

Sentence Variety - Mix it up!



Vary your sentence patterns as you write; mix your clauses and phrases for effective sentences. Participial phrases and sentences with semicolons are particularly sophisticated.

Clauses

Definition of a Clause:

Group of words with subject and verb

Independent clause - stands on its own like a sentence

Dependent clause - cannot stand on its own (fragment)

1. Compound sentence - 2 indep. clauses separated by **comma and conjunction (and, but, or, nor, for, yet)**
I enjoyed reading science fiction, but historical fiction is also interesting.

2. Two indep. clauses separated by a **semicolon**
I enjoy playing indoor soccer; the action is fast and furious.

3. Two indep. clauses separated by **semicolon / parenthetical phrase / comma** (however, for example, of course, by the way, in my opinion, nevertheless . . .)
I enjoy playing the piano; however, I need to practice.

4. One indep. clause interrupted by **comma / parenthetical phrase / comma** (however, for example, of course, by the way, in my opinion, moreover . . .)
My parents, however, encourage me to play baseball.

5. Introductory adverb clause (always followed by **comma**) (when, while, until, after, before . . .)
When school is over, I rush home to do my homework.

6. Adjective clause, nonessential (always needs **commas**)
Tidily, who is my friend, is a straight-A student.

7. Adjective clause, essential (no commas needed)
The boy who lives next door to me won the vocal music contest.

8. Noun clause used as **subject**
Whoever wins the game tonight will be the state champion.
What I want is respect!

9. Noun clause used as **direct object**
I can't find whoever is hiding.
I don't know what I like and whom I respect.

10. Noun clause used as **object of the preposition**
I am listening to whoever is singing.
I am listening to whomever I called on the phone.

Phrases

Definition of a Phrase:

Group of words **without a subject and verb**

11. Introductory series of prepositional phrases (with, of for, about, over, under, by, in, out, up . . .)
By the end of the year, I plan to make five A's.

12. Introductory participial phrase (-ed or -ing phrase used as an adjective)
Confused by the story's ending, Marie read it again.
Running down the hall, Nick fell and broke his leg.

13. Participial phrase, nonessential (-ed or -ing phrase used as an adjective) (always needs **commas**)
Marie, **confused by the story's ending**, read it again.
Nick, **running down the hall**, fell and broke his leg.

14. Participial phrase, essential (-ed or -ing phrase used as an adjective) (no commas needed)
Maria is the girl **representing us in the contest**.
The boy **suspended by the principal** was Nick.

15. Gerund phrase used as **subject** (-ing phrase used as a **noun** in subject position)
Running on the playground is dangerous for children.

16. Gerund phrase used as **direct object** (-ing phrase used as a **noun** in direct object position)
I enjoy **running on the playground**.

17. Gerund phrase used as **object of the preposition** (-ing phrase used as a **noun** in the position of object of the preposition)
She was punished for **running on the playground**.

18. Appositive phrase, nonessential (always needs **commas**)
Sam, **my best friend**, plays the drums in the band.
Appositive phrase, essential (no commas needed)

19. Phrases in a series (separated by **commas**)
I respect you **for your honesty**, **for your intelligence**, and **for your strength**.
I like to read **in the morning**, **at lunch**, and **at night**.

20. Infinitive phrase (**to + a verb**)
To fly like a bird would be exciting. (subject)
I want **to fly like a bird**. (direct object)
My goal is **to fly like a bird**. (predicate nominative)