

Writing for the web

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<http://sibra.co.uk>

Cambridge Wordpress Meetup June 2018



Inspiration

Letting go of the words:

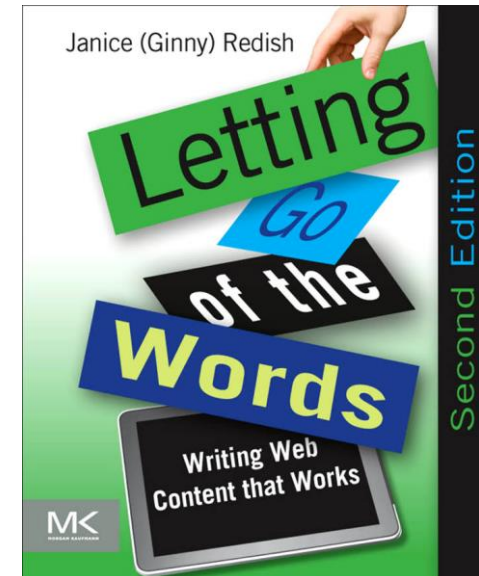
- Janice Redish

QuickSprout:

- <https://www.quicksprout.com/>

The pyramid principle:

- Barbara Minto
- How well do you inform
 - Thomas Johnson
 - IEEE Transactions 1982



Can I make a confession?

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In fact, I was downright awful.

Like many of you, I didn't get any kind of degree in writing. I didn't shine in high school English. I never entertained dreams of being a best-selling author.

And my first few posts online proved it.

But over time, I started realizing how important writing is in business. (Spoiler alert: it's super important.)

So I studied, practiced a lot, and got better. I'm still no Shakespeare, but I've learned a lot about writing.

Writing isn't a talent—it's a skill. A skill you can develop, refine, and improve.

Becoming a great copywriter isn't easy, but if you consistently work on your writing, your writing will get better and better.

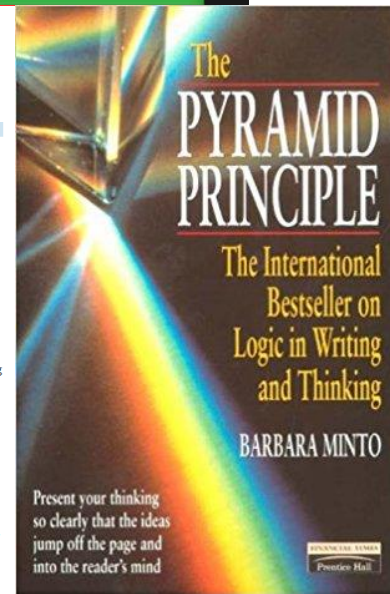
Here are 33 (count them!) writing tweaks that will propel you to copywriting mastery.

1. Use *you* instead of *we* or *us*

Guess what? Your copy shouldn't be about you. *It should be about the customer.*

Using *you* means *the copy is talking directly to the customer*. But using *we* and *us* turns you into another boring company.

Don't fall victim to the "all about us" copywriting trap. Show your readers how they'll benefit.



Just Beliefs



Many beliefs, little evidence, AFAIK, e.g.:

- Yoga is beneficial:
 - Evidence only for back problems
- Low levels electromagnetic radiation:
 - No evidence either way for long term effect

Much of what I say is my beliefs:

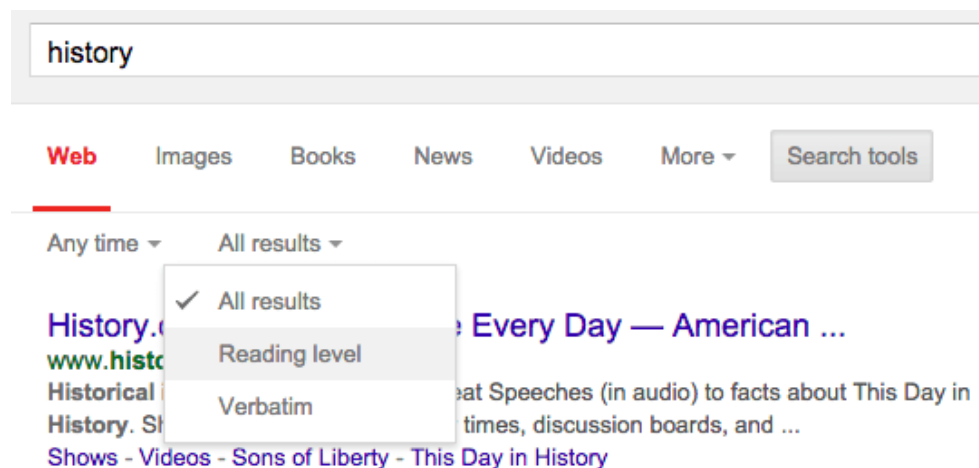
- Will suggest reasons:
 - What would Google do?
- Won't/can't provide stats.



Readability: possibly SEO ranking factor

Google indexed readability:

- From 2010 to 2015



Now Google “personalises” search results.

- Does your target group see results for their level of readability?

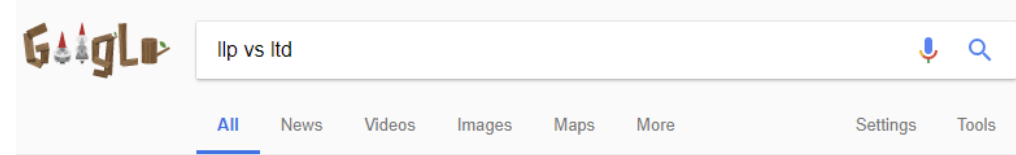


Time on page a ranking factor?

Google from academia where citations = perceived quality. So backlinks measured perceived quality, but now abused. Social media ratings: Google maybe blocked.

Could measure time between:

1. Click on a search result
2. View content in link
3. Either return to tab & click on another search result
4. Or stop searching as found best result.




About 5,850,000 results (0.37 seconds)


Limited companies pay corporation tax and Capital Gains Tax on all taxable income. **LLP** members pay Income Tax, National Insurance and CGT on all taxable income. The **LLP** itself has no tax liability. It is easier to change the internal management structure and distribution of profits in an **LLP**. 17 Feb 2015





[Limited company or LLP? - Rapid Formations](https://www.rapidformations.co.uk/blog/limited-company-or-llp/) 
<https://www.rapidformations.co.uk/blog/limited-company-or-llp/>


 About this result  Feedback

People also ask


Is a LLP a company? 


Is an LTD the same as an LLC? 

What is the difference between a partnership and a limited company? 


How does a LLP work? 

 Feedback


[Limited company or LLP? - Rapid Formations](https://www.rapidformations.co.uk/blog/limited-company-or-llp/) 


<https://www.rapidformations.co.uk/blog/limited-company-or-llp/> 
17 Feb 2015 - Limited companies pay corporation tax and Capital Gains Tax on all taxable income. LLP members pay Income Tax, National Insurance and CGT on all taxable income. The LLP itself has no tax liability. It is easier to change the internal management structure and distribution of profits in an LLP.


[What's the Difference Between an LLP and Limited Company? | The ...](https://www.theaccountancy.co.uk/.../whats-difference-llp-limited-company-7698.htm...) 

<https://www.theaccountancy.co.uk/.../whats-difference-llp-limited-company-7698.htm...> 
8 Jun 2017 - Shareholders vs members ... With LLP members, liability is limited to the amount each member guarantees to pay should the business run into ...

[LLP vs Ltd | Gannons Commercial Law Solicitors in London](https://www.gannons.co.uk/expertise/business-contracts/partnerships) 

<https://www.gannons.co.uk/expertise/business-contracts/partnerships> 
Deciding between whether to trade in partnership/LLP or as a limited company includes commercial and tax considerations. We explain some of the differences.

[LLP vs Ltd: What's the Difference? - The Formations Company](https://www.theformationscompany.com/llp-vs-ltd) 

<https://www.theformationscompany.com/llp-vs-ltd> 
LLP vs Ltd. On the face of it, LLPs share many of the same characteristics of limited companies. They both have to be incorporated at Companies House and they both involve higher reporting and filing requirements than the option of being a sole trader or a partnership, but in reality they are very different.



Web visitors skim-read

Corporate

e-commerce

Search results



www.useit.com

- Solving problem, seeking answers.
- Read opening paragraph, &
 - Beginning of first couple paragraphs.
- Eyes scan down on left hand side



Paragraphs: avoid wall of words

Subtitle

- 1 subtitle / 2-3 paragraphs.
- Subtitle for 1 paragraph ok

Paragraph length

- 1 sentence is fine
- 2-3 sentences good
- 5+ too long.

Lorum ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Maecis sodales nisi nec tellus tempus consectetur. Nunc ultrices varius neque, nec lacina erat suscipit in. Sed tempus nulla, interdum eget nec eget, blandit nuncius est. Vivamus justo diam, pellentesque nec elementum non, euismatum nec orci. Ut vel tunc facilisis, feugiat diam eu, aliquam nuncius. Mauris nec, leo vitae tempus pharetra, nisi ligula lacus neque, non blandit urna nisi eget dolor. Aliquam in pretium elit. Ut imperdiet hendrerit nunc, at fringilla nec efficitur vel. Praesent congue libero sed velit, sit amet porta sem scelerisque ac. Vestibulum ullamcorper diam vitae lacina sollicitudin. Suspendisse nunc urna et ullamcorper laoreet. Nunc porta, sem et viverra nuncius, nisi ante gravida urna, a pulvinar nisi velit non quam. Vestibulum a justo semper, ullamcorper quam quis, efficitur ipsum. Sed fermentum magna eget urna dictum, id viverra nunc suscipit.

Etiam venenatis porta mauris vehicula sollicitudin. Sed ultrices tunc lacina. In hac habitasse platea dictumst. Curabitur lacus vel erat eu nuncius. Maecenas efficitur mi eu justo lacina, et suscipit neque imperdiet. Vivamus sodales lacus odio, vel fringilla nisi vulputate et. Maecis curam a urna ac viverra. Mauris nec, ligula quis hendrerit congue, nisi nisi fermentum nisi, id vehicula ante lacus vel lacus. Nulla et urna justo.

In feugiat lacina accumsan. Maecenas ornare dolor vel sapien efficitur hendrerit. Etiam eu ipsum in diam scelerisque portor eu eget leo. Phasellus non lacus congue, laoreet sapien a, vulputate urna. Curabitur eu lacus et moris ornare lobortis. In ac lacus et porta fringilla lacus. Nulla et dapibus non, sit amet ultrices tunc. Quisque vestibulum, lacus eget lobortis facilisis, erat orci feugiat dolor, efficitur accumsan urna moris vitae diam. Maecis quis aliquam urna. Nam congue sem id est fermentum dignissim. Mauris et urna et elit efficitur efficitur. Cras vel nunc tristique, vehicula urna eu, suscipit urna.

Cras laoreet leo vel nibb ullamcorper, eu efficitur magna sollicitudin. Sed sit amet erat erat. Quisque eget nisi pharetra, accumsan dui vel, condimentum erat. Donec tellus non, tempus vitae urna molestie, facilisis tempus quam. Curabitur curam lacus sit amet elementum ultrices. Nam sodales, urna quis feugiat nulla, nulla nisi lobortis sed, et ullamcorper lacus urna vel tunc. Ut urna leo, efficitur quis ante id, fuscesque vestibulum urna. In hac habitasse platea dictumst. Donec hendrerit eu mauris et portor. Duis fringilla urna non nisi molestie accumsan. Pellentesque mollis nunc magna urna, quis nulla urna vulputate et. Praesent urna lacus, pulvinar eget vulputate et, pulvinar id sem. Curabitur sollicitudin molestie ligula sit amet



QuickSprout writing style

- Readability-score.com
 - 2,167 words
 - 250 sentences
 - 8.7 words per sentence
 - 4.5 characters/word
- 2-3 sentences/paragraph
- Presumably A/B tested

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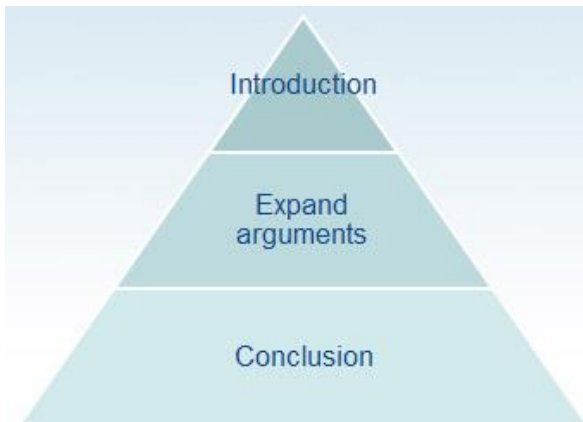
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<https://www.quicksprout.com/2016/11/09/33-writing-tweaks-that-will-turn-you-into-a-copywriting-master/#more-36717>

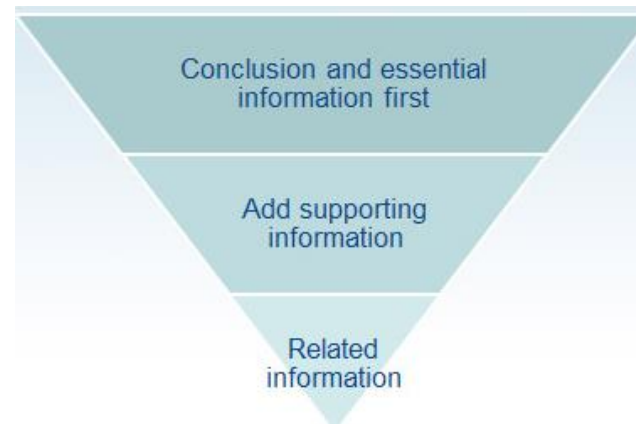


Inverted pyramid style



Pyramid Style

- Introduction:
 - history,
 - background,
 - rational
- Whatever happened
 - In order occurs to you
- Conclusions



Inverted Pyramid Style

- Main Point:
 - what to remember
- Supporting info
 - In order of importance
- Background
 - history
 - rational



How to write inverted pyramid

Just write. May not quite know key point.

- Use subheading h2, h3, h4 & lists
 - Each h2 has 1 to 3 h3 sub-paragraph
 - Can move around chunks of content
 - So create scan-readable content
- Opening sentence = copy of meta description?
 - Meta-description sells why visitor reads the page.
 - Google might use it.



<h1>Page Title</h1>

Copy meta-description. 2 more sentences.

<h2>Sub-Title</h2>

Max couple paragraphs, 3 sentences each, 15 words.

<h3>Sub-Sub Title</h3>

Max couple paragraphs, 3 sentences each, 15 words

<h3>Sub-Sub Title</h3>

Max couple paragraphs, 3 sentences each, 15 words

<h2>Sub-Title</h2>

Max couple paragraphs, 3 sentences each, 15 words:

- Bullet: ~< 10 words
- Bullet: ~< 10 words
- Bullet: ~< 10 words
- Bullet: ~< 10 words

Inverted pyramid: paragraphs

Paragraph: Assert then justify

If reader agrees they skim the paragraph, so:

- Write as you think:
 - because A, because B, because C
 - thus conclusion
- Cut conclusion, usually last sentence
- & Paste into opening sentence.

We're off to see the Wizard

We're off to see the Wizard,
The wonderful Wizard of Oz,
We hear he is a whiz of a wiz,
If ever a wiz there was,
If ever, oh ever a wiz there was,

The Wizard of Oz is one because
Because, because, because,
because, because
Because of the wonderful things
he does
We're off to see the Wizard
The wonderful Wizard of Oz



Sentences: No passive



Susan was given a prize.
A prize was given to Susan.

Write: Subject verb object

- Easier to imagine.
- Passive often has no clear subject to picture.



Sentence length: 15 words ish

Gunning Fog Index:

- Years of education to understand text.
- Complex = 3 syllables
 - Not -ing, -ed etc.

So

- 15 words = 6 ish years
 - If technical use long words
- 1 line: 75 characters?
-
- Even lower value for skim reading web page?



SOURCE	GUNNING FOG INDEX
Financial Times	13
The Economist	11
Wales Business Insider Magazine	14
New York Times	12
The Sun	10
Wordtree website	12



Avoid prepositional phrases

Use dependent clauses

- When
- If
- Because
- Who
- That
- Clauses have subject & verb
- Remove “of” use possessive:
 - The X of Y:= The Y’s X

The unlikelyhood **(of meeting orders) (from the majority) (of its new customers) is (of concern) (to the company), due (to tardiness) (in the installation) (of its new manufacturing line)**

The company does not know whether it can meet most new customer orders, because its new manufacturing line is not yet installed



Use lists

Use lists for

- E.g.:
- Either/or
- Includes:
- Features:

Lists are:

- < 8 words
- **2 bold words:** then more explanation
- Ideally started with verb
 - Keep some tense/flow

Lists:-

- Are easier to skim read
- Demonstrate expertise
- Like bullets in presentation
- Screw up readability stats



No abstract nouns: can't sense them

Ability	Degree	Measure	Prospect	Standpoint
Activity	Effect	Method	Purpose	Substance
Basis	Effort	Nature	Quality	System
Case	Employment	Necessity	Question	Type
Character	Extent	Order	Reason	Use
Circumstance	Facility	Permission	Reference	Utilisation
Concept	Factor	Policy	Relationship	
Concern	Instance	Position	Respect	View
Condition	Intent	Possibility	Responsibility	
Connection	Interest	Practice	Result	
Course	Manner	Problem	Situation	



Sentences

If read aloud, would you speak in this way:

- At a dinner party?
 - With target personas
- To Aunt Agatha?



Typography for readability

- Line length:
 - 40 to 75 characters
 - Some say 95 for fastest read speed
- Vertical Rhythm
 - Consistent line height for p, h1, h2, h3, ul, ol,
- Left justify
- `<p> 16px`

Good Vertical Rhythm

Learning all about the ins and outs of the technical side of typography is good.

It will give you a solid grounding when looking for typefaces or fonts.



Typography: don't

- Floating sub-headings
 - Which paragraph
- Center justify text
 - Eye doesn't know where to start.
- Picture on left hand side
 - Breaks up LHS
- Pdf's
 - Extra effort

Floating Subheading example

Waffle, waffle, because because, because, because, finally lose will to continue, after reading three sentences.

Subheading

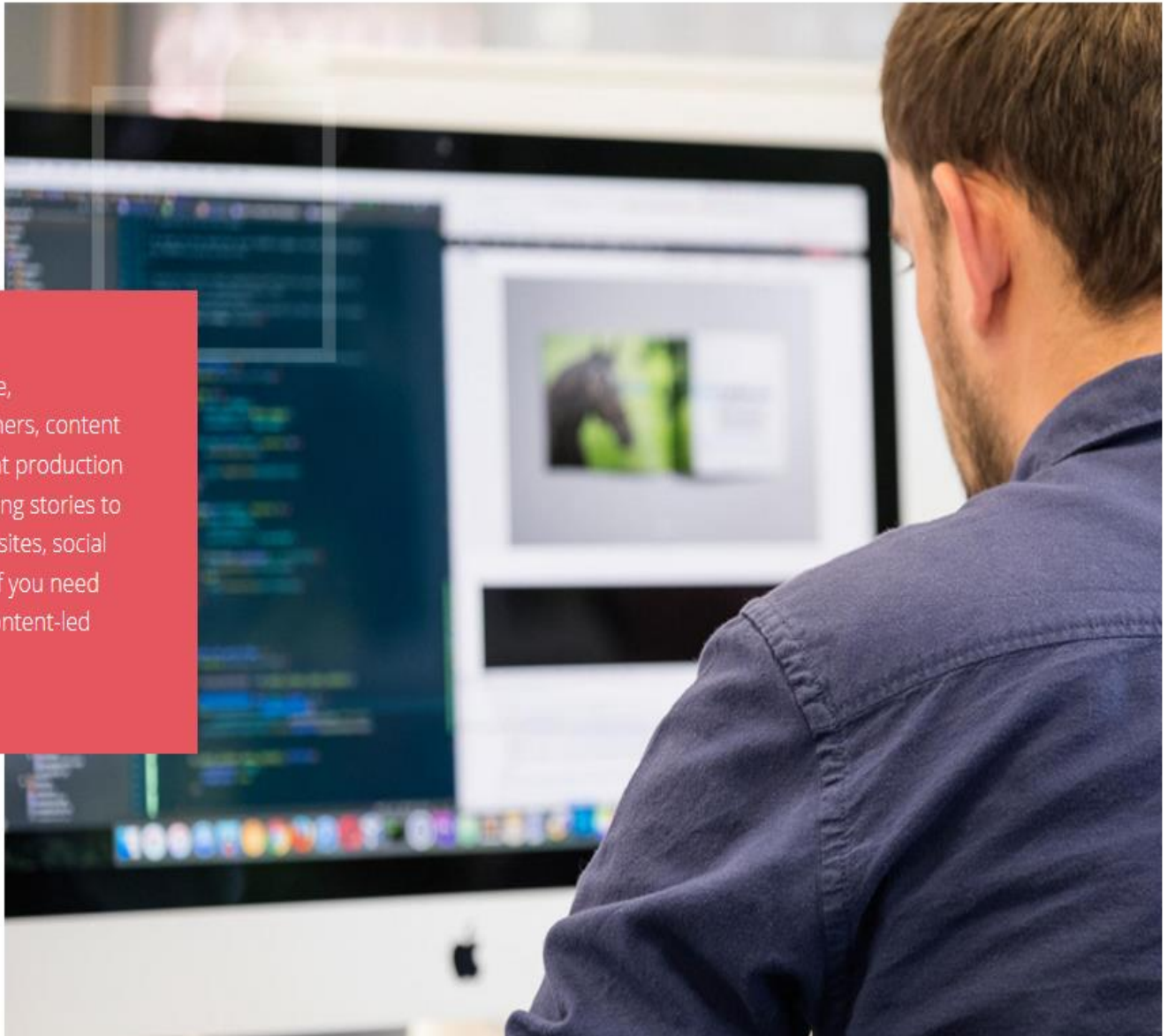
Don't know that subheading is attached to following paragraph. Some assertions, followed by loads of justification, because, because, because, because, because



I'd say wrong

- Centred
- No bullets for lists
- 1 paragraph
- Unreadable

CPL's team, based in Cambridge, includes journalists, editors, graphic designers, content strategists, videographers, developers, print production specialists and commercial experts. We bring stories to life in print, and in digital formats via websites, social media channels and video. Speak to us if you need expert strategy, flawless delivery and content-led communications that work.



Discussion

