

Become a better writer:



The more there is to read, the less your audience will want to read it.

Make sure your **writing is short.**

**20** Keep sentences to **20 words or fewer**

**5** Keep paragraphs to **5 sentences or fewer**

Become a better writer:



**No one wants to read a wall of words.**

Most readers skim documents instead of reading every word. Help your readers get your main points.

**1** Include a **short, clear main message** at the top of your document

**7** Use short paragraphs and bulleted lists. Keep lists to **fewer than 7 items**, and don't use sub-bullets

**1-3** Use a **relevant and specific heading** for every **1-3 paragraphs**

**For example:** "ATSDR Study Looks at Lead Contamination"  
**Instead of:** "Overview"

Become a better writer:



Passive voice is wordy, but active voice is concise and direct. Passive voice is formal, but active voice sounds more like speech (*making it easier to understand*).

**Passive:** "About 500 homes were left without water as a result of the chemical spill."

**Active:** "The chemical spill left 500 homes without water."

Use passive voice only when the **subject is unknown** or of **less importance**

Strengthen your sentences further by **keeping the subject and verb close together**