Sentence Variety

Purpose: Upon completion of this activity, students will understand the five strategies for sentence variation. This DLA should take approximately 1 hour to complete.

1. Go to http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/573/01/ and read the strategies for variation. Please read all five sections on sentence variety (see sidebar for list: Variation; Sentence Types; For Short, Choppy Sentences; For Related Subjects; and Similar Sentence Patterns). On a separate sheet, answer the following questions after you read:
   a. Why should writers vary their sentences?
   b. What are two ways to add variety to sentences?
   c. What are the four sentence types? Write the definition and provide one example of each.
   d. What are the six conjunctions you can use to combine sentences?
   e. Handling the same topic for several sentences can lead to what?
   f. What are three ways to handle covering several topics for several sentences?
      List five transition words that can help you vary the rhythm of a sentence.

2. The following paragraph, from The Little, Brown Handbook 12th edition, is choppy and stilted. It lacks rhythm and can be boring to readers. Using the techniques discussed in the web reading, combine sentences in the paragraph so that it flows smoothly and has rhythm. Rewrite the paragraph on a separate sheet, and add or delete words as necessary to make the language smooth.

   The Italian volcano Vesuvius had been dormant for many years. It then exploded on August 24 in the year AD 79. The ash, pumice, and mud from the volcano buried two busy towns. Herculaneum is one. The more famous is Pompeii. Both towns lay undiscovered for many centuries. Herculaneum and Pompeii were discovered in 1709 and 1748 respectively. The excavation of Pompeii was the more systematic. It was the occasion for initiating modern methods of conservation and restoration. Herculaneum was simply looted of its most valuable finds. It was then left to disintegrate. Pompeii appears much as it did before the eruption. A luxurious house opens onto a lush central garden. An election poster decorates a wall. A dining table is set for breakfast.

3. Look more closely at a paragraph you are currently working on, and practice using the strategies for variation in your own work. Then, take this completed activity plus a piece of your own writing to review with an instructor or tutor in the WRC. Have that person sign and date this sheet.

Instructor/Tutor signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________