

# FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR CLEAR SENTENCES

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To draft clear sentences or revise unclear ones, follow these five principles:

1. **Make subjects short and concrete**, ideally naming the character that performs the action expressed by the verb that follows.
2. **Avoid interrupting the subject and verb** with more than a word or two.
3. **Put key actions in verbs**, not in nouns.
4. **Put information familiar to readers at the beginning** of a sentence, new information at the end.
5. **Avoid long introductory phrases**: get to a short, familiar subject quickly.

Skim the first seven or eight words of every sentence you've written to make sure they meet these criteria.