Proper Academic Sentence Writing.

Academic writing which is what you must do on the TOEFL exam, IELTS exam and generally in a university is accomplished through sentence variety, sentence patterns and sentence structures.

15 ways to start a sentence

1. “ing” Seizing the knife, Laura cut herself free. Having applied the cream, he immediately felt better. Worrying about what he was supposed to remember for the test, he was unable to sleep.
2. Past Participle. Finished with his homework, he began to watch television. Amazed, he stood still with his mouth open, like a goldfish.
3. Present Participle. Finishing he homework, allowed him to watch television. Walking up the street, he tripped.
4. Participle. Gone are the days of respect for elders.
5. Simile. Like a fish, she dived into the water.
6. Adverb. Slowly, the giant climbed up the cliff. Carefully, he opened the lid. Unfortunately, he received a big surprise after opening the lid.
7. Preposition. Above the clouds, the sun shone brightly and he could see for miles.
8. Subordinate Conjunction. (until, since, before, as, if, when, although, because, as long as, after). Since he was worried about the test, he could not sleep. Behind the sleepless nights is the worry that he will not become a doctor.
9. Adjective. Angry at the world, he stalked off.
10. A phrase. At the top of the road, he paused.
11. Infinitive. To lose the game was his worse fear.
12. Gerund as subject. Debating his friend was hi favorite pastime.
13. Adverbial Clause. When the dog arrived, the boy ran to greet him.
14. Noun Clause. How to avoid doing his chores puzzled the boy.
15. Subject. The man walked down the street.
16. Transitional word. Rather, they needed to get more glue to complete the project.

also, again, as well as, besides, coupled with, furthermore, in addition, likewise, moreover, similarly

Consequence:

accordingly, as a result, consequently, for this reason, for this purpose,

hence, otherwise, so then, subsequently, therefore, thus, thereupon, wherefore

Generalizing:

as a rule, as usual, for the most part,

generally, generally speaking, ordinarily, usually

Exemplifying:

chiefly, especially, for instance, in particular, markedly, namely,

particularly, including, specifically, such as

Illustration:

for example, for instance, for one thing, as an illustration,

illustrated with, as an example, in this case

Emphasis

above all, chiefly, with attention to, especially, particularly, singularly

Similarity:

comparatively, coupled with, correspondingly, identically, likewise, similar, moreover, together with

Exception:

aside from, barring, besides, except, excepting, excluding, exclusive of, other than, outside of, save

Restatement:

in essence, in other words, namely, that is, that is to say,

in short, in brief, to put it differently

Contrast and Comparison:

contrast, by the same token, conversely, instead, likewise,

on one hand, on the other hand, on the contrary, rather,

similarly, yet, but, however, still, nevertheless, in contrast

Sequence:

at first, first of all, to begin with, in the first place, at the same time,

for now, for the time being, the next step, in time, in turn, later on,

meanwhile, next, then, soon, the meantime, later, while, earlier,

simultaneously, afterward, in conclusion, with this in mind,

Summarizing:

after all, all in all, all things considered, briefly, by and large, in any case, in any event,

in brief, in conclusion, on the whole, in short, in summary, in the final analysis,

in the long run, on balance, to sum up, to summarize, finally

Diversion:

by the way, incidentally

Direction:

here, there, over there, beyond, nearly, opposite, under, above,

to the left, to the right, in the distance

Sentence Patters and Sentence Types:

Sentence patterns and sentence types allow for you to not have boring writing and speaking. This is the type of language that adds spice and variety to essays. Using the same pattern over and over again is not effective writing. Remember, how you speak is how you write and vice versa.

1. Simple Sentence (what most of you use). Politicians are worried about the rising cost of healthcare.
2. Compound Sentence (not used enough) (but, for, or, not, so, yet, and). A lack of knowledge of creating compound sentences is what leads to a significant amount of run-on sentences.

Politicians are worried about the rising cost of healthcare, yet they still fight against any legislation to control cost.

[Run-Sentence] Politicians are worried about the rising cost of **healthcare, they** still fight against any legislation to control cost. (the writer must put a connector here “yet”)

1. Compound Sentence (2nd variety) Independent Clause ; Independent Clause.

Politicians are worried about the rising cost of healthcare; they are considering new methods.

1. Compound Sentence (3rd variety) Independent Clause ; independent marker , independent clause. (Markers: therefore, moreover, thus, consequently, however, also)

Politicians are worried about the rising cost of healthcare; therefore, they are requested an independent consultant to provide alternatives.

1. Complex Sentence. Dependent marker , independent clause (because, before, since, while, although, if, until, when, after, as)

Because politicians are worried about the rising cost of healthcare, they are requesting an independent consultant to provide alternatives.

1. Complex Sentence. Independent Clause, dependent marker, dependent clause. (because, before, while, since, until, if, after, although, as).

Politicians are concerned about the rising cost of healthcare because there have been no alternative plans suggested.

1. Non-Essential Phrase. Many politicians, including republicans and democrats, desire a reduction of healthcare cost but cannot come to an agreement.
2. Passive Voice (object more important or actor unknown). (object becomes subject, add, BE verb, past participle)

Ex. The man must have eaten five hamburgers. (Active)

Five hamburgers must have been eaten by the man. (Passive)

Ex. Susan mailed the letter. (Active) The letter was mailed by Susan. (Passive)

1. Relative Clauses. The man, who is 6 feet tall, is my father. The dog that ate the bone belonged to Susan. (who, that/which, where)
2. Adjective Clause. The young man took the car, which belonged to my older sister Susan
3. Correlative Sentence (not only…but also, neither nor, either or, both and, no sooner ……than, as ……as, whether …… or).

Ex. Not only was the sandwich good, but also it was filling.

Ex. Neither he school life nor general history can explain his actions.

1. Negative Inversion ( are used with negative and restrictive adverbs (only, never, hardly, little, not only … but also , barely, no sooner, only … then)

Ex: Never have I been so insulted.

Ex: No sooner had I walked in the door, than the dog drug in the dead body.

Ex: Only then did I fully understand the problem.

Ex: Rarely do I bother to read these grammar lessons; but no sooner had I started to read this one, did I realize its usefulness for improving my

1. Conditional Sentences

Present Real: If I go, I will call you. (If/When, present simple, present simple)

Present Unreal (Imaginary Situations). If I were you, I would not go to the party. (If, simple past, would & simple verb)

Past Unreal (What you would do different in the past). If had gone to the party, I would have met Laura. (If, past perfect, would & have & past participle)

III. Eliminate the Verb to BE from your writing and use strong verbs. Substitute weak verbs with strong verbs (all of your basic verbs are pretty much weak verbs , i.e. walk, talk, speak, etc.). Also, eliminating the BE verb helps to eliminate wordiness which is a hallmark of poor writing. BE verbs are not always bad, but they are weaker than active verbs, powerful verbs. BE verbs are many times absolute and hint at a certain level of being permanent that likely does not exist. Strong writers will re-word sentences to use more active, powerful verbs.

BE Verbs: to be, am, is , are, was, were, be, being, been

Eliminate “there is/are” and “it is/are” sentence constructions

Example: Tony is afraid of spiders. (weak)

Tony fears spiders (Better)

Example: June is the manager of the largest Taco Bell in Houston. (weak)

June manages the largest Taco Bell in Houston (Better)

Example: Susan walked down the street with a smile. (weak)

Susan strolled down the street with a smile. (better)

Example: John Wall was the creator of the Simpsons television series.

John Wall created the Simpsons television series.

Example: The unhappy cook is unfulfilled. He heads to bed, angry, even though he got compliments. (weak)

The unhappy cook, heads to bed, unfulfilled, even though he got compliments. (better)

Example: One of the reasons for homelessness is that the structure of society is different than fifty years ago.

Homelessness occurs as a result of a society structured differently fifty years ago.

Example: A third reason for homelessness is the fact that people may have mental problems.

Mental problems constitute an additional factor in the creation of homelessness.

Example: The truck was loaded with boxes of pears by the employees. (weak)

The employees loaded the truck with boxes of pears. (better)

Example: Because Joe is prone to stay away from social gatherings, he spends many evenings alone in her dorm room. (weak)

Because Joe avoids social gatherings, he spends many evenings alone in his dorm room.

Example: The intended purpose of the lecture was to teach students effective time management

The lecture’s intended purpose taught students effective time management.

Example: There was a display of contemporary abstract art at the campus gallery.

The campus gallery displayed contemporary abstract art.

Example: Dr. Brene Brown has a theory that when people avoid vulnerability, they also stop emotional growth. (weak)

Dr. Brene Brown theorized that when people avoid vulnerability, they shut down emotional growth.

**1. Vary the rhythm by alternating short and long sentences.**

Several sentences of the same length can make for bland writing. To enliven paragraphs, write sentences of different lengths. This will also allow for effective emphasis.

**Example**: The Winslow family visited Canada and Alaska last summer to find some native American art. In Anchorage stores they found some excellent examples of soapstone carvings. But they couldn't find a dealer selling any of the woven wall hangings they wanted. They were very disappointed when they left Anchorage empty-handed.

**Revision**: The Winslow family visited Canada and Alaska last summer to find some native American art, such as soapstone carvings and wall hangings. Anchorage stores had many soapstone items available. Still, they were disappointed to learn that wall hangings, which they had especially wanted, were difficult to find. Sadly, they left empty-handed.

**Example**: Many really good blues guitarists have all had the last name King. They have been named Freddie King and Albert King and B.B. King. The name King must make a bluesman a really good bluesman. The bluesmen named King have all been very talented and good guitar players. The claim that a name can make a guitarist good may not be that far fetched.

**Revision**: What makes a good bluesman? Maybe, just maybe, it's all in a stately name. B.B. King. Freddie King. Albert King. It's no coincidence that they're the royalty of their genre. When their fingers dance like court jesters, their guitars gleam like scepters, and their voices bellow like regal trumpets, they seem almost like nobility. Hearing their music is like walking into the throne room. They really are kings.

**2. Vary sentence openings.**

If too many sentences start with the same word, especially "The," "It," "This," or "I," prose can grow tedious for readers, so changing opening words and phrases can be refreshing. Below are alternative openings for a fairly standard sentence. Notice that different beginnings can alter not only the structure but also the emphasis of the sentence. They may also require rephrasing in sentences before or after this one, meaning that one change could lead to an abundance of sentence variety.

**Example**: The biggest coincidence that day happened when David and I ended up sitting next to each other at the Super Bowl.

**Possible Revisions**:

* Coincidentally, David and I ended up sitting right next to each other at the Super Bowl.
* In an amazing coincidence, David and I ended up sitting next to each other at the Super Bowl.
* Sitting next to David at the Super Bowl was a tremendous coincidence.
* But the biggest coincidence that day happened when David and I ended up sitting next to each other at the Super Bowl.
* When I sat down at the Super Bowl, I realized that, by sheer coincidence, I was directly next to David.
* By sheer coincidence, I ended up sitting directly next to David at the Super Bowl.
* With over 50,000 fans at the Super Bowl, it took an incredible coincidence for me to end up sitting right next to David.
* What are the odds that I would have ended up sitting right next to David at the Super Bowl?
* David and I, without any prior planning, ended up sitting right next to each other at the Super Bowl.
* Without any prior planning, David and I ended up sitting right next to each other at the Super Bowl.
* At the crowded Super Bowl, packed with 50,000 screaming fans, David and I ended up sitting right next to each other by sheer coincidence.
* Though I hadn't made any advance arrangements with David, we ended up sitting right next to each other at the Super Bowl.
* Many amazing coincidences occurred that day, but nothing topped sitting right next to David at the Super Bowl.
* Unbelievable, I know, but David and I ended up sitting right next to each other at the Super Bowl.
* Guided by some bizarre coincidence, David and I ended up sitting right next to each other at the Super Bowl.

**Simple sentence: A sentence with one independent clause and no dependent clauses.**

* My aunt enjoyed taking the hayride with you.
* China's Han Dynasty marked an official recognition of Confucianism.

**Compound Sentence: A sentence with multiple independent clauses but no dependent clauses.**

* The clown frightened the little girl, and she ran off screaming.
* The Freedom Riders departed on May 4, 1961, and they were determined to travel through many southern states.

**Complex Sentence: A sentence with one independent clause and at least one dependent clause.**

* After Mary added up all the sales, she discovered that the lemonade stand was 32 cents short
* While all of his paintings are fascinating, Hieronymus Bosch's triptychs, full of mayhem and madness, are the real highlight of his art.

**Complex-Compound Sentence: A sentence with multiple independent clauses and at least one dependent clause.**

* *Catch-22* is widely regarded as Joseph Heller's best novel, and because Heller served in World War II, which the novel satirizes, the zany but savage wit of the novel packs an extra punch.

#### 1. Combine Sentences With Conjunctions:

Join complete sentences, clauses, and phrases with conjunctions:

and, but, or, nor, yet, for, so

**Example**: Doonesbury cartoons satirize contemporary politics. Readers don't always find this funny. They demand that newspapers not carry the strip.

**Revision**: Doonesbury cartoons laugh at contemporary politicians, but readers don't always find this funny and demand that newspapers not carry the strip.

#### 2. Link Sentences Through Subordination:

Link two related sentences to each other so that one carries the main idea and the other is no longer a complete sentence (subordination). Use connectors such as the ones listed below to show the relationship.

after, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, even though, if, if only, rather than, since, that, though, unless, until, when, where, whereas, wherever, whether, which, while

**Example**: The campus parking problem is getting worse. The university is not building any new garages.

**Revision**: The campus parking problem is getting worse because the university is not building any new garages.

**Example**: The US has been highly dependent on foreign oil for many years. Alternate sources of energy are only now being sought.

**Revision**: Although the US has been highly dependent on foreign oil for many years, alternate sources are only now being sought.

#### 1. Relative pronouns

Embed one sentence inside the other using a clause starting with one of the relative pronouns listed below.

which, who, whoever, whom, that, whose

**Example**: Indiana used to be mainly an agricultural state. It has recently attracted more industry.

**Revision**: Indiana, which used to be mainly an agricultural state, has recently attracted more industry.

**Example**: One of the cameras was not packed very well. It was damaged during the move.

**Revision**: The camera that was not packed very well was damaged during the move.

**Example**: The experiment failed because of Murphy's Law. This law states that if something can go wrong, it will.

**Revision**: The experiment failed because of Murphy's Law, which states that if something can go wrong, it will.

**Example**: Doctor Ramirez specializes in sports medicine. She helped my cousin recover from a basketball injury.

**Revision 1**: Doctor Ramirez, who specializes in sports medicine, helped my cousin recover from a basketball injury.

**Revision 2**: Doctor Ramirez, whose specialty is sports medicine, helped my cousin recover from a basketball injury.

#### 2. Participles

Eliminate a be verb (am, is, was, were, are) and substitute a participle:

Present participles end in -ing, for example: speaking, carrying, wearing, dreaming.

Past participles usually end in -ed, -en, -d, -n, or -t but can be irregular, for example: worried, eaten, saved, seen, dealt, taught.

**Example**: Wei Xie was surprised to get a phone call from his sister. He was happy to hear her voice again.

**Revision 1**: Wei Xie, surprised to get a phone call from his sister, was happy to hear her voice again.

**Revision 2**: Surprised to get a phone call from his sister, Wei Xie was happy to hear her voice again.

#### 3. Prepositions

Turn a sentence into a prepositional phrase using one of the words below:

about, above, across, after, against, along, among, around, as, behind, below, beneath, beside, between, by, despite, down, during, except, for, from, in, inside, near, next to, of, off, on, out, over, past, to, under, until, up, with

**Example**: The university has been facing pressure to cut its budget. It has eliminated funding for important programs. (two independent clauses)

**Revision**: Under pressure to cut its budget, the university has eliminated funding for important programs. (prepositional phrase, independent clause)

**Example**: Billy snuck a cookie from the dessert table. This was against his mother's wishes.

**Revision**: Against his mother's wishes, Billy snuck a cookie from the dessert table.

#### 1. Dependent markers

Put clauses and phrases with the listed dependent markers at the beginning of some sentences instead of starting each sentence with the subject:

after, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, even though, if, in order to, since, though, unless, until, whatever, when, whenever, whether, and while

**Example**: The room fell silent when the TV newscaster reported the story of the earthquake.

**Revision**: When the TV newscaster reported the story of the earthquake, the room fell silent.

**Example**: Thieves made off with Edvard Munch's The Scream before police could stop them.

**Revision**: Before police could stop them, thieves made off with Edvard Munch's The Scream.

#### 2. Transitional words and phrases

Vary the rhythm by adding transitional words at the beginning of some sentences:

accordingly, after all, afterward, also, although, and, but, consequently, despite, earlier, even though, for example, for instance, however, in conclusion, in contrast, in fact, in the meantime, in the same way, indeed, just as... so, meanwhile, moreover, nevertheless, not only... but also, now, on the contrary, on the other hand, on the whole, otherwise, regardless, shortly, similarly, specifically, still, that is, then, therefore, though, thus, yet

**Example**: Fast food corporations are producing and advertising bigger items and high-fat combination meals. The American population faces a growing epidemic of obesity.

**Revision**: Fast food corporations are producing and advertising bigger items and high-fat combination meals. Meanwhile, the American population faces a growing epidemic of obesity.

This flexibility can be useful in creating varied rhythmic patterns over the course of a paragraph.