



Super Duper Sentence Builder / *Creador de oraciones espectaculares*

Summary

The Super Duper Sentence Builder is a strategy to build the early literacy awareness that sentences are comprised of words and that words can be represented by print. The strategy further engages children in the fun and wonder of constructing complex sentences. It develops a foundational understanding of the purposes and roles of different parts of speech (e.g., adjectives as describing words, prepositional phrases to denote location and timing). The use of sentence strips and dictation enable children to literally see their sentences getting longer and longer as they add the detail of adjectives, phrases, and clauses. This strategy builds upon knowledge the class has developed in the first few weeks of a thematic unit. Teachers may utilize Observation Pictures and the Draw and Dictate strategies in conjunction with this strategy.

Implementation

In this small group strategy, the teacher begins with a photo or image related to a topic the class has been learning about and a simple sentence. The teacher writes the sentence on a sentence strip, spreads it on a table floor, or posts it on a pocket chart, and then reads the sentence aloud to the children. Then, together with the children, the group chorally recites the sentence and counts the number of words in the sentence.

The teacher uses prompting questions to engage the children in providing more and more details. As children share additional words and phrases, the teacher writes them on a sentence strip and inserts them into the sentence or pocket chart where they belong. This may involve offering the group some choice. Children are able to visually see how the sentence is growing and becoming more and more complex.

The sentence grows from a simple statement/sentence such as:

The cow eats.

(article) (noun) (verb)

To a far more complex sentence, such as:

The black, spotted cow eats grass happily in the meadow near the farm.

 ,
(article) (adjective) (adjective) (noun) (verb) (adverb) (prepositional phrase)



From a simple sentence with only 3 words to a rich, complex sentence with 13 words and far more detail.

Once the sentence is as packed as the children choose to make it, count the words in the new Super Duper sentence and celebrate what a lovely, long, descriptive, complex sentence they have created!

Step 1:

Assemble a small group of children (3 to 5) on the floor, around a table or in front of a pocket chart and tell them you are going to work together to build a long, complex Super Duper sentence about _____.

Provide a photo related to the thematic topic. It should be a photo that centralizes something the children have been learning about and that has a lot of detail. Begin with a simple sentence with just an article, noun and verb. (e.g., The cow is eating.) Write the sentence on a sentence strip in BLACK and spread on the table or floor, or post on a pocket chart.

Instead of using a photo, you could provide a simple sentence that is related to a Draw, Tell, and Label the class has studied, a character in a story the class has just read, or perhaps a fantasy topic that is popular among the class (e.g., The sanitation worker drives. *or* The superhero can fly.)

Step 2:

Ask questions and provide prompts to children that will elicit more information from them to embellish the sentence.

- **Use prompts to elicit more details in general.**

For example, *“What more can you tell me about the cow that is eating?” “What is the cow*

eating?”, *“What do you see the cow is doing?”*

Based on what the children tell you, write words onto the sentence strips, cut each word and insert it in the sentence where it belongs. For example, The cow is eating grass.

Be sure and read the sentence out loud as you insert the new word(s).

- **Use prompts to elicit adjectives.**

Ask the children description questions, such as: *“Tell me what the cow looks like.”*

“What color is the cow?”, *“What else can you tell me about the physical characteristics of the cow?”*

For each adjective the children provide, write it on a sentence strip, cut it apart and insert

it in the sentence into the proper place (note, you are modeling how adjectives get inserted), and read the sentence out loud. Be sure to include a comma between

adjectives when using more than one. Keep doing so until children run out of describing words.



- **Use prompts to elicit prepositional phrases:**

Prepositional phrases describe location and timing. Elicit these types of phrases by asking where questions, such as: “*Where is this cow?*”, “*Where does the cow live?*”. You can also ask when questions, such as: “*When is this happening?*”

Write each prepositional phrase on a sentence strip, cut it and insert it into the sentence in its proper place. If the children give you more than one prepositional phrase, you can put both at the end of the sentence, or place one at the beginning of the sentence and one at the end. Again, read the sentence out loud as you build it. Check in with the children: “*How does this sound? Is our sentence getting longer? Is it giving more information?*”

- **Use prompts to elicit additional adjectives or adverbs related to the *location* or *action*:**

If the children are still engaged, ask them for describing words related to the prepositional phrases, such as: “*Tell me more about the meadow where the cow is eating, what color is it? What does it look like?*”

Or, you can ask children to tell you more about the action (the verb). “*Tell me more about how the cow is walking. Is it walking fast? Slow? Crooked?*”

As you add words, be sure to use a different color pen so it is obvious to the children that the original sentence (written in black) is growing. Every time a word is added, read the sentence out loud.

Step 3:

Complete the sentence and celebrate!

When the children begin to lose interest, or when the sentence is a good, long, complex one – stop, read it to the children and invite them to say it with you.

Count the number of words and point out –“We started with a sentence that just had 4 words, remember? (and repeat the original, written in black) We added so much information and now we have a fantastic Super Duper sentence with (new number) words and so much information!

Celebrate the Super Duper sophisticated, complex sentence they have created.

Have children write their names on a sentence strip as authors, and post their newly created Super Duper sentence on the wall!

Note:

You may need to go beyond a simple noun, adjectives, verb, prepositional phrase sentence if the children really get into it – and you may need to create a complex sentence with several prepositional phrases into a compound sentence adding an “and....” or a “while” clause to accommodate all of their ideas in a single sentence. (e.g. The black, spotted cow eats grass



and flowers happily in the meadow near the farm **while** the flies buzz loudly around his tail.)
Go with it! Let them make it as complex as they want.

Notes on Strategy
