**Practical Tips for Writing**

1. **Get to the main verb quickly by**

* *Avoiding long introductory phrases and clauses.*

EX. “Since most undergraduate students change their major fields of study at least once during their college careers, first-year students who are not certain about the program of studies they want to pursue should not load up their schedules to meet requirements for a particular program.”

REVISION: Revise by moving the long introductory clause somewhere else in the sentence; begin the sentence with “First-year students should not load up their schedules with requirements for a particular program if they are not certain about the program of studies they want to pursue, because most change their major fields at least once during their college careers.”

* *Avoiding long abstract subjects*

EX. “Abco Inc.’s understanding of the drivers of its profitability in the Asian market for small electronics helped it pursue opportunities in Africa.”

REVISION: Abco Inc. was able to pursue opportunities in Africa because it understood what drove profitability in the Asian market for small electronics.

* *Avoiding interrupting the subject-verb connection*

EX. “Some scientists, because they write in a style that is impersonal and objective, do not easily communicate with laypeople.

REVISION: “Some scientists do not easily communicate with laypeople because they write in a style that is impersonal and objective. It is a kind of style filled with passives and . . .”

1. **Change nominalizations into action verbs. (Change the nominalization “opposition” into the verb “oppose.”)**

EX. “There is **opposition** among many voters to nuclear power plants based on the belief of their threat to humans.”

REVISE: “Many voters **oppose** nuclear power plants because they believe that such plants threaten human health.”

1. **Convert “to-be” verbs such as “is,” “was,” “were,” into action verbs.**

EX. “A child is generally a symbol of new life.”

REVISE: “A child symbolizes new life.” (this is also an example of converting a nominalization (“a symbol”) into an action verb.

1. **Eliminate unnecessary words by**

* *Deleting meaningless words.*

EX. “Productivity actually depends on certain factors that basically involve psychology more than any particular technology.”

REVISION: “Productivity depends on psychology more than on technology.

* *Deleting doubled words.*

EX. “full and complete,” “true and accurate,” “hopes and desires.”

* *Deleting what readers can infer.*

EX. “terrible tragedy,” “final outcome,” “future plans” (these are redundant modifiers)

EX. “During that period of time” (REVISE: “During that period”)

EX. “large in **size**,” “round in **shape**,” “unusual in **nature**” (those in bold are redundant nouns; just use “large,” “round,” and “unusual.”

* *Replacing a phrase with a word.*

EX. “the thing to do before anything else” (just use “first”); “carefully read what you have written” (just use “edit”).

* *Reducing the number of prepositions.*

EX. “It is a matter of the gravest possible importance to the health of anyone with a history of a problem with disease of the heart that he or she should avoid the sort of foods with a high percentage of saturated fats.” (note: this sentence contains 10 prepositions.)

REVISION: “Anyone with a history of heart disease should avoid saturated fats.” (note: only two prepositions here.)