

# INTRODUCING TK STUDENTS TO SENTENCE BUILDING

## A Step-by-Step Journey

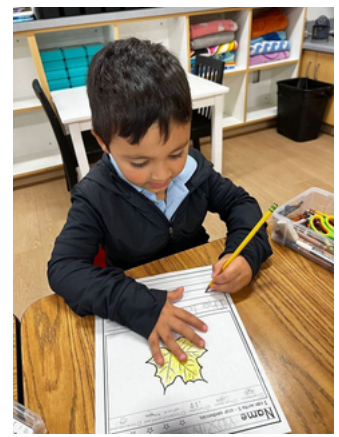
In our TK class, we've embarked on an exciting and foundational journey into the world of sentences. Learning to build a sentence isn't just about writing; it's about understanding language, structure, and expression. Each step we take helps our young learners grasp the basics of communication while developing critical thinking and creativity.



## What is a Sentence?

We begin by teaching our students that a sentence is a complete thought. A sentence is not just a random collection of words—it needs to have structure, meaning, and purpose. We introduce two essential elements of every sentence:

- A noun (the subject): This tells us who or what the sentence is about.
- A verb (the action): This tells us what the subject is doing.



For example, in "The bird flies," the bird is the noun, and flies is the verb. Students start to see how these two elements work together to form a meaningful thought.

To help students understand this, we have them act out simple sentences: "The boy jumps" or "The dog runs." This hands-on activity makes the idea of a noun and verb concrete, connecting action to words.

## Using Sentence Starters to Build Confidence

Since TK students are just beginning their writing journey, sentence prompts serve as a wonderful starting point. Our Fall-themed sentence starters with pictures provide context and inspiration. Each picture corresponds to a sentence starter like “The leaf is \_\_” or “The pumpkin looks \_\_,” allowing students to engage their imagination while learning to structure a sentence.

This has been a fun and interactive way to get students thinking about what words they can add to complete the sentence. By giving them a clear prompt, we take away the uncertainty, helping them focus on how to build the sentence correctly. One student exclaimed, “I want to say ‘orange’ because that’s my favorite color for pumpkins!”

## Essential Sentence-Building Skills

As we progress, we incorporate essential skills that help students understand how to **write** sentences properly:

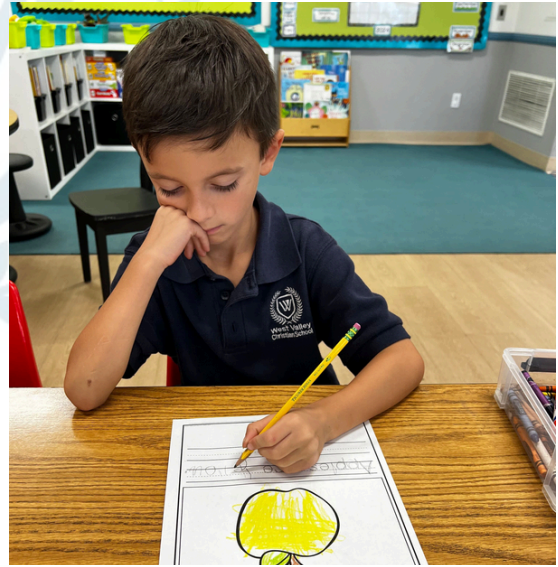
- **Capitalization:** Students are learning that every sentence must start with a capital letter. It signals the beginning of a new thought and adds importance to the first word. This is an important rule that sets the tone for clear writing.
- **Letter formation and sizing:** Using letter formation lines, students practice forming their letters correctly, focusing on the size of uppercase and lowercase letters. This helps them develop neat and legible handwriting. Consistency in letter sizing is key to making their writing easy to read.
- **Counting words:** Before we write, we count the number of words in our sentence. This helps students plan their writing space and keeps them mindful of the structure of their sentence.
- **Spacing between words:** One of the biggest challenges for young writers is remembering to leave spaces between their words. We use “finger spacing” to remind students that each word needs its own space to stand out clearly. This is especially important for readability, and it’s a skill we practice in every writing exercise.
- **Ending with a period:** The period is an important part of a sentence. It signals that the thought has come to an end. We introduce punctuation by explaining that a sentence without a period is like a story that never finishes—students need to let the reader know when their idea is complete!



## Connecting Learning to Real Life

We also encourage students to think about how they use sentences in their daily lives. During a group discussion, one student excitedly said, "I talk in sentences when I tell my mom what happened at school!" This connection helps students see how writing sentences is just another way of communicating ideas—just like they do when they speak.

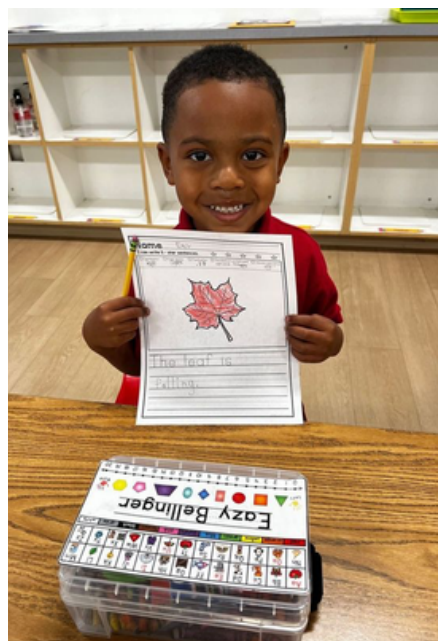
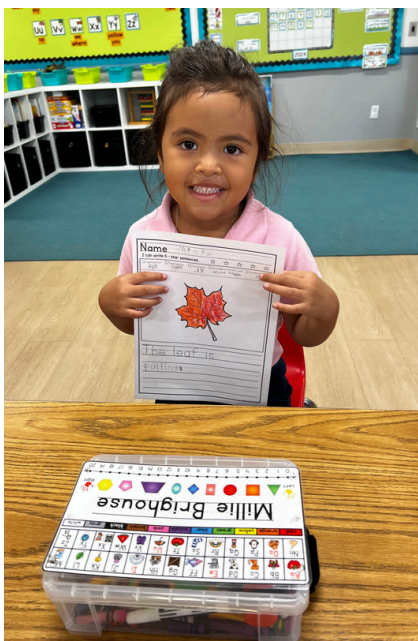
As students progress, they begin recognizing the structure in their spoken language, making the transition to writing more natural.



## Developing Critical Thinking and Creativity

Our sentence-building exercises encourage critical thinking as students decide what words to add to their sentences. We challenge them to think about why a certain word makes sense and how it helps the sentence make sense. For example, during a sentence starter exercise, one student pondered, "If I put 'green' for the pumpkin, that's okay because pumpkins can be green, but I think 'orange' is better because that's what pumpkins look like in my neighborhood."

These choices require students to analyze the sentence, think about context, and make a logical decision—important skills for both writing and life.



## Bible Reference: The Power of Words

As we learn about sentences, we reflect on the power of words in the Bible. We talk about how words can build up, express love, or teach others—just like in our writing. One of our favorite verses that ties into this lesson is from Proverbs 16:24: “Gracious words are like honey, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.” This reminds students that the sentences they build are not just tools for communication but can also be used to bring kindness and understanding to others. We encourage students to think about how the words they choose matter in both their writing and their daily interactions with friends and family.



## A Word from Our Students

Here are some quotes from our budding writers:

- “I love writing about pumpkins because it makes me think of carving them with my dad!”
- “My sentence says the apple is red because I saw a red apple at the farm.”
- “I like putting spaces between my words because then I can read them better.”

These reflections show that students are not only learning to write but also thinking deeply about the process. They are making connections between what they know and what they write, setting a strong foundation for their future literacy skills.

Our introduction to sentences is just the beginning of a long and exciting journey in learning to write. We’ll continue practicing sentence structure, word choices, and punctuation as we build a strong foundation for future writing. It’s wonderful to see students becoming confident and enthusiastic about creating sentences that express their own ideas and thoughts.

