

Write Better

RIGHT NOW

QUESTIONS to ask yourself WHEN YOU'RE WRITING

Do I sound like a real person?
How can I make my writing voice more natural?

.....

How do I know what I know?
Why am I a credible source?

.....

Who am I writing to? Why should they care about my topic?

.....

What's the most important point?
Is it in the title and first paragraph?

Is this context really necessary?

.....

What can I tell the reader that they don't already know?
What's the conventional wisdom?
Why is it wrong?

.....

Could this [sentence, paragraph, chapter, book] be shorter?

.....

Can I relate what I've written to something urgent or newsy?

Would my [sibling, parent, spouse] understand what I've written?
How would I explain it to them?

.....

What do I want readers to do?
Have I tried hard enough to convince them?

.....

Could a [story, quotation, statistic, image, photo] bring this to life?

.....

AVOID AND BUSINESS CLICHÉS AND JARGON

✗ Deep dive

✗ Drill down

✗ Core competency

✗ Leverage

✗ Buy-in

✗ Dog and pony show

✗ Reinvent the wheel

✗ Boil the ocean

✗ Robust

“By using stale metaphors, similes, and idioms, you save much mental effort, at the cost of leaving your meaning vague, not only for your reader but for yourself.”

George Orwell

MORE TIPS

- 1 Get someone else to read it
- 2 Delete meaningless adjectives like “key,” “exciting,” or “leading”
- 3 Use active verbs
- 4 Read it out loud

SIMPLIFY AND CUT UNNECESSARY PHRASES AND WORDS

As a result of → Because

Despite the fact that → Despite

Due to the fact that → Due to, because

Every single → Every

For the purpose of → For, to

In accordance with → By, under

In addition → Also, too

In advance of → Before

In an effort to → To

Inasmuch as → Since

In a timely manner → Promptly, on time

Incumbent upon → Must

In order that → For, so

In regard to → About, concerning

In the event that → If

It is requested that → Please

Leverage → Use

Limited number → Few

Majority → Most

Necessitate → Need

Numerous → Many

On a regular basis → Regularly

Pertaining to → About

Provided that → If

Provides guidance for → Guides

Time period → Time, period

Utilize → Use

With reference to → About

With the exception of → Except for

In order to → To