

Sentence Variety

Relative Clauses and Participles

If your paper is predictable, the very foundations of your paper--your sentence structure--may be the culprit. Read below for some suggestions on simply combining clauses.

Relative Clauses:

Combine sentences if the subject is repeated by embedding one sentence inside the other. Eliminate repetition by using a clause that starts with a relative pronoun. Relative pronouns (which, who, whom, that, and whose) are commonly used to introduce certain noun clauses and adjective clauses.

Example 1: Jay Leno is the host on the Tonight Show on NBC. He has been broadcasting for ten years.

Revision 1: Jay Leno, host of the Tonight Show, has been broadcasting for ten years.

Example 2: I lost a necklace. It was valuable.

Revision 2: The necklace that I lost was valuable.

Participles

Verbals are verb parts and function as *nouns*, *adjectives*, or *adverbs*. Participles of a verb can appear in two forms, past and present. *Past participles* of *regular verbs*, or the equivalent to *irregular verbs*, end in --ed and function as adjectives. By using the participle at the beginning or end of the sentence, the repeated subject and progressive past of a verb ("was," "is," "were") are eliminated.

Example 1: The actor ran up the stairs when his name was called. He was surprised and full of laughter.

Revision 1: Surprised and laughing, the actor ran upstairs when his name was called.

Present participles of a verb end in --ing and function as an adjective or noun. Again, by using the participle at the beginning or end of the sentence, the repeated subject and progressive part of the verb are eliminated.

Example 1: The water was running. It may be too dangerous to play in.

Revision 1: Running water may be too dangerous to play in.

