



WRITING TIP - REMOVING UNNECESSARY WORDS

I would like to thank Glynnis Witwer of Proverbs 31 and COMPEL Training for teaching me about unnecessary words in writing. I want to share with you what I have learned. This will help you in producing tighter and clearer writing.

Remove the word “that.”

Most occurrences of the word “that” can be removed from your writing. To decide where you can remove “that,” begin by searching for all occurrences of the word. Then read the sentence without the word “that” in it. If it is intelligible and makes sense without it, simply delete.

Delete words at the beginning of a sentence.

There is, It is, I believe, I think, I write this article...

Starting a sentence in this way takes away from the main point and emphasis of the sentence.

Here are a couple of examples:

There are twenty-five students who have already expressed a desire to attend the program next summer.

Instead say: Twenty-five students have already expressed a desire to attend the program next summer.

It is necessary to exercise each day for good health..

Daily exercise is necessary for good health.

Eliminate intensifiers and qualifiers

Intensifiers and qualifiers are words that strengthen or weaken another word - usually the word directly to the right. The purpose of an intensifier or qualifier is to tell us about the intensity of another word. Watch out for them.

Some common ones are: really, very, quite, extremely, severely, suddenly, totally, absolutely, rather, a bit, a little, somewhat, slightly.

To make your writing stronger, remove the intensifier or qualifier and instead, look for one verb that will better describe what you are trying to say.

Here’s an example: Instead of “she was very quiet” say “she was silent” or “she was tight-lipped.”