Twitter Thread by Kieran Drew



Kieran Drew
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Most people suck at writing.

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

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■ 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).

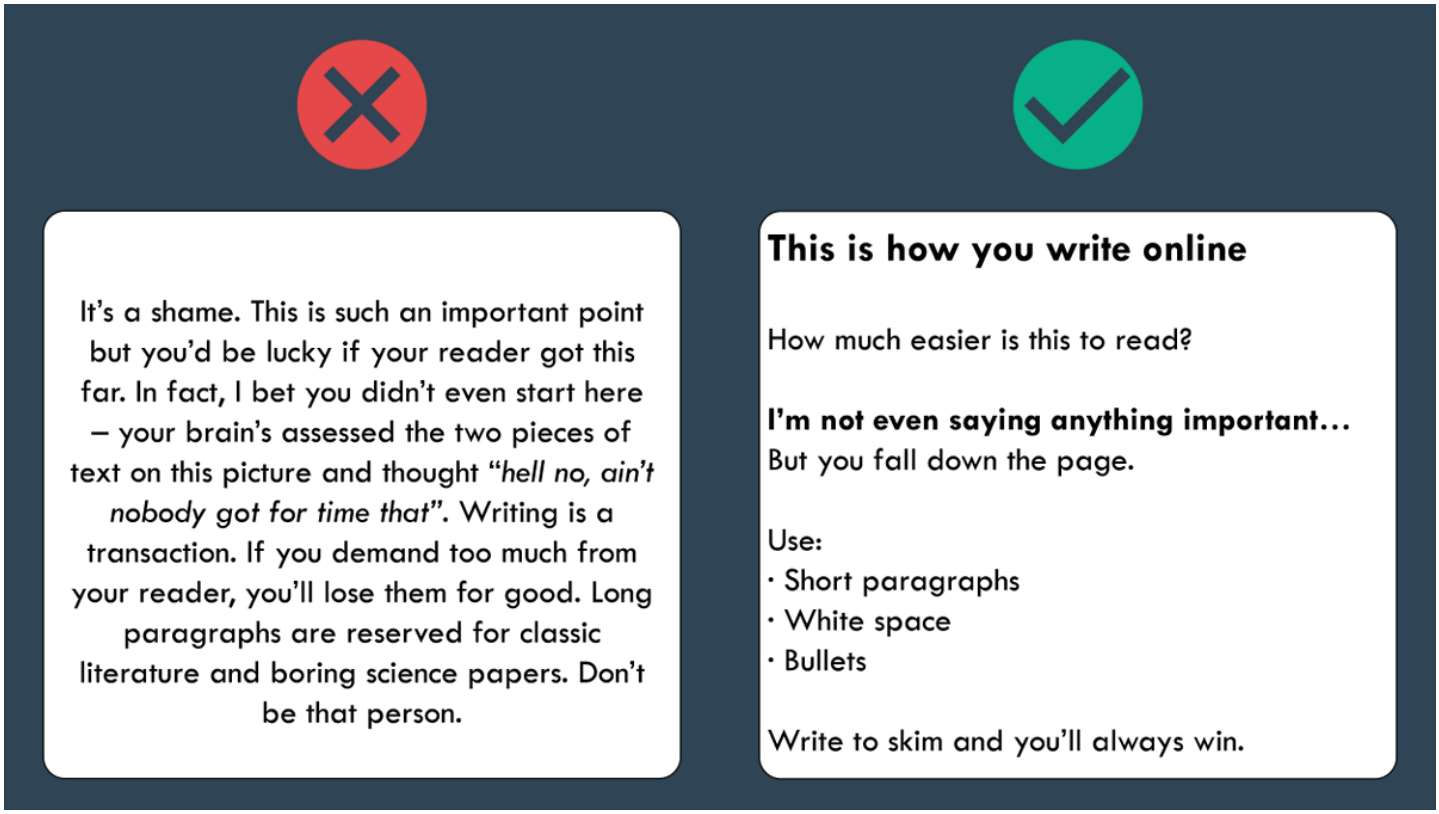
Write first, edit later.

■Not Formatting

Before we read, we assess.

'Is this worth my energy?'

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



■ Sounding Academic

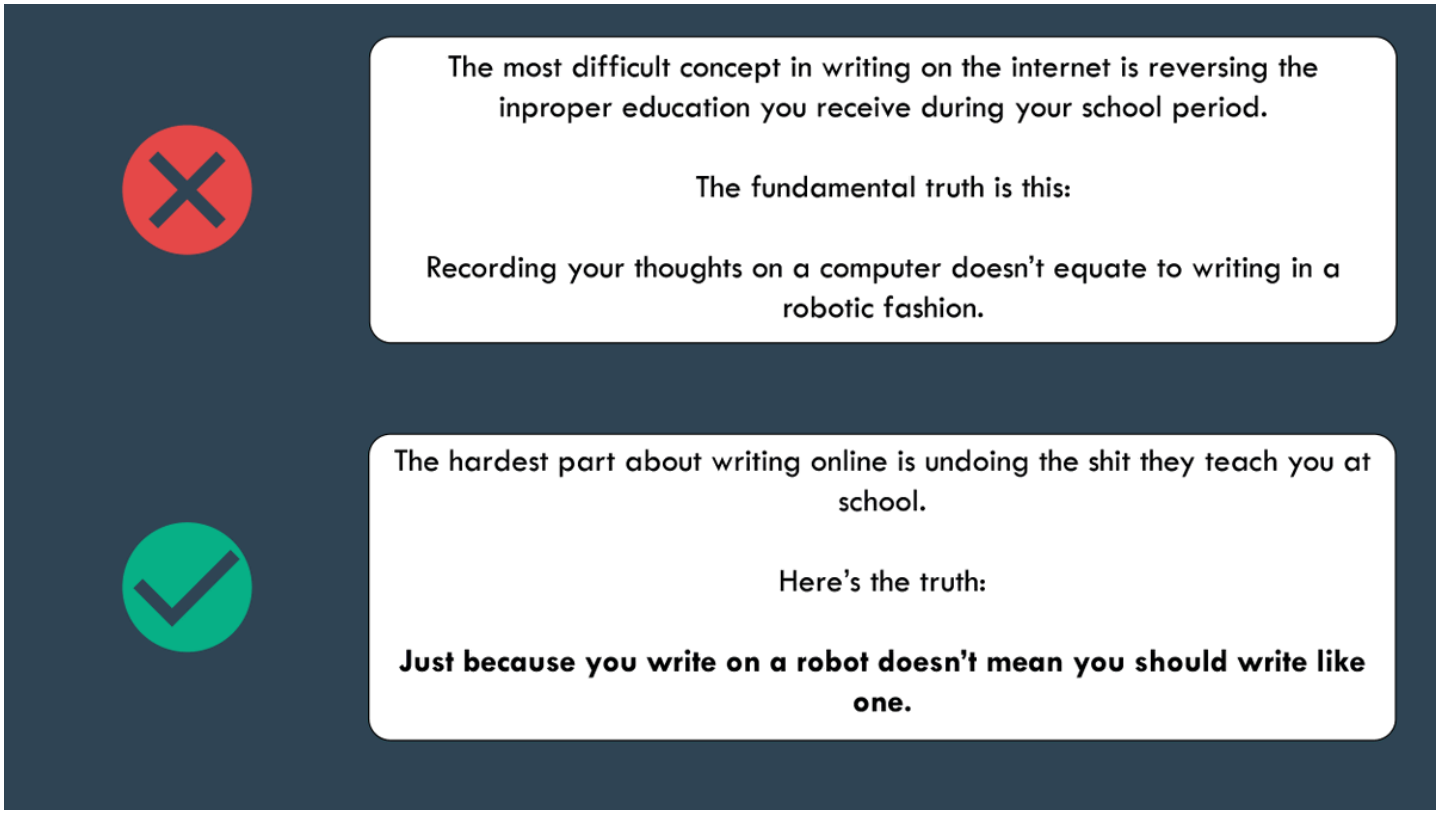
Schools teach you to use complex and clever language.

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.



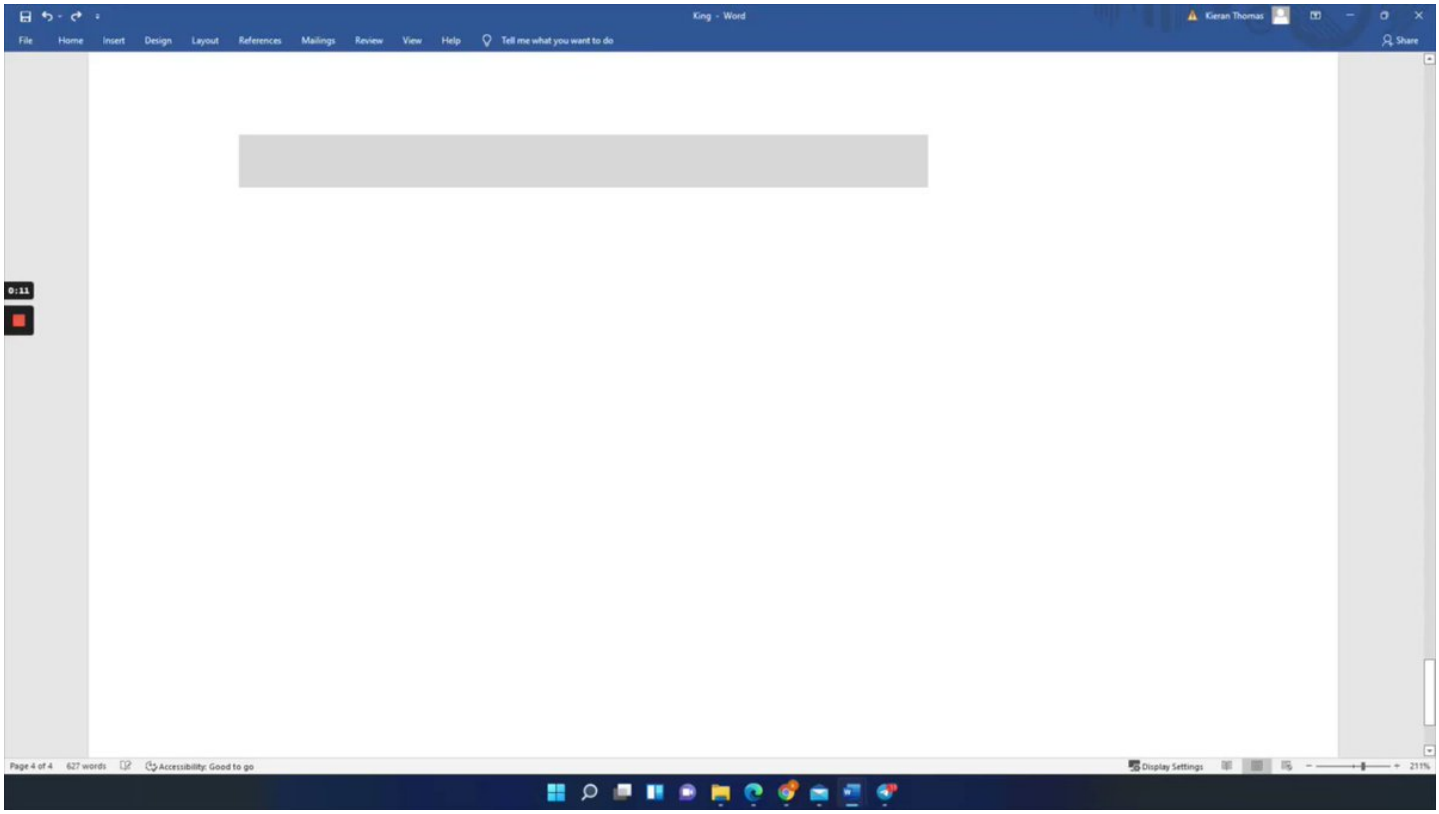
■ Using Adverbs

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.



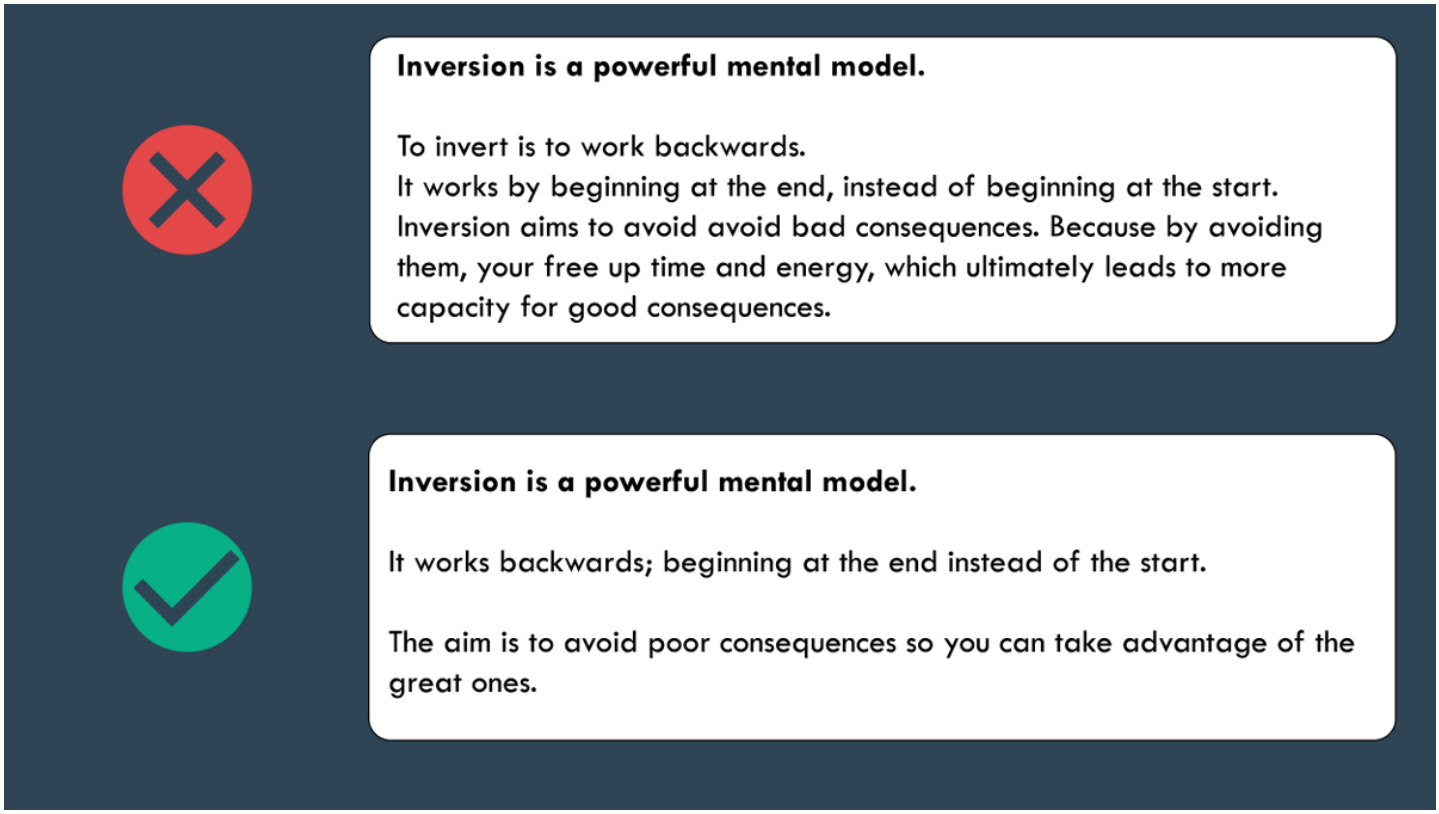
■ Saying Too Much

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.



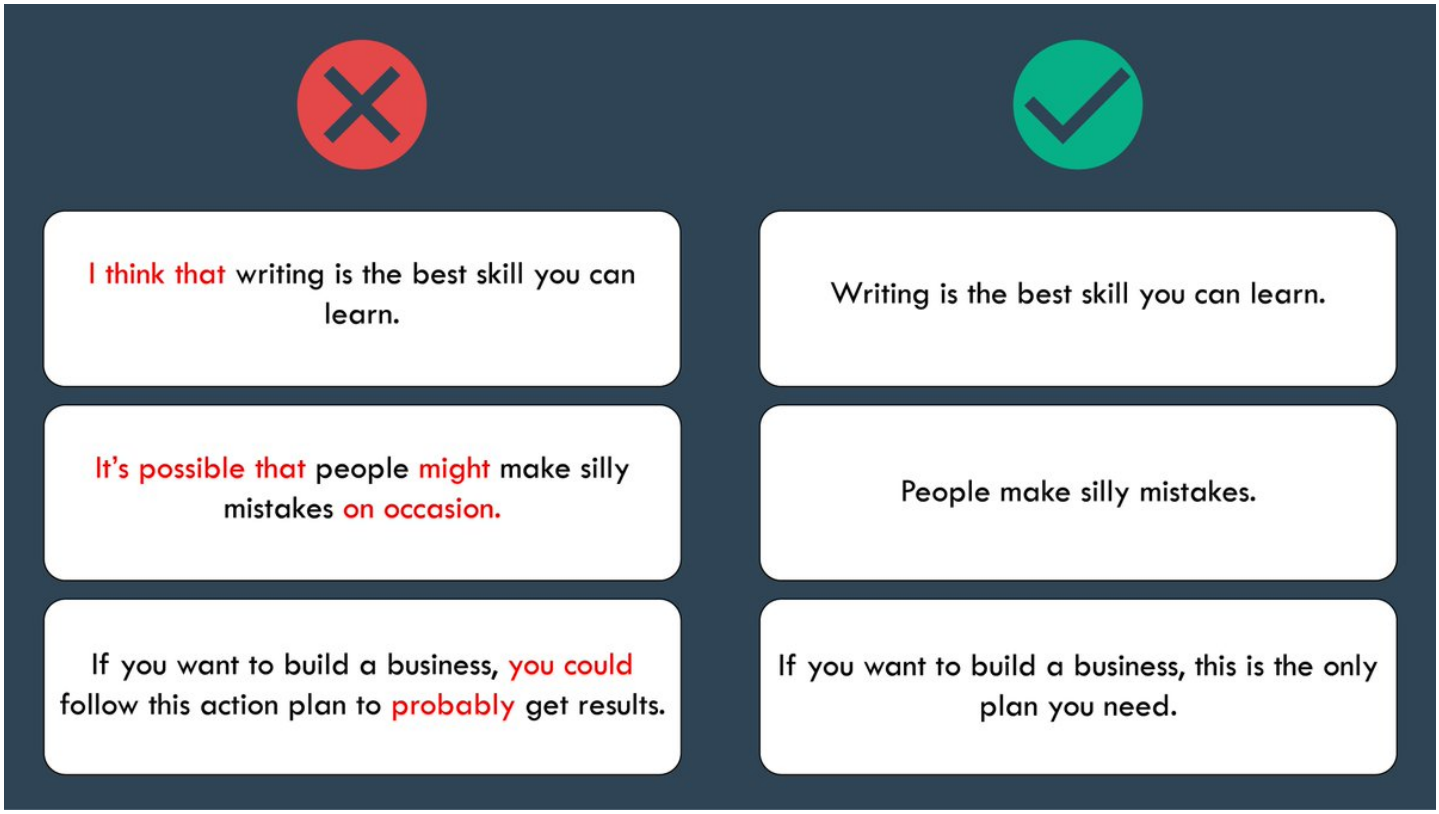
■ Hedging Your Bets

Writing is a reflection of your thoughts.

And people aren't interested in weak ideas.

They want strength.

Be bold.
Never hedge your bets.



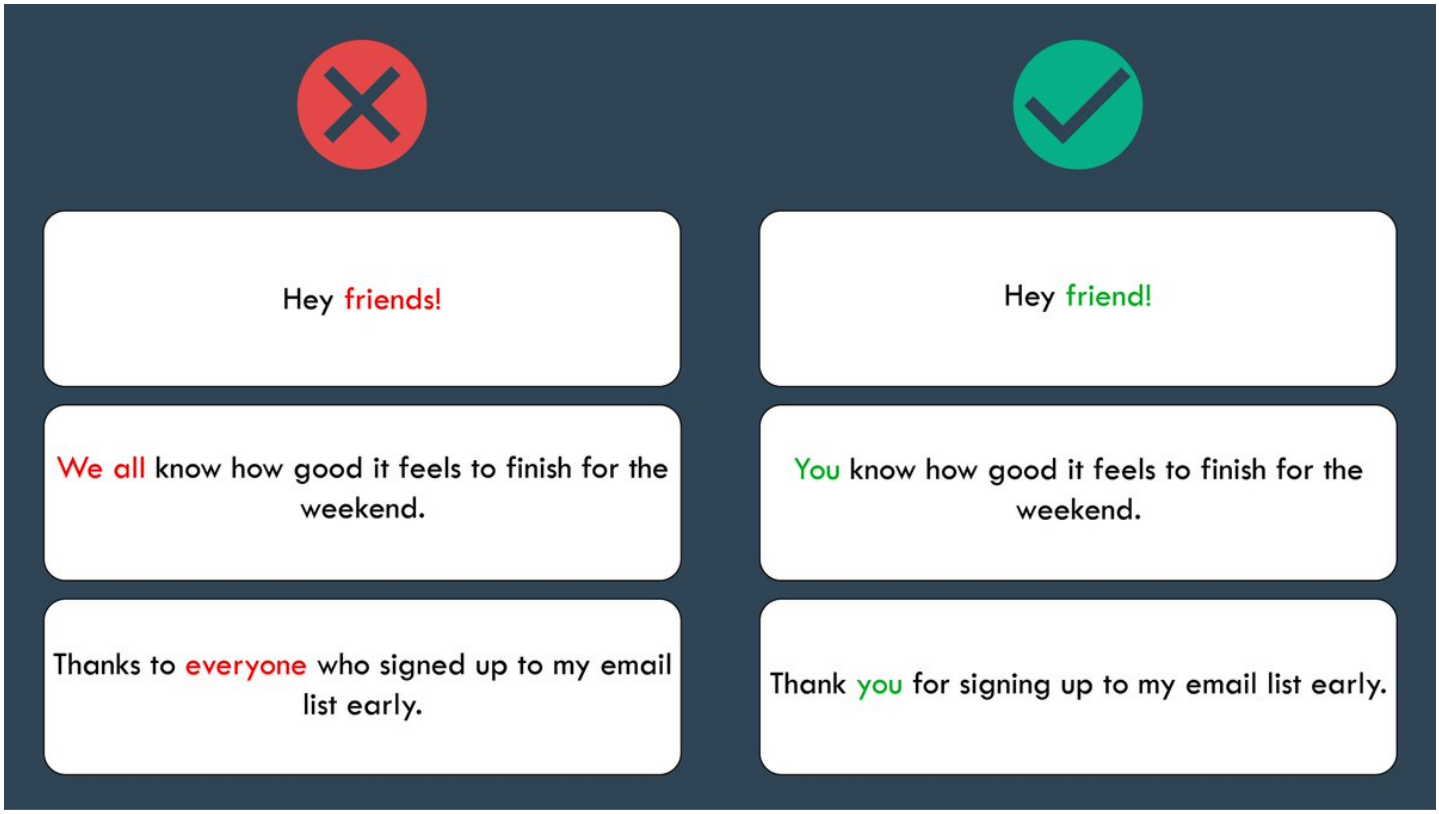
■ Not Writing to One Person

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

People want to feel special.

Instead:

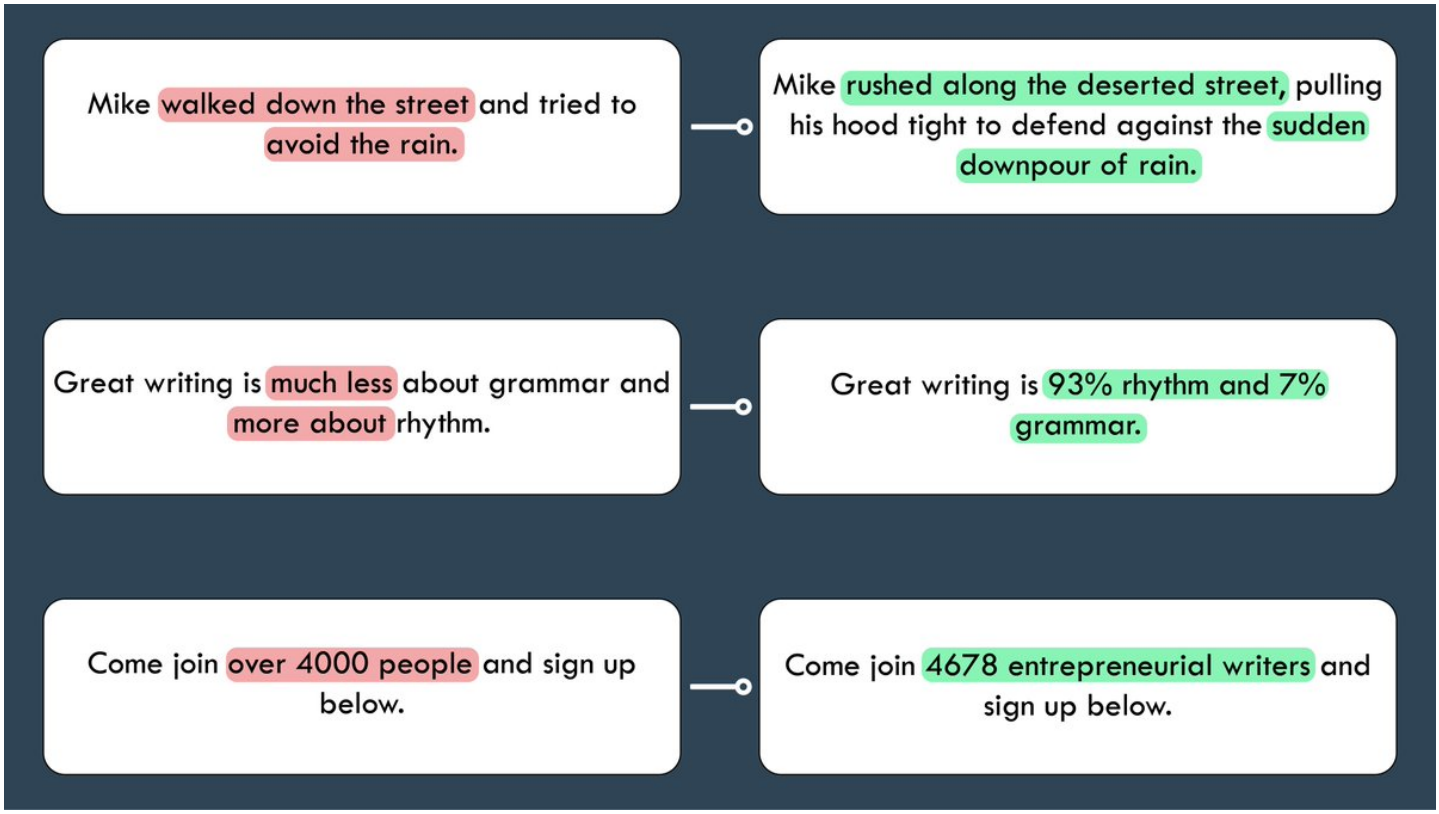
Imagine you're speaking to one avatar (write to your past self if you're not sure who)



■ Being Too General

Weak writing is vague.

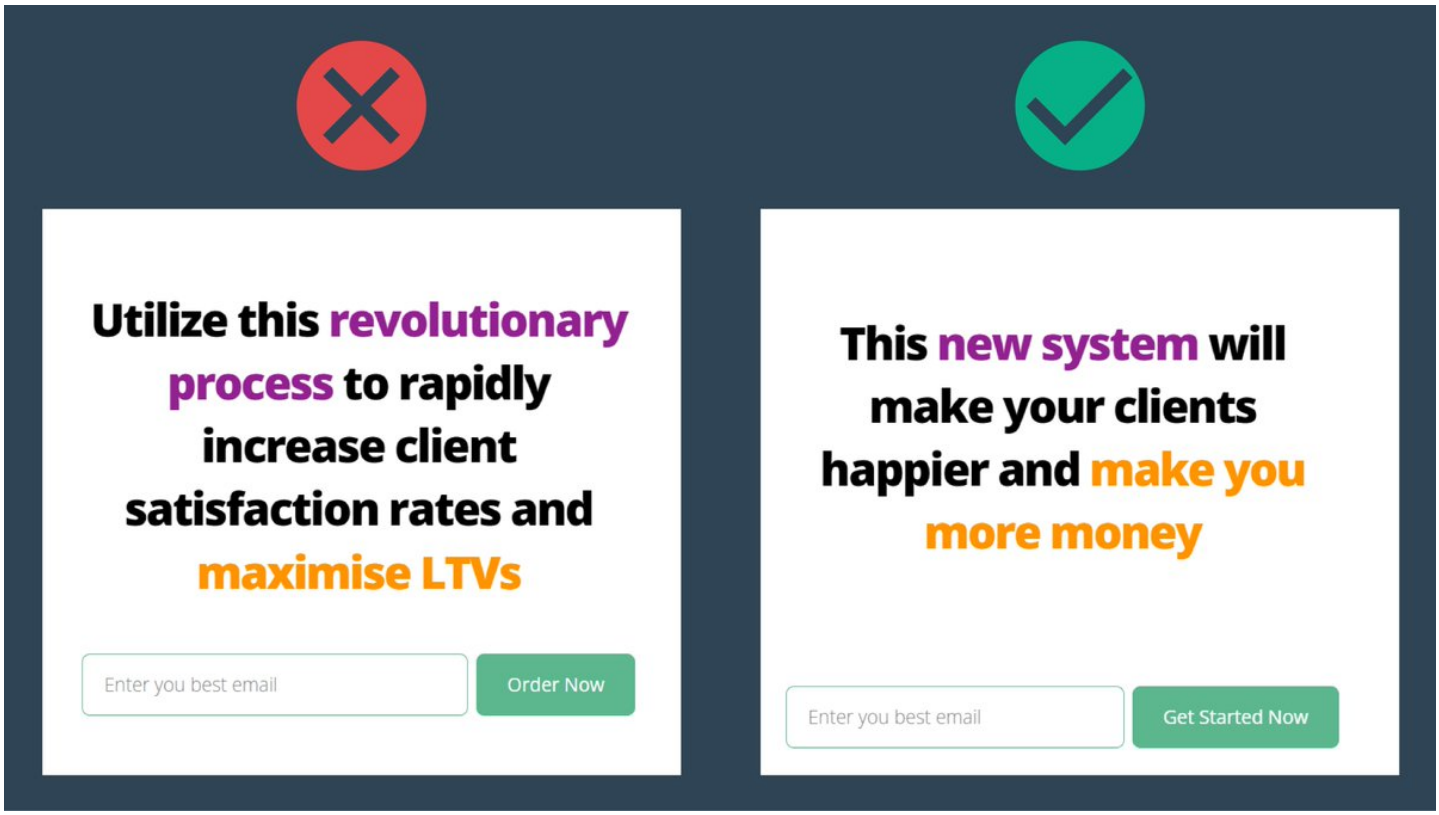
Strong writing is specific.



■ Using Big Words

The average reading age in US is 12.
In the UK, it's 9.

Be clear, not complex.

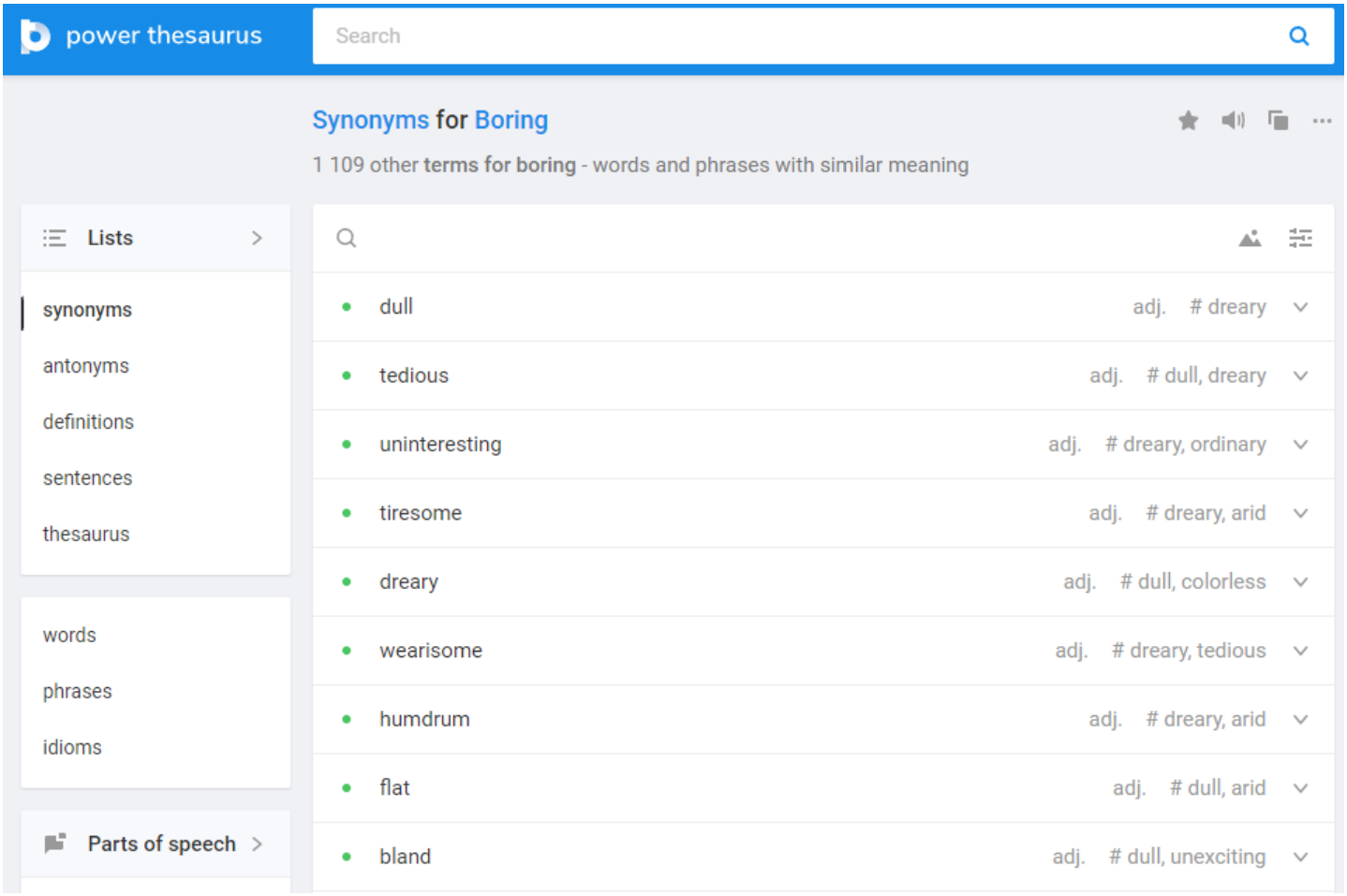


■ Not Being Exciting

The worst thing you can be online is boring.

Swap words for more exciting, emotional ones.

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



■ Using Passive Voice

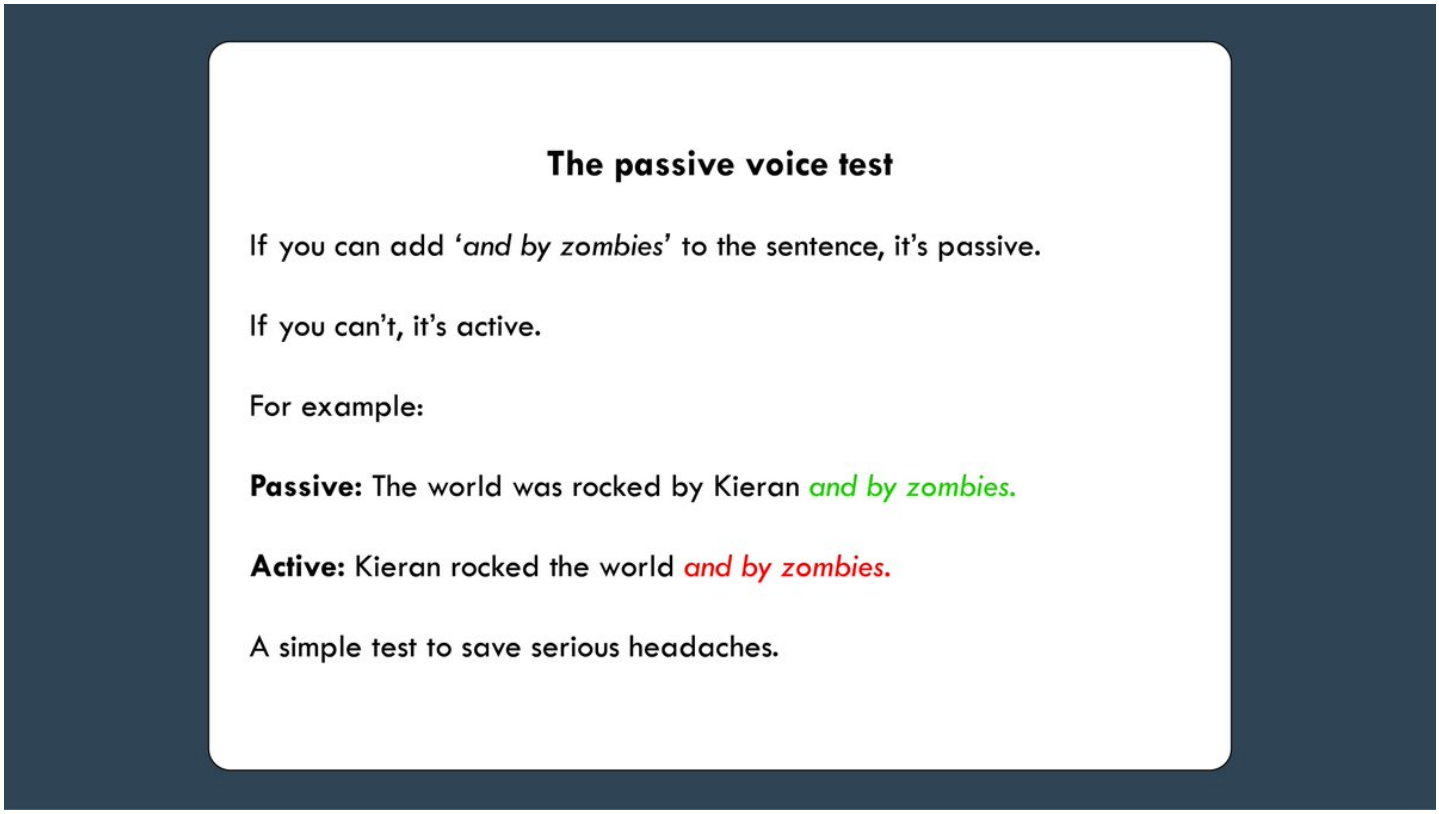
Passive writing is weak and wordy.

It ruins the flow.

An example:

The girl was smiled at by the boy.
The boy smiled at the girl.

Use this test ■



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.
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> But if you avoid these 12 common mistakes, I guarantee you won\u2019t:
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> \U0001f9f5
>
> — 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