If your instructor has said that your essay ideas, organization, and development are great but that your sentence structure needs work, this handout will probably help. Follow as many of these steps as you need.

- Brainstorm, prewrite, and develop your rough draft as you normally would.

- Once you are satisfied with the ideas and organization of your paper, go back over your draft, circling the following words each time they appear: **and but there was were is**

- Now reread the sentences in which the words “and” or “but” appear, keeping the following information in mind.

  **Coordination** uses conjunctions (and, but, or, nor, for, yet, so) to connect two sentences with roughly equal ideas. Both ideas in a coordinate sentence (also called a COMPOUND sentence) carry approximately equal weight. A trick to remembering the conjunctions is to think of the acronym, FANBOYS, which stands for For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, and So.

  **Subordination** uses conjunctions (for example: although, because, since, when, which, who, if, whereas) to connect one dependent clause to an independent clause, creating a COMPLEX sentence. By using a complex sentence, you indicate to your reader that one idea carries more weight than the other.

  **Subordination** is better than coordination in showing relationships between ideas because it more closely reflects complex life situations. In the subordination of two related ideas, the more important idea is put into an independent clause which could stand alone. The less important idea is put into a subordinate clause which could never stand alone because it is dependent on the independent clause.

  ✤ How to Employ Subordination ✤

  **Example:** Because he got home late, he missed his dinner. (Using coordination would show a weaker relationship: He got home late, and he missed his dinner.)

  **Pattern:** Because----------------------------------, **independent clause**.
Use any of the following to subordinate one idea to another:

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**More Examples:**

Although he was poor, he was a happy man.
Where there is smoke, there is fire.
Unless she finishes her degree, she will not get the job.

**A Few Smaller Points:**

Whenever the subordinate (dependent) section comes first, a comma is usually put between the subordinate section and the independent clause.

While it is better to put the subordinate section before the independent sentence, the opposite is possible. When this is done, no comma is put between the independent clause and the subordinate section. On occasion, the subordinate section should follow the independent clause for the sake of logic or dramatic effect.

**Example:** She toasted the bread while he scrambled the eggs.

**Pattern:** Independent sentence while -------------------------------.

Once you have learned the pattern of subordination, use it!

**Coordination:** Paul was hurrying, and he cut his finger.

**Subordination:** Because Paul was hurrying, he cut his finger.

(The above is condensed from *Steps in Composition*)
Write Like A Pro

● Work with your over-coordinated sentences, deciding which ones you could rewrite using subordination instead of coordination. This one step alone will help immensely in making your writing sound more sophisticated than it probably does now.

● Next, isolate sentences which begin with words like there is, there are, there was, here is, here are. Remember that the words there and here used in this way are called EXPLETIVES. Their only function in the English language is to allow you to put the verb in front of the subject instead of after it. (In other words, they allow you to reverse the normal English sentence pattern of the Subject-Verb-Object.) Cross out the word there and then underline the subject and verb in your sentence. Now move the subject and verb to their normal positions. Voila! You’ve created a less wordy, more sophisticated sentence.

Example: There is a vase on the table.
Marked: There is a vase on the table.
Changed: A vase is on the table.

● Check your essay now for over-use of very weak verbs, such as was and were or has and had. These verbs create no vivid mental pictures for your reader. Here the remedy is slightly more difficult than earlier ones we’ve mentioned, only because it involves INCREASING YOUR VOCABULARY. Read the following versions of the same sentence, noticing how the more expressive verb in each sentence gives you a different mental image of motion:

The little boy RAN down the street.
The little boy RUSHED down the street.
The little boy JOGGED down the street.
The little boy SCURRIED down the street.
The little boy SCAMPERED down the street.
The little boy TROTTED down the street.

● Once you’ve gotten to the final draft of your essay, try incorporating as many of these hints as you can. Using subordination rather than coordination, eliminating words such as there and here, and consulting a thesaurus to find better vocabulary words for your essay will help you become a better, more sophisticated writer.

Some Examples

There were locusts and cicadas chirping and buzzing in the trees all night long.
Locusts and cicadas chirped and buzzed in the trees all night long.

As I stood on the mountaintop, there were snowcapped mountain peaks all around me.
As I stood on the mountaintop, snowcapped mountain peaks surrounded me.
The tornado winds howled outside, and we huddled together in the basement for safety. While the tornado winds howled outside, we huddled together in the basement for safety.

No one shops at Dillards after 9 p.m., and the staff decided to close early. Since no one shops at Dillards after 9 p.m., the staff decided to close early.

You will not pass this test, and you will fail. You will fail unless you pass this test.

The old man walked along the sidewalk. The old man (ambled, strolled, sauntered, trudged, plodded, limped) along the sidewalk.

“I thought you would understand me,” she said. “I thought you would understand me,” she (stated, replied, murmured, muttered, cried, raged, shrieked).