

Style Checklist

Examples

- Funny and real life examples
 - Encourage the reader to take part in the example by putting them in a position to participate
 - e.g. “let’s say you’re walking down the street and you slip and fall”.
- Return to the concept after the example
 - Link examples back to the concept always, and try to “trivialize” the concept by making it sound simple
 - e.g. “so what we just did was calculate using the Pythagoras formula”
 - e.g. “now we’ll take that and try to do it with trigonometry. We’ll be using sin, cos, and tangent”
 - e.g. “so what we just did was apply sin, cos and tangent to a triangle”.

Talk, not lecture to the viewer

- Clear signposting
 - Tell the reader before you start talking about something.
 - e.g. announcing, “now let’s look at ”
- Use action words
 - Invite the reader to participate
 - e.g. “let’s calculate using the Pythagoras formula”
 - Never ever use passive voice
 - e.g. Don’t say “it is possible to calculate”
 - e.g. “we can calculate” or “let’s calculate”
- Don’t use nominalization unless it’s absolutely necessary

- Makes you sound like a boring fuck
- e.g. “The explanation of this theory can be made in this manner” vs. “You can explain it this way.”
- Then make it even simpler
- e.g. “This is why.”

Make fun of stuff

- Statement + Because + Sarcastic Statement
 - Difficult names: “Chebyshev Polynomials, because clearly ‘polynomials’ weren’t already difficult enough to pronounce”.
 - “We’re going to calculate how long it would take a box to fall to the ground if it were pushed out of the plane, because we’re totally to need to know that tomorrow”.
- Make fun of yourself
 - Because that’s the one person whom you can be sure not to offend.
 - e.g. “Someone who’s lazy like me will prefer this method”
- Make fun of examiners
 - Because that’s everyone’s common enemy
 - e.g. “The examiner will ask you how many miles you ran. Now that’s not really his business, but they always ask you stupid things. So just answer him.”

A script, not lecture notes

- Add a pregnant pause after every question
 - “What’s the algorithm for the Runge-Kutta method for differential equations?” *pause for 2 seconds* “Fall to your knees and pray baby, pray.”
 - “Who’s the sexiest man on earth?” *pause for 2 seconds* “Why, Linan, of course.”

- Don't sound like a textbook
 - So don't use textbook language
 - e.g. "Note that this theorem is..." vs "Be careful! This theorem is..."
 - e.g. "Given these assumptions, we can proceed with our derivation." vs "We know that these are our assumptions. So let's proceed!"

Vary your sentence length

- If every sentence was as long as this one, reading it would be a total pain in the ass - imagine: you'd have to make it through the entire thing on one single breath, and after that you'd still have to process it. Now take that previous sentence and use your marvelous imagination to predict how it would look like if you were reading out a hundred of them in a row and someone were listening to it all the way - you're going to sound like a balmy old professor who has not been listened to for the past three decades of his life.
- See that above? Give it a read through and you'll find that it's bad. Really bad. It's not so much about the actual content as it is about the length and monotonicity of the sentences. The simplest way to fix it is to keep sentences short if possible, and make them long only when you need them! Easy peasy!

Vary punctuation

- A lecturer sees "!" very differently from ".", and will read them accordingly.
- e.g. "This is the end of the lecture." vs. "This is the end of the lecture!"