



# How to Write Better

7 Crucial Tips

**WRITETODONE**

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Do you worry whether your writing is good enough?

I can see you nodding your head.

You are not alone. Every writer has doubts about his or her writing.

The good thing is that writing is a journey. Every sentence you write is a step along the road and makes you a better writer.





On this journey, you can either travel the long road – or use shortcuts.

Using shortcuts means learning to spot and fix mistakes in order to write better.

Here are seven instant fixes that will improve your writing.

But ... what is good writing?

Inexperienced writers think that 'good' writing is elaborate.

No, good writing is simple.

Here are 10 tips to improve your writing immediately.

# 1

## 1. The Art of Natural

Check out an example of elaborate writing below (I've sourced examples of writing from free Kindle books chosen at random).

This is from a story about a young girl who is at home with her young brother when a thunderstorm strikes. The lights go out. Here's how the writer describes the scene:

An ebony abyss claimed the den.

I take this to mean, "The room went dark."

Maybe the author consulted a Thesaurus to create a sentence with special words. But all she achieved was to throw the reader out of the story.



If you want to keep the reader immersed in your story or article, you need to write as simply as possible.

Avoid writing that calls attention to itself.

Your words should sound natural. Just imagine answering your neighbor's question about last night's power-cut with:  
"An ebony abyss claimed the den."

I reckon you'd get a strange look ...

### **Tip**

*Read each sentence aloud to see if it sounds natural or contrived.*

# 2

## 2. Is it obvious?

When you start editing your piece of writing, cut out everything that's already implicit. Look at the following sentence:

The only luminescence came in the form of the full moon which shone down from a starry sky.

I imagine the writer was trying to say something like:  
"The only light came from the full moon."



In general, the moon shines from above, agreed? So, when the author writes, "...which shone down from a starry sky", he's stating what is already obvious.

## **Tip**

*Grab your word-knife and cut out what is redundant.*

# 3

## 3. Tight is good



Take a look at this excerpt from a suspense novel that reads like a Real Estate ad:

*The late afternoon sun streamed through the balcony-facing, floor-to-ceiling windows.*

By the time the reader has stumbled through the words 'balcony-facing' and 'floor-to-ceiling', any suspense has long evaporated.

To keep your readers' attention, you need to shake loose and discard unnecessary words.

## The fix

Cut out all adjectives and adverbs and re-insert only those that are absolutely necessary.



# 4

## 4: Deliver in Small Doses

Do you sometimes throw a lot of information at your readers all at once?

Careful!

Take a look at this example:

Ron was the spoiled, playboy son of a local multi-millionaire home improvement chain-store owner.

It looks like the author wanted to squeeze a lot of information into one sentence.



Here's the information she wanted to convey:

*Ron was spoiled*

*He was a playboy*

*He lived in the same town as his father*

*His father was a multi-millionaire*

*His father ran a home-improvement  
business*

*The store his father owned was part of a  
chain.*



That's a lot of information crammed into one sentence!

If you need to give background information, make sure you do it in small doses.

## **The fix**

Look for all sentences that contain more than two or three pieces of information about a person or a place. Use additional sentences to drip-feed the background information.

# 5

## 5: Become a killer (of clichés)

Take a look at the following clichés:

“The rosy fingers of dawn touched the distant hills.”

“I smiled at him as I told my little white lie and he took it hook, line, and sinker.”

Clichés are predictable and cheapen your writing.

### **The fix:**

Hunt down and kill any clichés. Be ruthless.

# 6

## 6: Make color count

New writers love eye-popping colors:

*The emerald river wound its way through the dusty hills which were dirty off-white tinged with streaks of brownish yellow.*

I'm sure you agree that there is too much color in the sentence above. Make color count by using it sparingly.

### The fix

Delete superfluous colors in your descriptions.

# 7

## 7: Unpack sentences

A simple guide to better writing is to focus on one idea per sentence. Long sentences make reading a drag. Here is an example:

*The lawyer, now that his client had pleaded guilty, was faced with the problem of concealing his own part in the criminal act, a mistake in judgment that, while it was done with the best of intentions, was nonetheless a violation of his oath as an attorney, a violation that might conceivably result in his indictment, and even a prison term.*



There are so many ideas in this sentence that it's difficult to follow.

Here is a simple rule about length:

**Sentences should not contain more than twenty to thirty words.**

(Of course, rules like this one beg to be broken – but break them with care).



## The fix

Hunt for your long sentences and work on them as follows:

- Get rid of unnecessary words.
- Where there is a comma, check if it could be a full stop.
- Where you see the word 'which', see if you could start a new sentence.
- Reword and rephrase.



## CONCLUSION

As you can see from these seven fixes, it's easy to improve your writing. Once you know which mistakes to look for in your writing, you can correct and avoid them.

However, if you focus on mistakes when you are in the flow of writing, you'll cramp your creativity. Apply the fixes only **after** you've created something. Here is contrary advice for your first drafts:



**Let your writing be full, wild, and bad: the *badder*, the better.**

Put what you've written aside. Wait for at least one day. Then apply the seven instant fixes above – and transform your writing into a thing of beauty.

If you are wondering how to write better – follow these tips and you will be amazed how your writing improves.

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