

**Varying Sentence Length**

Just as Echo went on and on repeating others' words, some writers go on and on writing sentences of the same length. The sentences may all be very short and choppy, or they may all be stringy and full of *and's*, *but's*, *so's*, and *then's*.

**CHOPPY SENTENCES** The frogs lived in a pond. Their life was carefree. They played and croaked all day. They were not happy. They thought they needed a king. The king could give them orders.

**STRINGY SENTENCE** Orpheus was unhappy because Eurydice had died, and he wanted to bring her back to life, and then he went to the underworld, and he confronted Hades, and Hades was entranced by Orpheus's music, and so he let Eurydice go.

The chart below suggests some strategies for varying sentence length in your writing.

Varying Sentence Length		
Problem	Revising Strategy	Example
Choppy Sentences	Combine sentences that state related ideas.	The frogs lived a carefree life in a pond. Although they croaked and played all day, they were not happy. They thought they needed a king to give them orders.
Stringy Sentences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Break the sentence into two or more sentences.</li> <li>• Turn some of the independent clauses into phrases or subordinate clauses.</li> </ul>	Orpheus, unhappy because Eurydice had died, wanted to bring her back to life. He went to the underworld and confronted Hades. Entranced by Orpheus's music, Hades let Eurydice go.

**Exercise A Revising Choppy Sentences and Stringy Sentences**

Revise each of the following items so that they are no longer choppy or stringy.

**EXAMPLE:** Aesop's fables are loved around the world, and they've been translated into many languages, and some versions are illustrated, and others are in verse.

Because Aesop's fables are loved around the world, they have been translated into many languages. Some versions of Aesop's fables are illustrated; others appear in verse.

1. Hercules was extremely strong. He was also brave. He was given twelve labors to complete. They were all horrendous.

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2. Demeter was grieved and angry. Hades had kidnapped her daughter. He had taken Persephone to the underworld. There she would be his wife.

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3. Icarus and his father, Daedalus, had to escape from an island, and so Daedalus made wings from gull feathers, and then he attached the wings to his son, and then he gave Icarus an important warning about their use.

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4. The mice feared the cat. The cat always chased them. The mice held a meeting. They discussed how to make their lives safer.

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5. Icarus loved the sensation of flight, and he ignored his father's warning, and he flew higher and higher, and then he felt the warmth of the sun.

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### **Exercise B Revising a Paragraph to Vary Sentence Length**

The following paragraph has both choppy sentences and stringy sentences. On a separate sheet of paper, revise the paragraph to form sentences that vary in length.

King Midas loved riches. He thought gold was of great importance. The god Dionysus granted the king's wish, and it was for an unusual power, and it was called the golden touch because everything Midas touched would turn to gold, but unfortunately that included food, and it also included his daughter, so when Midas touched her she turned into a golden statue. Midas realized his mistake. It was based on greed. He felt sorrowful and foolish. He cried out to Dionysus. He no longer wanted the golden touch.

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**Answers are not available Online.**