



The Workshop: Critique for Variety and Flow in the Writer's Sentences

Directions: Use the instructions on this sheet with your writer's workshop critique group to take a closer look at your sentence structure and content.

Step 1: Setting the Tone for the Group

Introduce yourselves and trade papers. Remember that all criticism should be constructive and specific, and that all compliments should be genuine and specific.

Step 2: Looking for Sentence Length and Variety

On the student paper you have been given, use a pen or pencil to put a slash after each sentence.

Example: I often spend my time in the library. / I would like to be able to say that the search for truth draws me in. / But, in reality, I am attracted to the soft chairs, the mellow atmosphere, and the way the sun shines into the reference room late on winter afternoons. /

The purpose of this activity is to get a visual idea of the length and variety of sentence structures.

Step 3: Identifying Statements of Fact/Evidence or Examples/Commentary or "What I Learned"

This next activity requires the use of three colored markers/highlighters/colored pencils. For our purposes, you will need yellow, green, and blue. Read through the paper three times. On the first read through, look for statements of fact. *Example: My brother was a failure at USC.* Each time that you find a statement of fact, underline or highlight it with yellow. On the second read through, look for evidence, examples, narrative or anecdotes that support the statements of fact. *Example: My mom cried when she learned he hadn't been to any classes during his junior year.* Underline or highlight these sentences with green. On the third read through, look for commentary about the facts/evidence. *Example: I learned several things from the failure of my brother. It was his failure that taught me to be my own person.* Underline or highlight these sentences with blue. The purpose of this activity is to see the balance between the three types of sentences that drive the content of an essay: statements of fact, evidence to support the statements, and commentary on the statements/evidence. (If you don't know what color a particular sentence should be, just leave it uncolored. Sentences using fiction techniques such as pure description or similes, probably won't get highlighted.)

Step 4: Checking the Punch Lines

Draw a box around the first sentence of the paper. Then circle the first sentence of each body paragraph. Then draw a box around the first sentence in the concluding paragraph. The purpose of this activity is to notice the lead ins/hooks/topic sentences.

Step 5: Looking for Flow

Look for the following words (or words like them) and put an asterisk (*) above each of the words.

Transition words taken from: <http://larae.net/write/transition.html>. Viewed 21 September 2007.

<p><u>For continuing a common line of reasoning:</u></p> <p>consequently clearly, then furthermore additionally and in addition moreover because besides that in the same way following this further also pursuing this further in the light of the... it is easy to see that</p>	<p><u>To change the line of reasoning (contrast):</u></p> <p>however on the other hand but yet nevertheless on the contrary</p> <p><u>For initial use:</u></p> <p>admittedly assuredly certainly granted no doubt</p>	<p>nobody denies obviously of course to be sure true undoubtedly unquestionably generally speaking in general at this level in this situation</p> <p><u>For the final points of a paragraph or essay:</u></p> <p>finally lastly</p>	<p><u>Transitional chains, arranged chronologically:</u></p> <p>first... second... third... generally... further... more... finally in the first place... also... lastly in the first place... pursuing this further... finally to be sure... additionally... lastly in the first place... just in the same way... finally basically... similarly... as well</p>	<p><u>To signal conclusion:</u></p> <p>therefore this hence in final analysis in conclusion in final consideration indeed</p> <p><u>To restate a point within a paragraph in another way or in a more exacting way:</u></p> <p>in other words point in fact specifically</p>	<p><u>Sequence or time:</u></p> <p>after afterwards as soon as at first at last before before long finally first... second... third in the first place in the meantime later meanwhile next soon then</p>
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