

10 Ways to Improve Your Writing

1

Explain and situate quotes.

Don't ask them to speak for themselves. Who said the quote? What does it mean? Introduce quotes and show how they relate to your thesis.



2

40
WPS

Keep your sentences below forty words. Max.

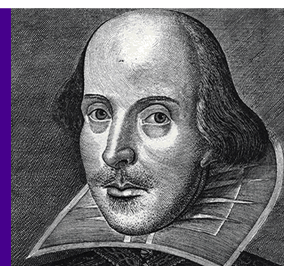
Break them your sentences up when you can. Every jewel needs its own box! Connect ideas with periods, rather than commas.

(Do you really *need* that extra clause?)

3

Organize your paper less like Law & Order and more like Shakespeare.

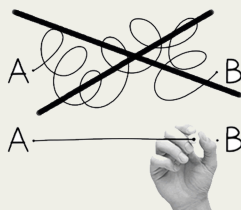
Your paper is not a mystery. Your introduction should say what is about to happen, like a Shakespearean prologue. Don't leave little hints and then tie it all together at the end, like a Law & Order episode.



4

Simplify.

Synonyms actually aren't always helpful. Choose meaningful words and stick with them! (Also, cut out academic-ese. Don't try to sound sophisticated! It backfires 99% of the time.)



5

Anticipate. Objections.

6

Avoid adverbs and adjectives.

Let the verbs do the work! (Consider: "She ran really fast" vs. "She sprinted.") Only use adverbs when you can't convey the same meaning without them. Adjectives, too, should be used only when necessary.

7

Raise your voice.

You have something important to say. Don't be afraid of your own voice!



Also, be clear about what is your voice, and what is the voice of your interlocutors.

8

Get rid of padding.

Rather than "*noun* and *noun*," just "*noun*." Rather than "*adjective* and *adjective*," just "*adjective*."

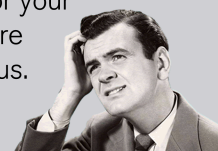
Never use more words than you need to. It doesn't always feel true, but in writing, less really is more.

9

What's "that"?

Be careful with pronouns. Words like *it*, *this*, *such*, *that*, can be unclear.

Make sure that the referents for your pronouns are unambiguous.



10

Care. These tips can help, but it's your own genuine care about the topic that will wow your reader.