**Sentence Length**

*From the left came a crashing blow. Her jaw exploded with pain. She tried to guard herself. One arm came up. Too late. Death came quickly.*

The sentences themselves take on the aspects of the fight. Sharp blows, staccato movements, the simple, unadorned reality of a fight to the death. But if your whole story is told in this fashion, it wears on the reader. It can be exhausting. Long sentences can also be confusing for the reader as they may have to read them several time and will likely give up when they can’t figure them out.

A tip: Read a passage out loud – you can hear the staccato rhythm when you do this, so it's an easy check. And it's something that needs to be fixed.

**SENTENCE BEGINNINGS**

Few things are as awkward and childlike as someone who writes without any variety when they begin a new sentence.

*Mary came to a turn in the path. Mary didn't know what to do. Mary thought about it awhile, so finally Mary decided to take the new route. Mary didn't know what she'd find, but Mary hoped it would be okay. Mary took a deep breath. Mary started on the new path.*

Okay, so that's really obvious. Mary, Mary, Mary. Stop it. But what about this?

*Mary came to a turn in the path. She didn't know what to do. She thought about it awhile, so she finally decided to take the new route. Mary didn't know what she'd find, but she hoped it would be okay. She took a deep breath. Mary started on the new path.*

The problem isn't just repeating "Mary" all the time, is it? No, it's starting each sentence with a proper name or pronoun. The structure of the sentences is almost identical. It's much more interesting for a reader (and denotes much more maturity in the telling) if you get some variety in your sentence structure. Start some with prepositions, others with verbs. Mix them up, think of interesting ways to tell your story by manipulating the sentences.

*A turn in the path stopped Mary. She didn't know what to do. Thinking carefully, she decided to take the new route. She didn't know what she'd find, but hoped it would be okay. Taking a deep breath, Mary started on the new path.*