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Editing Made Easy
Assignment #9-B, Lesson

Teaching Simple Sentences

Grade Level: Primary
Subject: Language Arts/Writing

Lesson Aim/Objective:

Students will understand the following about sentences:

- they must have a subject and a verb
- fragments are missing either a subject or a verb
- to determine the difference between a sentence and a fragment, ask:

Who/what did something or is something? (subject)

What did they do? Or What are they? (verb)

Motivation:

Build interest by telling students that simple sentences are the building block on which all of our writing will stand. A simple sentence is independent and can stand on its own, without it all of our thoughts would be fragments. Display the following sentences from class read aloud, *Stone Fox*, on the board (cover the second until after the first has been discussed):

Searchlight ran up ahead.

I followed.

Instruction/Procedure:

1. Invitation to notice - Ask students to discuss the sentence, what picture does it bring to mind? Model how to think through a sentence. Who or what did something? What did he do? Underline the parts of the sentence that match

their answers and label subject and verb. Guide students to notice that the subject has a noun. Next, show the second sentence. It only has two words, ask if students think that it is a sentence or a fragment (or a poser). Give it the test, discuss.

2. Invitation to edit - Play the game *Is It or Isn't It?* (Everyday Writing page 89.) Model by reading the first group of words and then asking the questions to determine if it is a sentence. Put students in teams and keep track of points as you play in game show style.

He paced.

And ran.

Grandfather stirred.

Doc gasped.

Another day.

I turned.

To look.

Willy nodded.

He fell.

Look back at the posers and determine ways to change them from fragments to sentences. Chart answers.

3. Invitation to collect - Start a list of two-word sentences on chart paper. Let students know that they are rare, but can be found in the books they've read. Send them on a two-word sentence safari using the chapters in Stone Fox we've already read, or in sections of their independent reading books they have read. Chart the questions *Who or what did something?* (subject) and *What did they do? Or What are they?* (verb) and review that each sentence must have a subject and a verb. Remind them to test their findings by asking the two questions before bringing their two-word sentence to be added to the chart. After enough time has passed for students to add to the collection, review the list together. Point out strong, active verbs as you read the sentences.

Follow Up:

Invitation to Imitate - Read aloud the picture book An Island Grows, by Lola M. Schaefer. Ask what students notice and chart three sample sentences. Discuss the rhyming couplets and test them to determine if they are sentences. Have students connect to learning from science, social studies, or personal interests by creating two word sentences using subjects and verbs that focus on a specific topic. Students begin by following these steps:

- List 12-15 terms
- Choose the strongest 8-10
- Choose organizational tool (chronological order, steps in a process, smallest to largest, alphabetical order, etc.)
- Order the terms
- Add a verb to each term
- Expand the final sentence

(From Everyday Editing pg. 91,92)

