

Sentence Structure Exercises to Improve Creative Writing



Sentence Structure Lessons

The exercises which follow are attempting to introduce the showing technique and improve sentence structure. First the teacher webs with the class on the overhead/chalkboard followed by modelling several different ways the language can be used. Finally, students write their own sentence using the webbing. Due to the importance of verbs the language webbed with the teacher will be based on verbs. Each lesson contains webbing and a sentence model for the teacher to follow.

As soon as possible it is very helpful to introduce beginning sentences with participial phrases. Have students choose one of the verbs to start their sentence with (action words webbed) and add “ing” to it. This will help students to vary their sentence structure when they write stories and avoid always beginning a sentence with he, she, they, the, and then. Participial phrases begin with vivid verbs and create new sentence beginnings each time they are employed. For example: Shining brightly, the sun peeked from behind the clouds. Let’s take a look at the sample exercise below.

Webbing

Question: What did the lion’s eyes/tail/claws/mane do?

What did the lion do?

eyes glowed/glared/gleamed/winked/flushed

tail wagged/sliced/slapped/swished/flicked

claws sprung/exploded/sliced/extended

mane shook/gleamed/shone/rustled

lion pounced/leaped/tracked/inched/darted



Teacher Models:

Sample one (no participial phrase):

The lion’s eyes glowed, and its claws sprung open as it pounced.

*Note how the words “as” and the word “and” are used to connect three good action words together.

Sample two (with a participial phrase):

Gleaming, the lion’s eyes flashed as his tail flicked and his mane shook.

*Note how the participial phrase is used. The first “ing” word is followed by the noun (object it describes) which is followed by a second action word in past tense (“ed” form).

**Web with the class the showing technique as indicated below.
Next, model two different sentences which use the webbing.
Have students write their own sentence(s) and share their work.**

Webbing

Question: What did the lion's eyes/tail/claws/mane do?
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claws sprung/exploded/sliced/extended

mane shook/gleamed/shone/rustled

lion pounced/leaped/tracked/inched/darted



Webbing

Question: What did the koala's eyes/ears/hands/nose do?
What did the koala do?

eyes glowed/gleamed/sparkled/twinkled/glared/winked

ears wiggled/twitched/perked/drooped/stood/rose/turned

hands grabbed/clung/climbed/held/gripped

nose twitched/wiggled/sneezed

koala scrambled/climbed/ascended/mounted/scaled



Webbing

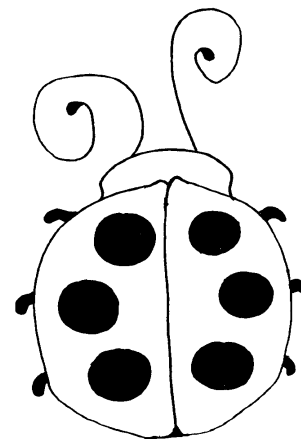
Question: What did the ladybug's mouth/antennae/wings/legs do?
What did the ladybug do?

mouth spat/shot/spurled/spouted yellow liquid

antennae wiggled/twitched/drooped/wilted/perked/rose/stood

wings spread/flapped/soared/extended/lifted

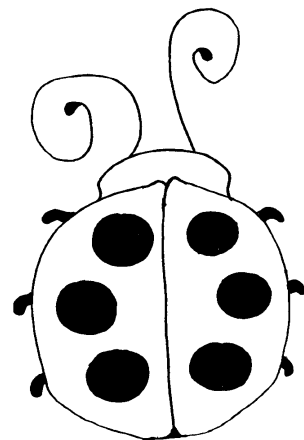
ladybug soared/rose/hung/hovered/darted/flew/zipped



**Write a sentence for each character which uses the webbing
your class created to “show” the character’s actions.**







**Web with the class the showing technique as indicated below.
Next, model two different sentences which use the webbing.
Have students write their own sentence(s) and share their work.**

Webbing

Question: What did the frog's eyes/tongue/legs/mouth do?
What did the frog do?

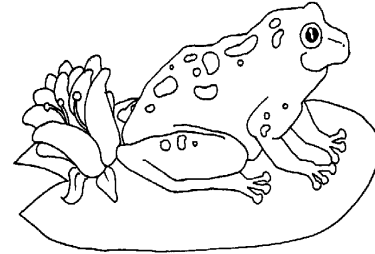
eyes bulged/glared/sparkled/shone/gleamed/glowed

tongue slapped/swished/flicked/shot/exploded/sprung/slurped

legs sprung/exploded/leaped/jumped/hopped/shot

mouth chirped/sang/ribbit/croaked

frog pounced/leaped/dove/exploded/suntanned/rested



Webbing

Question: What did the bat's eyes/wings/mouth/tongue do?
What did the bat do?

eyes searched/glared/flushed/shone/gleamed/glowed

tongue slapped/swished/flicked/shot/exploded/sprung/slurped

wings flapped/spread/lifted/extended/soared/rose

mouth shrieked/screeched/called/haunted/echoed/crooned

bat hovered/darted/dodged/threaded/soared/sailed/zipped



Webbing

Question: What did the bear's eyes/wings/mouth/ears do?
What did the bear do?

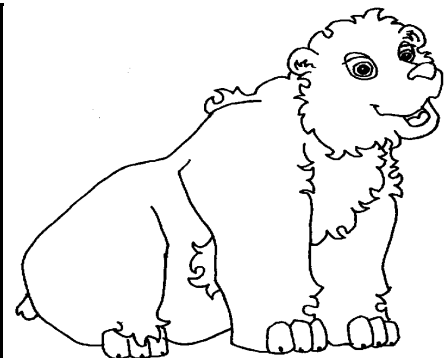
eyes searched/glared/flushed/shone/gleamed/glowed/twinkled

ears perked/twitched/turned/rose/wiggled/wilted/folded

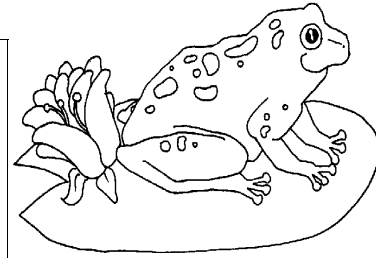
feet stomped/thundered/boomed

mouth roared/growled/yipped/thundered/boomed

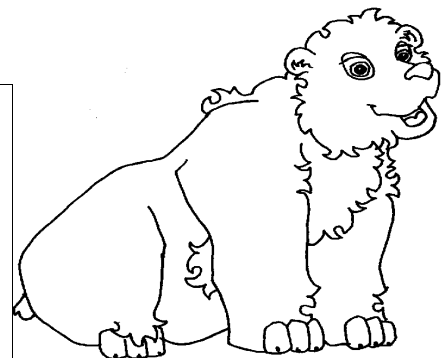
bear lumbered/scrambled/climbed/ascended/bounded/rolled
scratched/itched/dove/swam/paddled



**Write a sentence for each character which uses the webbing
your class created to “show” the character’s actions.**







**Web with the class the showing technique as indicated below.
Next, model two different sentences which use the webbing.
Have students write their own sentence(s) and share their work.**

Webbing

Question:What did the long neck's eyes/legs/teeth/tail do?

What did the long neck do?

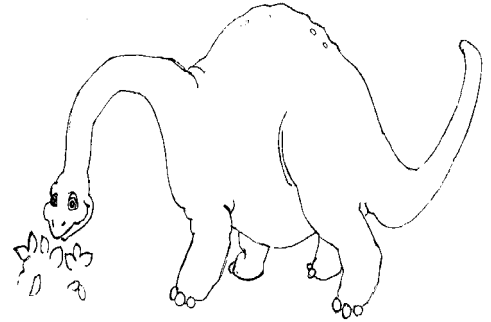
eyes glared/sparkled/shone/gleamed/glowed/narrowed/stared

legs stomped/shook the ground/pounded/boomed/lumbered

teeth ripped/tore/pulled/yanked/uprooted

tail wagged/sliced/slapped/slashed/whipped/rose

long neck lumbered/wandered/collapsed/stormed/charged



Webbing

Question:What did the bunny's eyes/legs/teeth/tail do?

What did the bunny do?

eyes widened/shut/stared/peeked/peered/glowed/glanced

nose twitched/wiggled/wriggled

ears rose/flattened/stood/turned/twitched/drooped/wilted

legs thumped/warped/leaped/hopped/jumped

bunny exploded/burst/bounded/bounced/flew/darted/dodged



Webbing

Question:What did the bee's eyes/legs/teeth/tail do?

What did the bee do?

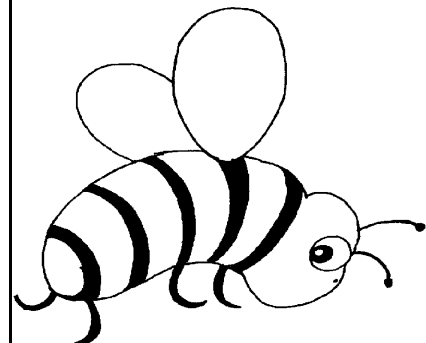
eyes widened/shut/stared/peeked/peered/glowed/glanced

antennae twitched/wiggled/wriggled/searched/explored

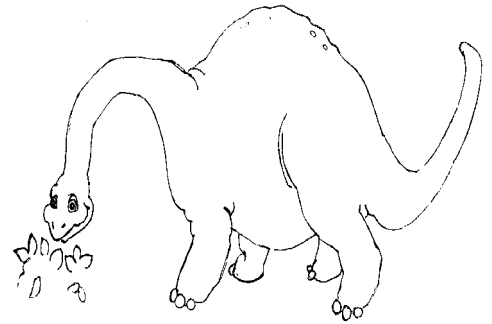
wings flapped/lifted/extended/spread/soared/rose

legs hopped/jumped/crawled/inched/ambled

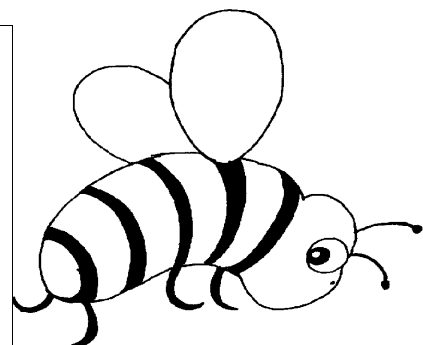
bee buzzed/hummed/soared/flew/zipped/hovered/sliced



Write a sentence for each character which uses the webbing
your class created to “show” the character’s actions.







Quotation Marks Before and After the Speaker Combined with: Compound and Complex Sentences



Compound Sentences

A compound sentence joins two complete sentences together using a co-ordinating conjunction. The co-ordinating conjunctions are:

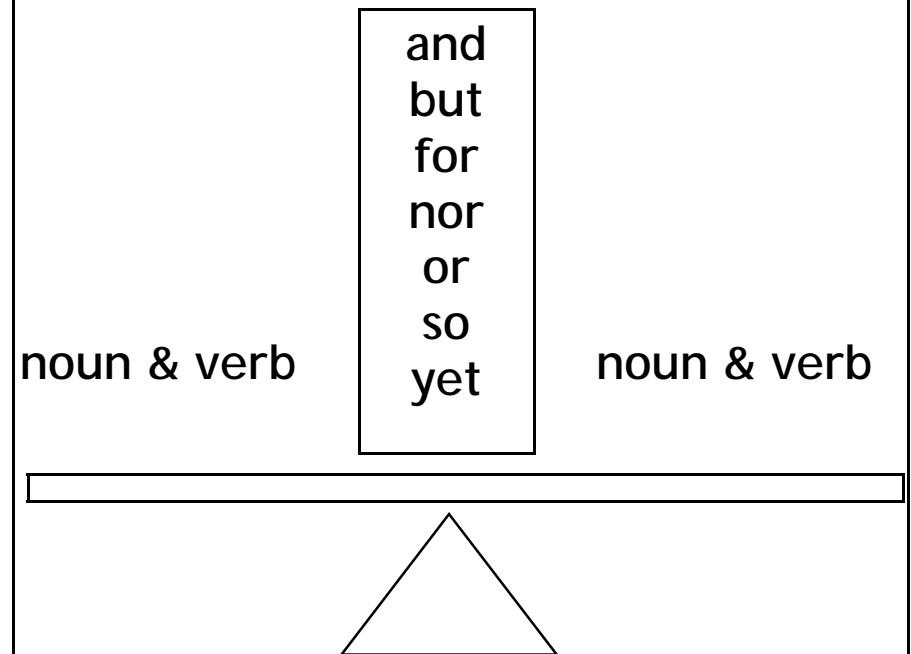
and
but
for
nor
or
so
yet

A comma is used before the co-ordinating conjunction to punctuate the sentence.

Example:

The icicles hung down from the rooftop,
and the sun created a kaleidoscope of
colours as it reflected off the snow.

Co-ordinating conjunctions balance the sentence when they join the two simple sentences together.



Complex Sentences

A complex sentence joins an independent and a dependent clause together using a subordinating conjunction.

Some subordinating conjunctions are:

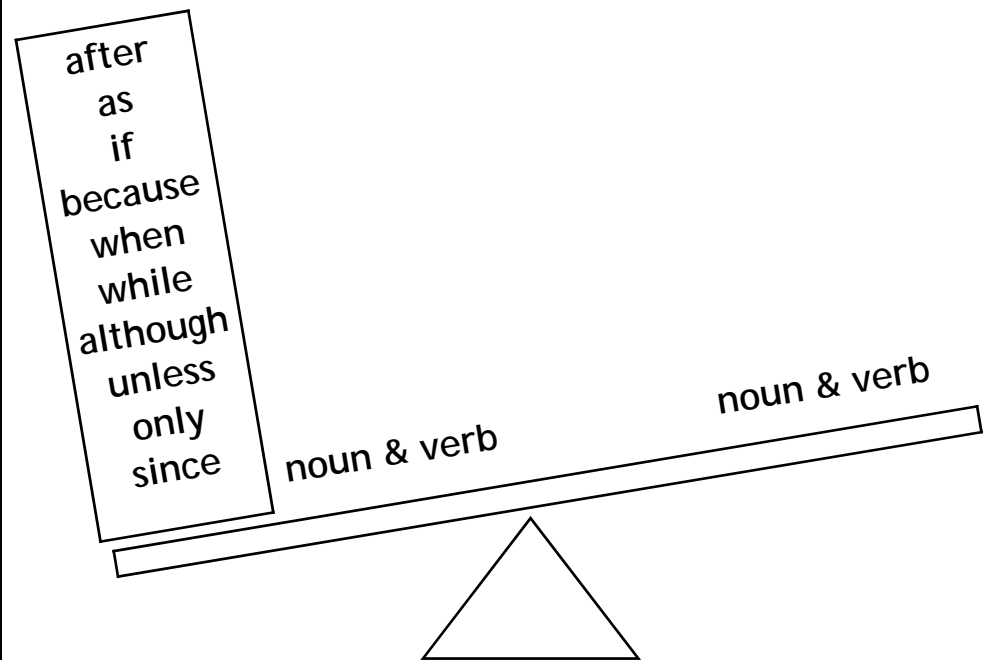
after	although
as	unless
if	only
because	since
when	where
while	

A comma is used to separate the clauses if the dependent clause (the clause which begins with a subordinating conjunction) comes first.

Example:

After the snow stopped falling, the sun created a kaleidoscope of colours as it reflected off the snow.

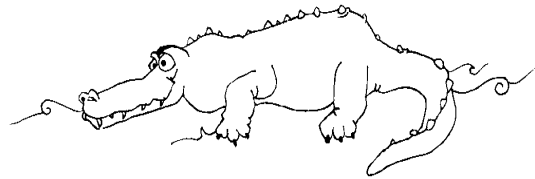
Subordinating conjunctions create dependent (unbalanced) clauses. When two simple sentences are joined together with a subordinating conjunction one clause becomes dependent on the other and can no longer stand alone. The subordinating conjunction may come at the beginning of the sentence or it may come between the two sentences.



Create a compound sentence in the first exercise and a complex sentence in the second exercise. Notice how the capitalization changes when the sentence is broken into parts. The second set of quotation marks are followed by a lower case letter NOT an upper case letter as taught before.

“The sun is shining,”

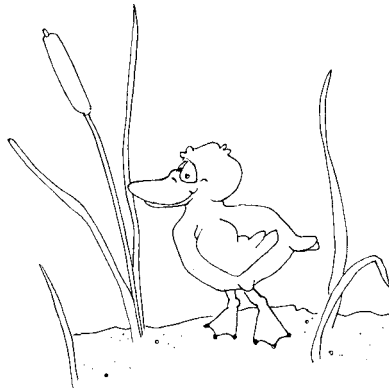
**Speaker
smiled the crocodile,**



**“and my tummy is
growling.”**

**“After I’ve gone swim-
ming,”**

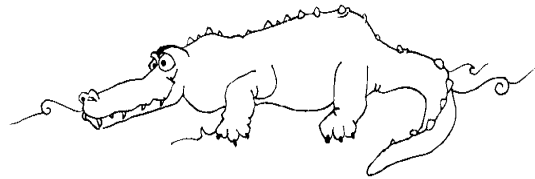
**Speaker
quacked the duck,**



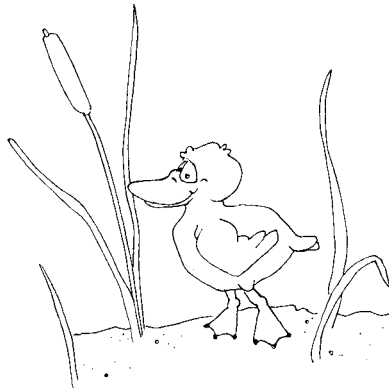
**“I’ll make you some
lunch!”**

Create a compound sentence in the first exercise and a complex sentence in the second exercise.

Speaker

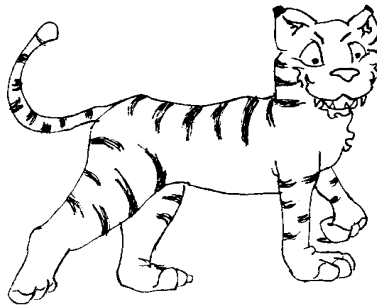


Speaker

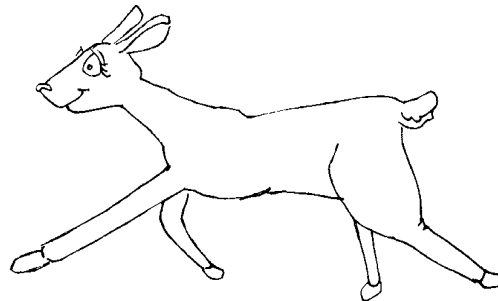


Create a compound sentence in the first exercise and a complex sentence in the second exercise.

Speaker



Speaker

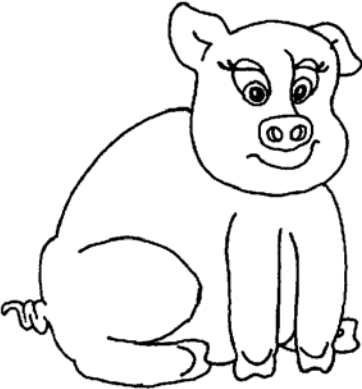


Create a compound sentence in the first exercise and a complex sentence in the second exercise.

Speaker



Speaker



Create a compound sentence in the first exercise and a complex sentence in the second exercise.

Speaker



Speaker



Create a compound sentence in the first exercise and a complex sentence in the second exercise.

Speaker

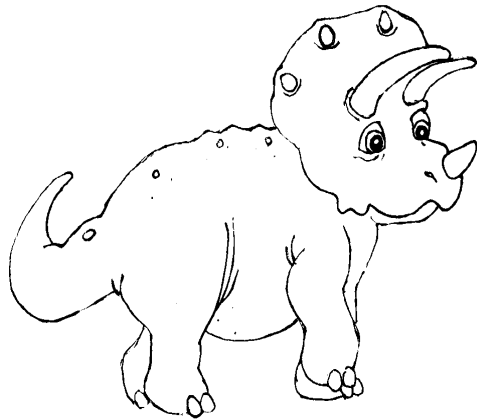


Speaker

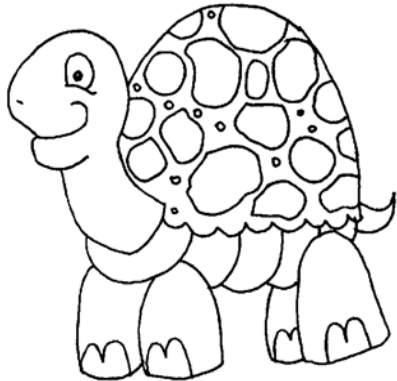


Create a compound sentence in the first exercise and a complex sentence in the second exercise.

Speaker

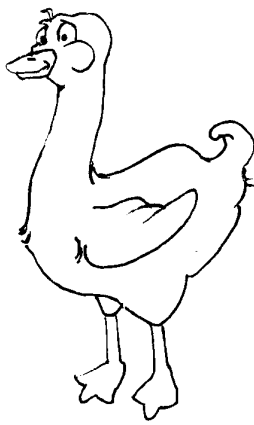


Speaker



Create a compound sentence in the first exercise and a complex sentence in the second exercise.

Speaker

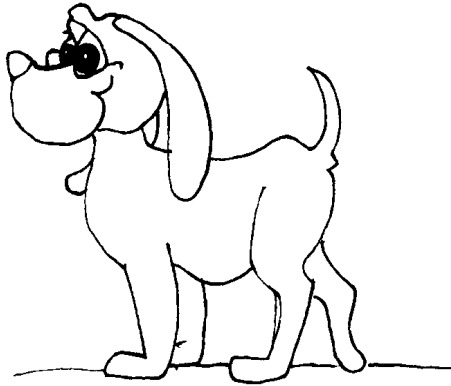


Speaker

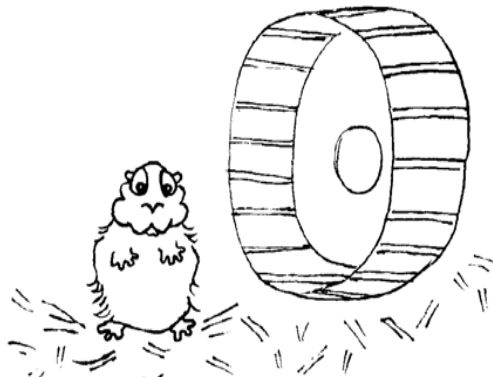


Create a compound sentence in the first exercise and a complex sentence in the second exercise.

Speaker

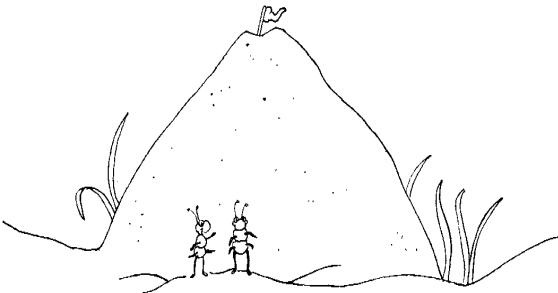


Speaker



Create a compound sentence in the first exercise and a complex sentence in the second exercise.

Speaker



Speaker

