

**The Struggling Writer**  
Far West GREAT Region  
El Paso, TX  
Research, Development, and Presentation  
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**Enhancing Writing Skills**

**Objectives**  
Teachers will be able to

- Understand the need to help students build a sense of self-efficacy when faced with writing assignments
- Identify specific grammatical elements that often cause students the greatest difficulty
- Assist students in writing effective sentences
- Assist students in writing effective paragraphs
- Use a variety of activities that encourage writing across content areas

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**Building Self-Efficacy**

**Self-Efficacy**  
A belief by learners that they can be successful when attempting new activities as learners.

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### Building Self-Efficacy

- **Strategy 1: Assessment**
  - Restructuring assessment to begin with informal before formal assessment such as TABE or CASAS
- **Strategy 2: Learning Styles and Special Needs**
  - Incorporating learning style inventories into the intake process and using the results to identify appropriate instructional strategies
- **Strategy 3: Recognition and Incentives**
  - Establishing a system for recognizing student achievement, such as student of the month, newsletters, posting writing samples
- **Strategy 4: Student Leadership**
  - Establishing opportunities for students to take a leadership role, such as peer teaching

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### Building Self-Efficacy

What can you do?

- Conduct Learning Styles Inventory
- Discuss the results with students
- Modify instruction to convey information in more than one way
- Set up students for success by teaching to their learning styles

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### Quality of Instruction

- Show relevance of what is being taught to learners' goals and needs
- Provide opportunities to build a sense of community in the classroom
- Build on learners' experiences
- Modify instruction to address student's learning styles and special needs
- Connect instructional objectives and curriculum to learner's goals
- Demonstrate respect and understanding of cultural diversity
- Engage students in actively planning and evaluating their own learning

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Enhancing Writing Skills



Specific Problems

- Word Choice
- Mechanics
- Subjects and Verbs that Don't Agree
- Pronoun Problems
- Short Choppy Sentences
- Long, Convoluted Sentences
- Paragraphs with no Pizzazz

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Enhancing Writing Skills

Problem Words

It's, Its	To, Too, Two	Who's, Whose
There, Their, They're	Have, Of	Lead, led
Where, Were	Than, Then	Lose, Loose
Now, Know, No	Affect, Effect	Accept, Except
Do, Due	That, Which, Who	Ensure, Insure

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Enhancing Writing Skills

Spelling  
(Homonyms)

My supervisor's decision effected everyone on the shift.

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**Time for a Reality Check!**

*Most of your check is going towards your gas expenses, especially if you drive a 6 or even an 8 cylinder car, this car 's waist more gas than a regular 4 cylinder.*  
 waist or waste?

*Finally, I feel I have accomplished alot more than before.*  
*Many people believe that having alot of money guarantees happiness.*  
 Would you use the word "alittle"?

*... its a good life on the border.*  
 Should you use its, its', or it's?

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**Enhancing Writing Skills**

Capitalization  
 Problems with apostrophes  
 Contractions  
 Possessives  
 Punctuation within quotation marks  
 Commas  
 Too many  
 Not enough  
 Not in the right place

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**Enhancing Writing Skills**

**Capitalization and Punctuation**

- Help readers interpret the structure of sentences
- Always used for a good reason

**Examples**

- I left him convinced he was a fool.
- I left him, convinced he was a fool.
- She is there now.
- She is there now?
- She is there now!

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Check Your Grammar

Capitalization

On new year's day in january 2002, the nobel peace prize was given to the famous french Citizen, sir arthur dyer.

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Check Your Grammar

Spelling  
(Possessives)

Marys sons thought that the resulting assets from the merger of the two companies resources were theirs' to invest.

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Check Your Grammar

Spelling  
(Contractions)

We have to decide whose going on the expedition based on seniority.

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Check Your Grammar

**Punctuation**  
**(Comma Overuse)**

**Because they want to be correct, sometimes, people put extra commas, in sentences, by mistake.**

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Check Your Grammar

**Punctuation**  
**(Commas in a Series)**

**Jessica thought she could finish writing her essay complete the grammar section of the test and get to her job on time.**

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Check Your Grammar

**Punctuation**  
**(Commas & Independent Clauses)**

**Nathan went to the local supermarket and he bought soup and crackers for supper.**

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Check Your Grammar

**Punctuation**  
**(Introductory Elements)**

**Although she was across the room from Timothy Nancy could see his warm smile.**

**In a memo to her staff Doris informed them of her retirement plans.**

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Check Your Grammar

**Punctuation**  
**(Appositives)**

**Mr. Jackson the president of the local business association went to the meeting.**

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Check Your Grammar

**Punctuation**  
**(Quotations)**

**Connie's sister, June, who is "twenty-four and still lives at home", is a thorn in Connie's side.**

**He shouted "You're fired".**

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**Time for a Reality Check!**

*Even though, student dont want to assist school, they go because if not they are sent to court.*

*in many other cases parents go to work and in order to have a better life in the future they also go to school.*

**What's missing?**

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**The Rules of Commas**

- L**ists (Use commas to separate lists of three or more items. The comma before the final item is optional.)
- I**ntroductions (Place a comma before elements that precede the subject.)
- E**xtra Information (Divide extra (non-essential) information of all kinds with a comma on each side of extra information.)
- S**entences (Divide independent clauses (sentences) with a comma and a conjunction.)

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**Make A Point!**

The following paragraph has no capital letters or periods to mark where sentences begin and end. Add capitals, periods, commas, and/or other punctuation that may be needed to make the word groups into complete sentences.

my brother was always my best friend when I was a child especially as we two were almost alone in the world we lived with our old grandmother in a little house, almost a shack, in the country whenever I think of him now I see a solemn, responsible boy a boy too old for his years who looked out for me no matter what once there was a bully john anson who looked enormous to me though he was probably an average twelve-year-old John had it in for me because he liked littice Grant who liked me he decided to beat me up right before her eyes I was lucky my brother came by he didn't interfere any he just stood there somehow though his presence gave me confidence I licked the stuffing out of john Anson if my brother hadn't been there I don't think I could have done it.

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Enhancing Writing Skills

What Errors in Usage Do You See?

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Enhancing Writing Skills

Usage

- Subject-Verb Agreement
  - Agreement in number
  - Interrupting phrases
- Verb Tense Errors
  - Sequence of tenses
  - Word clue to tense in sentence or paragraph
- Pronoun Reference
  - Wrong pronoun
  - Pronoun shift
  - Vague or ambiguous reference
  - Agreement with antecedent

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Check Your Grammar

Agreement in Number

The climate in both places are mild.

Neither Mary nor her brothers knows what happened.

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Check Your Grammar

**Interrupting Phrases**

**The teacher of adult education,  
alternative education, and ESL are  
here.**

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Check Your Grammar

**Verb Tense Errors (Sequence)**

**We will appreciate your attendance and  
look forward to seeing you again.**

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Check Your Grammar

**Verb Tense Errors  
(Word Clues)**

**Yesterday, Tom will get his mother a new  
coat.**

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Check Your Grammar

**Pronoun Reference  
(Wrong Pronoun)**

Joyce came to the house to see  
Kyle and I.

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Check Your Grammar

**Pronoun Reference  
(Pronoun Shift)**

If one wants something important out of  
life, you must get it.

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Check Your Grammar

**Pronoun Reference  
(Ambiguous Reference)**

Samantha thanked Jerilyn when she  
received her degree.

*Who received the degree?*

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Check Your Grammar

**Pronoun Reference  
(Agreement with Antecedent)**

**When writing an essay, everyone performs  
at the best of their ability.**

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**Time for a Reality Check!**

*Even though, student dont want to assist school, they go because  
if not they are sent to court.*

*For example, if you were to leave your kids at home  
many dangerous things can happen.*

*So now I will continue to do good for the sake of my family and I.*

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Enhancing Writing Skills

**Sentence Structure**

- **Sentence fragments**
- **Run-on sentences**
- **Comma splice**
- **Dangling modifiers**
- **Parallelism**

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Check Your Grammar

**Sentence Fragment**

**Because she was new in town and had not met any of her neighbors.**

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Check Your Grammar

**Run-On Sentence**

**He used to work at Burger Palace now he works at Taco Land.**

**(Correctly punctuated, but difficult to understand.)**

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Check Your Grammar

**Comma Splice**

**We all watched *Titanic*, it was a great movie!**

**Sharon was overwhelmed with work, she was able to complete everything before she left the office.**

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Check Your Grammar

Parallelism

He likes to listen to music, to watch movies and going swimming.

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Check Your Grammar

Dangling Modifier

While driving on Greenwood Avenue yesterday afternoon, a tree began to fall toward the gentleman's car.

Running down the street, the house was on fire.

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Time for a Reality Check!

*Such as clothes, food, and many other things.*

*I've been going to the gym, five years back I wasn't doing any of this because of my drug problem.*

*Now I also eat the right foods in my past I didn't care what I would eat.*

*The first reason El Paso is a great place to live would be good climate.*

*For example, if you were to leave your kids at home, many dangerous things can happen.*

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**Fixing Modifiers**

Smashed flat by a passing truck, the dog sniffed at what was left of a half-eaten hamburger.

- 1. Check for modifying phrases at the beginning of your sentences.
- 2. If you find one, underline *the first noun that follows it*. (That's the one that is being modified.)
- 3. Make sure the modifier and noun go together *logically*. If they don't, chances are you have a dangling modifier.
- 4. Rewrite the sentence.

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**Your Modifier is Dangling!**

- A woman passed, leading a Springer spaniel in a long black dress.
- After reading the paper, the telephone rang.
- I found my missing baseball glove cleaning my room.
- Looking out the airplane window, the volcano seemed ready to erupt.
- While reading the newspaper, the cat jumped on the table.
- While doing the dishes, a mouse ran across the floor.
- We saw several blue jays looking out our front window.
- While flying over the lake, the skyscrapers of Denver appeared in the distance.
- Marin watched a radiant sunset climbing a hill.

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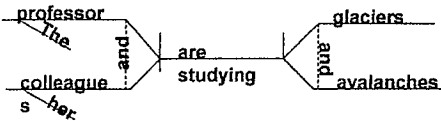
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**Building Sentences:  
Just One Step in the Process**




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# What Exactly Is Syntax?

Syntax is the study of the rules governing sentence structure, the way words work together to make up a sentence.

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## It's All Just Syntax

Sentence structure (syntax) is the basis of written language.

Teach syntax by:

- Discussing and modeling sentence structures
- Making students aware of how to use sentence patterns
- Giving students a vocabulary for talking about the elements of language
- Helping students use word order patterns
- Exposing students to the many possibilities of English syntax beyond the basic structures
- Using the writing process on a daily basis

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## Enhancing Writing Skills

### 3 Basic Forms of Sentence Structure

- **Basic**
  - My friend invited me to a party. I do not want to go.
- **Compound**
  - My friend invited me to a party, but I do not want to go.
- **Complex**
  - Although my friend invited me to a party, I do not want to go.

With just these three sentences types, it is possible for students to write good paragraphs , with good sentence variety, which are perfectly acceptable for the classroom and the workplace.

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### Enhancing Writing Skills

#### Types of Sentences

- **Declarative Sentences** (statements)
  - There will be a grammar test next class.
- **Interrogative Sentence** (questions)
  - Are you ready for the grammar test?
- **Imperative Sentence** (requests and commands)
  - Don't forget to review your notes and course pack.
- **Exclamatory Sentence** (exclamations)
  - Study!

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### Enhancing Writing Skills

#### Parts of Sentences

- Sentences are composed of four basic parts:
  - Subject
  - Verbs
  - Completers and Modifiers
  - Clauses

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### Enhancing Writing Skills

Students need know the basic parts of a sentence.

- **Subject** - a noun, pronoun, phrase, or clause about which the sentence makes a statement
- **Verb** - the action, event, or state of existence
- **Predicate** - the rest of the sentence coming after the subject
- **Subject Complement** - the noun, pronoun, adjective, phrase, or clause that comes after a linking verb
- **Direct Object** - takes the action of the main verb and can be identified by putting what, which, or whom in its place
- **Object Complement** - adds detail to the direct object and can be identified by inserting to be between the direct object and the object complement.

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### Enhancing Writing Skills

**Sentence Concepts**

- English language sentences are based on common "kernel" sentences.
- Three basic sentence patterns (common kernels) in English:
  - S-V (Subject-Verb): Subject and intransitive verb *Trevor drives. He works.*
  - S-V-O (Subject-Verb-Object): Subject, transitive verb, and direct object *The driver delivered the pizza.*
  - This pattern is sometimes complicated by the insertion of an indirect object (e.g., *Trevor told his boss a story.*) and by object complements (e.g., *The pizza made Trevor famous.*).
  - S-V-C (Subject-Linking Verb-Complement): Subject, linking verb, and predicate noun or predicate adjective. *Pizzas are Italian. Pizzas are nutritious.*
- About thirty percent of English sentences can be classified as S-V

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### Enhancing Writing Skills

**Basic Sentence Patterns**

- S + V
- S + V + DO
- S + V + N
- S + V + ADJ
- S + V + ADV
- S + V + IO + DO
- S + V + DO + OC
- S + V + DO + ADJ

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### Enhancing Writing Skills

**S + V – The simplest of the sentence patterns has a subject and verb without a direct object or subject complement. Prepositional phrases can be included.**

*Examples:*

**I swim. Joe swims. They swam.**

**The development of wind power practically ceased until the early 1970s.**

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Enhancing Writing Skills

**S + V + DO** – Another common sentence pattern uses the direct object. The object often answers a “what” question.

*Examples:*

**I drive a car. Joe plays a guitar. They ate dinner.  
Silicon conducts electricity in an unusual way.**

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Enhancing Writing Skills

**S + V + N** – A noun describes the subject and could take its place in this sentence pattern

*Examples:*

**Tim is a secretary.  
Jennifer is a daughter and friend.  
Her decision was a terrible mistake.**

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Enhancing Writing Skills

**S + V + ADJ** – This pattern uses an adjective after the verb to describe the subject.

*Examples:*

**Advice is cheap. She was gracious.  
The party was exciting and memorable.  
My friend suddenly look pale.**

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Enhancing Writing Skills

**S + V + ADV – In this pattern an adverb describes the verb form of the sentence.**

*Examples:*

**Beautiful flowers are everywhere.**

**The river flows rapidly downstream.**

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Enhancing Writing Skills

**S + V + IO + DO – This pattern is similar to the pattern with just the direct object, but there is a person or thing that receives the action.**

*Examples:*

**I gave her a gift. He teaches us English.**

**We are sending you the balance of the payment in this letter.**

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Enhancing Writing Skills

**S + V + DO + OC – This pattern is not as common, but is worth knowing as it provides variety through the use of a “to be” complement.**

*Examples:*

**We elected him president. [We elected him (to be) president.]**

**The committee declared the new design a breakthrough in energy efficiency.**

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Enhancing Writing Skills

**S + V + DO + ADJ** – This pattern shows how an adjective can describe the object rather than the initial subject of the sentence.

*Examples:*

Jim called his sister lazy.

We painted the house green for the first time.  
(prepositional phrase added)

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Create One Out of Four . . .

There is a boy.  
The boy is small.  
There is a pond.  
The boy fell.

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Revision: An Important Skill in Sentence Writing

Task	The small boy fell into the pond.
Combining	You <b>combined</b> four sentences into one.
Rearranging	You <b>rearranged</b> words, putting <i>small</i> before <i>boy</i> .
Subtracting	You <b>subtracted</b> unnecessary words.
Expanding	You <b>expanded</b> , adding <i>into</i> or <i>who</i> .

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**ARMS: An Easy Way to Revise**

**A**dd words, phrases, or more information to help make your points clear and easy for the reader to understand.

**R**emove words that repeat themselves and information that does not relate to the main idea of your sentence, paragraph, or to the topic of the composition.

**M**ove around words, phrases, sentences, or even whole paragraphs in order to keep your ideas clear and flowing toward a logical conclusion.

**S**ubstitute words with more exact words or phrases that express what you want to say more clearly.

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**Enhancing Writing Skills**

**Sentence Expansion** – Another way of teaching sentence writing.

**Example:** Expand “There’s a frog on the log” by adding modifiers (Use the 5 Ws plus one – who, what, when, where, why, and how to create a more effective sentence.)

- **Sentence:** There’s a frog on a log. (Who)
- **What kind?** Small, green
- **How?** Sitting
- **Where?** in the middle of the bog
- **Why?** Due to the heavy, heavy fog

Expanded sentence becomes:  
There’s a small, green frog who is sitting on a log in the middle of the bog due to the heavy, heavy fog.

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**Enhancing Writing Skills**

**I saw a clown.**

**I saw a funny clown.**

**I saw a funny clown juggling.**

**I saw a funny clown juggling bowling pins.**

**I saw a funny clown juggling bowling pins in a parade.**

**I saw a funny clown juggling bowling pins in a Christmas parade.**

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**Create Your Own Sentence Pyramids**

The sun is setting.

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**Using the 5 Ws and an H**

**Start with a phrase – “made cookies”**  
**Use prompts – *who, where, when***  
Shelly made cookies in the bakery in the morning.

**Now add descriptors – *what kind***  
Shelly made oatmeal and chocolate chip cookies in the bakery in the morning.

**Add more information – *how***  
Using an old family recipe, Shelly made oatmeal and chocolate chip cookies in the bakery in the morning.

**Could you add *why*?**

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**Using the 5 Ws and an H**

**It's your turn! Pick a phrase and write a sentence using the 5 Ws and an H.**

- Went home
- Left school
- Found money
- Saw a crime
- Bought a car
- Watched movie
- Counted change
- Ate lunch

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### How to Improve Sentences

- **Length** (short, long; avoid too many short, choppy "baby" sentences)
- **Structure** (simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex)
- **Purpose** (declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, or imperative)
- **Arrangement** (loose, periodic, parallel, balanced, and inverted).

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### Scrambled Sentences & Sentence Effectiveness

#### One more step in the writing process - organization

- **Analysis:** breaking down the sentence into its parts and looking at the way the parts are organized and the relationships among the parts.
- **Synthesis:** a process of working/reworking the parts and/or combining them in such a way that the result is a new product.



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### Enhancing Writing Skills

#### Organization

- Scrambled Sentences
- Sentence Effectiveness
- Scrambled Paragraphs



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**Scrambled Sentences**

- A. begin to lengthen
- B. to shorten
- C. and the nights
- D. the days
- E. after June 21st



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**Scrambled Sentences**

**Scrambled Sentences**

- A. autumnal sun
- B. in the morning
- C. my window
- D. when I awoke
- E. a brilliant
- F. was shining in



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**Scrambled Sentences**

- A. an adequate standard
- B. science
- C. for every family
- D. of living
- E. makes possible



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**Sentence Kernels**

Deconstructed Passage (Sentence Kernels)

**Sam had his eye on the used Mustang.  
He had seen it for several weeks.  
The salesperson had gotten used to seeing Sam.  
He saw him each afternoon around 4:00.**

*Can you put these kernels into one effective sentence?*



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**Sentence Kernels**

- A. The column was based on interviews.**
- B. The interviews happened before the game.**
- C. Alborn interviewed the two players.**
- D. They told Alborn they planned to arrive for the game.**
- E. They planned to arrive by plane.**



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**Sentence Kernels**

Deconstructed Passage (Sentence Kernels)

**The sprinter approached the starting line.  
She stretched one last time.  
The starter called for runners to take their mark.  
She found her lane.  
She got into starting position.  
Finally, she heard the "pop" from the starter pistol.**



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**Deconstructing Sentences**

**You Do It! Deconstructing Sentences**

*The slight young detective stood on the stage and stared up to the box in which President Lincoln had been assassinated, kept pretty much as it was that fateful night. Klayman was no stranger to Ford's Theatre. He'd spent many hours there soaking in its historic meaning and listening to tourists' lectures delivered by park rangers.*

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**Enhancing Writing Skills**

**Scrambled Paragraph  
to be  
Mixed Cleaner**



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**Enhancing Writing Skills**

**Strategies for Incorporating Writing in the ABE/Literacy Curriculum**

- Use authentic tasks and materials
- Teach students to write to a specific audience and from a different perspective
- Teach patterns of writing
- Use graphic organizers
- Incorporate workplace scenarios
- Have students write instructions
- Practice, practice, practice

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Enhancing Writing Skills

*Take the BORING out of Writing!*

*Try 100 Words...More or Less!*

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Enhancing Writing Skills

**Writing Formats**

- Directions
- To-do lists
- Memos or letters
- Emails
- Proposals
- Graphic information such as charts, tables, graphs, and spreadsheets
- Newsletters
- Reports
- Speeches

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**Look for Common Error Patterns**

- Trying to say too much in one sentence
- Writing short, choppy sentences
- Including more than one main idea
- Writing non-sentences or fragments.
- Using incorrect grammar, such as:
  - Vague pronoun reference
  - Wrong or missing preposition
  - Comma splice
  - Tense shift
  - Unnecessary shift in person
  - Wrong tense or verb form
  - Lack of subject-verb agreement
  - Pronoun agreement error
  - Dangling or misplaced modifier (Connors & Lunsford, 1988)

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### Enhancing Writing Skills

#### What Do Students Need to Know? Personally and in the Workplace?

- Ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing
- Ability to select and use language appropriate for the audience
- Ability to produce effective work-related texts

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### Enhancing Writing Skills

#### Writing should be:

- Clear – easy to understand by the reader/audience
- Accurate – factual and correct
- Correct – grammatically and technically
- Comprehensive – includes all of the information the reader needs
- Concise – does not have a lot of excess verbiage
- Accessible – organized

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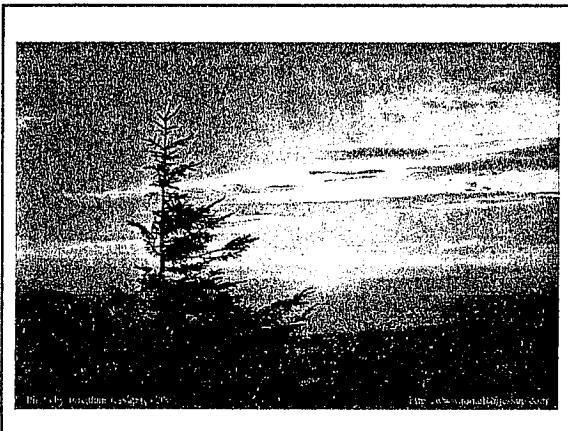
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Far West GREAT Region

Research, Development, and Presentation

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