

Sentence Variety

It is important to add variety to your sentence structure to make your writing less repetitive and more sophisticated.

Coordinate Sentences

Use common conjunctions (for, an, nor, but, or, yet, so) and/or conjunctive adverbs (however, therefore, moreover, consequently, nonetheless). You can also use “both...and” “either...or” “neither...nor” “whether...or” not only...but also.”

Sentences: Herb wanted to travel to Miami. He didn’t have the money for a flight.

Revision: Herb wanted to travel to Miami, but he didn’t have the money for a flight.

Revision: Herb wanted to travel to Miami; however, he didn’t have the money for a flight.

Sentences: The women did not respond to the survey. They did not turn in their final recommendations.

Revision: Neither of the women responded to the survey nor did they turn in their final recommendations.

Sentences: It is important to attend class. It is necessary to finish homework.

Revision: Not only is it important to attend class, but also it is necessary to finish homework.

Subordinate Clauses

Use subordinating conjunctions to subordinate (de-emphasize) one idea and emphasize another.

after	although	as	as if	because
before	even though	if	in order that	rather than
since	so that	that	though	unless
until	when	where	whether	while

Sentences: I was riding my bike on the trail. I saw a huge snake.

Revision: When I was riding my bike on the trail, I saw a huge snake.

Sentences: The semester started early. We were out of school by June 1.

Revision: Since the semester started early, we were out of school by June 1.

Relative Clauses

If you use the same noun in two sentences, combine the sentences with a relative pronoun (which, who, whom, that, whose).

Sentences: The movie star chose to wear black shoes. The shoes were from Brooks Brothers. flight.

Revision: The movie star chose to wear black shoes, which were from Brooks Brothers.

Sentences: The book was named after my uncle Sam. He fought and died in Vietnam. o

Revision: The book was named after my uncle Sam, who fought and died in Vietnam.

Participles

Eliminate a repeated subject by starting a sentence with a verb ending in -ed or -ing.

Sentences: The bridesmaid was tired and upset. She left the reception alone.

Revision: Tired and upset, the bridesmaid left the reception alone.

Sentences: The child was sleeping quietly. He held a teddy bear in his arms. alone.

Revision: Sleeping quietly, the child held a teddy bear in his arms.

Appositives

Use an appositive, which modifies a noun or pronoun, to communicate information within one sentence.

Sentences: IVCC offers students a service to help them write papers. This service is called The Tutoring and Writing Center.

Revision: IVCC offers students The Tutoring and Writing Center, a service to help them write papers.

Sentences: Ms. Neely is the English instructor. She teaches mostly Shakespeare classes.

Revision: Ms. Neely, the English instructor, teaches mostly Shakespeare classes.

Prepositional Phrases

Use a prepositional phrase (in, to, for, at, from, on, because of, in addition to, under, through, between) to provide information.

Sentences: The concert is on Friday at 7:00 PM. The concert will take place in the auditorium theatre.

Revision: The concert on Friday at 7:00 PM will take place in the auditorium theatre.

Absolute Phrases

An absolute phrase consists of a sentence's subject and part of its predicate. Turn a sentence into an absolute phrase at the beginning or end of another sentence.

Sentences: The princess's hair was glistening in the sun. She picked up the prince and heaved him over her horse's back. o

Revision: Her hair glistening in the sun, the princess picked up the prince and heaved him over her horse's back.

Revision: The princess picked up the prince and heaved him over her horse's back, her hair glistening in the sun.