

Sentence Improver: Make Every Word Count

Choose precise verbs, add useful detail and vary how sentences start.

Name _____ Date _____ Class _____

Learning objective: I can improve sentences with precise vocabulary, useful detail and varied openings.

✓ I choose precise verbs ✓ I use fronted adverbials and relative clauses ✓ I cut words that add nothing

- 1 Choose a precise verb** Replace each plain verb with a more precise one. Think about how the action is done.

Plain sentence	Better verb
The fox went across the garden.	
"Stop!" she said .	
The boy ate his dinner.	
The rain fell on the roof.	

- 2 Expand the noun phrase** Add one or two well-chosen details before or after the noun.

1 a house →

2 the dog →

3 some trees →

- 3 Fronted adverbials** Rewrite each sentence starting with a fronted adverbial. Remember the comma after it.

1 We ran home. (when?)

2 The cat waited. (where?)

3 Mia opened the letter. (how?)

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- 4 Add a relative clause** Use *who*, *which*, *where*, *whose* or *that* to add extra information. Use commas if the clause is in the middle.

1 My grandad grows tomatoes.

2 The castle was cold and dark.

- 5 Show, don't tell** Rewrite each sentence to **show** the feeling through actions, speech or description.

1 Sam was scared.

2 Priya was excited.

- 6 Cut it down** Longer is not always better! Cross out words that add nothing, then rewrite the sentence.

1 The very big, huge, enormous giant walked slowly and very slowly up the hill.

- 7 Improve it**

Improve this sentence using at least **two** techniques from this sheet: *The man went into the old shop.*

Answer Key

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Question	Answers
1 Choose a precise verb	The fox went across the garden. – Better verb: e.g. crept, darted, slunk, trotted “Stop!” she said . – Better verb: e.g. shouted, yelled, gasped, ordered The boy ate his dinner. – Better verb: e.g. gobbled, devoured, wolfed, nibbled The rain fell on the roof. – Better verb: e.g. drummed, pattered, hammered, lashed
2 Expand the noun phrase	1. e.g. a crumbling stone house with boarded-up windows 2. e.g. the scruffy little dog from next door 3. e.g. some ancient oak trees on the hill
3 Fronted adverbials	1. e.g. As the thunder rumbled, we ran home. / Later that evening, we ran home. 2. e.g. Under the dripping hedge, the cat waited. 3. e.g. Nervously, Mia opened the letter.
4 Add a relative clause	1. e.g. My grandad, who lives in Leeds, grows tomatoes. 2. e.g. The castle, which stood on the cliff, was cold and dark.
5 Show, don’t tell	1. e.g. Sam’s hands shook as he pressed himself against the wall, hardly daring to breathe. 2. e.g. Priya bounced on her toes, grinning, unable to keep still.
6 Cut it down	1. e.g. The enormous giant trudged up the hill. (big, huge and enormous mean the same; ‘slowly’ is repeated – a precise verb does the job)
7 Improve it	Look for: • A precise verb (e.g. shuffled, strode) • An expanded noun phrase or relative clause • A fronted adverbial with a comma, or a detail that creates atmosphere

Teaching note: there is no single right answer for most questions; the key gives examples. Accept any answer that uses the technique correctly with accurate punctuation. Fronted adverbials (Year 4) need a comma; relative clauses (Year 5) in the middle of a sentence need a pair of commas.