Mastery Series: Clarity and Concision

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Clarity
Clarity

- Logical arrangement of the elements of your argument
- Logical arrangement of the elements of your sentence
Clarity of Argument

Sequence

• Chronological order
• Context before detail
• Definition before use of theory (or term)
• Purpose of list before list
Clarity of Sentence

- Mysspelangs
- Homophones
- Subject/Pronoun Agreement
  - Vague pronouns
- Subject/Verb Agreement
- Vague Word Choice
- Passive Voice
- Hyphenated Modifiers
- Dangling (Misplaced) Modifiers
- Parallelism
Homophones!
(And other tricky words)

- Affect / Effect
- Its / It’s
- There / There / They’re
- Two / Too / To
- Angel / Angle
- Assets / Assess
- Casual / Causal
- Council / Counsel
- Cue / Queue
- Disinterested / Uninterested
- Further / Farther / Furthermore
- Lay / Lie
- Lose / Loose
- Material / Materiel
- Method / Methodology
- Personal / Personnel
- Regardless (Irregardless)
- Tenants / Tenets
- Than / Then
- That / Which
- Threw / Through (thru)
- Toward / Towards
- Versus / Verses (vice)
Subjects and Pronouns!

- **Subject/Pronoun Agreement**
  - The United States values their freedom
  - The United States values *its* freedom
  - The United States citizens value *their* freedom
  - A combatant accepts that they must risk their life to perform their duty
  - A combatant accepts that he/she must risk his/her life to perform his/her duty
  - Combatants accept that they must risk their lives to perform their duties

- **Vague Pronouns**
  - They got in his car and went to their house!
  - Sarah and Steve got in a perfect stranger's car and went to my parent's house!
Subjects and Verbs!

- The United States are a complex country

- The United States is a complex country

- Each and every participant, attending the conference of his or her own volition and for the benefit of several major industries, wish they were somewhere else.

- Each and every participant, attending the conference of his or her own volition and for the benefit of several major industries, wishes to be somewhere else.
Sometimes
A lot
People
- Sometimes, a lot of people do things.
- From 2009 to 2015, the number of adult Americans who received a flu vaccination increased by 15.6%.
  -Centers for Disease Control, *Flu Vaccination Coverage, United States, 2014-15 Influenza Season*
Passive Voice

Enemy of clarity when you omit the subject from the sentence altogether

- The Warsaw pact was signed into existence on May 14, 1955

- The Warsaw pact was signed into existence on May 14, 1955, by eight Eastern European nations.
Fun with hyphens!

I saw a man-eating alligator.

I saw a man eating alligator.

A hyphen can make a difference in meaning.

Source: English Leap
The kind mother gave bologna sandwiches to all the children in Ziplock bags.
More fun with Dangling Modifiers!

- In the aftermath of 9/11, the United States founded the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2002.
  - In 2002, in the aftermath of 9/11, the United States founded the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).
- By 1890, among adults, half the men and a third of the women knew how to read in Kansas.
  - By 1890, among adults, half the men and a third of the women in Kansas knew how to read.
Parallelism

Making lists parallel means using the same structure in each individual element of the list

- **All adverbs**
  - You can analyze your research findings qualitatively, quantitatively, or comparing them.
  - You can analyze your research findings qualitatively, quantitatively, or comparatively.

- **All gerunds**
  - The U.S. military is responsible for waging war, securing borders, and to protect U.S. citizens.
  - The U.S. military is responsible for waging war, securing borders, and protecting U.S. citizens.

- **All infinitives**
  - We need to gather data, to analyze that data, and finally making recommendations.
  - We need to gather data, to analyze that data, and to make recommendations.
Fog up the river, where it flows among green aits and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping and the waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex marshes, fog on the Kentish heights. Fog creeping into the cabooses of collier-brigs; fog lying out on the yards and hovering in the rigging of great ships; fog drooping on the gunwales of barges and small boats. Fog in the eyes and throats of ancient Greenwich pensioners, wheezing by the firesides of their wards; fog in the stem and bowl of the afternoon pipe of the wrathful skipper, down in his close cabin; fog cruelly pinching the toes and fingers of his shivering little 'prentice boy on deck.


Excessive fog afflicted all of London.
Enemies of Concision

- Wordiness
- Repetition and Redundancy
- Stating the Obvious
- Prepositions
- Passive Voice
Redundancy

- Absolutely essential/ absolutely necessary
- Advance planning / advance warning
- Added bonus
- Alternative choice
- Anonymous stranger
- Ask the question
Stating the Obvious

- I believe, I think, I argue...
- It is necessary to...
- Needless to say...
Prepositions, by their very nature, send your reader’s attention in new directions

- Taking observations from leadership involved in the troubles detailed in the case study, the following analysis through the lens of social identity perspective will provide intelligence leaders with guidance on how to more effectively balance security and liberty interests within their organizations, thereby setting up the intelligence organization to more likely succeed in its long term endeavors.

- The case study detailed the leadership’s observations regarding their troubles. Analyzing these observations using the social identity perspective will help guide intelligence leaders to more effectively balance security and liberty within their organizations. Ultimately, this will foster long-term organizational success.
Enemy of concision because it requires more words.

- The Warsaw pact was signed into existence on May 14, 1955, by eight Eastern European nations.
  - Eight Eastern European nations signed the Warsaw pact into existence on May 14, 1955.

- Particle aggregation is minimized and dispersion behavior is improved by applying an ultrasonic bath along with PH controlling of the nanofluids. (21 words)
  - Applying an ultrasonic bath with PH controlling the nanofluids minimized particle aggregation and improved dispersion behavior. (16 words)
Strong Verbs

- It is his belief that writing is easy.
  - He believes that writing is easy.

- He made a comparison between apples and oranges.
  - He compared apples and oranges.

- His success was caused by continued work.
  - He succeeded because he continued to work.

- Give an analysis of the data and then create a summary.
  - Analyze the data and then summarize it.
For more information on grammar and writing, check out:

Mastery Series: Punctuation
Mastery Series: Grammar
Writing Winning Arguments: The Art of Academic Persuasion