

## Twitter Thread by [Kieran Drew](#)

[Kieran Drew](#)

[@ItsKieranDrew](#)



**Most people suck at writing.**

**But if you avoid these 12 common mistakes, I guarantee you won't:**



■ Not Varying Sentence Length

We don't see what we read.

We hear it.

If each sentence is the same length, you sound boring.

Instead, aim for 20% long and 80% short.

Make your sentences sing.

This sentence has five words. Here are five more words.  
Five-word sentences are fine. But several together become monotonous. Listen to what is happening. The writing is getting boring. The sound of it drones. It's like a stuck record. The ear demands some variety.

Now listen. I vary the sentence length, and I create music. Music. The writing sings. It has a pleasant rhythm, a lilt, a harmony. I use short sentences. And I use sentences of medium length. And sometimes when I am certain the reader is rested, I will engage him with a sentence of considerable length, a sentence that burns with energy and builds with all the impetus of a crescendo, the roll of the drums, the crash of the cymbals—sounds that say listen to this, it is important.

So write with a combination of short, medium, and long sentences. Create a sound that pleases the reader's ear. Don't just write words. Write music.

—Gary Provost

## ■ Writing and Editing Together

Writing and editing are two separate skills.

Mix them and you suck at both.

Instead:

Leave 24 hours between each session (longer if possible).

Write first, edit later.

## ■ Not Formatting

Before we read, we assess.

'Is this worth my energy?'

Be easy to read and you'll be easy to love.



It's a shame. This is such an important point but you'd be lucky if your reader got this far. In fact, I bet you didn't even start here – your brain's assessed the two pieces of text on this picture and thought "*hell no, ain't nobody got for time that*". Writing is a transaction. If you demand too much from your reader, you'll lose them for good. Long paragraphs are reserved for classic literature and boring science papers. Don't be that person.



### This is how you write online

How much easier is this to read?

**I'm not even saying anything important...**  
But you fall down the page.

Use:

- Short paragraphs
- White space
- Bullets

Write to skim and you'll always win.

#### ■ Sounding Academic

Schools teach you to use complex and clever language.

But online, personality wins.

Treat writing like a conversation with a close friend.

Read it out loud before you publish.

Delete anything you wouldn't say in person.



The most difficult concept in writing on the internet is reversing the improper education you receive during your school period.

The fundamental truth is this:

Recording your thoughts on a computer doesn't equate to writing in a robotic fashion.



The hardest part about writing online is undoing the shit they teach you at school.

Here's the truth:

**Just because you write on a robot doesn't mean you should write like one.**

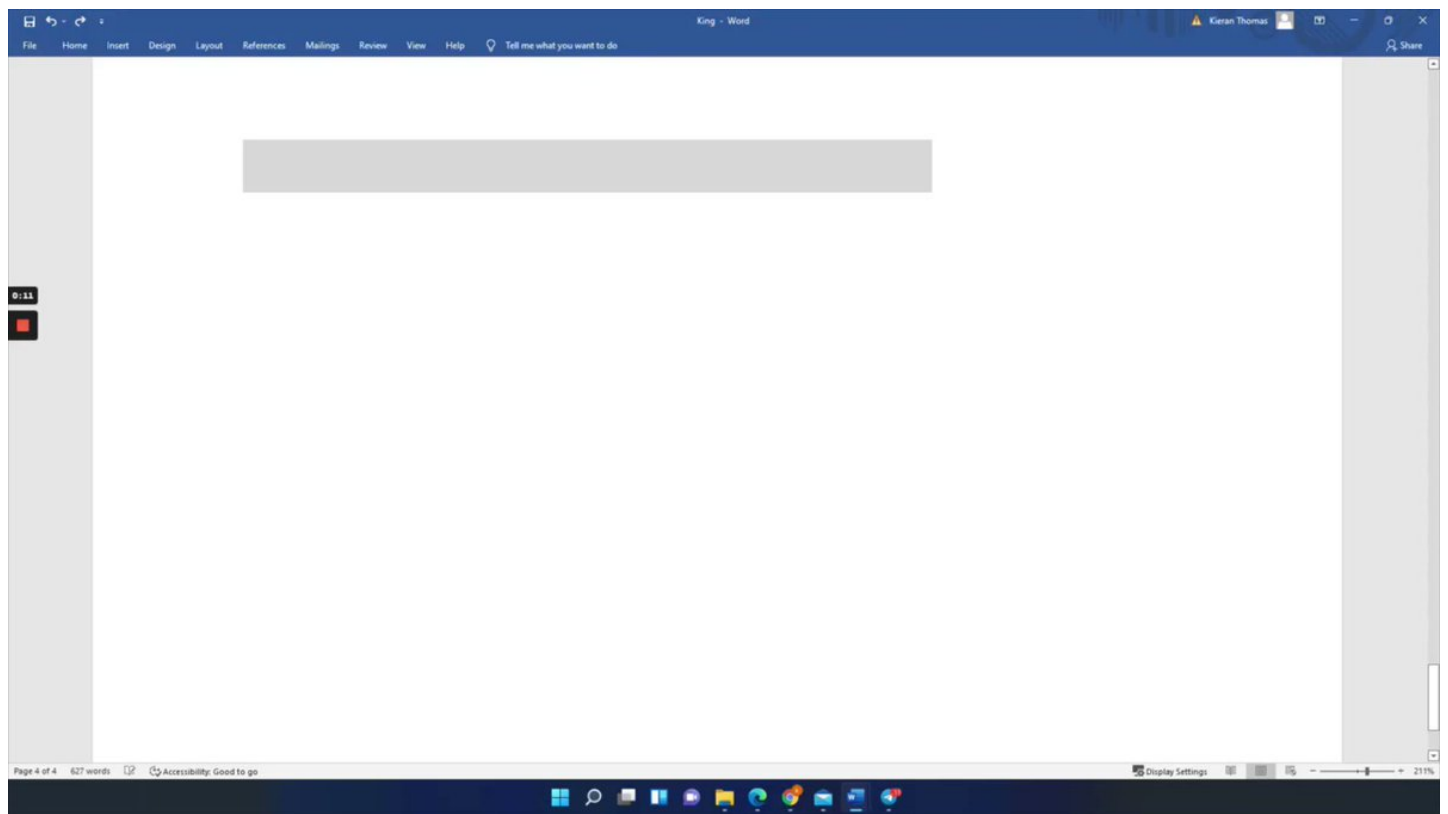
#### ■ Using Adverbs

Stephen King once said, 'The road to hell is paved with adverbs.'

They don't strengthen your point.

They weaken your writing.

Use adverbs as an opportunity to swap for bolder language.



## ■ Saying Too Much

Schools punish you for not writing enough, but the internet rewards you for being succinct.

Say what needs to be said, then say no more.

Pro tip:

When you edit, reduce your word count by 30%.

Constraints are the key to creativity.



**Inversion is a powerful mental model.**

To invert is to work backwards.

It works by beginning at the end, instead of beginning at the start. Inversion aims to avoid avoid bad consequences. Because by avoiding them, your free up time and energy, which ultimately leads to more capacity for good consequences.



**Inversion is a powerful mental model.**

It works backwards; beginning at the end instead of the start.

The aim is to avoid poor consequences so you can take advantage of the great ones.

■ Hedging Your Bets

Writing is a reflection of your thoughts.

And people aren't interested in weak ideas.

They want strength.

Be bold.

Never hedge your bets.



I think **that** writing is the best skill you can learn.

It's **possible that** people **might** make silly mistakes **on occasion**.

If you want to build a business, **you could** follow this action plan to **probably** get results.



Writing is the best skill you can learn.

People make silly mistakes.

If you want to build a business, this is the only plan you need.

#### ■ Not Writing to One Person

When you write to everyone, you write to no one.

People want to feel special.

Instead:

Imagine you're speaking to one avatar (write to your past self if you're not sure who)



Hey **friends!**

**We all** know how good it feels to finish for the weekend.

Thanks to **everyone** who signed up to my email list early.



Hey **friend!**

**You** know how good it feels to finish for the weekend.

Thank **you** for signing up to my email list early.

#### ■ Being Too General

Weak writing is vague.

Strong writing is specific.

Mike **walked down the street** and tried to **avoid the rain.**

Mike **rushed along the deserted street,** pulling his hood tight to defend against the **sudden downpour of rain.**

Great writing is **much less** about grammar and **more about** rhythm.

Great writing is **93% rhythm and 7% grammar.**

Come join **over 4000 people** and sign up below.

Come join **4678 entrepreneurial writers** and sign up below.

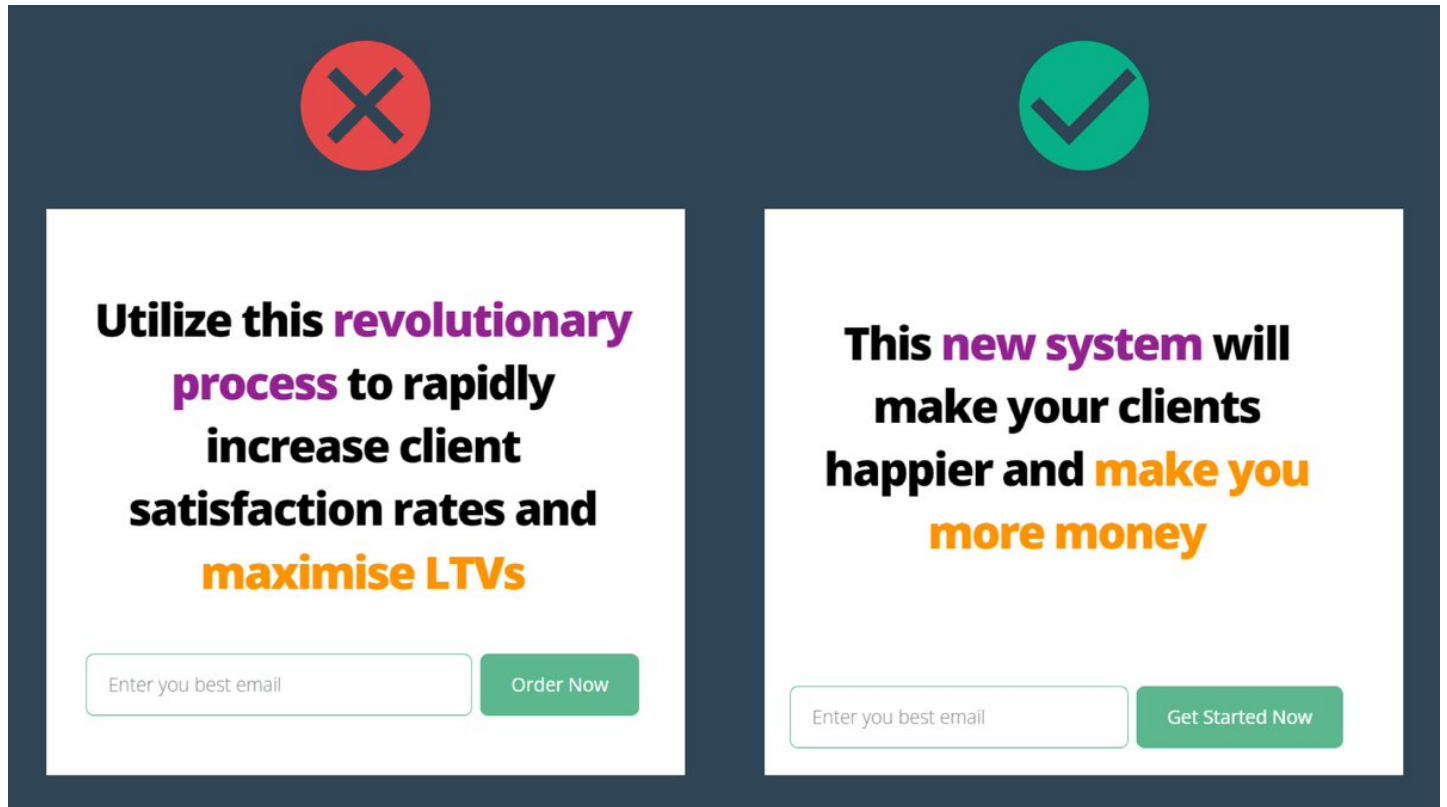


## ■ Using Big Words

The average reading age in US is 12.

In the UK, it's 9.

Be clear, not complex.



The image shows a comparison of two marketing messages. The left message is marked with a red X, indicating it is poor. It reads: "Utilize this revolutionary process to rapidly increase client satisfaction rates and maximise LTVs". Below this text is a form with the placeholder "Enter you best email" and a green button labeled "Order Now". The right message is marked with a green checkmark, indicating it is good. It reads: "This new system will make your clients happier and make you more money". Below this text is a form with the placeholder "Enter you best email" and a green button labeled "Get Started Now".

**Left Message (Marked with a red X):**

Utilize this **revolutionary** **process** to rapidly increase client satisfaction rates and **maximise LTVs**

Enter you best email **Order Now**

**Right Message (Marked with a green checkmark):**

This **new system** will make your clients happier and **make you more money**

Enter you best email **Get Started Now**

## ■ Not Being Exciting

The worst thing you can be online is boring.

Swap words for more exciting, emotional ones.

(Use <https://t.co/TsWfm8u9CG> h/t @wrongstowrite)

Synonyms for Boring

1 109 other terms for boring - words and phrases with similar meaning

Lists

synonyms

antonyms

definitions

sentences

thesaurus

words

phrases

idioms

Parts of speech

dull

adj. # dreary

tedious

adj. # dull, dreary

uninteresting

adj. # dreary, ordinary

tiresome

adj. # dreary, arid

dreary

adj. # dull, colorless

wearisome

adj. # dreary, tedious

humdrum

adj. # dreary, arid

flat

adj. # dull, arid

bland

adj. # dull, unexciting

## ■ Using Passive Voice

Passive writing is weak and wordy.

It ruins the flow.

An example:

The girl was smiled at by the boy.

The boy smiled at the girl.

Use this test ■

## The passive voice test

If you can add 'and by zombies' to the sentence, it's passive.

If you can't, it's active.

For example:

**Passive:** The world was rocked by Kieran *and by zombies*.

**Active:** Kieran rocked the world *and by zombies*.

A simple test to save serious headaches.

TL;DR

12 writing mistakes to avoid:

- Adverbs
- Too wordy
- Big words
- Being boing
- Passive voice
- Hedging bets
- No specificity
- No formatting
- Writing to a crowd
- Sounding academic
- Same sentence length
- Writing & editing together

Thanks for reading!

If you enjoyed this, 2 requests:

1. Drop me a follow [@itskierandrew](#) for ideas on writing, philosophy and business
2. Share the thread so others can read

Just click below and up you go, cheers.

<https://t.co/8WfN86MAJI>

Most people suck at writing.

But if you avoid these 12 common mistakes, I guarantee you won't:

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— Kieran Drew (@ItsKieranDrew) August 16, 2022

Writing tips are great and all...

But if you're interested in attracting an audience, building your business and creating killer copy, you'd love my newsletter A-B-C.

Come join 5.5k writers here:

<https://t.co/YePBTJOIno>