



# Sentence Imitation

## DESCRIPTION

This writing activity challenges students to study example sentences drawn from literature, and then to write their own sentences, mimicking the form of the original. Students learn to appreciate and analyze both writer's craft and sentence structure, and gain facility and confidence in writing complex and varied sentences of their own.

LEARNING STRATEGIES Synthesizing

LESSON PLAN STAGE Investigation

SKILLS Reading as a Writer

## PREPARATION

- Find one or more model sentences from a piece of literature, preferably from a text that the students are reading or are listening to as a read-aloud. Select sentences that are structurally complex, and that are well-written. They should be interesting in their context, and should sound pleasant.

## ACTIVITY STEPS

## TEACHER NOTES

1 The teacher displays the first model sentence, and reviews where it comes from. Class clarifies the meaning of any unfamiliar words. Class discusses what the sentence means. Then, class discusses the structure of the sentence, and notes the parts of speech of each word.

If students have explicit knowledge of sentence structure, they should identify the parts of the sentence during this step.

2 Teacher models writing a new sentence, using the structure of the original. Then, the whole class works together to write a third sentence, in the structure of the original.

Encourage students to write their new sentences about entirely new topics, using none of the original vocabulary.



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### ACTIVITY STEPS

### TEACHER NOTES

3 Teacher distributes a new model sentence to class, and students work alone or in small groups to write at least three new sentences with the same structure as the new model sentence.

4 Each student shares out one of their sentences.

5 Alone or in groups, in conversation or in writing, students reflect on their learning process.

Circulate as students are working, sitting with individuals or groups for approximately five minutes at a time. Ask students about how they are mimicking the sentence structure, and what they are hoping to express.

Briefly discuss the value of varying sentence structure, and how great writing is interesting in meaning and form.

Students respond to questions including:

- How well were you able to imitate this sentence?
- How might sentence imitation affect your writing?
- How well are you able to vary sentence structure when you write?
- How could you do a better job of varying and being intentional about sentence structure when you write?