Perhaps the most underrated of stylistic elements, **sentence structure** is actually quite important in **ordering your ideas, establishing emphasis, enhancing flow, and varying how you convey ideas**, all of which contribute to your personal 'voice' as a writer. You can develop this voice by practicing the following four sentence patterns:

### Simple Sentences

The most basic sentence type, simple sentences are simply independent clauses containing a subject and a predicate (verb + object noun).

```
Ex. Walter likes bowling.
```

### Compound Sentences

Compound sentences combine two or more independent clauses using a **comma** and a **coordinating conjunction** (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).

```
Ex. Walter likes bowling, but Walter never bowls on Saturdays.
```

### Complex Sentences

While compound sentences combine two independent clauses, complex sentences, by comparison, join together an independent clause and at least one dependent clause using a **subordinating conjunction**.

```
Ex. Walter likes bowling because it helps Walter to relax.
```
Note: To vary your expression of ideas even more, place the dependent clause at the **beginning** of the sentence. Whenever you do this, however, remember to **include a comma** between the dependent and independent clauses.

Ex. **Walter likes bowling because it helps Walter to relax.**

**Compound-Complex Sentences**

The compound-complex sentence combines two or more independent clauses with one or more dependent clauses.

Ex. **Because it helps Walter to relax, Walter likes bowling, but Walter never bowls on Saturdays when Walter instead discusses nihilism.**

1. **Dependent Clause: Because it helps Walter to relax**
2. **Punctuation: Comma whenever a dependent clause begins a sentence**
3. **Independent Clause: Walter likes bowling**
4. **Coordinating Conjunction: Joining word that links two independent clauses**
5. **Independent Clause: Walter never bows**
6. **Prepositional Phrase: On Saturdays**
7. **Dependent Clause: When Walter instead discusses nihilism.**