

Sentence Variation

If all your sentences begin with the subject, your writing can become monotonous.

Notice that the sentences in the following paragraph lack variety.

Bees buzz loudly in the meadow. The summer sun shone hot and bright. A breeze rippled the leaves of the elm tree. A mockingbird was on the highest branch singing a song.

There are many ways to add variety to sentences. Sometimes you can begin a sentence with an adverb or prepositional phrase.

Ex: Begin with an adverb

Carefully, the silversmith poured the hot, molten silver into the mold.

Ex: Begin with a prepositional phrase

In the evening, I frequently take my dog for a walk.

Occasionally, you can use inverted word order, placing the verb before the subject.

Ex: Steadily across the high wire stepped the tightrope walker.

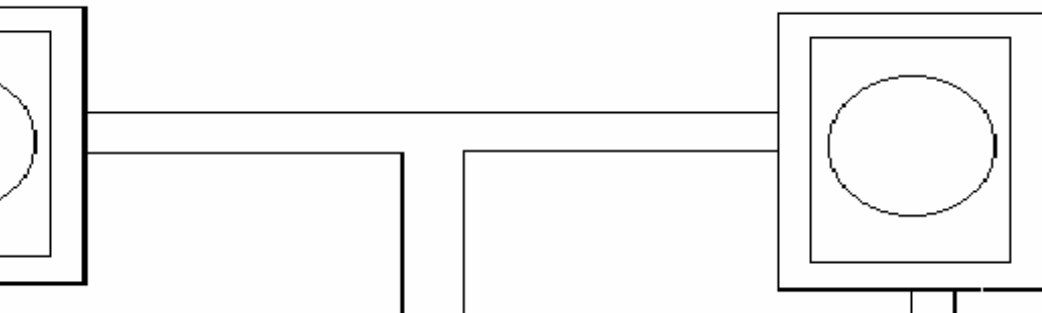
Using an adjective clause in the middle of your sentence adds variety too.

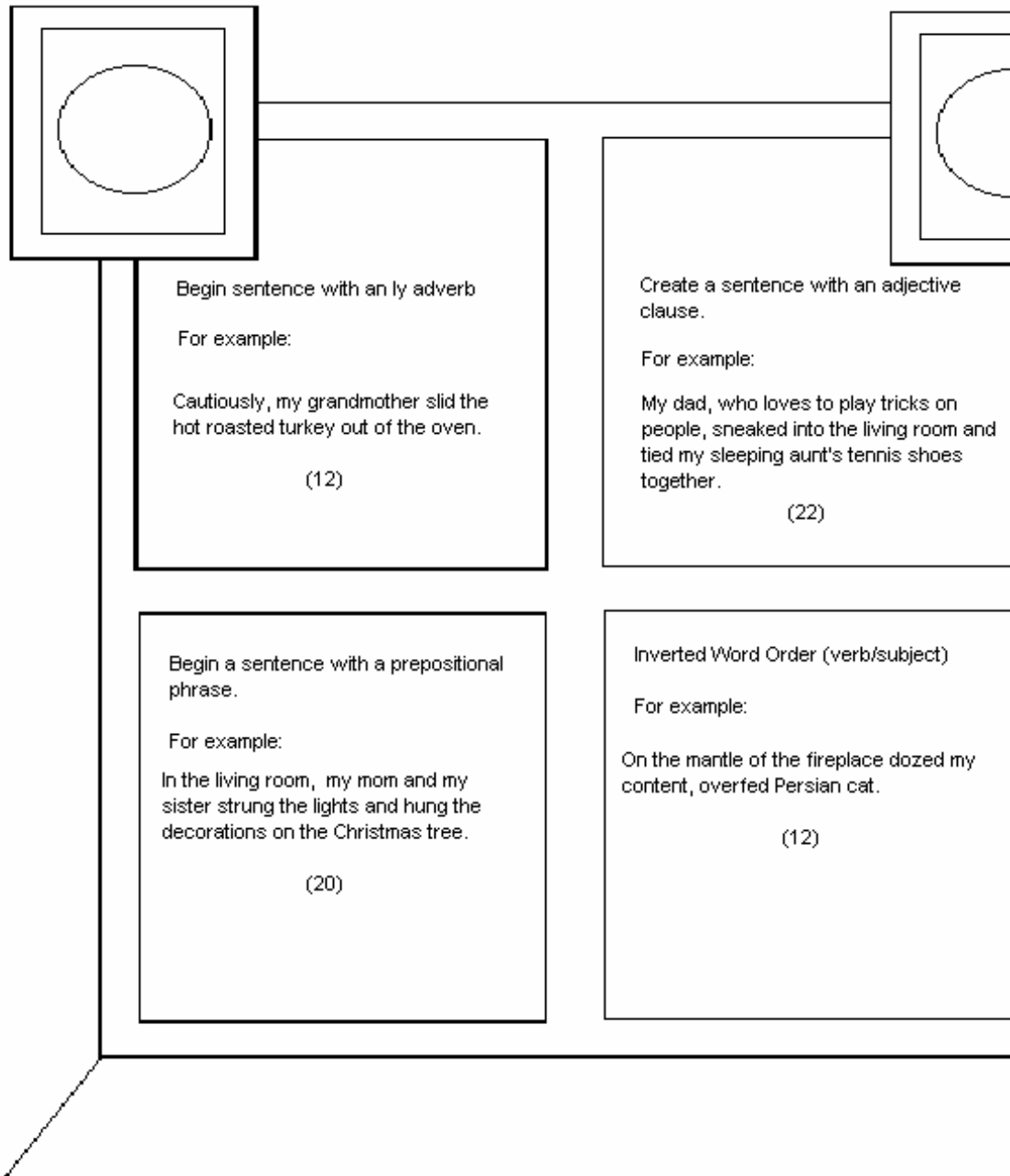
Ex: The old sailor, who knew many legends, told us about a hidden treasure.

Notice the varied beginnings in this revised paragraph.

In the meadow, bees buzzed loudly. Hot and bright shone the summer sun. Softly, a breeze rippled the leaves of the old oak tree. A mockingbird, which was perched high in the tree, sang a melody.

Exercise: Imagine that you are standing outside the window of your house on Thanksgiving Day. Write a paragraph of at least six sentences (an introductory sentence, your four sentences from the window, and a concluding sentence) that shows what you see inside your home (remember to use vivid verbs). Begin one sentence with an adverb and one sentence with a prepositional phrase; use inverted word order in another, and an adjective clause in the middle of another sentence. The order of the types of sentence patterns you use does not matter. Decorate your window – curtains, wallpaper, etc.





Everyone at my house is busy on Thanksgiving day, except my cat. Cautiously, my grandmother slid the hot roasted turkey out of the oven. In the living room, my mom and my sister strung the lights and hung the decorations on the Christmas tree. My dad, who loves to play tricks on people, sneaked into the living room and tied my sleeping aunt's tennis shoes together. On the mantle of the fireplace, dozed my content, overfed Persian cat. There is never a dull moment at my house on Thanksgiving.