

Name: _____ Date: _____

Vary Your Words

When you encounter the same word over and over again in a paragraph, you start to lose interest, right? Using a variety of words spices up your writing. Consider the following paragraph:

*I saw my brother Cal **running** down the street waving his arms. I **ran** after him, yelling, "Why are you **running** around like you're on fire?" He called back, "I'm **running** after the Wilsons' dog. She stole my hat and **ran** away!" It must have been a great hat. I've never seen Cal **run** so fast!*

A form of the word *run* appears six times. Yikes! Here are two things you can do to make the paragraph more interesting:

- 1 Look for places where you can be more specific.** For example, was Cal sprinting, speeding, or racing? Did the speaker rush or tear after him? Did the dog dart, bolt, or trot away?
- 2 Use a thesaurus to find words that have the same or a similar meaning as *run*, and replace the uses of *run* with those words.** Just remember that the thesaurus usually provides words that have *similar* meanings, not necessarily the *same* meanings—so be sure to look up the meanings of unfamiliar words.

Here's an example of how the paragraph above could be improved:

*I saw my brother Cal **sprinting** down the street waving his arms. I **tore** after him, yelling, "Why are you **racing** around like you're on fire?" He called back, "I'm running after the Wilsons' dog! She stole my hat and **bolted**!" It must have been a great hat. I've never seen Cal **move** so fast!*

Directions: Read the paragraph below. Then rewrite it, looking for places where you can be more specific or substitute other words for any form of *amazing*.

Erin just called with some **amazing** news. Her family is planning a vacation to the island of St. Croix, and I'm invited! Erin says that St. Croix is an **amazing** place to visit, with **amazing** beaches and a lot of opportunities for snorkeling. She promises we'll see some truly **amazing** fish. Erin is an **amazing** friend, and her family is **amazing** too. I can hardly wait for our **amazing** island vacation together!

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Vary Your Sentences

When every sentence in a paragraph is the same length, the reader gets bored. When every sentence in a paragraph starts with the same words, the reader gets bored. When every sentence in a paragraph has the same rhythm, the reader gets bored. When every sentence . . . well, you get the point. To add some pizzazz to your writing, you need to mix things up!

Here are four ways to add variety to your sentences:

1. Add an adverb to the beginning of a sentence.

Eli picked his clothes off the floor and threw them in the closet.

Hurriedly, Eli picked his clothes off the floor and threw them in the closet.

2. Move a prepositional phrase to the beginning of a sentence.

Grace mixed the cake batter with a large wooden spoon.

With a large wooden spoon, Grace mixed the cake batter.

3. Link two sentences to form a compound sentence.

The water was freezing cold. Seth and Pete dove in anyway.

The water was freezing cold, but Seth and Pete dove in anyway.

4. Combine two or more sentences.

Siberian tigers are the world's largest cats. Siberian tigers are among the most-endangered species.

Siberian tigers, the world's largest cats, are among the most-endangered species.

Directions: Rewrite the paragraph below so that the sentences vary in length, structure, and rhythm. Use the tips in the box above to help you.

My brother Don and I made a pizza. We made the dough. We measured out the flour. We measured the salt. We measured the yeast. We measured the water. We measured the olive oil. We combined the ingredients. We made a ball of dough. Don kneaded the dough. I rolled out the dough. We put sauce on the pizza. We put toppings on the pizza. I put pepperoni on the pizza. Don put mushrooms on half of the pizza. I don't like mushrooms. We covered it all with cheese. We baked it in the oven. We ate the whole thing in 15 minutes.

Note: *Scope* does not accept Google Docs. If you are e-mailing your entry, please send a .pdf or .doc file.

Ghost Ship Contest

Read the passage on page 29 of your March 2020 issue of *Scope*. Note the words and phrases in bold. Follow the prompts in the circles to revise and polish the writing. Three winners will each get a \$25 gift card and have their entries published online.

Entries will be judged on:

- ⇒ creativity
- ⇒ grammar
- ⇒ clarity
- ⇒ strength of descriptive language

My name: _____

My home phone number: _____ My grade: _____

My teacher's name : _____ My teacher's e-mail: _____

School name: _____

School address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

School phone number: _____

My parent or legal guardian consents
to my participation in this contest.

Parent's or legal guardian's signature: _____

Include this sheet with your entry and send both to: scopemag@scholastic.com
Or mail to: Ghost Ship Contest, c/o *Scope*, P.O. Box 712, New York, NY 10013-0712

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY April 20, 2020!