SENTENCE LENGTH & STRUCTURE
(Sentence Fluency)

VARYING SENTENCE LENGTH

PROBLEM: Too Many Short Sentences

Writing Sample

I bought the wagon. It was on sale at Walmart. It cost $9.99. The wagon broke. It bought it on a Tuesday. It broke on Wednesday.

FIX #1: ELIMINATE UNNECESSARY WORDS

I bought a wagon on sale Tuesday at Walmart for 9.99. The wagon broke on Wednesday.

FIX #2: COMBINE SENTENCES USING A CONJUNCTION (FANBOYS)

Example Sentence: I bought a wagon on sale. It was on sale at Walmart.

Revision: I bought a wagon on sale Tuesday at Walmart for 9.99, but it broke on Wednesday.

FIX #3: COMBINE SENTENCES USING SUBORDINATION (AAAWWUBBIS)

Example Sentence: I bought a wagon on sale. It was on sale at Walmart.

Because the wagon was on sale at Walmart, I bought it.

PROBLEM: Too Many Long Sentences

Fix by adding short sentences for impact.

Example: The Winslow family visited Canada and Alaska last summer to find some native American art, such as soapstone carvings and wall hangings. Anchorage stores had many soapstone items available, but they were disappointed to learn that wall hangings, which they had especially wanted, were difficult to find. They were very disappointed when they left Anchorage empty-handed.

Revision #1: change last sentence: Sadly, they left empty-handed.
Revision #2: The Winslow family visited Canada and Alaska last summer to find some native American art, such as soapstone carvings and wall hangings. Anchorage stores had many soapstone items available. But no wall hangings. They were disappointed when they found out that wall hangings, which they had especially wanted, were difficult to find. Sadly, they left empty-handed.
VARY SENTENCE STRUCTURES

If you have too many of the same structure in a row (general rule 3+), change one of the structures.

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**Sentence Structures**

Simple sentence: A sentence with one independent clause and no dependent clauses.

* My aunt enjoyed taking the hayride with you.

Compound Sentence: A sentence with multiple independent clauses but no dependent clauses.

* The clown frightened the little girl, and she ran off screaming.

Complex Sentence: A sentence with one independent clause and at least one dependent clause.

* After Mary added up all the sales, she discovered that the lemonade stand was 32 cents short.

Compound-Complex Sentence: A sentence with multiple independent clauses and at least one dependent clause.

* With her reputation on the line, Peggy played against a fierce opponent at the Scrabble competition, and overcoming nerve-racking competition, she won the game with one well-placed word.

**Catch-22 is widely regarded as Joseph Heller's best novel, and because Heller served in World War II, which the novel satirizes, the zany but savage wit of the**

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EXAMPLE: The Transformation of Bookworms song is awesome. I love listening to the cool beat. I love learning the new vocab words. I don’t like that I often can’t sleep at night because the song is stuck in my head. (ALL SIMPLE)

Revision: The Transformation of Bookworms song is awesome. (Simple). I love the cool beat, and learning the new vocabulary words. (Compound) Because I enjoy listening to it, I get it stuck in my head, and then I can’t sleep at night. (Compound-Complex)