# Sentence Variety

Sentence variety is a strategy to enhance the flow of ideas, intensify points, and sustain the interest of your listeners. Varying the length, rhythm, and structure of sentences are three ways to create variety and interest in your speech.

### Obejctives

1. Explain three types of sentence variety: simple, compound, and complex
2. Use sentence variety to enhance the flow of ideas and provide appropriate emphasis
3. Produce or summarize ideas in various length of speech

## Sentence Types

Before we begin, we need to review the basic sentence structures in English: simple, compound, and complex sentence.

#### **Simple sentences**

A simple sentence consists of only one independent clause. This means there is one subject and one verb and the idea is complete.

Examples:

I run.

John ate an apple.

Short sentences present one idea clearly, but too many of them in succession can make writing seem awkward and simplistic. However, a few well-placed short sentences can add emphasis.

Example:

**Proactivity and dedication are qualities of an extraordinary musician. These qualities set an excellent musician apart from average musicians because an excellent musician uses these qualities to refine his skills. Almost any musician will know how to play his instrument, but knowledge alone isn’t enough. With dedication and proactivity, a musician can reach the highest levels of skill in performance. When these musicians play, the audience can see their skill and be moved by the performance.**

#### **Compound sentences**

A compound sentence consists of two of more independent clauses. The clauses are joined by a coordinating conjunction. Conjunctions are words such as for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so.

Examples:

John studies biology, and Josh studies mathematics.

It was already 1 am, but no one wanted to leave the party.

Medium-length sentences allow space to connect ideas and add details, while remaining clear and easy to read. Medium-length sentences are the most versatile and should form the core of your writing.

Example:

Proactivity and dedication are qualities of an extraordinary musician. These qualities set an excellent musician apart from average musicians because an excellent musician uses these qualities to refine his skills. **Almost any musician will know how to play his instrument, but knowledge alone isn’t enough.** With dedication and proactivity, a musician can reach the highest levels of skill in performance. When these musicians play, the audience can see their skill and be moved by the performance.

#### **Complex sentences**

A complex sentence has at least one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. Dependent clauses contain a subordinating conjunction, such as adverbs of time. A dependent clause is not a complete idea. Because the idea is incomplete, complex sentences must also have at least one independent clause with the dependent clause.

Examples:

Although many people do not like their jobs, they still need to work for a living.

There was nobody in the lab last Tuesday since the accident occurred at midnight.

Long sentences establish complex interrelationships and include substantial amounts of amplification and clarification. Use them sparingly to emphasize relationships and to incorporate significant details.

Example:

Proactivity and dedication are qualities of an extraordinary musician. **These qualities set an excellent musician apart from average musicians because an excellent musician uses these qualities to refine his skills.** Almost any musician will know how to play his instrument, but knowledge alone isn’t enough. With dedication and proactivity, a musician can reach the highest levels of skill in performance. **When these musicians play, the audience can see their skill and be moved by the performance.**

### Exercise 1: Listen for Variety

Try to identify the simple, compound, and complex sentences you hear. If you need extra help, you can use the . On a piece of paper, write sentences you hear in these three categories.



Transcript Count

Simple sentences: 16

Compound sentences: 2

Complex sentences: 20

### Exercise 2: Listen for Variety 2

Try to identify the simple, compound, and complex sentences you hear. If you need extra help, you can turn on the captions. On a piece of paper, write the beginning of sentences you hear in these three categories.



### Exercise 3: News Report

You will describe and discuss recent event in your country. You are encouraged to use various types of sentences to enrich the content of their report.

1. Spend a few minutes to research a recent event (or environmental issue like the previous videos)
2. Learn the details about the event or the issue.
3. Write a script and some bullet points.
4. Report your findings for no more than three minutes.

### Exercise 4: Traveling Memories

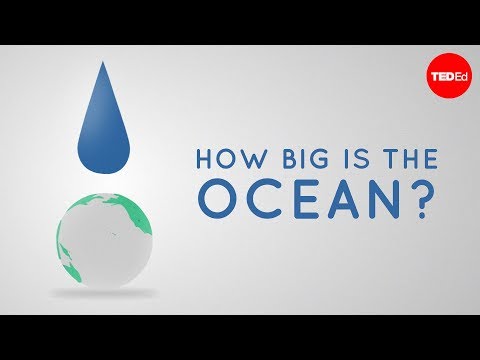
You will talk about a memorable traveling experience while using different types of sentences. You will need to talk about the same experience three times under different time constraints.

1. Think of one of your memorable traveling experiences, such as the first time traveling to the US.
2. Prepare by thinking about as many details as you can. You may mention the time, reason, and your reaction about the experience. You have 4 minutes to talk about the experience.
3. You will need to speak of the same experience again, this time in less than 3 minutes.
4. For the third time, you will explain the experience in 2 minutes.

You do not have to change or add any new content, the purpose of repeating the same topic with reduced amount of time is to encourage you to produce speaking with different sentence varieties. This will also help you improve your fluency.

### Exercise 5: Identify Sentence Types

Watch this video with your group. Use the transcript below to identify and organize the sentences into the simple, compound, and complex categories.



Read this online at <https://edtechbooks.org/advanced_low_listening__speaking/sentence_variety>