

Changing the ways in which you begin your sentences is a great tool to add variety, create interest, and improve style in your writing.

1. _____

The most common sentence patterns in English have the subject first, followed by the verb. We first learn who or what the sentence is about, and then we discover what the person or thing does or is. Articles and adjectives may precede the noun, of course!

Examples: _____

2. _____

A great way to start a sentence is with one or more prepositional phrases.

Comma Rule: When opening with a prepositional phrase of more than 4 words or multiple prepositional phrases in a row, a comma is required. For opening prepositional phrases of 4 words or less, the comma recommended but optional.

Examples: _____

3. _____

An adverb is a word that describes a verb, adjective, or other adverb and often ends in *-ly*.

She slowly turned the corner and peered into the murky basement.

Slowly, she turned the corner and peered into the murky basement.

In the second sentence, the adverb *slowly* is placed at the beginning of the sentence. If you read the two sentences aloud, you will notice that moving the adverb changes the rhythm of the sentence and slightly alters its meaning. The second sentence emphasizes how the subject moves—*slowly*—creating a buildup of tension.

Comma Rule: An adverb used as a sentence opener is followed by a comma.

Examples: _____

4. _____

Can be used to make a sentence more exciting, but be careful that you do not create a sentence fragment! When you use an -ing sentence starter, you must have an additional action verb in the sentence.

Comma Rule: If the introductory -ing word (or phrase) is followed by a complete sentence with a subject and a verb, the -ing word or phrase must be set off by a comma.

Example: _____

5. _____

Often used to describe feelings in greater depth.

Comma Rule: If the introductory -ed word (or phrase) is followed by a complete sentence with a subject and a verb, the -ed word or phrase must be set off by a comma.

Example: _____

6. _____

An introductory subordinate clause helps to describe the time/sense/logic of an action. They add meaning to the "what happened" part of the sentence by answering the questions *how*, *when*, *where*, or *why*. Introductory adverb clauses typically begin with these words:

after	as long as	but that	since	though	whenever	while
although	as soon as	how	so that	unless	where	why
as	as though	if	than	until	whereas	
as if	before	in order that	that	when	wherever	

Comma Rule: An introductory subordinate clauses is always followed by a comma.

Example: _____

7. _____

The technique is used to grab your reader's attention and draw them in quickly. While they do create variety in your writing, they should be added thoughtfully, intentionally – *with purpose* – and not because of lazy writing.

Example: _____

