



Sentence Fluency

What is sentence fluency?

Fluent writing is writing that uses a variety of sentence kinds, types, and styles and that flows smoothly from one idea to the next. (Imagine a gently flowing river or stream.)

The keys to writing fluently are:

- sentence variety and effective use of transitions.



Ways to add variety and interest:

- 1- Alternate short and long sentences.
- 2- Use different kinds, types, and styles of sentences.
- 3- Write elaborate sentences.
- 4- Use special effects.



Alternate short and long sentences.

Omit needless words by combining
short sentences:

Example: Patty loves books and dogs.
Sam also loves books and dogs.

Combined: Patty and Sam love
books and dogs.




Alternate short and long sentences (continued).

Create longer sentences by combining
short sentences:

Example: Patty likes to play soccer.
Sam prefers to play basketball.



Combined: Patty likes to play soccer,
but Sam prefers to play
basketball.



Alternate short and long sentences (continued).

Example:

Patty and Sam are close friends. They get along well even though they enjoy different sports. Patty likes to play soccer, but Sam prefers to play basketball. They have important things in common, though. They both love books and dogs. When they're not practicing their favorite sports, you'll find them poring over fantasy novels in the local library or walking their Labradors in the neighborhood park.



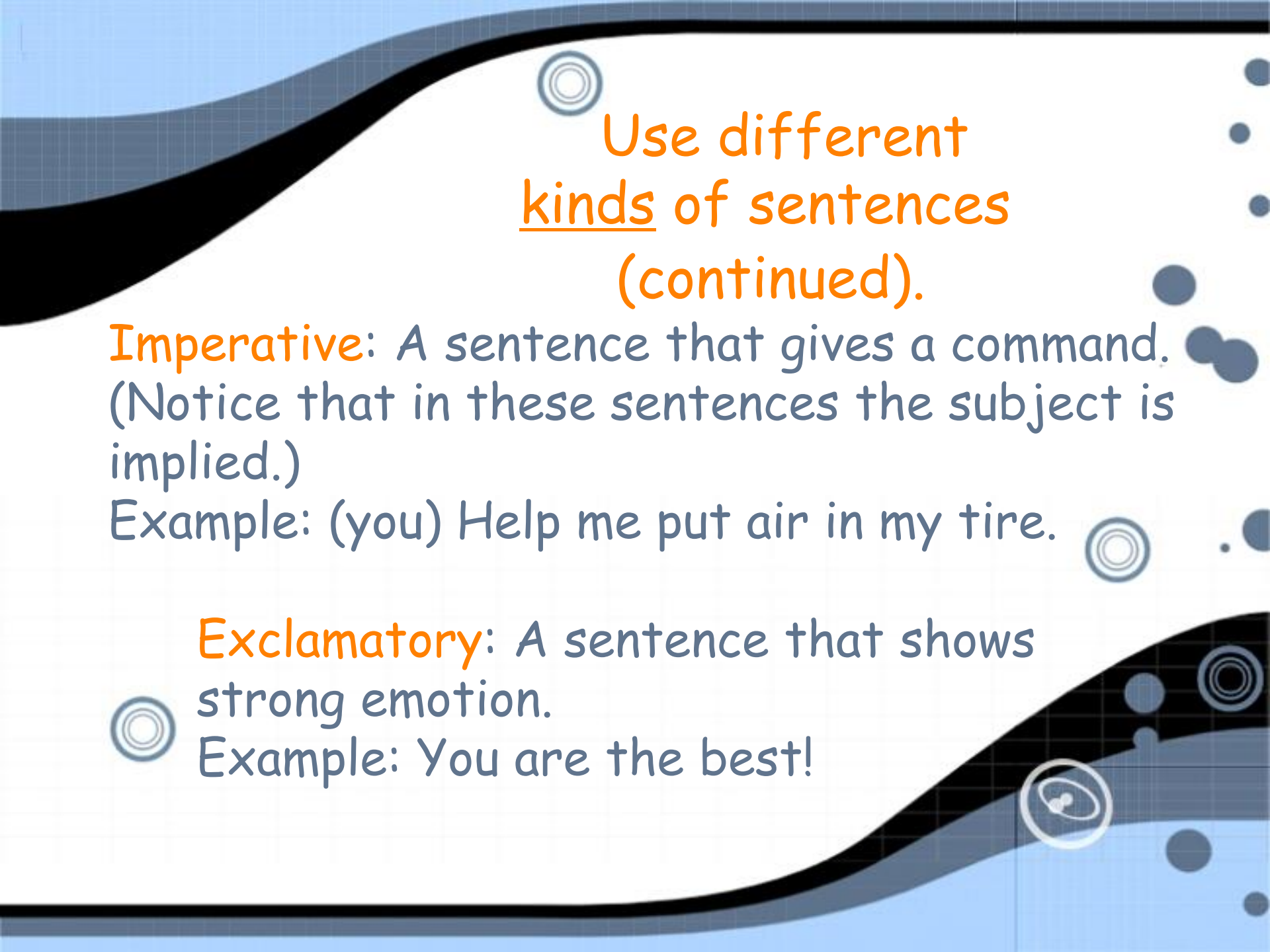
Use different kinds of sentences.

Declarative: A sentence that makes a statement.

Example: My bike has a flat tire.

Interrogative: A sentence that asks a question.

Example: Do you have an air pump?



Use different
kinds of sentences
(continued).

Imperative: A sentence that gives a command.
(Notice that in these sentences the subject is implied.)

Example: (you) Help me put air in my tire.

Exclamatory: A sentence that shows strong emotion.

Example: You are the best!

Use different types of sentences.

Simple (one independent clause):

Patty likes to play soccer.

Compound (two independent clauses):

Patty likes to play soccer, but Sam prefers to play basketball.

Complex (one independent clause and one dependent clause):

Patty and Sam get along well even though they enjoy different sports.



Use different styles of sentences.

Examples:

Vary sentence beginnings:

Even though they enjoy different sports, Patty and Sam get along well.

Gathering all his skill and courage, Sam attempted the three-pointer.

Tired and hungry, Patty shuffled home after the soccer game.

Add appositives:

Patty, Sam's next-door neighbor, is a talented soccer player.



Write elaborate sentences.

Use colorful words and add specific details and interesting descriptions:

"September climbed out of her kitchen window, leaving a sink full of soapy pink-and-yellow teacups with leaves still clinging to their bottoms in portentous shapes."


(From *The Girl Who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of Her Own Making*)



Use special effects.

Special effects such as repetition and parallelism make sentences more interesting and fun to read. (Refer to MR HOT AND SPICY for more special effects.)

"Once upon a time, a girl named September grew very tired indeed of her parents' house, where she washed the **same** pink-and-yellow teacups and matching gravy boats every day, slept on the **same** embroidered pillow, and played with the **same** small and amiable dog."

 (From *The Girl Who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of Her Own Making*)

Finally, use transitions.

Transitions will help your writing flow smoothly from one idea to the next.

"**After a moment**, she prudently knelt down and gathered up a particularly jewel-encrusted sceptre."

"**By afternoon**, September thought she had probably stepped on the collective national worth of Finland."

(From *The Girl Who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of Her Own Making*)



Remember:

The keys to sentence fluency are:

- 1- sentence variety and
- 2- effective use of transitions.



Bibliography / Works Cited

Kemper, Dave, Patrick Sebranek, and Verne Meyer. *Write Source*. Wilmington: Great Source Education Group, 2005.

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