***Sentence Types: Simple, Compound, and Complex***

Your ability to vary sentence types in your writing will allow you to control the pacing and clarity of your paragraphs. Using a variety of sentence types also makes for more interesting reading.

* A **simple sentence** has one independent clause and no subordinate clauses.
* *Old-growth forests in the United States are disappearing.*
* *Citizens must act.*
* A **compound sentence** has two or more independent clauses, joined by coordinating conjunctions, and no subordinate clauses.
* *Old-growth forests in the United States are disappearing, and citizens must act.* (two independent clauses joined by *and*)
* A **complex sentence** contains one independent clause and one or more subordinate clauses.
* *Because old growth forests in the United States are fast disappearing, citizens must act now. (Because old growth forests in the United States are fast disappearing* = subordinate clause beginning with subordinatingconjunction; *citizens must act now* = independent clause)
* *Forests that have existed for thousands of years are in danger.* (*that have existed for thousands of years* = subordinate clause beginning with relativepronoun; *Forests . . . are in danger* = independent clause)
* A **compound-complex sentence** joins two or more independent clauses with one or more subordinate clauses.

*Forests that have existed for thousands of years are in danger, and citizens must take action.* (*Forests are in danger* and *citizens must take action* = independent clauses; *that have existed for thousands of years* = subordinate clause)

Make use of all these types of sentences. Don’t string together a long series of simple sentences, but, on the other hand, don’t always write compound and complex sentences. Try beginning with a simple sentence, or try following several long compound and complex sentences with a simple one. It can have a surprisingly forceful effect.

Because America seemed to provide limitless natural resources, until the second half of this century we spent them freely. We mined for minerals, diverted rivers, and cut down trees, many of which had been growing for thousands of years before the first settlers arrived.

Over the years, America’s wilderness has given way to prosperous cities, and skyscrapers have replaced giant old trees. *America has succeeded. But now we are paying the price.*