

**Make your writing concise – and compelling**

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| Rule | How to do it |  |
| Gather enough information so you can write clearly, directly and factually. | Take good notes. Ask questions until you understand. Seek multiple sources, including people, websites and other resources.  |  |
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| Emphasize the most interesting aspects. Be specific. Add a compelling detail. | Look for a way to add a little color, or something distinctive. Don’t just focus on the “what.” Sometimes the “why” and “how” is what will compel your audience to read, watch or listen. |  |
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| Plan for visuals and multimedia.  | Can you get a good photo to illustrate the story? Can we be more thoughtful with a stock image? Should this be video? Or audio – a podcast? A quiz? An animation? |  |
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| Use plain English and easily understood words. | Avoid abbreviations, acronyms and jargon. Spell out the full names of abbreviated organizations and define unfamiliar words. |  |
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| Choose active, visual verbs.  | Look for verbs that are colorful and emotional. Visual verbs are those where you can “see the action.” *Launch instead of implement.*Pick verbs that match what you’re trying to describe. *Saunter instead of walk*.  |  |
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| Use bulleted and numbered lists. | * You put your right foot in.
* You take your right foot out.
* You put your right foot in.
* And shake it all about.
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| Avoid long sentences. | 10 to 15 words per sentence is a good average. Even better is a mix of shorter and longer sentences to create a nice rhythm for the reader. |  |
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| In your final read-through, cut your copy by 10%. | Check the word count and aim to reduce by 10%. Cut unnecessary words (really, very, etc.) and details that don’t add anything. |  |
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