

## Chapter 18 How do you Write Stylish Sentences?

pp 303-328 \*(See especially agent/action 303-309, economy 313, variety 322)

\*This handout references the Scott/Foresman Handbook for Writers

1. Whenever you can, make persons or things the subjects of your sentences and clauses. p303

Dull Access to a steady stream of lively and diverse cultural events is one of the advantages of attending college in a big city.

Livlier Students attending college in a big city can enjoy a steady stream of lively and diverse cultural events.

2. Make sure verbs convey real actions. (Avoid strung-out phrases like "give consideration to" that slow down your writing). p305Dull Some groups who **are in opposition to** the death penalty believe that there is doubt about its morality.

Stronger Some groups who oppose the death penalty doubt its morality.

3. Make sure subjects can do what their verbs demand. p306.X The narrative **structure** of Aretha Franklin's song **begins** as a child and continues through her adult life.In Aretha Franklin's song, the narrative **structure follows** the life of a character from childhood to adulthood.4. Replace to be verbs whenever possible. p307.Dull It is the tendency of adolescents **to be more concerned** about the opinion of others in their age group than they **are** about the values parents are trying to instill in them.Engaging Adolescents **crave** the approval of their peers and often **resist** their parents' values.5. Reduce the number of passive verbs. p 308. (Use passive voice for a specific purpose; choose it deliberately).Passive Madison **was selected** by Representative Barton for an appointment to the Air Force Academy.Active Representative Barton **selected** Madison for an appointment to the Air Force Academy.6. State ideas positively. p 311. (Your writing will be more economical and easy to read).Difficult Do we have the right **not to be victims** of street crime?Clearer Do we have the right **to be safe** from street crime?7. Cut down on expletive constructions. (See list on p 319). (Sometimes you need them, but when you can take them out, do so).Tiresome *Even though it is the oldest manufacturer of automobiles, Mercedes-Benz remains innovative.*

Stronger The oldest manufacturer of automobiles, Mercedes-Benz still remains innovative.

8. Condense sprawling phrases. \*(see many more phrases to hunt down on p314).Wordy **Regardless of the fact that** Sue graduated from the academy just last year, she has the confidence of a seasoned officer.Revised **Although** Sue graduated from the academy just last year, she has the confidence of a seasoned officer.9. Cut Nominalizations (See list on p 315 for many examples: X customization vs customize).10. Condense long verb phrases to focus on the action (See list on p 316 for examples: X has an understanding of vs understands).11. Eliminate redundancies, surplus intensifiers. (See lists on p 317-318: X we're completely finished vs we're finished).12. Cut the number of prepositional phrases and relative pronouns when possible. (See examples on pp 319-321).13. Condense sentences into clauses and clauses into phrases or words. Say more with less. (See pp 321-322).14. "Chunk" your writing. p 311. (Break lengthy sentences into more manageable pieces).15. Look for fresh images that will strike your reader's imagination; use similes, metaphors to dramatize ideas. (See 326-8)16. Vary sentence structure/length! (See 280-281, for expanded simple; pp 262-90, 323-27, for compound & complex)