs, articles, and finally the verbs and nouns. At each step, ask the students when the sentence stops becoming a sentence. And when is it just a shorter sentence?



Six Trait Writing Warm-Ups



Trait #5: Sentence Fluency

Preparation

Exercise

Follow-up

| | | | |
|----|---|---|--|
| 1. | A selection from a basal pre primer and a selection from a good anthology | Read each aloud. Ask which is more enjoyable to listen to. Ask why. (direct discussion toward choppy vs. smooth) | Point out how adding some longer sentences makes the selection read smoother |
| 2. | A few limericks | Read the limericks aloud. Ask what makes them fun to listen to and read. | Talk about how writing can "flow" easily. |
| 3. | A few nursery rhymes (display on overhead or have copies for each child) | Read the rhymes chorally. Ask what makes them easy to read aloud together. Emphasize the flow | Talk about how words can fit together in an easy way. |
| 4. | Display a selection (from your collection) full of sentence fragments. | Ask students what's wrong with the selection. Then ask them to help you rewrite the selection making complete sentences. Read it aloud and have the children compare the way it sounded before and after. | Talk about importance of sentence structure. |
| 5. | Display a selection full of short (3 and 4 word) sentence; i.e., We came home. We ate cookies. We played games...etc. | Write on the board: "After school, we rode our bikes home and shared a plate of homemade chocolate chip cookies. Then we decided to play a quick game of Chinese Checkers followed by our favorite, Monopoly." Ask students which sounds better and why.. | Talk about ways to make sentences flow better. |

| | | | |
|-----|--|---|---|
| 6. | Display a sentence with too many adjectives and/or too long a listing of objects. | Ask students to help you rewrite the sentence as two or three more manageable sentences. See if these read more easily. | Point out the need not to cram too much into one sentence. |
| 7. | Display an example of good sentence fluency (from your collection). | Have children count the words in each sentence. Ask them what they notice about the sentence lengths. | Talk about the need to vary sentence lengths. |
| 8. | Display an example of poor sentence fluency (from your collection). | Ask children to help you rewrite it, varying sentence lengths. See if that improves it. | Point out how varying sentence lengths can improve writing. |
| 9. | Display a selection (from your collection) in which many of the sentences begin in the same way. | Ask students what they notice. Ask them how it could be improved. Ask them to help you rewrite it. Compare how the two versions sound when read aloud. | Point out the need for variety in sentence beginnings. |
| 10. | Display a selection (from your collection) of an "endless sentence." (and, and, and...) | Ask students what's wrong with it and then ask for suggestions as to how to break it up into manageable sentences. Ask why it's important in good writing not to go on and on and on. | Emphasize that longer is not always better. |

IDEAS AND STRATEGIES

SENTENCE FLUENCY

1. Read lots and lots of poetry picture books aloud and ask—"What makes language flow?" Make a list of ideas and find examples of prose picture books with good fluency.
2. Type the text of a picture book without any sentence breaks and then rewrite it showing the natural fluency through sentences.
3. Make a list of sentence beginnings that show variety.
4. Tell a story/explain a concept aloud before you try to write it. Ask a partner to write down the beginnings of each of your sentences as you speak.
5. Choral Reading—Nothing helps kids see the difference a pause or inflection can make than to try and read a passage or poem aloud with other people—simultaneously. They have to carefully plan where to breathe, stop, start, raise, and lower their voices. They must study the text for clues that will help them decide how best to read the sentence or phrase. This is a terrific place to use some of your favorite poetry. One of mine is Paul Fleishman's *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices*.
6. Hunt for the Longest and Shortest—Give students a stack of books—texts as well as novels, and comb through them for the longest sentence they can find. Once small groups have found some, read them aloud. Whose sentence is long, but still makes sense? Whose doesn't? Now do the same thing with the shortest sentence. Chances are, someone will come up with the idea that one word is sometimes used as a complete sentence. What do you think—is it or isn't it? This is a good time to discuss the basics of what sentences are and aren't and how fragments and other devices are used for stylistic effect.
7. Share rhythmic language that's fun to read aloud. Poetry is an excellent choice, but be sure the rhymes are creative and the language natural. Some poems work so hard at rhyming that much of the natural flow is lost. Rehearse. Read it aloud before you share it with students, so it will feel natural. Remember that some prose pieces have wonderful rhythm, too. Hearing good language read aloud builds fluency even with young writers who are themselves not ready to begin writing sentences.
8. Share two versions of writing with the same content but a very different sound. Write one with short, choppy sentences: *We went to the beach. It was sunny. It was warm. We had fun. We flew kites. We ate snacks.* VERSUS: *We spent a warm, sunny day at the beach eating snacks and flying kites.* Ask students which they prefer and why. You may need to share a number of examples before students begin to hear the differences. Keep sharing. Keep asking.
9. Play the sentence-building game; you can do this on the board or just orally. Have students choose a topic: money, baseball, school, cats, etc. Then you come up with sentence beginnings and ask them to finish each sentence. Give them only one sentence beginning at a time. The only rule is you have to make up a complete sentence. For instance, you might come up with the beginning, "In the morning..." When students add their ending, the sentence might turn into, "In the morning, our cat is hungry." The purpose of this game is to help students become aware that sentences can begin in many ways. So use your imagination to come up with lots of variety. Use six or seven beginnings or more each time you play. Variation: Let them give YOU the beginnings, and you come up with the answers by completing the sentences.

Awareness of Audience:

10. The single strongest strategy is to provide students with opportunities to write to a variety of audiences: parent, newspaper, businesses, friends, teachers, etc. Look for those "teachable moments" as they arise where students can write for a real purpose and audience such as: solving a playground problem, suggesting a change in the lunchroom, responding to a community issue, etc.
11. Take a list of very specific audiences (such as: principal, friend, parent), topics (such as: problem, solution, idea), and forms (such as: friendly letters, letter of complaint). Have students mix and match them. Students are to write with an appropriate voice for the combination they have selected.

Transitions:

12. Post classroom rules that prohibit the use of weak transition words such as: and, so, then or any combination of them used at the beginning of a sentence. This nudges students to investigate new words and evaluate the use of transitions.



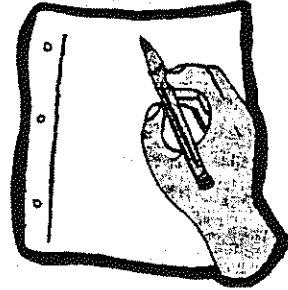
Examples of enhanced sentence fluency to share with your students.

- ✓ In yesteryear, when Moby Dick was just a tadpole and the seas rolled and thundered over the jetties and onto the shore...
- ✓ In my old battered black wallet I carry many things. A letter from a friend. My lunch ticket. My social security card. Many other tidbits and items as well. There is one thing, however, which I prize above all my possessions. It is a photograph. It's small, and the photographer was not good. That does not matter. What matters is the person in the photograph. His name is Brian Sizemore.

Sentence Fluency

Simple to more Complex Activity:

- ❖ Sue played ball.
- ❖ Sue played volleyball.



Rewrite sentence so it has distinct meaning with flow.

Story Rewrite

Rewrite the following story so that the meaning is clear and the sentences flow.

Before I go out into the game of life, I need to find out my strengths and weaknesses. So I can find out what I want from life. I see where it is that it is going to take me where I want to go.

Life is a game. If you play it that way it's harder to get over your head. Every little thing I do adds up to who I am. If I keep my toes up the rest should follow.

Sentence Combining Activities

The dog hurried across the street.

The dog was attempting to avoid the car.

Attempting to avoid the car, the dog hurried across the street.

⇒ Combine the following short sentences into one.

Sam played the piano.

Sam played the sonata on the piano.

The sonata was in a key.

The key was minor.

The sonata was melodic.

The sonata was short.

The piano was an upright.

The piano was in the den.

Sentence Embedding Activities

Experiment with embedding by inserting the following sentences into the base sentence:

The gentleman would have struck me as a celebrity.

He was a man of fifty.

He was very high and very straight.

His moustache was slightly grizzled.

A dark grey walking-coat fitted him admirably.

I noted both professionally.

I don't mean as a barber that I noted him professionally.

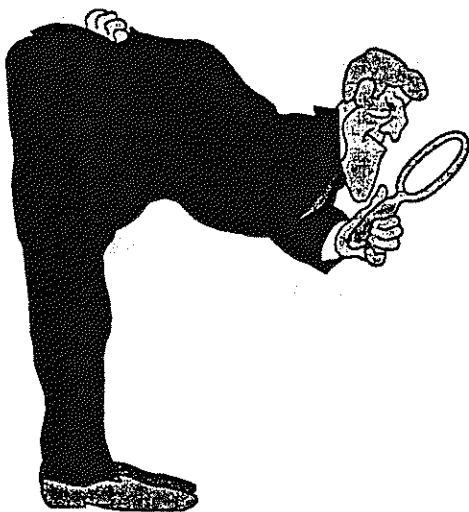
I don't mean as a tailor I noted him professionally.

The Bus Stop

Each morning I ride the bus to school. I wait along with the other people who ride my bus. Sometimes the bus is late and we get angry. Some guys start fights and stuff just to have something to do. I'm always glad when the bus finally comes.

Test Yourself . . .

Cutting the fat from your writing may not be as easy as it sounds. Take out your word cleaver and try your hand at simplifying the sentences below by eliminating unneeded words. Do no rewriting, except perhaps to supply one word to replace several:



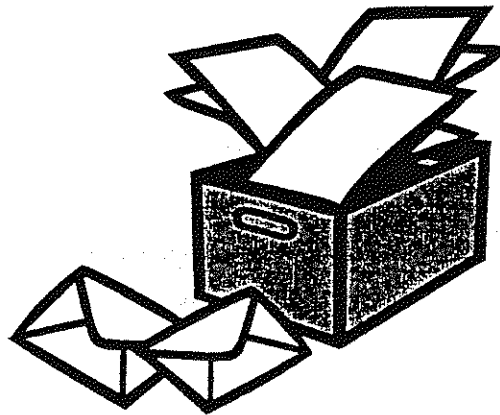
1. The stadium has ample parking space available for fans' automobiles.
2. There is no easy shortcut to learning how to play the game of bridge.
3. In the appendix in the back of the book you will find a complete list of all references to the author's earlier previous works.
4. The ability to express yourself well by means of the written word is an essential skill to have if you want to be successful in business.
5. She joined the company at a higher salary level than she had expected to receive at the time when she made application for the position.
6. Let's have a discussion on this particular issue sometime at a later date.
7. His first fiction novel was not a successful book in terms of sales, but after his second made the best-seller list, the first began to sell better than it had done previously.



Sentence Fluency Activity #2, Contin

8. It is necessary for all of the fire extinguishers in the entire complex to be inspected on a monthly basis.
9. In the very beginning, a diet and exercise program might not produce the results you expected from the start, but don't become discouraged.
10. There were a number of very important issues that were brought up and thoroughly discussed in detail during the meeting.

The Write Way . . . The S. P. E. L. L. Guide to Real-Life Writing
Richard Lederer and Richard Davis



Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to you in response to a matter I feel is crucial to the survival of democracy and to the continuation of Western thought. I ask, beg rather, that the brilliant individual who created the Alaska Writing Assessment topic be immortalized for all time in a US postage stamp.

Perhaps you have no rue comprehension of how much this soul-searching question has affected my life. I believe, in all sincerity, that this question managed to awake in my deadened young mind the infinite wonder of the universe. To even the smallest of minds, this question is one of awesome scope and emotional depth. Dear friends, who should be on a postage stamp? This ancient question raises bewilderment and reverence. What are childish questions like, "What is reality?" and "What is the good?" compared with "Who should be on a postage stamp?"

There are many irrelevant issues in modern America such as the democratic ideals of natural rights, racial equality, and morality. Most people would have chosen a question dealing with these silly issues, or something like genetic ethics, abortion, or education. This man, however, has managed to cut off all the fat of modern America and get to the bone: postage stamps. He should be honored, adored even. He has opened the hearts and minds of Alaskan youth with one question: Who should be on a postage stamp?

Postage stamps are the perfect representation of the American mind. They are so vital to existence! Obviously, the faces on stamps affect our nation tremendously.

You, my friends, control this vital artery of the American mainstream. You hold the power to put faces on stamps, and one man deserves it.

With his timeless question concerning stamps, he has proved himself worthy of being on one. I ask you to reward this genius, this saint, this great teacher. My friends, the man who created the Alaskan Writing Assessment Topic should be honored forever on a US postage stamp.

Thank you for your time.

Remembering Our Flag

Have you ever wondered about the American Flag? Well, close your eyes, and imagine.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Guns fire, and American Soldiers run. Screaming rings in everyone's ears. The enemies fall, one by one. In the end, after the dust clears, hundreds of dead soldiers lay revealed in the dirt, bloody from battle. Some live, unconscious. But through a sea of blood, bodies, and damaged equipment, the flag though ripped and torn, is still clutching the pole, flowing proudly in the faint breeze. If the enemy brought their flag, it is gone for it is clearly nowhere to be seen. The national anthem is lingering in the dust, and it's rhythm pulses through the survivors blood. Ah, victory at last!!!

Imagine. Just imagine the Fourth of July. Why do we celebrate such a holiday? How about Christmas? Thanksgiving? Can you feel the flag? Do you feel the soldiers pain when you touch it, yet you feel great pride? Can you smell the flag's glorious scents? Smell any BBQ? Do you taste any? Well, when you listen to the flag do you hear the soldier's piercing screams of pain, backed up by booming gunshots? The next time you look at a flag, do me a favor and ask yourself What does it mean to me?

Grade 5

Tennessee Dawn Mountains

Colors. Streaming out from the slither of sun barely peeking over the pine. Pine trees swaying in the gentle breeze. Dawn is reaching over the mountains. The Brook. Welcoming Dawn with low murmur as it dances through the steep mountains reaching the clouds. Puffy white clouds. Parting so that you can see the sun wriggle to announce a new morn. I smile, the ends of my mouth turn up ear to ear. I smile at my invisible friend. She is mine. Only visible to me! Squelch. Squelching through moss. Muddy, cold, wet. Little splashes under our feet. Chirping. Chirping crickets. A chirping hum. Crickets hopping around my feet. Honey bees. Bees making honey. The sweet odor dancing around me. Making me long for it. Long to taste the sweet liquid run through my mouth and down my throat. Mountains. Steep purple mountains. Standing tall against the purple, and pink, and yellow, orange, sky. Birds tweet. Swooping through the sky. Bringing worms wriggling to be free. All is quiet except—thump, thumpity-thump. My heart bumping in the silence. In the stillness. No wait, not my heart. The ground trembles from running. A horse. It's brown coat glimmering in the sun light. Wishing, wanting to jump the fence to gallop off into the wilderness. Mane whipping in the wind. The sun is high in the sky now, and everything is pulling me. Pulling me to go home DO I have to? The warmth of the July air turns me around pointing me to the cabin. The sun has made it. Made it. Made it to a new day.

Writein Will

One day there was a seven year old boy called Will. He loved to write. In his life he has made ten great books. They read them every day in school. But there was a kid who hated Will. He was called Eric. He decided to make bigger stories than Will, using 14 pages of his draft book. Now that for Will was a problem. So, to get things back to normal he used whole draft books. The war began. Will used 5 draft books. Eric used 10. Will used so many because he was behind that he used 100 draft books. Eric only used 20 draft books. Will patted Eric on the shoulder and said Eric I wish we were friends. The war stopped. They became friends.



Grade 1

New School Equipment

I feel that education is a thing a person should be made to this school. I think that changes should be made to this school. This school needs stuff like new books, new computers, new heather, new chars, and new overheads.

I think schools need new book. If the schools had new books the words would be easy to see. In the new books pages would not be missing from the books. The new books would have ckrit arenas.

I feel that new computers would help the students a lot. A new computer would be like a new library. New computers could help the students with all subjects. Computer can help with all subjects. You can find info on the web with a computer.

The schools need more new overheads for teachers. The new overheads would help with group stuff. I think the school needs new overheads seeds overheads brace quick. New overheads would help teacher get there point across.

I think if we got the stuff I said education would double.



There are numerous things that I will want to remember when I am old. I will want to remember everything; all the joy and pain of life. Without one, the other cannot exist. My life is scattered with both joyous and painful moments, but what I'd most like to remember is the bittersweet summer of my fifth year. It was the summer before my father died; probably the last time I can recall being truly innocent and happy.

The memories still float back to me—the green smell of blue-skied mornings and wet grass bending underfoot. That summer I stopped caring about keeping clean. I was brown with sun and mud, smudges of it across my face. I dug a hole in a strawberry patch, filled it with hose water and lobelia buds. It was my cauldron, and I stirred it with a stick. Sometimes I would stand in it, enjoying the feel of mud and sunken vegetation squoozed up between my toes. Knee-deep in dirt, my feet planted firmly in earth, I was a child-weed creature.

I buried a blessing for the strawberries that year, in the hopes that they would be ripe, sweet, and bigger than any before. I wrote this on a scrap of drawing paper and stuffed it into a 25-cent gumball machine egg along with a strawberry leaf. I swore it worked.

Years after I would become fascinated with aging. What became of the past—concrete fragments of it? I dug mole hills in the garden, trying to exhume my offering, to see if it was still there; if the worms had gotten to it. If it had changed. I tried, with dirt-caked fingernails, to claw my way back. Back to the summer of my dirt-smudged face, ripe strawberries, and five-year-old voodoo. The summer of the fragrant night garden, still redolent of honeysuckle the night my father died.

I remember now. . . I still brought back columbine trumpets, horns of nectar for the guests to sip, even though the honeysuckle smell smothered, like death, and I felt as though I'd been kicked in the stomach. The sticky sweet oozed over my tongue, mingled with bruised petals, and everyone smiled through their tears at me because I was five, and it was summer, and what else was I supposed to do?

Grade 10

Creating a Readers Theater Script

Readers theater scripts are powerful tools for helping students to read and write reflectively. To create a script, writers must read carefully, weighing critical points against those less worthy of attention. They then need to craft language that sounds fluent when read aloud. They also need to stretch into inferential reasoning to determine how voices should sound and how a narrator might assist the mood through carefully chosen comments.

Scripts for Expository Learning

The following example came from a fourth-grade student. He was asked to write a report about Abraham Lincoln, and he promptly began groaning and exhibiting every avoidance behavior he had in his bag of tricks. When the assignment was reconfigured to "Write a readers theater script that you can perform with two friends," he was suddenly filled with enthusiasm and eagerly began researching and writing. What a change!

Example *Abraham Lincoln* by Brenden

NARRATOR #1: In 1890 Abraham Lincoln was born in a log cabin in Kentucky. He moved a lot as a child.

NARRATOR #2: When he was nine, his mother, and her aunt, and her uncle died leaving his father to take care of Abe, his sister, and his second cousin.

NARRATOR #1: A year later, Abe's father left on a trip and the kids were left at home for many weeks.

EVERYONE: When his father returned, he had a new wife.

NARRATOR #2: Abraham worked hard to learn to read and write. He was also a hard laborer. He cut wood and even worked on the Mississippi River.

Scripts for Novels and Picture Books

To create readers theater scripts with novels or picture books, students review the text to determine which events were most critical to the story line. They then review the narration and dialogue for each event and select the critical portions. It helps to work with photocopies of the text when they are at this stage so they can cross out and highlight as they discuss. Finally, they write their summaries of the dialogue and narration into a script.

Example *Cinderella* by Megan

STEPMOTHER: Cinderella! Get in here right now. The prince is about to arrive with the glass slipper for your sisters to try on and this place is a mess!

CINDERELLA: Yes. Of course I will help you.

NARRATOR #1: She said in a sweet and patient voice.

NARRATOR #2: As Cinderella entered the room, her hand closed around the glass slipper that was tucked safely into her apron pocket.

STEPMOTHER: While you are cleaning, be sure to start a fire and then hurry quickly to start a pot of tea. It is very important that you get done and get back to the kitchen with the cook. We wouldn't want you in the way when the prince arrives.

NARRATOR #1: She said with a sneer.

Introducing Reader's Theater

All: Reader's Theater...Reader's Theater...Reader's Theater

Reader 1: Reader's Theater

Reader 2: What is it?

Reader 3: It is reading.

Reader 4: Reading a script...

Reader 1: as a character...

Reader 2: as a storyteller.

Reader 3: It is theater...

Reader 4: that isn't memorized

Reader 1: and we can read more than one part...

Reader 2: by changing our voices.

Reader 3: Reader's Theater is...

Reader 4: an audience listening...

Reader 1: using imagination...

Reader 2: to picture the scenes.

Reader 3: It is theater

Reader 4: about people,

Reader 1: ordinary people,

Reader 2: whose lives are exciting

Reader 3: sad...

Reader 4: humdrum...

Reader 1: and strange.

Reader 2: Reader's Theater is entertaining.

Reader 3: It is acting with the voice...

Reader 4: without scenery...

Reader 1: makeup or props.

Reader 2: Reader's Theater is challenging.

Reader 3: Reader's Theater is the voice of the people

Reader 4: It is sharing literature.

All: Reader's Theater!



WHALES

by Gail Gibbons

WHALES

Reader 1: Whales live in oceans. They are not fish. They are air-breathing, warm-blooded mammals.

Reader 2: Some are small, and others are huge! The world's largest animals are whales.

Reader 3: The first ancestors of whales lived more than 50 million years ago.

Reader 4: Their fur was replaced by blubber to keep them warm. Blubber is a layer of fat between the skin and muscles.

Reader 5: Inside their flippers are bones arranged like those of a hand.

Reader 6: Whales' tails are called flukes. They don't look like fish tails. Whales push themselves through the water by moving their flukes up and down. They use their flippers for balance and turning.

Reader 7: Whales can't stay under water like fish. Beneath the surface they must hold their breath.

Reader 8: Before diving, whales breathe fresh air into their lungs through one or two nostrils on top of their heads. They are called blowholes.

Reader 1: When the whales surface, they blow out their wet, warm breath, making a spout.

Reader 2: When whales can't see well in dark and murky waters, they make clicking sounds. The sound waves travel and bounce off objects. Then they come back to whale's ears. This is called sonar or echolocation.

Reader 3: Some whales make other sounds, too. They resemble squeals, groans, chirps, and whistles like birds. Scientists believe that whales make these sounds to communicate with each other.

Reader 4: Some whales travel to cold waters to feed and live in the summer. Often they travel in groups, called pods. In the winter they go back to the warmer waters. This traveling is called migration.

Reader 5: In the warm waters, the females have babies. They can only have one baby at a time. A male is called a bull and a female is called a cow. A baby is called a calf.

Reader 6: There are two main kinds of whales. One group has teeth. They are called

toothed whales. Most toothed whale males are larger than the females.

Reader 7: A Pilot Whale is about 20 feet long.

Reader 8: The Narwhal has two teeth. In the males, one of the teeth grows into a long tusk.

Reader 1: A Beluga also called a White Whale, lives near the North Pole. It is about 18 feet long.

Reader 2: A Sperm Whale can stay under water for a very long time. It can be 65 feet long. It can dive down more than a half mile.

Reader 3: Toothed whales have only one blowhole.

Reader 4: The teeth are only for catching their food. They gulp down their food without chewing.

Reader 5: A Killer Whale also called an Orca, has sharp teeth. It eats fish, penguins, seals and even some of the bigger whales! It can be 30 feet long.

Reader 6: The other main group of whales has no teeth. Instead, they have long, fringed blades hanging from their upper jaws that strain their food from the water. The blades are called baleen, or whalebone.

Reader 7: Baleen whales eat fish and a mixture of tiny plants called plankton. In the plankton are shrimplike creatures called krill.

Reader 8: A Pygmy Right Whale is the smallest baleen whale. It's about 25 feet long.

Reader 1: The Minke Whale swims close to shore.

Reader 2: The Gray Whale has the longest migration route of 6,000 miles!

Reader 3: All baleen whales have two blowholes.

Reader 4: The female baleen whales are often larger than the males.

Reader 5: A Right Whale has a huge head and is about 55 feet long.

Reader 6: The Humpback Whale is known for its songs. It can make about 1,000 different sounds.

Reader 7: The Sei (say) Whale is about 60 feet long.

Reader 8: The Bowhead Whale has 15 foot long baleen.

Reader 1: Baleen whales are among the biggest of the whales.

Reader 2: Some baleen whales have grooves on their skin from their chin to their belly.

Reader 3: The Fin Whale is huge. It got its name from the hooked fin on its back.

Reader 4: A blue whale is the biggest creature that ever lived. It is even bigger than the dinosaurs. It is often 100 feet long and can weigh as much as 180 tons.

Reader 5: A baby blue whale is the biggest baby in the world. At birth it is about 25 feet long and can weigh 4,000 pounds.

Reader 6: A blue whale is so big that 50 people can stand on its tongue. A blue whale eats about 4,400 pounds of krill a day.

Reader 7: There used to be millions of whales in the oceans. For thousands of years they were hunted for their meat, hide, and bones.

Reader 8: About 200 years ago, whalers began hunting them even more for other products.

Reader 1: They used different parts of the whales to make lamp oil, soap, candles, and cosmetics.

Reader 2: The whalers used the baleen to make baggy whips, umbrellas, and stiffening for clothes.

Reader 3: Over the years, there were fewer and fewer whales.

Reader 4: People are worried about how small the whale population has become.

Reader 5: Some laws have been passed to protect them from being hunted.

Reader 6: Sometimes people go on whale watches to see these creatures in their natural home, the ocean.

Reader 7: Scientists have learned that there are about 100 different kinds of whales.

Reader 8: They are graceful and beautiful wonders of the sea.

If you have a Reader's Theater script that you would like to include on this page, submit it to me at readinglady1@aol.com.

Whales script sent in by Deb Smith.

Courtesy of www.readinglady.com

Preamble to the Constitution

A Choral Reading for a large group / Readers' Theater for 7 voices!

R1: The Constitution of the United States.

All: We the people

R1: The people:

R2: First the Native American,

R3: then a flood of Europeans immigrants,

R4: Africans,

R5: Middle Easterners,

R6: Asian peoples,

R7: South Americans

R1-7: and they keep on coming

All: We the people of the United States,

R1: The United States:

R2: ALL 50!

R3: From Portland, Maine west to Sacramento, California,

R4: from Fargo, North Dakota south to El Paso, Texas

R5: Alaska and Hawaii

All: We the people of the United States in order to form a more perfect Union,

R6: That Union seemed perfect, all of the colonies became states as well as the territories to the west,

R7: until the southern states seceded because they wanted States Rights.

R1: But the Civil War ended with a more perfect union of states based upon the belief that all Americans deserved the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

All: We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice,

R2: Even before the established United States, justice was valued.

R3: John Adams had actually defended the British in court after they had attacked and killed colonists during the Boston Massacre. Although he didn't believe in the British cause, he still believed justice was more important than retribution.

R4: Justice was ensured for Americans by following the fairness of John Adams in establishing a Court system beginning with local courthouses and moving up to the Supreme Court in Washington, D.C.

All: We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility,

R5: There have been times when our nation's tranquility has been disturbed.

R6: but in spite of Pearl Harbor, December 7th, 1941

R7: and as recent as the horror in New York City, Washington D.C. and Shanksville, Pennsylvania, September 11th, 2001.

R1-7: we still live in a stable and peaceful country.

All: We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense,

R2: The Air Force, No one comes close! Soar to new heights!

R3: The Army. Be all you can be! Be an army of one!

R4: The Navy, Welcome aboard; Anchors aweigh!

R1: The Coast Guard, Protecting America, It's our job everyday!

R5: and the Marines. The few, the proud. Semper Fi (Figh)!

All: We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare,

R7: People's basic needs must be met in a country.

R5: Needs for housing, education, and health care are overseen by our government system.

R6: Labor laws ensure that people work in safe environments and work to make pay fair for the jobs people do.

All: We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves

R1: Jefferson's promise of Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness came later for many of the peoples of our nation.

R2: African Americans did not share the rights of whites by law until the Emancipation Proclamation signed in 1863.

R3: Women did not share in the rights of men to vote or own property until 1920 when the Suffrage Act was ratified.

All: We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity,

R1: That's you and me!

R1-3: And our children!

R1-7: And our children's children!

All: We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

R5: The Constitution of the United States of America has stood the test of time.

R6: Although it was signed on September 17th, 1787, it still stands as a ruling document of laws, ensuring our rights and liberties that we still enjoy today.

R7: And so, let us proclaim once again for all the world to hear....

R1: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America.

All: We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Sources for Reader's Theatre

<http://www.aaronsherp.com/rt/>
<http://www.readers-theatre.com>
<http://www.geocities.com/EnchantedForest/Tower/3235>
<http://www.storycart.com>
<http://loiswalker.com/catalog/guidesamples.html>
<http://www.readinglady.com>
http://home.sprynet.com/~palermo/intr_rdio.htm
<http://home.sprynet.com/~palermo/radiokit.htm>

Phone Numbers

Reader's Theatre Script Service: www.readers-theatre.com
619-276-1948 Call for catalog. Has excellent scripts available from grades one through adult literacy. Reasonably priced.

Portage and Main Press. 100-318 McDermot Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3A 0A2 800-667-9673

Has at least 5 book collections of readers theater scripts from K through Grade 8.

Books/Collections of Scripts

A Reader's Theatre Treasury of Stories, by Win Braun (Calgary:

Braun & Braun, 2000). ISBN: 1-895805-30-9

Presenting Reader's Theatre, by Caroline Feller Bauer (H. W. Wilson, 1991)

Reader's Theatre for Beginning Readers, by Suzanne Barchers (Teachers Ideas Press, 1993)

The Best of Reader's Theater, Vols. I and II, by Lisa Blau (One from the Heart, 2000)

From Script to Stage (22 readers theater scripts from first grade through junior high school), by Aaron Shepherd.

Flower Awards (attach verse to long stem red rose)

Present to children following the play The Sunflower That Went Flop.
"Our seed of reading created a beautiful bloom!"

The Sunflower That Went Flop

Written by Joy Cowley - Adapted by Cynthia Lenz

Narrator: Mrs. Brown had sunflowers growing by the wall. They were straight and tall, and yellow as the sun. The people passing by looked at them.

Mrs. Smith: What beauties!

Sammy: They are gorgeous!

Narrator: Day after day the sunflowers stood tall by the wall, under the hot sun. Then, one afternoon, the sunflowers went FLOP! People passing by saw the sunflowers.

Mr. Jones: What a shame!

Sammy: How Sad.

Mrs. Smith: That's too bad!

Mrs. Brown: Oh no, my poor flowers.

Mr. Brown: What is it, my love?

Mrs. Brown: Our big yellow sunflowers went FLOP!

Mr. Brown: Don't get in a tizz. I'll fix it. I can fix anything.

Narrator: Mr. Brown called Mr. Sticky.

Mr. Brown: Mr. Sticky, can you stick up our sunflowers?

Mr. Sticky: I have my fix-it bag with sticky tape right here. I can fix your sunflowers.

Narrator: Mr. Sticky went stick, stick, stick and the sunflowers stood up by the wall again.

Mr. Sticky: There that should do it.

Mrs. Brown: What a clever man you are.

Mr. Brown: Think nothing of it, my love.

Mr. Sticky: It was easy!

Narrator: The sun was hot all day and the next afternoon, suddenly the sunflowers went FLOP>
People passing by saw them.

Sammy: Look at the sunflowers that went FLOP.

Mr. Jones: Isn't that too bad.

Mrs. Smith: What a shame.

Mrs. Brown: My poor sunflowers! Come, my love.

Mr. Brown: What is it, my love?

Mrs. Brown: Our sunflowers went FLOP again.

Mr. Brown: Don't get in a tizz. I'll fix it.

Narrator: Mr. Brown called Mrs. Needle.

Mr. Brown: Can you stitch up our sunflowers?

Mrs. Needle: Why yes, I think I can. Let me look in my fix it bag.

Narrator: Mrs. Needle went stitch, stitch, stitch and the sunflowers stood up by the wall again.

Mrs. Brown: What a clever man you are.

Mr. Brown: Think nothing of it, my love. It was easy.

Mrs. Needle: That's better.

Narrator: The sun was hot all day and the next afternoon, suddenly the sunflowers sent FLOP.
The people saw it.

Sammy: Just look at that.

Mr. Jones: What a shame.

Mrs. Smith: What a pity.

Mrs. Brown: OH dear, oh dear.

Mr. Brown: What is it, my love?

Mrs. Brown: Our sunflowers have gone FLOP again.
 Mr. Brown: Don't get in a tizz. I'll fix it. I can fix anything.
 Narrator: Mr. Brown called Mr. Hammer.
 Mr. Brown: Can you fix our sunflowers?
 Mr. Hammer: I can fix anything with my hammer. There that should do it.
 Narrator: Mr. Hammer went hammer, hammer, hammer, and stood the sunflowers up again.
 Mrs. Brown: What a clever man you are.
 Mr. Brown: Think nothing of it, my love. It was easy.
 Mr. Hammer: I knew I could fix it.
 Narrator: The sun was hot all day, and the next afternoon suddenly the sunflowers went FLOP.
 Again the people passing by saw the flowers.
 Mr. Jones: Look at the sunflowers. They went FLOP.
 Mrs. Smith: They flopped again, what a shame.
 Sammy: They have had it this time.
 Mrs. Brown: It's done it again. Our sunflowers flopped.
 Mr. Brown: OK, I guess I have to fix them but let's do it in the morning. I'm always best at
 Fixing things in the morning.
 Narrator: That night, something happened up in the sky.
 Father Cloud: I'm feeling so heavy. Some of you raindrops must fall down to earth.
 Little Raindrop 1: Oh please, let me go.
 Father Cloud: All right, but stay with the others. Don't forget to help out wherever you can.
 Little Raindrop 2: Wheeeee. Here I go.
 Sunflower 1: Welcome, little raindrop. We were hoping you'd see us.
 Sunflower 2: We're so glad to see you. We were feeling quite dry.
 Little Raindrop 3: I'm so happy to land where I'm needed. You look quite thirsty.
 Sunflower 3: Could you seep down to our roots? They've started to shrink.
 Sunflower 4: They'd support us much better if they all had a drink.
 Little Raindrop 1: I'll seep into the soil and do what I can.
 Narrator: That night it rained and rained. The sunflowers drank and drank. They grew straight
 And tall again. The next morning the people passing by looked at the sunflowers.
 Sammy: Oh, look at the sunflowers.
 Mr. Jones: The sunflowers look so tall today.
 Mrs. Smith: They look so beautiful.
 Mrs. Brown: My sunflowers, just look at my sunflowers. I don't know how you did it. You fixed
 Them, you really fixed my sunflowers. What a clever man you are.
 Mr. Brown: Think nothing of it, my love. It was easy.
 Narrator: As they looked at their beautiful sunflowers standing tall by the wall,
 they saw a beautiful rainbow in the sky.
 Mr. Brown: Look at the beautiful rainbow.
 Mrs. Brown: The seven colors of the rainbow.
 Red: Red is first, the first is red. Sunny rain showers make the color red.
 Orange: Orange is second, the second is orange. Sunny rain showers make the color orange.
 Yellow: Yellow is third, the third is yellow. Sunny rain showers make the color yellow.
 Green: Green is fourth, the fourth is green. Sunny rain showers make the color green.
 Blue: Blue is fifth, the fifth is blue. Sunny rain showers make the color blue.
 Indigo: Indigo is sixth, the sixth is indigo. Sunny rain showers make the color indigo.
 Violet: Violet is seventh, the seventh is violet. Sunny rain showers make the color violet.
 All Rainbow Colors: Sparkling prisms, arching in the sky - a lovely rainbow a feast for your eye.

Create a Readers Theater Script

Narrator #1: _____

Narrator #2: _____

Narrator #3: _____

Everyone: _____

6 +1 Traits™ of Writing Lesson Plan

SENTENCE FLUENCY

Name: Mary Schmidt

Date: 10/21/14

Grade Level/Course: English 9

Components of the Trait Addressed (Check any that apply):

SENTENCE FLUENCY

- ☐ Sentence structure underscores & enhances meaning
- ☐ Sentences vary in length and structure
- ☐ Purposeful and varied sentence beginnings
- ☐ Use of creative & appropriate connectives
- ☐ Writing has cadence; easy to read aloud

ADDITIONAL TRAIT(S)

Type of Writing (circle one):

Descriptive Narrative Imaginative Expository Persuasive Technical

Writing Prompt: Write a well-constructed sentence about each picture from either the perspective of a participant or an outside observer. No two sentences may begin in the same way. You must use at least 4 different sentence types (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex).

Book Title (optional): 101 Uses for a Dead Cat (Or any wordless book of cartoons)

Time Required: 45-60 minutes

What to Do/Materials/Preparation Needed:

- ⇒ Discuss characteristics of sentence fluency. Focus on "Purposeful and varied sentence beginnings add variety and energy" and "sentences vary in length as well as structure."
- ⇒ Complete sentence chart for JFK's Inaugural Address (1961). Discuss findings. How do varied sentence beginnings contribute to sentence fluency? What variety in length does the chart reveal and how does that contribute to fluency?
- ⇒ Explain procedure:
 - ⇒ Everyone gets a page from the book. Put the picture number on the paper and write a sentence about the picture.
 - ⇒ Pass the pictures. Put the number of your new picture on the paper and write another sentence.
 - ⇒ Continue until everyone has 15 sentences. Trade papers with a partner and fill out a new sentence chart.
 - ⇒ Discuss your findings with that partner. Make any changes in your sentences to improve the fluency and put all into a paragraph.

How does this activity connect to the trait(s)?

The component of this activity that signaled "traits" to me was the variety in sentence beginnings.

John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address (1961)

1 We observe today not a victory of party but a celebration of freedom--symbolizing an end as well as a beginning--signifying renewal as well as change. **2** For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forbears prescribed nearly a century and three-quarters ago.

3 The world is very different now. **4** For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. **5** And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe--the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.

6 We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. **7** Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans--born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage--and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.

8 Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

9 This much we pledge--and more.

10 To those old allies whose cultural and spiritual origins we share, we pledge the loyalty of faithful friends. **11** United there is little we cannot do in a host of cooperative ventures. **12** Divided there is little we can do--for we dare not meet a powerful challenge at odds and split asunder.

13 To those new states whom we welcome to the ranks of the free, we pledge our word that one form of colonial control shall not have passed away merely to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny. **14** We shall not always expect to find them supporting our view. **15** But we shall always hope to find them strongly supporting their own freedom--and to remember that, in the past, those who foolishly sought power by riding the back of the tiger ended up inside.

FLUENCY CHART

[illegible]

