

Figure 12.2 Revising Your Narratives with Sentence Variation

You've learned so much about grammar and noticed such excellent sentence variation in our classroom literature. Now's the time to put your skill to work!

What differences do you notice in the sentences of the following two descriptions?

Example 1:

I heard a noise from the hallway. I quickly sat upright in bed. *Who could that be?* I wondered. I knew my mom wouldn't be returning that early. I planted my feet on the floor. Then I began to walk softly across my room. I neared the door to my bedroom. It was closed. I heard more sounds in the living room. It was the room next to mine.

I felt worried and uncertain. I slowly turned the doorknob. I wanted to solve the mystery. I still felt fearful. In the center of the living room, I found our dog Rosie. Her teeth were wrapped around her favorite toy. She had pulled it from the shelf to entertain herself. *False alarm!* I thought. I sleepily returned to bed.

Example 2:

Hearing a noise from the hallway, I quickly sat upright in bed. *Who could that be?* I wondered, knowing my mom wouldn't be returning so early. My feet planted on the floor, I began to walk softly across my room. As I neared the closed door to my bedroom, I heard more sounds in the living room, the room next to mine.

Worried and uncertain, I slowly turned the doorknob. Although I wanted to solve the mystery, I still felt fearful. I found our dog Rosie, her teeth wrapped around her favorite toy. She had pulled it from the shelf to entertain herself. *False alarm!* I thought and sleepily returned to bed.

You probably notice that Example 1 sounds choppy, but Example 2 has a better flow because it contains greater sentence variation.

Here's the assignment:

Write a final revision of your personal narrative. Aim for sentence variety within paragraphs—you don't want an entire paragraph of simple and compound sentences when you actually know a variety of types, including participial phrases, absolute phrases, adverb clauses, adjective clauses, and appositives.

Choosing from the sentence variations below, use six examples from the list, with at least one from each category, for an *A* paper and four examples for a *B* paper. If you think it's necessary, you may exceed that number to enhance your paragraphs.

(continued)

Figure 12.2 (concluded)

- ◆ Appositives: one appositive placed before a noun and one placed after a noun

Examples: *A constant worrier*, my mom checked the door several times, making certain she had locked it.

My mom, *a constant worrier*, checked the door several times, making certain she had locked it.

- ◆ Adjectives placed before a noun

Examples: *Kind and loving*, my grandmother often cooks my favorite meal.

Warm and chocolaty, the cookie melted in my mouth.

- ◆ Absolute phrases used to communicate body language (three for an A paper and two for a B paper)

Examples: *Eyes staring at the ball*, I moved to the front of the court.

Fingers grasping the racket, I sent the ball back across the net.

- ◆ Participial phrases used to communicate body language

Examples: *Slumping in my seat*, I stared unhappily at the failing test score.

My friend, *holding the jammed lock in both hands*, tried to yank it open.

I bent forward to pick up my pen, *losing my balance and falling forward*.