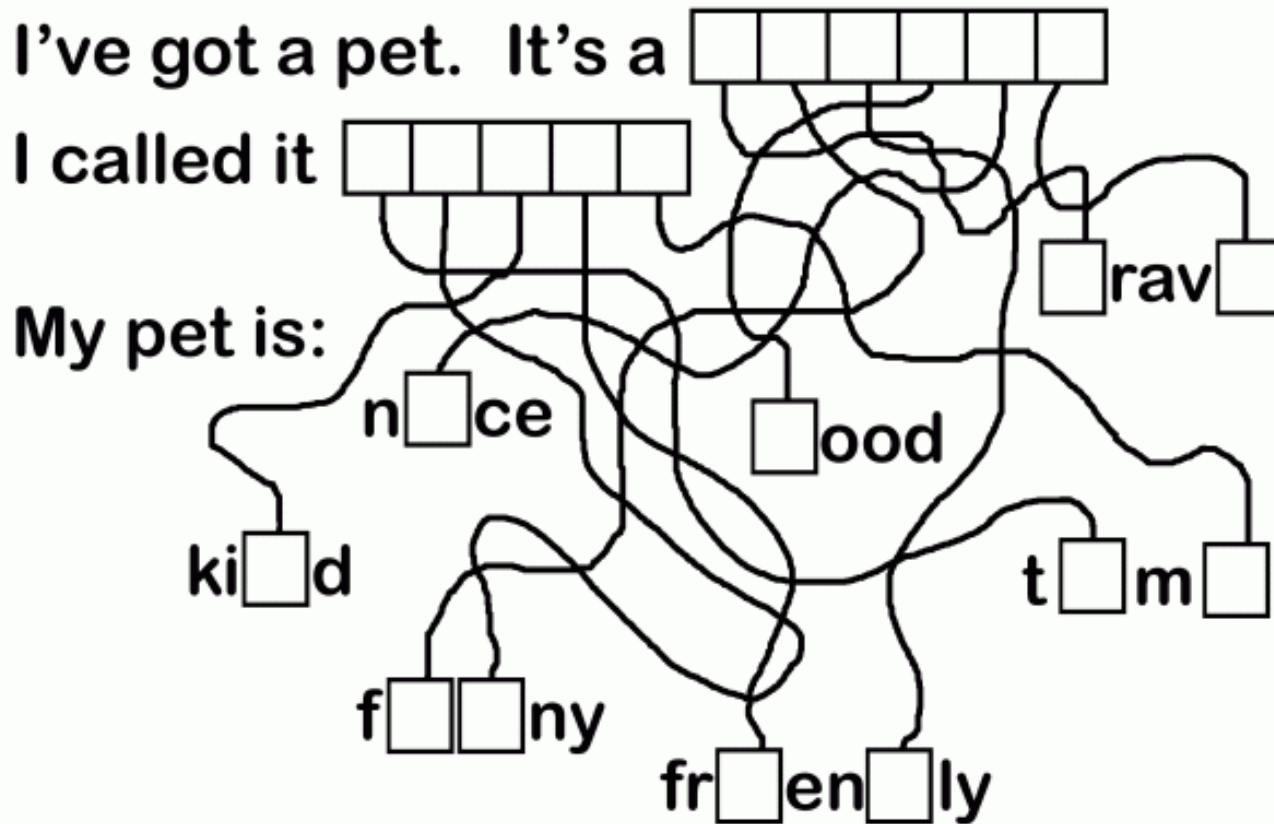
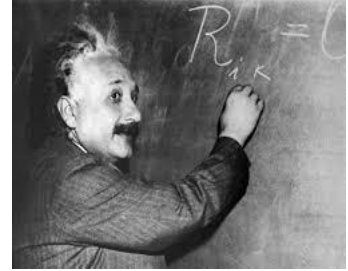


CORSO PUBBLICARE UN ARTICOLO SCIENTIFICO



1.1 Introduction

■ What makes good writing?

- 1. Good writing communicates an idea clearly and effectively.
 - 2. Good writing is elegant and stylish.

Takes having something to say and clear thinking.

Takes time, revision, and a good editor!

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Steps to becoming a better writer:

- In addition to taking this class, other things you can do to become a better writer:
 - Read, pay attention, and imitate.
 - Write in a journal.
 - Let go of "academic" writing habits (deprogramming step!)
 - Talk about your research before trying to write about it.
 - Write to engage your readers—try not to bore them!
 - Stop waiting for "inspiration."
 - Accept that writing is hard for everyone.
 - Revise. Nobody gets it perfect on the first try.
 - Learn how to cut ruthlessly. Never become too attached to your words.
 - Find a good editor!
 - Take risks.

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Another amusing example

- "These findings imply that the rates of ascorbate radical production and its recycling via dehydroascorbate reductatse to replenish the ascorbate pool are equivalent at the lower irradiance, but not equivalent at higher irradiance with the rate of ascorbate radical production exceeding its recycling back to ascorbate." (from *Photochemistry and Photobiology...*)

- Is this sentence readable?
- Is it written to inform or to obscure?

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A classic hallmark of "academic writing": spunky verbs become clunky nouns...

- "Adoptive cell transfer (ACT) immunotherapy is based on the ex vivo **selection** of tumor-reactive lymphocytes, and their **activation** and numerical **expression** before **reinfusion** to the autologous tumor-bearing host."
- "These findings imply that the rates of ascorbate radical **production** and its **recycling** via dehydroascorbate reductatse to replenish the ascorbate pool are equivalent at the lower irradiance, but not equivalent at higher irradiance with the rate of ascorbate radical **production** exceeding its **recycling** back to ascorbate."

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After much work on my part, I translated this too...

- "These findings imply that, at low irradiation, ascorbate radicals are produced and recycled at the same rate, but at high irradiation, they are produced faster than they can be recycled back to ascorbate."

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1.1 Introduction

What makes a good writer:

- Having something to say.
- Logical thinking.
- A few simple, learnable rules of style (the tools you'll learn in this class).

Take-home message: Good writing can be learned!

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One more example!

Dysregulation of physiologic microRNA (miR) activity has been shown to play an important role in tumor initiation and progression, including gliomagenesis. Therefore, molecular species that can regulate miR activity on their target RNAs without affecting the expression of relevant mature miRs may play equally relevant roles in cancer.

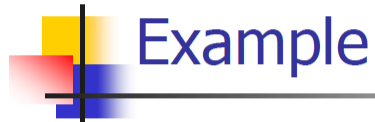
From an article in *Cell*



17 / 57



75%



Example

Note the use of nouns
instead of verbs.

Dysregulation of physiologic microRNA (miR) activity has been shown to play an important role in tumor initiation and progression, including gliomagenesis. Therefore, molecular species that can regulate miR activity on their target RNAs without affecting the expression of relevant mature miRs may play equally relevant roles in cancer.

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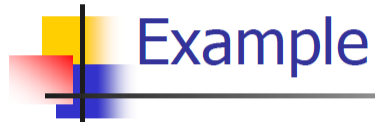
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18 / 57



75%



Example

Note the use of vague words.

Dysregulation of physiologic microRNA (miR) activity has been shown to play an important role in tumor initiation and progression, including gliomagenesis. Therefore, molecular species that can regulate miR activity on their target RNAs without affecting the expression of relevant mature miRs may play equally relevant roles in cancer.

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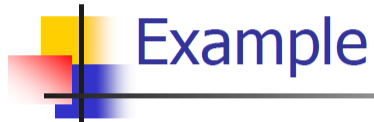




19 / 57



75%



Example

Note the use of unnecessary jargon and acronyms.

Dysregulation of physiologic microRNA (miR) activity has been shown to play an important role in tumor initiation and progression, including gliomagenesis. Therefore, molecular species that can regulate miR activity on their target RNAs without affecting the expression of relevant mature miRs may play equally relevant roles in cancer.

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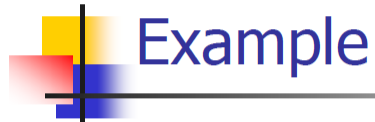
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Example

Note the distance between the subject and the main verb of this sentence.

Dysregulation of physiologic microRNA (miR) activity has been shown to play an important role in tumor initiation and progression, including gliomagenesis. Therefore, molecular species that can regulate miR activity on their target RNAs without affecting the expression of relevant mature miRs may play equally relevant roles in cancer.

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Possible rewrite...

- Changes in microRNA expression play a role in cancer, including glioma. Therefore, events that disrupt microRNAs from binding to their target RNAs may also promote cancer.

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Principles of Effective Writing

- "The secret of good writing is to strip every sentence to its cleanest components. Every word that serves no function, every long word that could be a short word, every adverb that carries the same meaning that's already in the verb, every passive construction that leaves the reader unsure of who is doing what—these are the thousand and one adulterants that weaken the strength of a sentence. And they usually occur in proportion to the education and rank."
- -- William Zinsser in *On Writing Well*, 1976

Long words and phrases that could be short...

Wordy version

- A majority of
- A number of
- Are of the same opinion
- Less frequently occurring
- All three of the
- Give rise to
- Due to the fact that
- Have an effect on

Crisp version

most
many
agree
rare
the three
cause
because
affect

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Example 1

"This paper provides a review of the basic tenets of cancer biology study design, using as examples studies that illustrate the methodologic challenges or that demonstrate successful solutions to the difficulties inherent in biological research."

stripped of clutter.



Example 1

~~"This paper provides a review^S of the basic tenets of cancer biology study design, using ~~as~~ examples studies^{md} that illustrate the methodologic challenges or that demonstrate successful solutions to the difficulties inherent in biological research."~~

This paper reviews cancer biology study design, using examples that illustrate specific challenges and solutions.

**Notice how we strip that sentence
of all the garbage to get it down**




5:22 / 17:08



Example 2

"As it is well known, increased athletic activity has been related to a profile of lower cardiovascular risk, lower blood pressure levels, and improved muscular and cardio-respiratory performance."

a profile of lower cardiovascular risk,
lower blood pressure levels, and




Example 2

is associated with
"As it is well known, *I* increased athletic activity *has been related to* a *profile* of lower cardiovascular risk, lower blood pressure *levels*, and improved muscular and cardio-respiratory performance."
fitness

→

Increased athletic activity is associated with lower cardiovascular risk, lower blood pressure, and improved fitness.

Notice how much clutter we've
stripped away from that sentence.



Example 2

is associated with
“As it is well known, *I* increased athletic activity ~~has been related~~ to a ~~profile~~ of lower cardiovascular risk, lower blood pressure ~~levels~~, and improved muscular and cardio-respiratory performance.”
fitness

→

Increased athletic activity is associated with lower cardiovascular risk, lower blood pressure, and improved fitness.

Increased athletic activity lowers cardiovascular risk and blood pressure, and improves fitness. (stronger level of evidence)



Cut unnecessary words

- Be vigilant and ruthless
- After investing much effort to put words on a page, we often find it hard to part with them.

But fight their seductive pull...

- Try the sentence without the extra words and see how it's better—conveys the same idea with more power



Cutting extra words

Example:

“Brain injury incidence shows two peak periods in almost all reports: rates are the highest in young people and the elderly.”

More punch→

“Brain injury incidence peaks in the young and the elderly.”



11:13 / 17:08



1.5: Cut the clutter, more tricks

https://www.coursera.org/learn/sciwrite/lecture/hORC2/1-5-cut-the-clutter-more-tricks

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Lessons

This Course: Writing in the Sciences

PrevNext

Unit 1

1.1: Introduction; principles of effective writing11 min

1.2: Examples of what not to do6 min

1.3: Overview, principles of effective writing6 min

1.4: Cut the clutter17 min

1.5: Cut the clutter, more tricks4 min

1.6: Practicing cutting clutter9 min

Quiz: Unit 1 Homework16 questions

Demo Edit 1 (Optional)23 min

Stanford MEDICINE

Eliminate there are/there is

There are many ways in which we can arrange the pulleys.

→We can arrange the pulleys in many ways.

There was a long line of bacteria on the plate.

→Bacteria lined the plate.

2:40 / 4:12

1.5: Cut the clutter, more tricks

Interactive Transcript

English

Help us translate!

Downloads

Lecture Video mp4

0:02

12:22 23/08/2018



Common clutter:

- 1. Dead weight words and phrases
 - As it is well known
 - As it has been shown
 - It can be regarded that
 - It should be emphasized that
- 2. Empty words and phrases
 - basic tenets of
 - methodologic
 - important

“Some words and phrases are blobs.”
-- William Zinsser in
On Writing Well,
1976

And that's really true, some words and phrases are so amorphous.



Common clutter, continued:

- 4. Unnecessary jargon and acronyms
 - muscular and cardiorespiratory performance
 - Gliomagenesis
 - miR
- 5. Repetitive words or phrases
 - studies/examples
 - illustrate/demonstrate
 - challenges/difficulties
 - successful solutions
- 6. Adverbs
 - very, really, quite, basically, generally, etc.

Practise on real sentences

Texts for practice exercises

ESERCITAZIONE

Anti-inflammatory drugs may be protective for the occurrence of Alzheimer's Disease

Anti-inflammatory drugs may ~~be protective for the occurrence of~~ Alzheimer's Disease.

Anti-inflammatory drugs may **protect against** Alzheimer's Disease

Texts for practice exercises

ESERCITAZIONE

Clinical seizures have been estimated to occur in 0.5% to 2.3% of the neonatal population

~~Clinical seizures have been estimated to occur in 0.5% to 2.3% of the neonatal population.~~

Clinical seizures **occur** in 0.5% to 2.3% of the **newborns**.

Texts for practice exercises

ESERCITAZIONE

Ultimately p53 guards not only against malignant transformation but also plays a role in developmental processes as diverse as aging, differentiation, and fertility.

~~Ultimately p53 guards not only against malignant transformation but also plays a role in developmental processes as diverse as aging, differentiation, and fertility.~~

Besides preventing cancer, p53 plays a role/roles in aging, differentiation, and fertility.

Texts for practice exercises

ESERCITAZIONE

Injuries to the brain and spinal cord have long been known to be among the most devastating and expensive of all injuries to treat medically

~~Injuries to the brain and spinal cord have long been known to be among the most devastating and expensive of all injuries to treat medically.~~

Injuries to the brain and spinal cord **are** among the most devastating and expensive.

Texts for practice exercises

ESERCITAZIONE

An IQ test measures an individual's abilities to perform functions that usually fall in the domains of verbal communication, reasoning, and performance on tasks that represent motor and spatial capabilities

~~An IQ test measures an individual's abilities to perform functions that usually fall in the domains of verbal communication, reasoning, and performance on tasks that represent motor and spatial capabilities~~

An IQ test measures an individual's verbal communication, reasoning, motor and spatial capabilities.

As we can see from Figure 2, if the return kinetic energy is less than $3.2 U_p$, there will be two electron trajectories associated with this kinetic energy.

~~As we can see from Figure 2, if the return kinetic energy is less than $3.2 U_p$, there will be two electron trajectories associated with this kinetic energy.~~

Figure 2 **shows that** a return kinetic energy less than $3.2 U_p$ **yields** two electron trajectories

Rewrite the sentence

- He did not win the match
- There are few single genes that can cause autism in isolation.
- There are several mechanisms that could explain the findings
- There is one student in the class who passed the exam.



Blaise Pascal on the elegance in brevity:

“I have only made this letter rather long because I have not had time to make it shorter.” (*“Je n'ai fait celle-ci plus longue que parceque je n'ai pas eu le loisir de la faire plus courte.”*)

--*Lettres provinciales*, 16, Dec.14,1656

(though reference also attributed to St. Augustine, and Cicero....)