One way to check text:

1. Look for S-V and S-V-O structure (“SV(O)” for short) in sentences and clauses of compound sentences. Each “S” is the Subject/agent/thing that is doing something. The “V” is some Verb/action. The SV(O) may or may not be an “O” indicating what is acted upon. Sentences often have two SV(O)s linked by words like “and”, “but”, “therefore”, …

In each SV(O):

* 1. For the “S”, circle a single word that is the main subject (other words may modify/clarify that single word).
     1. If there are two subjects for a single verb, consider them as one double-subject and circle the two root words. Example: “Most men and some women enjoy football.” Circle “men” and “women”. S-V distance is 0. Length of subject noun phrase is 5.
  2. For the “V”, put a box around the word that specifies the main verb.
     1. If there are two verbs for the same subject, treat that as one double-verb and box the root words of each. Example: “Table 2 compares and contrasts the new method with previous methods.” Box “compare” and “contrast”. S-V distance is 0 (counting “Table 2” as the root subject).
     2. In some cases, it is better to consider this as two SV(O)s. Example: “We use panel data from two countries and compare the results.” Treat this as two SVOs: “We use data” and “We compare results”. S-V distances are 1 and 7.
  3. Draw a line from the S circle to the V box to illustrate the S-V distance.
  4. Underline any subordinate introductory clauses, including the linking words from a previous SV(O) in the same sentence.
  5. Cross out any weasel words!

1. Use the analysis table to record statistics about each S-V(O).

Example:

“After the various preliminary steps, the analysis process that we used finishes

after n steps and so we know b is related to c.”

(Note that “b is related to c” is an “O” for the SV “we know” and is also another SV(O) structure, but we’ll only count SV(O)s at the top level.)

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| Compound sentence? (>1 SV(O)?)  If Yes, then put \* in next row | Structure  S-V?  S-V-O?  V?  V-O?  Other? | Length of introductory clause  (0 if there is none) | # words in sentence or clause before S appears | S-V distance: # words between S and V | Main S root:  “process”, “we”, “it”, “this”, “that”, … | Length of noun phrase containing main S word. =1 for single-word noun. | Main V root: “finish”, “know”, “is”, “are”, “has”, “have”, … | Length of verb phrase containing main verb, including adverbs | If the SV(O) has an O, the length of the noun phrase containing O; otherwise \* |
| Yes | S-V | 4 | 6 | 3 | process | 6 | finishes | 4 | \* |
| \* | S-V-O | 2 | 2 | 0 | we | 1 | know | 1 | 5 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |