



Advanced & Digital Media Virtual Learning

# HS/Advanced & Digital Media

May 18, 2020



Lesson: [Writing Style (5/18/20)]

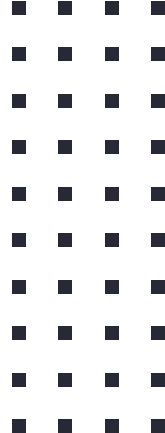

**Objective/Learning Target:**

**Understand the problems with wordy writing. Recognize writing that is not concise and use tactics to eliminate that writing. Create writing that is specific and descriptive and that shows instead of tells.**

# Bell Ringer

1. When you think about your own writing. What would you say is your biggest strength? What about weakness?





# Upgrading Your Writing Style



# 1. Don't Waste Words

Write only what you need

# Why It's Important

- Just because something is grammatically correct doesn't mean it is actually good writing.
- Sentences that use unnecessary words can still be correct grammatically.
- However, sentences that use those unnecessary words often don't flow well and seem awkward to the reader.

# It's about value, not length

- A bad habit many young writers pick up is related to trying to meet a word count. Rather than writing really good, concise copy they extend sentences with superfluous words to meet a word count faster.
- Every word in writing is valuable. The more meaningless words that are written the less valuable the entire piece becomes.

# You can be complex AND concise

- Writing concise and tight does not mean that your sentences must be simple and short.
- Concise writing uses the fewest words possible to convey meaning. If the meaning is complex then the sentence will still need to be complex. However, it will earn its complexity rather than existing just because a writer wants to have a longer sentence for their own vanity.

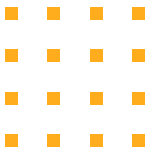
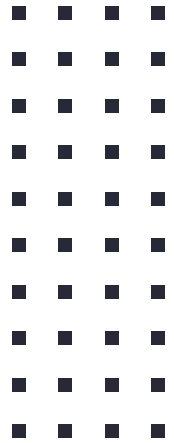


# Cutting Down on Extra Words

- Avoid wordy phrases. (Instead of “as of late” use “lately” or instead of “daily basis” use “daily”.)
- Remove pointless modifiers. (Example - He completely destroyed the house. There’s no need for “completely”. Destroyed is enough.)
- Use active voice. And use action verbs instead of nouns. (Instead of “under consideration” just use “considered”)



# Practice



## Identify and change the wordy phrases

The scroll was found stuffed in between two massive statues.

The patient stayed in the hospital for weeks, and for the duration of the visit they wrote thank you notes to the nurses.

The boy answered in the affirmative when asked whether or not he finished his homework.



# Answers

The scroll was found stuffed **in between** two massive statues.

The scroll was found stuffed between two massive statues.

The patient stayed in the hospital for weeks, and **for the duration of the** visit they wrote thank you notes to the nurses.

The patient stayed in the hospital for weeks and during the visit they wrote thank you notes to the nurses.

The boy answered **in the affirmative** when asked whether or not he finished his homework.

The boy answered yes when asked whether or not he finished his homework.



# Find and remove the meaningless modifiers

A general consensus believes the building definitely collapsed under its own weight.

Virtually everyone uses social media these days, but their ideas about what constitutes social media are entirely different.

A rather dangerous situation erupted this evening when four men quite literally led a car chase down mainstreet.



# Answers

A **general** consensus believes the building **definitely** collapsed under its own weight.

**Virtually** everyone uses social media these days, but their ideas about what constitutes social media are **entirely** different.

A **rather** dangerous situation erupted this evening when four men **quite literally** led a car chase down mainstreet.





## 2. Making Good Word Choices

Matching your words correctly

# Matching thoughts with words

- The best writers are able to use precise wording and descriptive vocabulary to make their prose read like someone would actually think.
- This means choosing the right wording is vital to creating good writing. This is a skill that takes time to master.



# Examples

- Change “His play hurt the team” to “His inaccurate passes caused them to crumble in the clutch.”
- Change “The group did well on their exam” to “The group’s ability to operate as a unit created success.”





# 3. Getting Specific

Vivid detail makes for better writing



# Show don't Tell

- Great writers show the reader what is happening rather than telling them what is happening.
- Use precise details and descriptions to convey to the reader what is happening.
- Vague descriptions and limited details lead to writers telling a story instead of showing the story.

## Show the action

- Don't write "Karen has a busy morning."
- Be more specific and write "Karen's list of morning meetings takes up a full page of her notebook before reaching her 9:00 a.m. break to write down the rest of her meetings in the morning."



## Show the evidence

- Don't tell the reader "It's been a bad month for the company."
- Show the reader "The company's stock lost over 60% of its value in just one month while revenues plunged into the red for the first time in company history."



# Details Matter

- Not only does showing instead of telling create a more interesting read it also creates a more accurate story.
- Journalism survives on details. They allow us to tell accurate stories. Generalizations can lead to misinterpretation. You might consider something a “small” problem whereas another perspective might see the problem as big.

# Assignment

Find the first draft of the last story you submitted for publication. Now, go through that story and make the wording more precise. Eliminate wordy phrases and meaningless modifiers. Make sure that you are being vivid in your descriptions. Remove generalizations for more specific detail. After you're finished resubmit the story.