

## Adding Sentence Variety

Adding sentence variety to your writing can enhance the flow of ideas, intensify points, and sustain the interest of your reader. Varying the length of your sentences adds variety and interest in your writing.

Look at the following example:

*The traffic light turned red. Traffic stopped. The big doors swung open. EMT Flynn pulled out of the station. They raced to the emergency.*

See how it got boring really quickly? Your brain got tired of all those short sentences.

Now look at this example from *EMT Morales-Clamshell Stretcher* by James Brewster:

*The traffic light outside the station turned red. Traffic stopped. The big doors swung open and EMT Flynn pulled out of the station onto Belair Road and raced to the emergency.*

See how the paragraph is much more interesting to read? Varying the length of your sentences makes the reader find an easy rhythm, which makes the reading more fun.

3 sentence lengths:

1. Short sentence-sentences of 2-7 words that state one idea clearly.  
*Example:* I walked to school
2. Medium sentence-sentences of 8 or more words that include details and connect ideas while still remaining clear and easy to read  
*Example:* I walked to school in the rain this morning.
3. Long sentence-sentences that include conjunctions, substantial details, or connections such as clauses  
*Example:* I walked to school in the rain this morning, but Mrs. Ivy, my friend's mother, stopped and gave me a ride.

A good paragraph contains sentences of different lengths—some short, some medium, and some long. Varying the length keeps the reading interesting.

How to lengthen sentences:

1. Add an adverb to the beginning of the sentence:  
I walked to school in the rain.  
*Moodily, I walked to school in the rain.*
2. Add a prepositional phrase to the beginning of the sentence:  
I had to walk to school in the rain.  
*On the first day of school, I had to walk in the rain.*
3. Link two sentences to form a compound sentence.  
I had to walk to school in the rain.  
*I had to walk to school in the rain and I was soaked when I got there.*
4. Combine 2 or more sentences by placing a clause in the middle of the sentences:  
Jan lives next door. We walked to school in the rain.  
*Jan, who lives next door, walked to school in the rain with me.*
5. Add adjectives and adverbs to your descriptions.  
It rained while I walked to school.  
*The silvery rain poured down as I walked quickly to school.*

Directions: Rewrite the following paragraph using the tools above to vary the sentences and make them more interesting.

*My family went camping. It was a long drive. We drove through mountains. We drove through forests. It took forever. Finally, we arrived. The campsite was in the woods. There were trees. They gave us shade. Rocks littered the ground. Dad made a fire pit with them. Mom and I set up the tent. It was hard. The tent was big. The poles confused us. We got it up, though. Dad built a fire. Mom brought out the food. We cooked hot dogs and baked beans. We took a hike. We fished in a lake. We roasted marshmallows. Dad told us a campfire story. It was fun.*

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