



Concision & Precision

Polish & Punctuate
Weed
Cultivate

William S. Warner

Typical Draft Revisions

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1st draft | Cohesion |
| Structure | |
| Transitions | |
| 2nd draft | Clarity |
| Voice | |
| Abstraction | |
| Nominalization | |
| 3rd draft | Concision |
| Obvious | |
| Modifiers | |
| Verbosity | |
| Redundancy | |



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Prune and Shake

1. Prune the big limbs

Save vital topics
Remove irrelevant
Interesting?



2. Shake out the dead leaves

Obvious
Modifiers
Repetition
Wordiness



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Less is more

75%

1. Compress to fewest clear words
2. 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~~y~~ in sight of God, and in the face of this congregation, to join together~~y~~ this man and this~~y~~ 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%



William S. Warner

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.

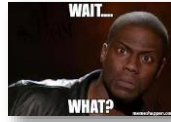
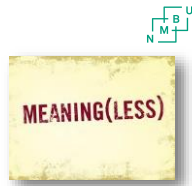
Foreseeable – When?

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*.

democratic

freedom

socialism

centerism

realistic

fascism

justice

Variable meanings of the abstract

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. . .

William S. Warner

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.

William S. Warner

Wordy Introduction

Nice shirt!
Without metadiscourse

I've got to say:
nice shirt!
With metadiscourse

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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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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Get to the point

- ✓ Reader wants to know topic quickly

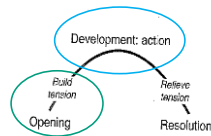
Due to nonlinear and hence complex nature of ocean currents, modeling these currents is difficult.

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

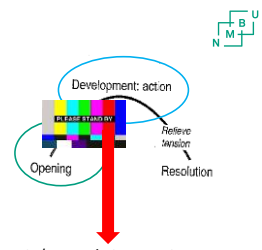
Direct link clarifies topic

- 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?

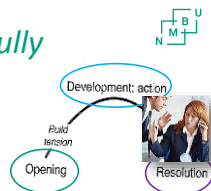
We **conclude**, based on simplified models of solar variability, that solar variability is increasing.

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**.

William S. Warner



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**?

William S. Warner



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*

William S. Warner

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

utilization
endeavor
termination
cognizant of
facilitate
is desirous
implement
envisage
apprise
eventuate
transpire
prior to
subsequent to

Anglo-Saxon

use
try
end
aware of
help
wants
start, begin
see, think
inform
happen
happen
before
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.

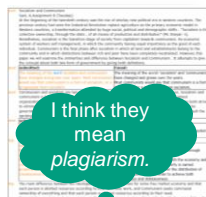
As explained January 19, you can book Writing Centre appointments online.

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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.

William S. Warner

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**

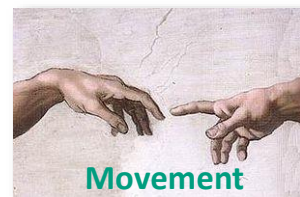
Did not have much confidence =
shy?
wary?
distrusted?

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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



William S. Warner

W.S. Warner

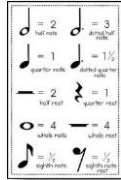
What is movement?



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 burns 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



W.S. Warner



Establish **problem**

Drives **research**

Introduces **characters**

Identifies **audience**

Short paper/narrow audience: **remind**

Long paper/broad audience: **explain**



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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?



W.S. Warner

Characters' actions

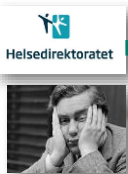


Terms **define** story's characters

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...

W.S. Warner



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

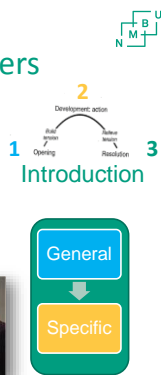
So what?

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...



W.S. Warner

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



W.S. Warner

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?

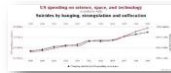
✓Interpret evidence like a lawyer

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!*



W.S. Warner

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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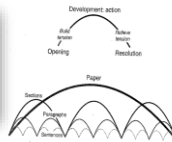


Move your reader's thoughts

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

Introduction

Conclusion



W.S. Warner

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



William S. Warner

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



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.

Apostrophe



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

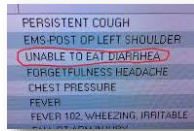
6. Think

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 twice to make sense of it?

William S. Warner

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

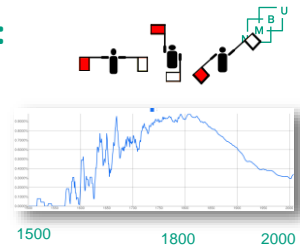
The popular US president John Kennedy was known for his speeches.

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

William S. Warner

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.

William S. Warner

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.

William S. Warner

Colon :



Amplify or **interpret** first clause

Your paper was approved: it fulfilled all five requirements.

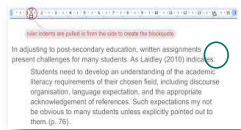
Fulcrum between oppositional statements

Man proposes: God disposes.

Introduce quotations

> 4 lines or 40 words of text

No "said" or "stated"



William S. Warner

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

William S. Warner

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

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to ask me on a date.



William S. Warner

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*]

William S. Warner



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.

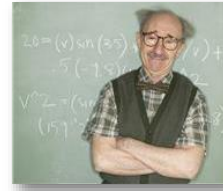
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to Sound Scholarly



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.



William S. Warner



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.



William S. Warner



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.



William S. Warner



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
3. Generally, use **usually**. interesting fact that additional appropriate nocturnal employment **could usually** keep adolescents off thoroughfares.



William S. Warner



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.

William S. Warner



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.



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.**

William S. Warner

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?



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.



William S. Warner