

# Bourne toWrite...

creative writing  
workshops

## Sentence Length

Rhythm is one of the most important qualities of a writer. It's something that can take a long time to perfect and that can make a few simple sentences become animated in the minds of the reader. The central factor that creates rhythm is the length of your sentences. If you vary your sentence lengths, you create the potential for rhythm. You can also create tension and pace.

Here's a beautiful example from the writer Gary Provost:

'This sentence has five words. Here are five more words. Five-word sentences are fine. But several together become monotonous. Listen to what is happening. The writing is getting boring. The sound of it drones. It's like a stuck record. The ear demands some variety. Now listen. I vary the sentence length, and I create music. Music. The writing sings. It has a pleasant rhythm, a lilt, a harmony. I use short sentences. And I use sentences of medium length. And sometimes when I am certain the reader is rested, I will engage him with a sentence of considerable length, a sentence that burns with energy and builds with all the impetus of a crescendo, the roll of the drums, the crash of the cymbals--sounds that say listen to this, it is important.'