Sentence Patterns

Perhaps the most underrated of stylistic elements, sentence structure is actually quite important in ordering your ideas, establishing emphasis, enhancing flow, and varying how you convey ideas, all of which contribute to your personal ‘voice’ as a writer. You can develop this voice by practicing the following four sentence patterns:

**Simple Sentences**

The most basic sentence type, simple sentences are simply independent clauses containing a subject and a predicate (verb + object noun).

Ex. Walter likes bowling.

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Object (Gerund)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
```

**Compound Sentences**

Compound sentences combine two or more independent clauses using a comma and a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).

Ex. Walter likes bowling, but he never bowls on Saturdays.

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Clause</th>
<th>Coordinating Conjunction</th>
<th>Independent Clause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
```

**Complex Sentences**

While compound sentences combine two independent clauses, complex sentences, by comparison, join together an independent clause and at least one dependent clause using a subordinating conjunction.

Ex. Walter likes bowling because it helps him to relax.

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Clause</th>
<th>Dependent Clause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
```

```
| Subordinating Conjunction |
```

**Note:** To vary your expression of ideas even more, place the dependent clause at the **beginning** of the sentence. Whenever you do this, however, remember to **include a comma** between the dependent and independent clauses.

Ex. Walter likes bowling **because it helps him to relax**.

```
Dependent Clause
Ex. Because it helps him to relax

Independent Clause
Walter likes bowling
```

**Compound-Complex Sentences**

The compound-complex sentence combines two or more independent clauses with one or more dependent clauses.

Ex. **Because it helps him to relax, Walter likes bowling, but he never bowls on Saturdays when he instead discusses nihilism.**

1. **Dependent Clause:** *Because it helps him to relax*
2. **Punctuation:** Comma whenever a dependent clause begins a sentence
3. **Independent Clause:** *Walter likes bowling*
4. **Coordinating Conjunction:** Joining word that links two independent clauses
5. **Independent Clause:** *He never bowls*
6. **Prepositional Phrase:** *On Saturdays*
7. **Dependent Clause:** *When he instead discusses nihilism.*