

Improve Your Writing: The Quick and Painless Way

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Step one to improving your writing in a quick and painless way is to familiarize yourself with the most common mistakes outlined below and learn to avoid them. Good writing respects the rules that govern the relationships between words. This means you must have a solid understanding of grammar, spelling, and punctuation rules. Above all, as a good writer, you strive to express your ideas in a way that is clear and memorable to your readers - more on that later!

Note: *The explanations below are shortened and simplified to save you time, but if you are serious about improving your writing, you should spare five minutes once in a while and read up about a grammatical topic that is of interest to you. In time, you will build the knowledge required to excel at communicating your ideas.*

Capitalization

1. The improved methods available which we will discuss in this blog will help us better evaluate, learn from and forecast using **Time Series Forecasting**.
The improved methods available, which we will discuss in this blog, will help us better evaluate, learn from and forecast using time series forecasting.
2. Being a **Data Scientist** is not easy as it involves many fields such as **Statistics**, **Computer Science**, and **Business Analysis**.
Being a data scientist is not easy as it involves many fields such as statistics, computer science, and business analysis.
3. The **magic trick** of Machine Learning — The Kernel Trick
The Magic Trick of Machine Learning — The Kernel Trick

→ In general, only proper nouns are capitalized. Think of proper nouns more like names rather than words - they denote specific places, people, countries, or entities, for example: Wednesday, the Queen of England, Simon Fraser University, the French language, Buddhism. Sometimes people capitalize words for emphasis, but this is technically not correct and unnecessary (use font formatting for emphasis instead). The word "internet" should not be capitalized. If unsure, you're safer to err on the side of not capitalizing. You can also Google the word in question to see whether others are capitalizing it in running text (pay attention to reputable sources).

→ Example 3 is a headline, so title case applies. In general, capitalize principal words, i.e. all words that are **not** short conjunctions (and, but, for, etc.), articles (the, a, an), or prepositions (for, with, to, etc.). For an easy fix, just use a capitalization tool like: <https://capitalizemytitle.com/> (**Note:** the tool only applies to capitalization in titles, not in running text)

Run-on sentences

1. Suppose you are a botanist at Amazon Rainforest, your team has brought you thousands of plants that potentially can be declaimed as new Species.
Suppose you are a botanist in the Amazon rainforest and your team has brought you thousands of plants that could potentially be claimed as new species.

→ A run-on sentence is a sentence that joins two or more independent clauses (phrases that can stand alone and have meaning; in this case, the two underlined parts above) often with a comma and without

the use of a proper conjunction (a "joining word" such as: and, for, because, since, etc.). Never join independent clauses with a comma alone; always use the right conjunction to represent the relationship between the phrases.

Prepositions

1. [...] they can access **to** the data [...]
[...] they can access the data [...]
2. [...] is given the task **for** forecasting the room bookings [...]
[...] is given the task of forecasting the room bookings [...]
3. It is not suitable for running **on** a production environment.
It is not suitable for running in a production environment.

→ Prepositions can be tricky to learn, especially for non-native speakers. When you learn new words, learn them with their preposition if applicable, for example: order someone to do something, task someone with something, provide something to someone, etc. When unsure in your writing, use Google to your advantage. For example in 2, the author could have Googled "given the task *" and Google would have returned many examples with the correct preposition in place of the asterisk.

Punctuation

1. Let's delve into finding our answers about our ET visitors using a very powerful and awesome visualization tool **'Plotly's Dash'**.
Let's delve into finding the answers about our ET visitors using a very powerful and impressive visualization tool: Plotly's Dash.
2. Now you must be wondering when things are working smoothly what is the need to up the Ante ??
Now you must be wondering: when things are working smoothly, why up the ante?
3. Guess what, that is precisely how a Siamese network works!
Guess what? That is precisely how a Siamese network works!

→ Use punctuation mindfully with the goal of bringing more clarity to your writing. Correctly and skilfully used punctuation is like a well-designed road with no bumps or potholes. Incorrectly used punctuation can irritate and throw readers off course. Spend five minutes once in a while to learn the rules around semi-colons, commas, hyphens, etc. It's a small time investment here and there and will make you a more confident, skillful writer who is able to guide readers smoothly through complex ideas. When it comes to question marks and exclamation points, there is no need to double or triple them - a single one is usually enough and looks more professional.

Articles

1. [...] only taking **last 12 months** into account would yield better results.
[...] only taking the last 12 months into account would yield better results.
2. [...] errors are minimized by **gradient descent algorithm**.
[...] errors are minimized by a gradient descent algorithm.
3. *Do they like **United States** more than the rest of the world?*
Do they like the United States more than the rest of the world?

→ Articles are definite or indefinite. The only definite article in the English language is "the" and is used to denote a specific thing. The indefinite articles are "a" and "an" and refer to things that are non-

specific. The indefinite article is omitted in the plural (e.g. dogs, curtains, computers) or with uncountable nouns like milk, water, salt etc.

→ In 1 and 3 above, the definite article must be used because specific things are being referred to. In 1, we are talking about not any period of 12 months, but the last 12 months. In 3, we are not talking about a random collection of states, but the specific country called the United States.

→ In 2, the indefinite article must be used because different kinds of gradient descent algorithms exist and we are talking about using one such algorithm in general, not a specific one. "The" could also be used here if a specific gradient descent algorithm has been previously mentioned and it is this same algorithm that minimizes errors.

Gender-Inclusive Language

1. But can a Data Scientist deploy **his** machine learning model at scale?
But can a data scientist deploy the machine learning model at scale?
2. The coffee shop owner can leverage this information to increase **his** coffee supply during these hours to meet demands
The coffee shop owner can leverage this information to increase the coffee supply during these hours to meet demands.
3. Suppose a user has read a description of an item up to the end, which means **he** may have some interest in it.
Suppose a user has read the description of an item till the end, which means they may have some interest in it.

→ Avoid favouring one gender in your writing, even in hypothetical scenarios, as this effectively erases the existence of 50% of the world's population and can alienate your readers (who may be any gender). You could use "he or she" and "his or her" but even this can be unnecessarily limiting as our understanding of sex and gender evolves, and it can be too wordy. Instead, try to use more general terms, switch to plurals (e.g. "users" rather than "user"), or rephrase your sentence altogether. The use of "they, them, their" for the singular is becoming increasingly acceptable as well.

Subject-Verb Agreement

1. Existing trees in the model remain untouched and thus **slows** down the rate of overfitting.
Existing trees in the model remain untouched and thus slow down the rate of overfitting.
2. The design of today's data-intensive applications **seem** to cause a chilling effect in the ways that we interact with them.
The design of today's data-intensive applications seems to cause a chilling effect in the ways that we interact with it.

→ Verbs must agree with the subject, meaning that the verb must reflect the number and nature of the subject. In 1, the subject is "trees" which denotes more than one, so the verb cannot be "slows." In 2, it can be tricky to lose sight of what the subject is, but it is technically "the design" which is in the singular and so the verb cannot be "seem." Subject-verb agreement is a good example of the importance of clarity in writing as it forces you to identify who or what is doing something in a sentence.

BONUS: Three Simple Things You Can Do to Improve Your Writing

1. Write for clarity

Ideas are only useful if they are expressed in a clear, understandable manner. If you can simplify what you want to say, it is often a good idea to do so. Avoid repeating unnecessary words or constructing unnecessarily long sentences. Similarly, do not shorten sentences so much that you end up breaking the rules of grammar and/or their meaning becomes ambiguous. Sometimes, it is easy to lose track of what you want to express with your writing. In this case, it is helpful to pause and ask yourself: what is the essence of what I'm trying to say here?

- John tries **the method** but soon discovers that **the method** is flawed.
John tries the method but soon discovers that it is flawed.
- For any incorrect prediction, larger weights are assigned to misclassified samples and **less on correctly classified**.
For any incorrect prediction, larger weights are assigned to misclassified samples and lower ones to samples that are correctly classified.

2. Write with quality in mind

Your writing can be grammatically correct and concise, but it could still be missing one thing: quality! Quality can be defined in different ways depending on your writing goals, medium, and audience, but one simple thing you can focus on to improve the quality of your writing is choosing the right words to capture what you want to say. Look at the example below and note how mundane, overused words can be replaced with more interesting word choices to elevate the entire sentence. In general, it is good practice to avoid overusing words like: do, be, have, make, good, very, etc.

- By the end of the article, we hope that you **have a better grasp** of the topic and **are ready to do** more in-depth research on Kubernetes.
We hope that, by the end of the article, you have developed a deeper understanding of the topic and feel prepared to conduct more in-depth research on Kubernetes.

3. ALWAYS proofread

Proofreading is such a simple step - any writer would be remiss to skip it. It is the easiest way to avoid typos and other errors. Take a break after you have finished writing and proofread your text the next day with fresh eyes. You may also find it helpful to proofread your piece from the end to the beginning to sharpen your focus. Use a spellchecker to make the task easier (but don't blindly accept its suggestions!). Consider asking a friend to review your writing and to point out anything that sounds problematic or doesn't make sense. If in doubt about a particular part, read it out loud: if it sounds incorrect, it probably is. This technique is often helpful for finding grammatical errors.

- Suppose your laptop has a different version of Python or **different a JDK**.
Suppose your laptop has a different version of Python or a different JDK.
- You are pretty sure that at least one of them has some features that **not shared** by the species your model identifies.
You are pretty sure that at least one of them has some features that are not shared by the species your model identifies.