

i. Vary the rhythm by alternating short and long sentences.

Several sentences of the same length can make for bland writing. To enliven paragraphs, write sentences of different lengths. This will also allow for effective emphasis.

Example: The Winslow family visited Canada and Alaska last summer to find some native American art. In Anchorage stores they found some excellent examples of soapstone carvings. But they couldn't find a dealer selling any of the woven wall hangings they wanted. They were very disappointed when they left Anchorage empty-handed.

Revision: 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. Still, they were disappointed to learn that wall hangings, which they had especially wanted, were difficult to find. Sadly, they left empty-handed.

2. Vary sentence openings.

If too many sentences start with the same word, especially "The," "It," "This," or "I," prose can grow tedious for readers, so changing opening words and phrases can be refreshing. Below are alternative openings for a fairly standard sentence. Notice that different beginnings can alter not only the structure but also the emphasis of the sentence. They may also require rephrasing in sentences before or after this one, meaning that one change could lead to an abundance of sentence variety.

Example: The biggest coincidence that day happened when David and I ended up sitting next to each other at the Super Bowl.

Possible Revisions:

- Coincidentally, David and I ended up sitting right next to each other at the Super Bowl.
- In an amazing coincidence, David and I ended up sitting next to each other at the Super Bowl.
- Sitting next to David at the Super Bowl was a tremendous coincidence.
- But the biggest coincidence that day happened when David and I ended up sitting next to each other at the Super Bowl.
- When I sat down at the Super Bowl, I realized that, by sheer coincidence, I was directly next to David.
- By sheer coincidence, I ended up sitting directly next to David at the Super Bowl.
- With over 50,000 fans at the Super Bowl, it took an incredible coincidence for me to end up sitting right next to David.