**2.6**

**Sentence Building Powerpoint - Slide Notes for Teachers**

The Powerpoint slides support teaching as follows:

* Slides 1 – 6, Week 2 Lesson 3: building detail in simple sentences
* Slides 7-11, Week 3, Lesson 1: variety in sentence length and structures
* Slide 12, Week 3, Lesson 2: complex sentences
* Slides 13 – 14, Week 3, Lesson 3: punctuating sentences

The explicit emphasis on sentence grammar in these lessons is not intended as first teaching. Clearly, you will need to adapt approaches to suit what your students already know about sentences, including their fluency with terminology. Asking a direct question “What is a sentence?” and listening closely to a selection of replies should help you decide how to use the PowerPoint to best effect.

**Slide 1**

Terminology is used to aid discussion and clarity, not as an end in itself. Your explanation of different sentence types will be important in the next few lessons and the terms on the title slide are considered essential for explicit teaching and discussion about sentence building. Word classes referred to in subsequent lessons are: noun, adjective, verb and adverb and you might want to check understanding of these terms here, for example by starting a glossary to which students can add examples from previous and subsequent lessons.

The distinction between phrase (group of words without a verb) and clause (group of words including a verb) is a crucial one. In subsequent lessons, a simple sentence is described as having one clause or being a main clause; the terms main clause and subordinate clause are used in the teaching plans to describe the structure of a complex sentence. Try to head off common confusion about these key terms: students often think that a simple sentence means it is short (or boring) while a complex sentence is long or complicated. Emphasise that the terms refer to how a sentence is structured, and support with explanations and examples.

**Slides 2 - 3**

The teaching point is about increasing awareness of words that do a lot of ‘work’ in a sentence in terms of providing information about setting, character and events, to inform students’ own deliberate word choices. Only the four main word classes for sentence building are referred to here but you could add others (e.g. determiners, pronouns and prepositions) if you think it will be helpful.

Use the grid on slide 2 (advance on mouse click) to make up sentences triggered by the image and students’ speculations about the situation, and use as an opportunity to reinforce fluency with word class function.

*Examples*:

The night was bitterly cold. The man ran desperately along the icy road. Sweat poured from him. His heartbeats were echoing loudly. Headlights of cars swept past him.

Ask: what are these key words suggesting to us about setting, character and action?

When you compare students’ suggestions with the original text, shown on slide 3, reinforce which word classes and choices do most ‘work’ in terms of indicating setting, character and action, linking back to earlier work on choosing powerful nouns and verbs.

**Slides 4 – 6**

The point of focusing on building detail to simple sentences first is to show the range of ways of varying sentences and the effects of often very small changes e.g. adding a short adverbial phrase. Many students confuse ‘simple’ sentence with short/easy/not a very good choice, while in fact they can be very varied indeed!

Use Slide 5 (which is animated – use mouse click to advance) to jointly compose changes to the “start” sentence, or get students to work in pairs on each step then share suggestions as a whole class.

Stress that very simple changes can make quite a difference e.g. A detective/The New York detective/Detective Charlie York. Encourage discussion of preferences and effects.

A helpful tip if students are stuck about adding adverbial information to build detail to a simple sentence is to ask them for a phrase (no verb) starting ‘with’: with his hands deep in his pockets; with the rain in his face; with a troubled frown; with a crumpled letter in his pocket.

Joint work as a class should help students to work independently in making similar changes to the simple sentence shown on Slide 6.

**Slides 7 – 10**

Students often pick up the idea that it’s good to ‘vary your sentences’ without really understanding what variety means, beyond mixing short and long sentences. The point of these slides is to illustrate that variety refers to both length and sentence type or structure.

**Slide 7**

Students often refer to using short sentences ‘for effect’, without really being clear about what effect is intended. It’s therefore helpful to clarify the purpose of sentence choices, for example a short sentence used to sum up an idea or to emphasise a dramatic moment. You could use the Philip Pullman exaggerated example of short and long sentences to explore these ideas, e.g. does the 80 word sentence ‘work’ in building up a picture of the power of the blow about to be delivered by Iofur? What is the effect of sandwiching this sentence between two very short ones?

**Slide 8**

Able writers might enjoy the challenge of unpacking the structure of the 80 word sentence and creating one of their own, for example to describe the power of the tornado in the image used in Week 2, Lesson 2. In the Philip Pullman example, look at the simplicity of the main clause (in pink) and how successive ‘waves’ of detail are added both before and after it, through seven different subordinate clauses. The detailed description before the main clause, which is late in the sentence, emphasises the build up before the fatal blow, with the hyphen adding to the drama; it’s as if the action is happening in slow motion.

**Slide 9**

Most grammar descriptions cite *and, or, but* as coordinating conjunctions that join clauses to make a compound sentence (*so, yet, for, nor* are sometimes added). You might want to add more examples to the slide to illustrate this e.g.

Was the man running away from danger *or* heading towards it?

Again, try to stress the purpose and impact of using a compound sentence and the different emphasis created by the choice of co-ordinating connective e.g. *and* for addition of extra, equally weighted information; *but* used to create a contrast. Encourage students to make up more examples, based on the *Faces* story, and evaluate effects.

**Slide 10**

Emphasise that subordinate clauses on their own won’t make a complete sentence – they need to be joined to a main clause. What is most important is that students recognise when a clause stands alone and makes complete sense, and when it is incomplete, since this should help students’ grasp of sentence boundary punctuation. When modelling how to move sub clauses around in a sentence, therefore, it’s helpful to emphasise the use of a comma to separate sub clause from main clause and full stop for the sentence boundary.

Stress the usefulness of complex sentences for fiction writing: e.g. how subordinate clauses

* add extra detail and information (the man *who was afraid*; the ground *which was iron-hard and icy*)
* highlight the sequence of events (*when he reached the steep slope....while she was waiting)*
* indicate a cause and effect relationship (*because he was terrified…so that he could escape...*).....

Stress how different meanings are emphasised according to where the subordinate clause is placed in a sentence and encourage students to experiment with this for themselves. They can make up additional subclauses to add to the main clauses shown on the slide.

**Slide 11**

You could use the extract from *Millions* to check students’ understanding of sentence types e.g. by highlighting or classifying different types. But the main purpose of using the slide is to stress how ‘real’ writers manipulate sentence variety to create effects, in this case to heighten tension and quicken the narrative pace. Invite open-ended discussion of this writer’s use of sentences e.g. whether the balance towards short and simple sentences ‘works’ for the reader. You could encourage students to try out alternative structures and the short follow-on writing activity is designed to provide practice in consciously controlling choices of sentence length and type.

**Slide 12**

Make this an oral activity, encouraging students to experiment with different ways of joining main and subordinate clauses and noting subtle shifts in meaning and emphasis. Encourage students to invent new subordinate clauses to add to the main clauses. It would be helpful to record some examples in writing, indicating correct punctuation, so that students can refer to these as models. You could consolidate earlier work by inventing additional main clauses (simple sentences) and combining them into compound sentences using *and/but/or*.

**Slides 13-14**

The emphasis here is on boundary punctuation rather than internal punctuation of sentences. Students often view punctuation simply as a matter of accuracy; the teaching point here is to encourage them to see how writers use punctuation to shape meaning and tone and to alter rhythm and pace of prose. Encourage students to read the extract aloud as they make punctuation choices, in order to ‘hear’ effects and check clarity of meaning. As extension, you could encourage students to explore how punctuation is used in the work of a favourite author.