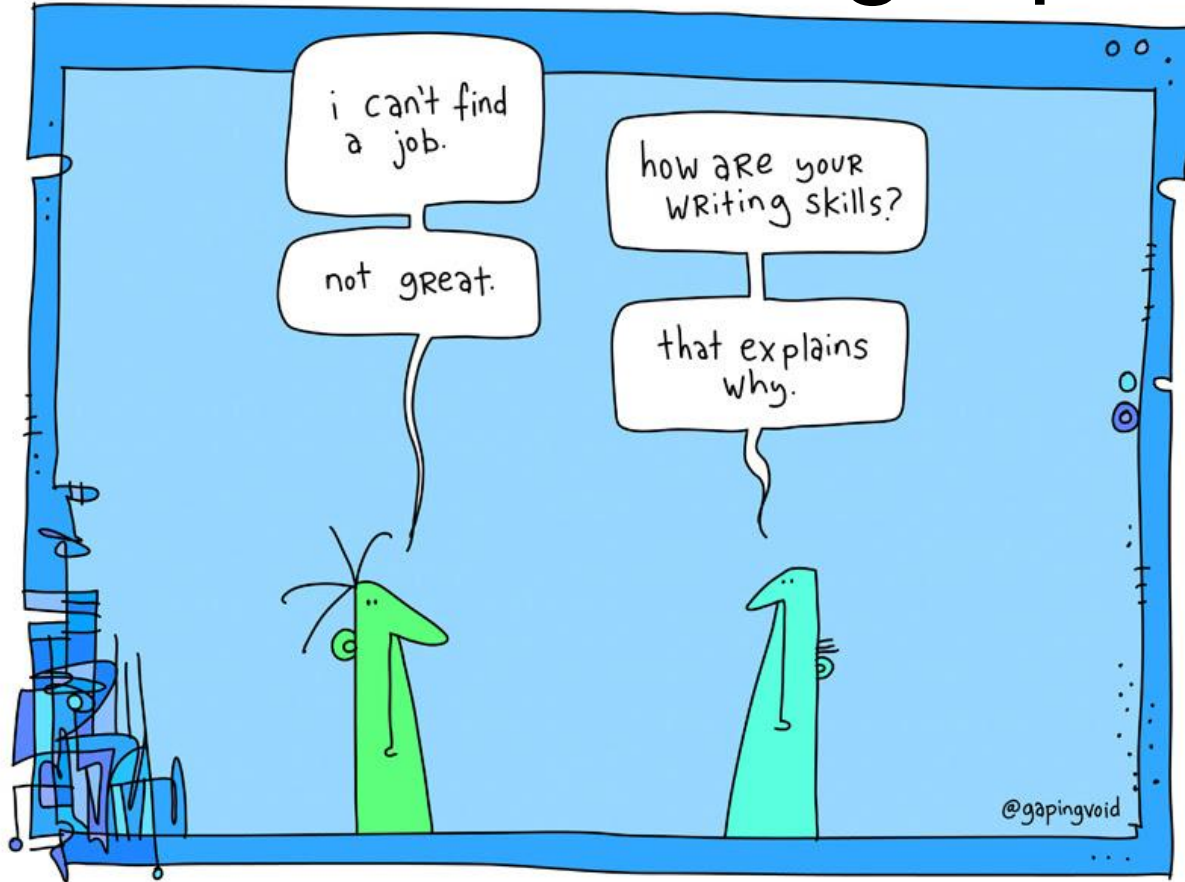


General Writing Tips



Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- Explain how nouns and verbs are the most important parts of writing well.
- Revise writing to gradually improve quality.
- Identify and eliminate clichés in your writing.

Agenda

- Best Practices for General Writing
- Best Practices for Email & Slack
- Practice Revising Along The Way

A majority of coding is refactoring.

A majority of writing is revisioning.

A memo posted by a manager
that was corrected by employees 🙌

Please, don't leave you^l dishes in the
sink.

Please, don't scrap^e you^l excess food into
The Sink.

Dishes found in the sink at closing will be
Placed in the trash for disposal.

Every Sunday^{the} fridge will be clean^{ed} out.

You cannot have any food in lockers
overnight^{its} policy.

space
Thankyou.

D-

Please Reverse

Revise, Revise, Revise



I don't believe in writer's block. Most of writer's block is having too much time on your hands. My mantra is that you can always edit a bad page; you can't edit a blank page.

— *Jodi Picoult* —

AZ QUOTES

Revise Phrasing

Original	Improved	Why
Sorry for the delay	Thanks for your patience	Reinforce the behavior you want
What works best for you?	Could you do ____ by ____?	Be specific and action oriented
No problem / No worries!	Always happy to help!	More positive
Hopefully that makes sense?	Let me know if you have any questions.	Ambiguous questions put a burden on the other person
Ahh sorry! My bad. Totally missed that.	Nice catch! Updated file attached. Thanks for letting me know!	More positive and more professional.
Regret any inconvenience	I was wrong. I'm sorry. It will not happen again.	Take ownership and properly apologize.

When in doubt, strike it out.

Student Activity:

Revise This Sentence

"In light of the pervasive problem of extremely long lines for flu shots at USF, providing another flu shot clinic on campus would offer this growing problem some kind of compensatory convenience."

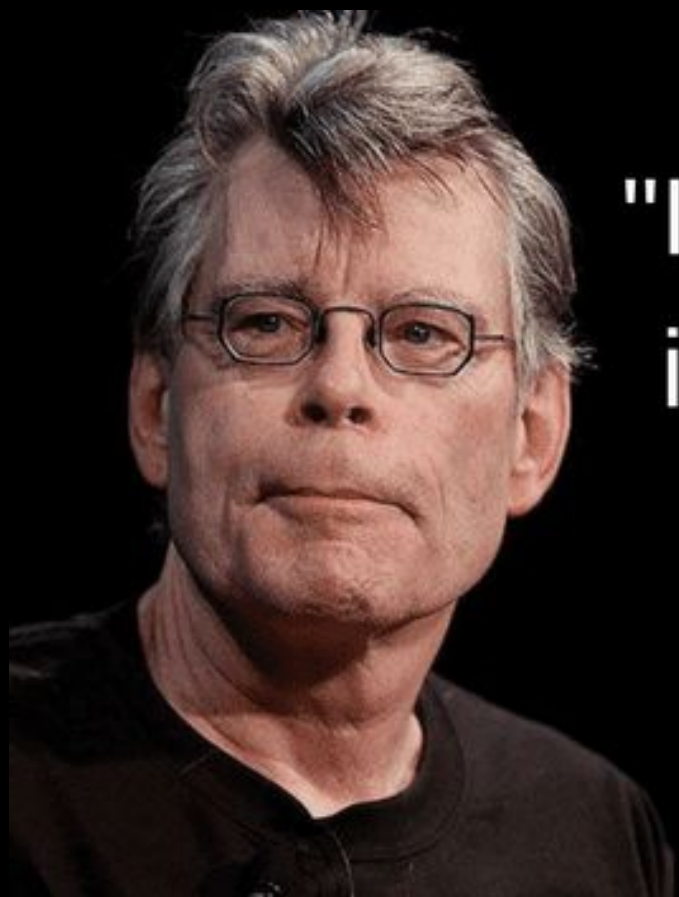
“University of San Francisco needs another flu shot clinic to reduce overcrowding.”

Focus on Nouns & Verbs

Who is doing what?

Leave Other Parts of Speech Out

- Minimize subjective adjectives (fast learner, hard worker)
- No adverbs (very, so, actually, quickly)
- No superlatives (the best ever, he is the worst)



"I believe the road to hell
is paved with adverbs."

Stephen King



The lion roared
ferociously.

The kitten purred
very softly.



When a lion roars, when *isn't* it ferociously?
When a kitten purrs, isn't it softly?

Student Activity:

Rewrite this sentence

I walked slowly and methodically through the majestic, lush, green hills, the scent of fresh, spring grass smelled very, very nice.

I ambled through the grass hills in the spring air.

What are your least favorite business clichés?

- Synergy
- Thinking outside of the box
- Giving 110%
- Paradigm shift
- Low-hanging fruit
- Going forward
- Best in class
- Core competency
- Sustainable
- Circle Back

How to Avoid Business Clichés

- Be personable.
- Focus on what is happening right now.
- Strive to use Plain English.

How could we revise it to reduce clichés?

“Thank you very much for taking the time to talk today.

I am certain that I will be able to contribute a great deal to your organization, especially by optimizing your ad spend, employing the multilevel skills I have developed over the years.

I look forward to hearing from you.”

Revised to be more personal

“Thank you so much for taking the time to talk today.

I have some additional thoughts on how you could better use your ad budget. For one, I think you could try new channels, such as influencers and Instagram stories. I am happy to send more details if you would like that.

Looking forward to hearing from you.”

Takeaways

- We write a lot. However, writing is difficult.
- Write a bad first draft quickly. Then revise slowly.
- Avoid cliches by focusing on the specific, current situation.

Bonus Materials

Use the right noun

- People should be fined for using verbs as nouns when there's a perfectly lovely noun already available.
- Case in point: learnings -> lessons