**Exercises for Varying Sentence Structures**

**Part I.**

**Skill: 1 Restart the sentence by “It is + v.ed”**

People agree that the American education system is in deep trouble.

--It is generally agreed that …

**Skill: 2 Restart the sentence by “There is +”**

People have recognized of the importance of scientific study of Africa’s wild lands and their ecology.

--Then, there has been a recognition of the importance of …

**Skill 3 Replace “if clause” with “a hidden condition”**

If you carefully compare the two teaching methods, you will find the former is superior.

--Careful comparison of the two teaching methods will show the superiority of the former.

**Skill 4 Replace “because” with other sentence patterns**

Because one can’t know what kind of knowledge will be more useful in the future, so he may not make an intelligent choice in taking school course.

--The inability to predict what kind of knowledge will be more useful in the future prevents a person from making an intelligent choice in taking school course.

(To present a hidden reason without “because”)

**Skill 5 Replace “when” clause with a noun phrase**

When our teacher had left, the heated discussion then ended.

--The departure of our teacher brought the heated discussion to an end.

(“When” does not merely suggest “at certain time”.)

**More exercises with various beginnings**

1 People generally think if a person is “gifted” or “bright” or talented, wonderful ideas will flash spontaneously into his mind. This is a misconception.

Today many people agreed that fundamental educational reforms are needed to improve the levels of skill and literacy of American students.

(It is a common misconception that

It is widely agreed that …)

2 The majority come to an agreement that we must place increased emphasis on training in math and science.

More and more people cast doubt on the overall effectiveness of universities, as they are now constituted, in discharging their responsibilities.

(There is a broad consensus that …

There is mounting skepticism about …)

3 If ones use passive voice frequently, it will deprives the style of that forward movement which occurs.

If you only apply book knowledge, you won’t get good results.

(A too frequent use of the passive voice, consequently, …

The application of book knowledge alone won’t bring you good results.)

4 Because many people desire to learn foreign languages, many language schools appear.

Because we are short of time, we have to omit some places of interest.

(Many language schools are called into existence by the social demand for foreign language learning.

Being short of time, we have to…

Or: Shortness of time has required the omission of some places of historical interest.)

5 When an old worker sees he is going to retire, he begins to worry about his future.

When there is slight improvement in their children’s studies, parents will feel happy.

(The mere prospect of retirement sets an old worker worrying about his future.

The slight movement in the children’s studies will lead to their parents’ happiness.)

Part II. Vary sentence structures

And… /But…/or…

Not only, but also…

Because…

If…

Although…

Which…/that…

(common in students’ writings)

So…that…/ So, …

First… second… third

For one thing…, for another…

On the one hand…, on the other hand…

In order to…

As a result, …

**Part II.**

**1. Vary structures by using inverted sentences**

e.g. Adding to societal changes today is an enormous stockpile of information.

From that science will come the realization that despite technology, man does not exercise dominion over nature.

Less important than ever is developing a meaningful philosophy of life.

**2. Vary sentence structures by double negation**

a. You can’t lend your marked book to your friends because nobody else can read them without being distracted by your notes.

You will never catch me with a free fifteen minutes in which I’m not reading something.

b. Probably there is not one here who has not in the course of the day had occasion to set in motion a complex train of reasoning.

c. Regardless of where the book came from, I cannot remember a time when I was not in love with them.

**3. Vary sentence structures with comparative structure**

Like anything, success is a question of timing.

Success is as much a question of timing as anything else.

Food is the most emotion-rousing issue, because food is the most basic issue to individual and national survival.

No other issues are more emotion-rousing than food, which is basically concerned with individual and national survival.

But the ability to sense the market is most critical.

None, however, is more critical than the ability to sense the market.

A young man’s first car is not a means of transportation, but a monument to his discovery of youthful freedom

A young man’s first car is less a means of transportation than a monument to his …

**4. Vary sentence structures by using an appositive**

1. Soon I would be on my own, making my own decisions, doing what I wanted without someone looking over my shoulder and it meant going to school with boys, which is a welcome change coming from all-girl high school.
2. Soon I would be on my own, making… and it meant going to school with boys—a welcome change coming from all-girl high school.
3. I don’t expect you simply to agree and do nothing more. I expect you add something that may be a reason for agreeing, another example, or a remark to carry the idea further.
4. I don’t expect you simply to agree and do nothing more. I expect you add something—a reason for agreeing, another example, or a remark to carry the idea further.
5. Doing part-time job can help us contact with society, (and) this is an alternative way to get knowledge.
6. Doing part-time job can help us contact with society, an alternative way to get knowledge.

**\* Functions of appositives**

**To conclude**

e.g. Instead she spends her evening watching TV and tidying her closets—occupations at which no particular expertise is expected.

**To explain**

e.g. It’s well understood that technological innovation always requires the discarding of the “old model”—the “old-model” in this case being not just our old typewriter, but my wife, my critic, my closest reader.

**5. Vary sentence structures by using post modifiers**

e.g.

There is an almost infinite variety of magazine available to satisfy the rich variety of interests and tastes.

It takes years of constant academic toil to reach a level of sophistication essential to function effectively in today’s very complex world.

(Adjective is the most flexible to extend a sentence.)

A national economy free of the burden of debt, populated by educated citizens ready to work and to care for their neighbors must be our goal.

**6. Vary sentence structures by using insertions**

e.g.

He (or she) looks at people in a similar way, for the man an attractive girl—and for the woman an attractive man—are the prizes they are after.

(a highly desirable possession)

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of this century, a man had to be aggressive and ambitious—today he has to be social and tolerant—in order to be attractive “package”.

Of course the importance of this distinction is popularly, if somewhat obscurely, recognized.

It will put enormous pressure on world supplies, making it difficult, if not impossible, to avoid hunger and starvation on a massive scale.

**7. Vary sentence structures by using passive voice**

Which sentence do you prefer?

1. The death of his mother was followed two months later by the loss of his and Clementine’s beloved three-year-old daughter, Marigold.
2. His mother died, and two months later he lost his and Clementine’s beloved three-year-old daughter, Marigold.

However, very little control can be exercised over the media used to generate information that comes to you from the outside.

However, there are signs that much more serious efforts may be mustered (called together, summoned up) in the reasonably near future.

**Part III Vary sentence length**

1. In the daily life we have noticed many men and women seek something that is neither food, nor clothing, not shelter, something that is totally useless in their environment. They seek personality.
2. And what of love? (short) You cannot hope to find love by experimenting biologically; you don’t build love by creating a living situation designed to test it; you don’t create love by setting up a forced **proximity** (being close/intimate to each other ). (long) Love is. (short)
3. It didn’t occur to me to offer to split the bill. In those days, life was simple. And wonderful men paid. (Cindy Blake)
4. Work has ceased to be a moral and religious obligation in the sense of the middle-class attitude of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. (long) Something new has emerged. (short) Ever-increasing production, the drive to make bigger and better things, have become aims in themselves, new ideals. (long) Work has become alienated from the working person. (short)

(As to its visual effect, short sentences like these can easily catch attention.)