



Concision & Precision



William S. Warner

Typical Draft Revisions

<p>1st draft</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure Transitions <p>2nd draft</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voice Abstraction Nominalization <p>3rd draft</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obvious Modifiers Verbosity Redundancy 	<p>Cohesion</p> <p>Clarity</p> <p>Concision</p>	
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Prune and Shake

- Prune the big limbs
 - Save vital topics
 - Remove irrelevant
 - Interesting?
- Shake out the dead leaves
 - Obvious
 - Modifiers
 - Repetition
 - Wordiness



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Less is more

75%

- Compress to fewest clear words
- Don't state the obvious

In my personal opinion, we must listen to and think over in a punctilious manner each and every suggestion that is offered to us.

opinion can only be **personal**
 Statement is implicitly **opinion**
listen to and think over means **consider**
punctilious manner means **carefully**
each and every is redundant
suggestion is something offered to someone



We must consider each suggestion carefully.

William S. Warner

Simplify structure



- Strengthen the **verb**
 The proposal did not **make an estimate of** costs.
- Avoid **unnecessary is, are, was and were**
 The project leader **is responsible for monitoring and balancing** the budget.
 The project leader **monitors and balances** the budget.
 There **was** another video **that explained** agro-ecology.
- Avoid **get**: typically paired with another word

get bigger = grow	get away from = escape
get better = improve	get worse = worsen/deteriorate
get closer = approach	get less important = diminish

William S. Warner

Redundancy Causes Complexity

The sample size was not quite sufficiently large enough.

At this point in time the economic finances are controlled by the governmental municipality.

Low pH values have been observed to occur in areas that have been determined to have many pine trees.

Think of **adding 20, 30, 40 % complexity**



William S. Warner

Dear~~y~~ beloved, we are gathered together~~s~~ in sight of God, and in the face of this congregation, to join together~~s~~ this man and this~~s~~ woman in Holy Matrimony...



Psalm 121:

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

Whence = from where (**from** from where)



William S. Warner

Avoid repetition



Broad issue okay, not repeated words

Drones are currently seen as improving access to information. This increased availability of information does have negative aspects. Smith (2015) noted the dangers of information access have recently been demonstrated in several arenas. The legal implications of information access, privacy and freedom of information, and the information government might have access to.

Turn issue into subject of next sentence, and expand.

Information access by drones can cause problems. The dangers have been documented in several arenas: legal, privacy, and government access (Smith, 2015).

Cut more than half. Focus on topic not author.

William S. Warner



Pairs

full and complete
true and accurate
hopes and desires
each and every
any and all
various and sundry
basic and fundamental
and so on and so forth
First and foremost...



willing and able

Think what you're writing!



William S. Warner

Redundant Modifiers

One word implies another:



preposition is redundant:
revolve around... return back
penetrate into... split apart
progress forward... continue on
evacuated out... fast forward ahead



The reason why we should not try to anticipate in advance those final outcomes is because past history tells us that it has been the ultimate outcome of little events that has unexpectedly surprised us.
We should not try to anticipate outcomes because history tells us that the effect of little events has most surprised us.

William S. Warner

Redundant Categories



large size
a red color
faster speed
cheapest price
heavy weight
tall height
round shape
uncertain condition
at this point in time
confused state
unusual in nature

The educational process and athletic activities are the responsibility of the county governmental systems.

regulation, education, administration... are systems

Education and athletics are the responsibility of the county.

William S. Warner

Redundant phrases



in order to = to
a lot of = many
prior to = before
first of all = first, firstly
in addition to = additionally
in this particular place = here
a number/variety of = several
at this moment in time = now
because of the fact = because
take into consideration = consider

The patient died of a fatal dose of morphine.

Breivik was found guilty and imprisoned in Halden Prison.

Breivik was found guilty and sent to Halden Prison.

30%



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Meaningless Words

- Meaningful** – worthless adjective
His was a *meaningful* contribution.
His contribution *changed our minds?*
- Interesting** – unconvincing word
An *interesting* point is...
Tell the point without preamble.
- Foreseeable** – When?
You will be paid in the *foreseeable* future.
- Factor, feature** – add nothing
The sample was an important *factor*...
A *feature* of the investigation...



William S. Warner

Empty words

- The senator was a true *patriot*.
- Our press is the *freest* in the world.
- The policy is opposed to *persecution*.



- Variable meanings of the abstract**
- democratic
- freedom
- socialism
- centerism
- realistic
- fascism
- justice
- class
- science
- equality
- terrorism
- bourgeois
- totalitarian
- reactionary
- progressive

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Modifiers



- The *entire* sequence takes less than one hour to complete.
- Heat *dramatically* increased protein.
- Heat increased protein *by a factor of 12*.



- The *first* phase of the reaction sequence takes one hour.
- She smiled *happily*.
- She smiled *sadly*.
- The *final* result. . .
- The *preliminary* result. . .

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Really Necessary?

- really
- actually
- virtually
- basically
- generally
- definitely
- personally
- practically
- essentially

50%



- Essentially*, good writing generally depends on *certain factors* that are *really* more common sense *in kind* than *virtually any given grammatical aspect*.
- ~~Generally speaking~~, good writing depends more on common sense than grammar.

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Substitute **damn** every time you're inclined to write **very**; your editor will delete it and the writing will be better.



As to the **adjective**, when in doubt strike it out.
Mark Twain



Write with **nouns** and **verbs**, not with **adjectives** and **adverbs**.

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Wordy Introduction



Metadiscourse – discussing the discussion

1. Author will **explain, argue, discuss**. . .
2. followed by **topic**

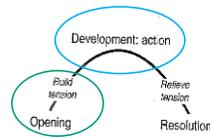
In this paper, I will discuss NGO's neglect of gender issues in Ethiopia.

In Ethiopia, NGOs neglect gender issues.



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Get to the point



- ✓ Reader wants to know topic quickly
Due to nonlinear and hence complex nature of ocean currents, modeling these currents is difficult.
Modeling ocean currents is difficult because they are nonlinear and complex.

The reason for rejection on the part of the editor was that the paper exceeded the word limit.

The editor rejected the paper because it exceeded the word limit.

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Avoid Interruption Remain Thoughtful

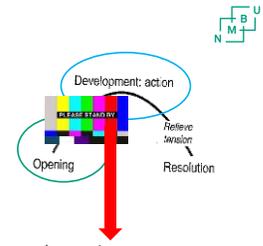
Subject does something
Verb shows what subject does

Direct link clarifies topic

- Omit **interruption**
- Split sentence (two topics)

Previous measurements, in which abrupt changes in temperature produced by seasonal variation, were asymmetric and could only be eliminated by thermal cycling, **are** in sharp contrast to measurements we made in the field.

Previous measurements varied seasonally and **were** asymmetric. **These characteristics contrast** to measurements **we made** in the field.



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Maintain flow thoughtfully

- Reader wants **verb-object** quickly
- Avoid or move **interruption**
- **Begin or end?** Focus or emphasis?
- Necessary words?



We **conclude**, based on **simplified models of solar variability**, that solar variability is **increasing**.

We **conclude** that solar variability is **increasing**, based on **simplified models of solar variability**.

Based on simplified models, we **conclude** that solar variability is **increasing**.

Simplified models suggest that solar variability is **increasing**.

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Abstract nouns

Individuals with mental health **issues** can be dangerous. It is important to approach this subject from a variety of **strategies**, including mental health assistance but also from a law enforcement **perspective**.

I have serious doubts that trying to amend Brexit would work on an actual **level**. On the aspirational **level**, however, a co-UK-EU amendment **strategy** may be more valuable.

People who are mentally ill can be dangerous. We need to consult mental health professionals, but we also may have to inform the police.

I doubt that trying to amend Brexit would succeed, but it may be valuable to try.

Can you define **issue**, **strategy**, **perspective**, or **level**?

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Avoid the dull and imprecise

thing
area
factor
individual



- A career in international relations offers many **things**, opportunities, foreign travel, embassy internship
abstract → **concrete**
- An **area of consideration** is the **individual factor** of the **thing** itself.
- Abstract nouns: **an approach, a concept, a condition, a context, a framework, an issue, a model, a process, a range, a strategy, a tendency, a variable**

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Avoid slang and sexism

Slang: informal, metaphorical speech

Pettersen (2012) **trashed** the theory.

Warner (personal communication, Jan. 18, 2019) claimed that Trump is "so full of **bullshit** his eyes are brown!"

Sexism

We interviewed heads of households and their **wives**. (**spouses**)

A scientist is judged by **his** peers.

Scientists are judged by **their** peers.

Mankind: people, humans, humanity, society, civilization

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Avoid *Relative* Political Labels



- ✓ *liberal, conservative, radical*
- ✓ *left and right*

Color?

- Red: Europe – communism; USA – Republican party
- Blue: conservative, monarch; USA - Democratic party
- Green: environmentalist; some Arabic groups



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Avoid Jargon



Jargon – gibberish

- Reader does **not** understand
- There's plain language equivalent

Argot – special vocabulary

- Reader **does** understand
- No** plain language equivalent
- Green Economy
- cultural Marxism
- environmentally friendly
- sustainable development

For years the indigenous body politic of South Africa attempted to negotiate legal enfranchisement without result.

- *Negative environmental impacts*
 - *Negative health outcomes*
- For years the native population of South Africa negotiated in vain for the right to vote.*
- *Air pollution, soil erosion, water contamination*
 - *Death, illness, mutilation*

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Avoid Pretentious language



So ornate it obscures topic

When our progenitors reach their silver-haired and golden years, we frequently ensepulcher them in edifices for senescent beings as if they were amongst the deceased.

When our parents become old, we frequently bury them in old-age homes as if they were already dead.



William S. Warner

Pompous Diction



- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| French/Latin | Anglo-Saxon |
| utilization | use |
| endeavor | try |
| termination | end |
| cognizant of | aware of |
| facilitate | help |
| is desirous | wants |
| implement | start, begin |
| envisage | see, think |
| apprise | inform |
| eventuate | happen |
| transpire | happen |
| prior to | before |
| subsequent to | after |

Pursuant to the recent promulgation issued January 18, 2019, because of temporal exigencies, it is incumbent upon us all to endeavor to make maximal utilization of electronic communication vis-à-vis scripting counselors to assure visitation at the center for improved written communication.

As explained January 19, you can book Writing Centre appointments online.

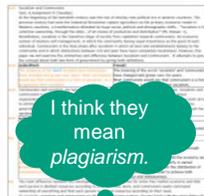
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Avoid Euphemisms



Evasive substituted for the harsh

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Adult entertainment | pornography |
| Negative savings | debts |
| Strategic withdrawal | retreat |
| Revenue enhancers | taxes |
| Chemical dependency | drug addiction |
| Incendiary device | bomb |
| Correctional facility | prison |
| Pacification | eradication |



Immature scholarship



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Avoid Anonymous Claims

Out of sight, out of mind.



- It is well known that there are three types of poverty.*
- Transparency has been found to enhance a company's reputation.*
- Transparency enhances a company's reputation.*

- It was shown/observed that...*
- It is speculated that...*
- It has been found that...*
- It has been reported that...*
- It has long been known that...*
- There are many papers stating...*

Expletives are like swearing: function but no meaning.

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Multiple Negatives

$$(-2) \times (-3) = 6$$

Two negatives make a positive.

It is **not uncommon** = it is **common**.

It is **unlikely**, that it **will not** work = it is **likely** to work.

Not **unreasonably inefficient** =
reasonably inefficient?
unreasonably efficient?

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Not the Negative

Don't write in the negative.

Write in the affirmative.

✓ Make negatives affirmatives:

not many = **few**

not the same = **different**

not different = **alike**

does not have = **lacks**

not old enough = **too young**

did not remember = **forgot**

did not consider = **ignored**

did not allow = **prevented**

not possible = **impossible**

Disengagement of the gears is not possible without unlocking mechanism release.

○ negatives conditional

○ combine negatives with passives

○ nominalization

✓ Change negatives to the affirmatives

✓ Nominalization to clause

✓ Passive to active

To disengage the gears, release the locking mechanism.

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Less Negative More Positive

- ✓ Reader wants to know what **is**
not what **is not**
- ✓ Negative other than **not**
 - Stronger
 - Specific
 - Concise



Not **honest** = **dishonest**

Not **important** = **minor, trifling**

Did not remember = **forgot**

Did not pay attention = **ignored**

Did not have much confidence =

shy?

wary?

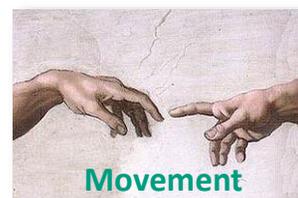
distrusted?

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Exercise

- Select a paragraph
- Remove all unnecessary
 - Interruptions
 - Modifiers
- Replace
 - Dull and imprecise
 - Jargon and slang
 - Pompous and pretentious
 - Euphemism and negative

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Crucial points to support arguments

Verbs move the reader

How to develop an introduction



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What is movement?



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 bums 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.



So write with a combination of short, medium, and long
 sentences. Create a sound that pleases the reader's ear. Don't
 just write words. Write music.

—Gary Provost

W.S. Warner

Academic storytelling like music



• Complex task that depends on a simple principle:
 Make people **want** to keep on reading to find out what happens.

• Construct a **compelling** issue whose main character is

An **institution** How did the Foreign Office respond to the hostage crisis?

A **methodology** Why should physicists use scattergrams to identify cosmic rays?

A **technique** What happens to student essays through peer assessment?

• People interest people

More powerful and persuasive

Include individual stories about

the **employees** at the Foreign office

the **researchers** who employ the methodology

the **students** who wrote the essays



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Establish **problem**

Drives **research**

Introduces **characters**

Identifies **audience**

Short paper/narrow audience: **remind**

Long paper/broad audience: **explain**



W.S. Warner

Drives research



Moving what?

Current public health guidelines in Norway

recommend that women consume a supplemental
 dose of **400 µg of folic acid per day** during the first
 trimester of pregnancy to reduce the risk of neural
 tube defects in children.

Can you imagine this paper
 not challenging the 400 µg
 recommendation?



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Characters' actions



Terms **define** story's characters

Objects

Organisms

Organizations



Verbs **describe** what characters do

✓ Soar: **guidelines recommend, demand, confirm**

✓ Stagnate: **guidelines are**

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Introduction – Type A



Who has not, during a time of illness or pain, cried out to a higher being for help and healing? Praying for help and healing is a fundamental concept in practically all societies, though the object to which these prayers are directed varies among religions of the world. In western culture, the idea of praying for the benefit of others (intercessory prayer) to God is widely accepted. However, the medical literature contains no scientific evidence either confirming or negating the healing effectiveness of intercessory prayer. Few prayer studies have applied scientific methods to determine whether prayer is therapeutically effective, and these studies have been inconclusive.

The following study concerning prayer and patients in a hospital coronary care unit was designed to answer two questions:

(1) Does intercessory prayer to God have any effect on the patient's medical condition and recovery while in the hospital. (2) How are these effects characterized, if present?

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Introduction – Type B

Who has not, during a time of illness or pain, cried out to a higher being for help and healing? Praying for help and healing is a fundamental concept in practically all societies, though the object to which these prayers are directed varies among religions of the world. In western culture, the idea of praying for the benefit of others (intercessory prayer) is widely accepted among the general population. However, intercessory prayer is not given enough attention by medical personnel as an alternative or complementary method of healing. Moreover, doctors sometimes discourage prayer, believing that it will give patients false hopes. But prayer by patients should be encouraged, and a system of intercessory prayer should be established by hospitals.

The benefits of prayer are many, such as...

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No one pattern fits all writing

A - Analysis

Who has not, during a time of illness or pain, cried out to a higher being for help and healing? Praying for help and healing is a fundamental concept in practically all societies, though the object to which these prayers are directed varies among religions of the world. In western culture, the idea of praying for the benefit of others (intercessory prayer) to God is widely accepted. However, the medical literature contains no scientific evidence either confirming or negating the healing effectiveness of intercessory prayer. Few prayer studies have applied scientific methods to determine whether prayer is therapeutically effective, and these studies have been inconclusive.

The following study concerning prayer and patients in a hospital coronary care unit was designed to answer two questions:

(1) Does intercessory prayer to God have any effect on the patient's medical condition and recovery while in the hospital. (2) How are these effects characterized, if present?

B - Argument

Who has not, during a time of illness or pain, cried out to a higher being for help and healing? Praying for help and healing is a fundamental concept in practically all societies, though the object to which these prayers are directed varies among religions of the world. In western culture, the idea of praying for the benefit of others (intercessory prayer) is widely accepted among the general population. However, intercessory prayer is not given enough attention by medical personnel as an alternative or complementary method of healing. Moreover, doctors sometimes discourage prayer, believing that it will give patients false hopes. But prayer by patients should be encouraged, and a system of intercessory prayer should be established by hospitals.

The benefits of prayer are many, such as...

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Three steps that move readers

- 1. General**
What
Topic and why worth writing about
- 2. Focus**
So what?
The missing or misunderstood
- 3. Specific – your contribution**
Here's what
Thesis – claim/stance



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1. General – What? Topic and why is it relevant/important?

- Justify **significance**
- Establish **relevance**
- Social **importance**



Who has not, during a time of illness or pain, cried out to a higher being for help and healing? Praying for help and healing is a fundamental concept in practically all societies...

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Establish Relevance

- Significant**
Cyber hacking elections yields dire consequences.
Explain abstraction
- Trend**
In the last 60 seconds, the US sold 2 million plastic bags
Cite evidence
- Implications**
Justification of female circumcision is necessary, because...
Clarify "necessary"

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Social Importance as a phenomenon

- Eternal**
Poverty continues to cause domestic violence, because...
Fecal pathogens remain the primary source of... (Ref).
- Growing**
Illegal ivory trade tripled last year, resulting in 895 elephants...
Teenage obesity has risen ten-fold in the last four decades (NCD Risk Factor Collaboration, 2017 cited in **Roberts, 2017**).



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Timely: 11.10.2017
Global: BBC News
 Roberts, 2017



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Reliable: Peer-reviewed
Accurate: The Lancet
 NCD Risk Factor Collaboration, 2017



2. Focus – So What?

- Point out **incomplete** knowledge
- Establish **gap** to fill
- Clarify a **misunderstanding**



However, the medical literature contains no scientific evidence either confirming or negating the healing effectiveness of intercessory prayer. Few prayer studies have applied scientific methods to determine whether prayer is therapeutically effective, and these studies have been inconclusive.

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How to read the gap

- ✓ Signal: *although, however, despite, nevertheless*
However, the trial studies contain limited data to prove...
Although oat yields have increased, their nutritional value...
- ✓ Precise wording: more critical, more credit
- 1. **Neutral:** *There is a scarcity of research in the field.*
- 2. **Obscurity:** *The results of these studies were inconclusive.*
- 3. **Defect:** Shows your understanding
A concern/problem/shortcoming in previous studies is...
Specify: lack of robust data, outdated method, geographically unsuitable, theory not germane

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Critical reading leads to your



Explicit *X is unknown, Y was uncertain, Z has not been found*
Implicit *Previous findings suggest that... appear to... assume...*

Gap

Missing fact



Puzzle

Hypothesis



Problem

Assess uncertainties



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3. Your contribution



- Fill** the gap, puzzle, problem. . . misunderstanding
Studying prayer and patients in a hospital coronary care unit was designed to answer two questions: how... and why...
- ✓ Reader in suspense
The study's purpose is twofold: (i) to quantify... (ii) to qualify...
- ✓ Reveal results
Three experiments show decreased tillage depth reduced mold (Experiment 1) and erosion (Experiment 2). Experiment 3, however, suggests that mold...
- ✓ Maintain **curiosity:** the one emotion you need

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Kiss: Keep it short, specific



Background

- ✓ Don't itemize literature
- ✓ General to **specific**



Issue – What specifically?

Gap – So what?

Purpose of study Here's what

The sensory receptors of the auditory system are the hair cells of the inner ear. Two types of mammalian auditory hair cells exist: inner and outer hair cells. Outer hair cells do not send neural signals to the brain, but they mechanically amplify low-level sound that enter the inner ear (Smith, 2003). The amplification is electronically passed from their cell bodies (Jones, 2007).

The **molecular basis** of this mechanism is thought to be the motor protein prestin, which appears to depend on chloride signaling (Bates, 2010). Although prestin has been researched intensively, its **molecular function** has not been fully established.

To determine the **molecular...**

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Evidence Does Not Explain Itself



✓Reader might misinterpret
Organic fertilizers release nitrogen quickly.

Is that good or bad?

✓Interpret evidence like a lawyer

Direct, clear, cause-and-effect

✓Correlation can dismiss counter argument

Advertising

Scientific research

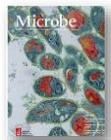


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Movement Summary

Familiar New Expand



1. General – Why is the topic worth studying?
2. Focus – What's missing or misunderstood?
3. Specific – Your contribution

- ✓Keep it brief
- ✓Generalist or specialist audience?



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Argument Conclusion



In a general way,

- confirm why topic is important
- explain why reader should accept your stance
- call for action or overview of possibilities

✓Do not

- bring in new points: *And, organic farming is cost effective.*
- or end with a **bang**: *It also solves world hunger!*

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Conclusion



Resist temptation to give up

Summary of analysis: *Based upon the evidence. . .*

To conclude. . . Unoriginal signpost to end

Avoid restating thesis **verbatim**

Critically read conclusions of journal articles

Go beyond recapping key points

So what? *What does this mean for scholarly discourse?*

Pique readers curiosity – *Where do we go from here?*

Prepare to defend yourself against critics



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What is the main thing to remember from thesis?



- End on a strong note – your final plea
- Don't end with

Unfortunately, however, the response rate was low.

Tells the reader: *Forget what I said about those findings.*

Save limitations for the **Discussion** or **Methodology**

- Think why your work is meaningful

Maybe a better way to phrase your **research question**

Might want to tweak your **Introduction**

Conclusion and **Introduction** like bookends

Stimulate curiosity

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Move your reader's thoughts

- Introduction and body - general to specific
- Conclusion - back to general to reinforce thesis
- Simplicity for a clear, convincing message



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Punctuation is to writing as religion is to morality: **it can change everything.**



GOD IS NOWHERE

God is now here
God is nowhere

Isaiah 40: 3

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness: **Prepare ye** the way of the Lord.
King James Version

The voice of him that crieth: **In the wilderness prepare ye** the way of the Lord.

English Standard Version



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What do you mean?



A woman, **without her man**, is nothing.
A woman: **without her**, man is nothing.

Dear Donald,
I want a man who knows what love is all about. You are generous, kind, thoughtful. People who are not like you admit to being useless and inferior. You have ruined me for other men. I yearn for you. I have no feelings whatsoever when we are apart. I can be forever happy – will you let me be yours?

Melania

Dear Donald,
I want a man who knows what love is. All about you are generous, kind, thoughtful people, who are not like you. Admit to being useless and inferior. You have ruined me. For other men I yearn! For you I have no feelings whatsoever. When we are apart I can be forever happy. Will you let me be?

Yours,
Melania

William S. Warner



Apostrophe



Possessive noun

The small teacher's room.
The small teachers' room.

Time or quantity

In one week's time
Two weeks' notice
Four meters' worth

Plural of words:

What are the *do's* and *don't's*?
There are too many *but's* and *and's* in your sentences.

Contractions

It's = it is, it has
Its = possessive of "it"
Do not take a vehicle or *its* contents.
Who's = who is, who has
Whose = possessive case of who or which
Whose vehicle should I take?

No contractions in academic papers



William S. Warner

Comma

Now I must go and get on my lover.
Now I must go and get on, my lover.



Illuminate grammar
Direct rhythm, direction, tone, flow
Original: "a piece cut off" for Greek actors (200 BC)



NO punctuation in the ancient languages
Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Latin

William S. Warner

6 Comma Rules



1. List three or more words: replaces **and**, or
I dedicate this book to my parents, Mother Teresa and God.
2. Join clause: **and, or, but, while, which, yet**
(generally not with **however** and **nevertheless**)
3. Parenthetical abbreviations **i.e. (that is), e.g. (for example)**
Assignment 12, i.e., your second draft is due today.
4. Before direct speech
He said, "Expect a lot from students, and you will get a lot."
5. Bracket additional information
She omitted, of course, the irrelevant details.

William S. Warner

6. Think

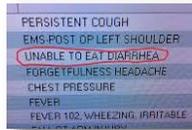


No dogs, please.

The man walked on, his head/higher than usual.

The driver managed to escape from the truck before it sank, and swam to the river-bank.

Don't guess; use a timer or a watch.



William S. Warner

Comma After Introductions



Introductory elements **often** require a comma, **but not always**

- Introductory clause (subject and verb)
- Long prepositional phrase (four or more words)
- Distinct pause
 - When you read aloud, do you pause to avoid confusion?
 - Must you read the sentence to make sense of it?

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Commas for extra, unnecessary, information



Appositive: noun/pronoun explains adjoining noun/pronoun

Commas – **extra** information

John Kennedy, **the popular US president**, was known for his speeches.

extra – we know the subject

My son, **Peter**, is a musician.

(just one son – **name extra**)

No commas – **essential** information

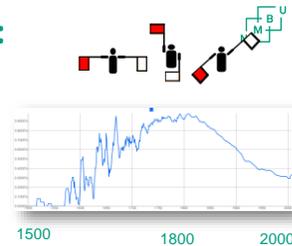
The popular US president **John Kennedy** was known for his speeches.

essential – which president?

My son Peter is a musician. (other sons – **name necessary**)

William S. Warner

Why Use Colons : and Semicolons ;



- Optional
- Old-fashioned
- Dangerously addictive
- Mysteriously connected to pausing
- Difference is too negligible to understand

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Semicolon ;



Relate independent clauses

It is 12:10. I cannot reach class in time.

It is 12:10, and I cannot reach class in time.

It is 12:10; I cannot reach class in time.

Emphasize **relationship**

✓ **thus, however, therefore, besides, accordingly, consequently,**

I had never written a paper before; **therefore**, I did not know how.

You do not have an outline; **consequently**, your paper lacks structure.

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Semicolon ;

List with own punctuation



To pass this course you must meet requirements, including attending class (at least 11 lectures), another is to pass 10 weekly assignments, including the final paper, and the last requirement is to laugh at 80% of the professor's jokes.

To pass this course you must meet 3 requirements: (1) attend at least 11 lectures; (2) pass 10 weekly assignments, including the final paper; (3) laugh at 80% of the professor's jokes.

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Colon :



Amplify or **interpret** first clause

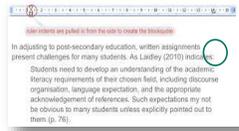
Your paper was approved: it fulfilled all five requirements.

Fulcrum between oppositional statements

Man proposes: God disposes.

Introduce quotations

- > 4 lines or 40 words of text
- No "said" or "stated"



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Colon :



Start a list

I find fault with only three aspects in your paper: the beginning, the middle, and the end.

Set up surprise

Per has only one dietary requirement: the animal must be dead.

Set off sub-title

Food Safety in Norway: An Assessment of Foodborne Diseases

Business letter salutation

Dear Dr. Smith:

William S. Warner

Dash – to break



Parenthesis (suppresses the interjection)

He tried (*I still can't believe this*)
to ask me on a date.



Commas add the interjection, e.g.,

He tried, *I still can't believe this*,
to ask me on a date.



Dash – the interjection stands on its own

He tried – *I still can't believe this!* –
to ask me on a date.



William S. Warner

Hyphen join-together



✓ **To avoid ambiguity**

- A re-formed rock band
- A reformed rock band



✓ **Clarify word cluster**

- anti-Apartheid movement
- high-pressure hose

✓ **Avoid letter confusion**

- Deice – de-ice
- Shelllike – shell-like

Spell out numbers

thirty-two ninety-five

Capital letter/number + noun

N-terminal 100-fold

Link nouns with nouns

Oslo-Bergen train

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Dash – to break



Parenthesis (suppresses the interjection)

He tried (*I still can't believe this*)
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Dash – the interjection stands on its own

He tried – *I still can't believe this!* –
to ask me on a date.



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Quotes



Ellipsis . . .

missing words in a quote

"Data was limited. . . but valid."

Brackets [added for contextual accuracy]

translation in quote

"A *kommune* ["municipality"] provides...

correct quote

"The *Time's* [*sic*] claimed that. . ."

sic = just as written

edit quote

"They [**firearms**] cause 47% of all. . ."

"The *vital* [**emphasis added**] data. . ."

[**emphasis mine**]

[**italics added**]

[**italics mine**]

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Exercise

- Select paragraph that contains a quote
- Punctuate for contextually accuracy
- If you don't have any quotes, apply alternative punctuation in your final paragraph to clarify your conclusion.

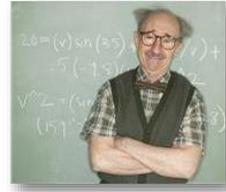
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to Sound Scholarly



More night jobs would keep youths off the streets.



William S. Warner

Step 1 – Forget the reader

Go for volume
Lengthen statements by
referring to **studies**.

Studies have found that more
night jobs would keep youths
off the streets.



William S. Warner



Step 2 – Confuse

Replace simple words like
more
jobs
night
youths
streets

with **multiple syllable jargon** of
Latin or Greek origin.

Studies have found that
additional nocturnal
employment would keep
adolescents off
thoroughfares.



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Step 3 – Be vague

Found is too clear
indicate and **identify** are
multi-purpose

Use them in *any* context to
mean almost *anything*.

Further lengthen and
validate vagueness by
attaching **the fact that**

Studies have **identified the**
fact that additional nocturnal
employment would keep
adolescents off thoroughfares.



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Step 4 - Muddle

Rely on **meaningless adjectives**
that lengthen without changing
the meaning:

relevant
appropriate
various

one of the least **meaningful** of all
the **interesting** modifiers

Various applicable studies
have identified the **interesting**
fact that additional
appropriate nocturnal
employment would keep
adolescents off thoroughfares.



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Step 5 – Never Commit

1. But quantify: **a number of** A number of various applicable studies have
2. Replace **will's** and **would's** with **can's** and **could's**. **generally** identified the interesting fact that additional
3. Generally, use **usually**. appropriate nocturnal employment **could usually** keep adolescents off thoroughfares.



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Step 6 – Repeat repetitively

Sprinkle redundancies

1. Useless repeated words
 2. In other words, exploit **tautology**, which is saying the same thing over and over again in different words.
 3. Do this without imparting additional force or clearness.
 4. Simply repeat needlessly, like, or, for example, or, such as "widow woman."
- A number of various applicable studies have generally identified the interesting fact that additional appropriate nocturnal employment could usually keep **juvenile** adolescents off thoroughfares.

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Step 7 – Exploit expletives

- Add **it is** and **there is/are** for **passive** scholarly tone.
- ✓ Don't forget that very **important** adjective **very**.



William S. Warner

There is no escaping the fact that **it is** considered **very important** to note that a number of various applicable studies have generally identified the interesting fact that additional appropriate nocturnal employment could usually keep juvenile adolescents off thoroughfares.



Step 8 – Distract with detail



Best at the end.



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There is no escaping the fact that it is considered very important to note that a number of various applicable studies have generally identified the fact that additional appropriate nocturnal employment could usually keep juvenile adolescents off thoroughfares, **including but not limited to the time prior to midnight on weeknights and/or 2 a.m. on weekends.**



Step 9 Interrupt thought

Use **foreign phrases**
Latin sounds *intelligimus*
Few know the meanings
ipso facto. [by the fact itself]



William S. Warner

There is no escaping the fact that it is considered very important to note that a number of various applicable studies ***ipso facto*** have generally identified the fact that additional appropriate nocturnal employment could usually keep juvenile adolescents off thoroughfares during the night hours, including but not limited to the time prior to midnight on weeknights and/or 2 a.m. on weekends.



More night jobs would keep youths off the streets.

- ✓ Increased words seven-fold
 - ✓ Sounds scholarly
- Would you publish this?



William S. Warner

There is no escaping the fact that it is considered very important to note that a number of various available applicable studies *ipso facto* have generally identified the fact that additional appropriate nocturnal employment could usually keep juvenile adolescents off thoroughfares during the night hours, including but not limited to the time prior to midnight on weeknights and/or 2 a.m. on weekends.

