

One of the key things to remember when writing an extended piece is that you have to keep the interest of the reader. (This is especially important if the person reading it will be a teacher or examiner with more than one piece to look at 😊)
One of the ways that you can do this is to use a variety of sentence lengths as well as some interesting vocabulary.

Ryan stood as still as stone, listening intently, but the faint rustling continued from inside the bedroom, so putting his good eye to the keyhole, he peered into the dimly lit room¹.

The room was wrecked, furniture having been scattered everywhere, one window standing open, curtains billowing aimlessly².

Hearing church bells chime the hour, Ryan crossed the landing and looked out across the square where the evening fog was already rolling in from the river which looked like a coiled black snake crawling sluggishly under the fitful moonlight³.

Ryan trod lightly down the worn steps until he reached the front door from which he could see a Christmas tree. The tree was topped with a silver angel. He crossed the square keeping to the shadows until he slipped as liquid as a cat into the church⁴.

He squinted through the gloom of the interior which was quite deserted, with a single candle burning near the altar, thinking that it was sad to see an empty church on Christmas Eve but shrugging the thought away he began a careful inspection of the places where the statue might have been concealed⁵.

Ryan, a private eye, suspects that he is not alone in the church. Write the next paragraph in which his suspicions are confirmed⁶.

Divide the paragraphs that follow into sentences of different lengths following the advice given. You should make only minor alterations to the wording.

As Ryan held the statue in his arms at last he could not hide the smile of triumph less cynical than the one that usually played around his thin lips⁷.

As soon as he stepped out of the church, he slipped the heavy statue under his coat and headed east, this being the quickest way to the hotel⁸.

Sentence lengths and interesting vocabulary

He took the stairs instead of the lift and reaching the third floor slipped the key into the lock noticing as he did so that the single hair he had placed across the opening was gone which meant someone was probably waiting for him⁹.

Ryan kicked the door sharply open and was rewarded by a muffled yelp as the door bounced off the body behind it, feeling grim satisfaction when he heard the body slump to the floor, a feeling that disappeared when he saw the chambermaid stretched out cold at his feet¹⁰.

Write out this story adding the information asked for in the comment¹¹.

Paul's heart skipped another beat. He looked behind him. He wished he had not taken a short cut through the park at this time of night¹². He quickened his footsteps. What was that noise? Was he being followed?¹³ No doubt in his mind now. They were not echoes. They were the footsteps of another. "Should I run? How far away is the gate?" he asked himself¹⁴. Panic gripped the boy. He began to run, worn trainers skidding on the wet tarmac. Behind him he could hear¹⁵ ... Closer, even closer came the running steps. Nearer, even nearer came the park gate. Further, even further away it seemed to Paul. He tripped and fell. He lay there, face down, unhurt but helpless¹⁶. A hand on his shoulder. He looked at the hand. A man's hand, huge, with thick stubby fingers. The hand pulled him round. He looked up into the man's face¹⁷. He recognised that face. It was the park keeper, the deaf and dumb park keeper, that so many of his friends liked to tease. The face broke into a smile. A hand pulled him to his feet. Another hand held something out to him. A bag. His school bag. Paul must have dropped it as he ran.

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- 1 Rewrite as 3 sentences
 - 2 Rewrite as 3 sentences.
 - 3 Rewrite as 3 sentences.
 - 4 Rewrite as 4 sentences.
 - 5 Rewrite as 5 sentences.
 - 6 Hint – using a series of short sentences helps to create tension.
 - 7 3 sentences – two short, one long.
 - 8 2 sentences – 1 long, 1 short.
 - 9 2 sentences – 1 long, 1 short.
 - 10 4 sentences – short, medium, short, medium.
 - 11 Remember to divide the story into appropriate paragraphs.
 - 12 Describe what Paul saw, mentioning only what a quick glance would reveal.
 - 13 Describe how the boy felt. Make his unease and tension explicit.
 - 14 Describe what Paul sees ahead of him.
 - 15 What could he hear behind him?
 - 16 Describe how he felt.
 - 17 Describe what the face looked like.