

VARY SENTENCE PATTERNS

Writing sentences with the same general length and structure can make a paragraph boring, choppy, or too difficult to read. Instead, vary your sentences by paying attention to word choice, tone, vocabulary, and sentence structure. Add some spice to your writing with the following tips:

- Include sentences of different lengths. You can combine short sentences into one, or cut longer ones into multiple sentences.
- Put prepositional phrases, modifiers, and dependent clauses in different places to shake things up a bit.
- Use a variety of conjunctions and transition words to add personality and flow to your sentences.
- Try not to start all your sentences the same way (e.g., subject followed by verb) or tag dialogue the same way every time (e.g., “he said,” “she said”).

Give it a try! Rewrite these passages. Make them more interesting by adding variety in sentence length and structure. **Sample answers**

1. Beavers are amazing builders. They can fell tall trees to build dams. They use their strong front teeth. They build their dams on shallow areas of streams or rivers. They interlock branches and twigs to keep everything in place and build up the dam. Beavers use mud to seal the dam. A beaver dam can be five feet high. It can be hundreds of feet long. The dam forms a pond in the river. Beavers build their lodges along the pond. They make underwater entrances to their lodges. This keeps them safe from predators.

Beavers are amazing builders. They use their strong front teeth to fell tall trees, which they then use to build dams. Beavers usually build their dams along the shallow areas of streams or rivers. They interlock branches and twigs to keep everything in place and build up the dam before sealing the dam with mud. Beaver dams, which can be five feet high and hundreds of feet long, form ponds in the river. Along these ponds, the beavers build lodges with underwater entrances to keep themselves safe from predators.

2. Sara said, “Don’t even think about it!” Sara glared at her best friend Delia. Sara thought there was no way she was getting on that roller coaster. Sara knew it was the scariest roller coaster in the park. Sara thought it was the scariest roller coaster in the state. Sara thought it was probably the scariest roller coaster in the world. The roller coaster was called the Phantom’s Dragon.

Delia said, “Come on, Sara. It will be fun. Look how colorful it is. It looks like a real dragon.”

Sara said, “Dragons are not real, Delia. And you are not being real if you think I am getting on that monstrosity.”

Sara pulled Delia away from the coaster. Sara pulled Delia toward the giant Ferris wheel. Sara thought the Ferris wheel was much less intimidating.

“Don’t even think about it!” Sara said, glaring at her best friend Delia. There was no way she was getting on that roller coaster. It was the scariest roller coaster in the park, in the state, probably even in the world! It was the Phantom’s Dragon.

“C’mon, Sara!” begged Delia. “It’ll be fun! And look how colorful it is, just like a real dragon.”

“Dragons aren’t real, Delia,” Sara replied. “And you’re not being real if you think I’m getting on that monstrosity.” Sara steered her best friend away from the coaster and toward the giant Ferris wheel. It was much less intimidating.

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Keep going! Rewrite these paragraphs with varied sentences to make them more interesting.

Sample answers

3. Skishoeing is a little like snowshoeing. Skishoeing is a little like skiing. Skishoeing is for snowshoers who want a little more glide. It is also for skiers who want a little more control through woods and over hills. Skishoes are shorter and wider than regular skis. This makes them slower than regular skies. It makes them easier to maneuver through forests. Skishoes usually have a skin attached to the bottom. This helps them get traction in the snow. This makes going uphill easier than on regular skies. People who snowshoe may like skishoes because they are more efficient. Skishoes are longer and thinner than snowshoes. This allows for more glide than snowshoes. Skishoes are better at breaking paths through fresh snow. They make going down hills faster and more exciting!

Skishoeing is a little like snowshoeing and a little like skiing. This sport is great for both snowshoers who want a little more glide and skiers who want a little more control through wooded areas and over hills. Because skishoes are shorter and wider than regular skis, skishoes are slower and easier to maneuver through forests. They also usually have a skin attached to the bottom, which gives them better traction than traditional skis for getting up snowy hills. People who normally snowshoe may like the improved efficiency of skishoes. Skishoes are longer and thinner than snowshoes, allowing for more glide. They're better at breaking paths through fresh snow, and they make going down hills faster and more exciting!

4. Van peered through the lens of the telescope. He slowly spun it around. He could see distant stars. He could see whole galaxies. He could see the rings of Saturn. He could even see Earth. Earth looked like a blue-and-white marble from his vantage point. Van wondered what his friends were doing back on Earth. He wondered if they were looking up at him. He wondered if they missed him. He sure did miss them! Van had been so excited to go on this trip into space. He was the only kid to ever land on an asteroid. Van hadn't counted on it being so lonely in space. He had two more months to go. Then, he and the few adults with him would be picked up by Stella Roamer. That was the space ferry. Van sighed. He thought it was going to be a long two months.

Van peered through the lens of the telescope, slowly spinning it around. He could see distant stars, whole galaxies, and the rings of Saturn. He could even see Earth, which looked like a blue-and-white marble from his vantage point. Van wondered what his friends were doing back on Earth. Were they looking up at him? Were they missing him? He sure did miss them! Van had been so excited to become the first kid to ever land on an asteroid, but he hadn't counted on it being so lonely in space. He had two more months to go, and then he and the few adults with him would be picked up by the space ferry, Stella Roamer. Van sighed. "It's going to be a long two months," he thought.