

Apprentice Sentence Procedures

My very photogenic mother died in a freak accident (picnic, lightning) when I was three.

-Vladimir Nabokov, Lolita

1. Chart the sentence.

Step 1: Divide it into parts.

My very photogenic mother | died in a freak accident | (picnic, lightning) | when I was three.

Step 2: Describe the effect of the parts.

Describes someone and relation to narrator | tells what happened | gives secret story in images | tells when it was

Step 3: Describe the function of each part and draw the symbol that represents it above.


Noun | verb | (noun, noun) | adverb

2. Pick a seed idea.

My mother couldn't keep me when I was twelve.

3. Look closely at the apprentice sentence and revise your piece to model it after the original. Read both aloud several times to hear the rhythm.

My mother felt unable to keep me (on welfare, living in projects) when I was twelve.

4. Go back to the original several times until your piece captures the same rhythm and tone.

Polished version:

My not-so-loving mother felt unable to keep me (welfare, the projects) when I was twelve.
-Jenny Y., 2004

Weekly Procedure:

Each week, you will complete an apprentice sentence. Each day, you will complete part of the apprentice sentence procedure. You will show that day's work the following morning. Your apprentice sentence schedule will go like this:

- Monday: Tape or glue the apprentice sentence at the top of a fresh page in your writer's notebook, read it aloud, divide the text into parts, and chart it below the original in your writer's notebook.
- Tuesday: Generate 2 -3 seed ideas in your writer's notebook, choose one, and draft your apprentice sentence in your WNB.
- Wednesday: Revise your draft by looking back at the original sentence and your chart of it until you feel like you have satisfied the requirements listed on the rubric. Read both aloud to make sure you have captured the rhythm and tone of the original. Pay special attention to the grammatical feature studied in each cycle.
- Thursday: Share your apprentice sentence with your color group and assess it with the rubric.