Writing for people who aren't experts

(Wait, does he mean us or them?)

Why?

Why do I have to learn this?

Why do I have to do this?

Different priorities

For other academics:

For everyone else:

Accurate

Engaging

Precise

Accessible

Detailed

Clear

You're going to have to do it

Press releases and news articles

Participant information forms

Outreach requirements for grants

Doing these yourself puts you in control.

Also, it's fun.

You're going to have to do it

Chemical in McDonald's fries may be the cure for baldness, study finds

CONSUMING McDonald's may be the answer to preventing baldness, according to Japanese researchers, who discovered a link between the fast food and hair growth.

Staff writer — News Corp Australia Network — FEBRUARY 6, 2018 9:58AM

Get some writing

If you brought one, get it out now

If you didn't, find something to write about

Your audience isn't dumb

They're just differently specialised.

Your audience isn't dumb

Alison Sealey and Lee Oakley

Anthropomorphic grammar?
Some linguistic patterns in the wildlife
documentary series *Life*

Abstract: Human language inevitably depicts the world from a human point of view. This article briefly reviews key positions on the use of anthropomorphic and anthropocentric language taken by scientists and discourse analysts. It then presents the data used in this investigation – a corpus of transcripts of the television series *Life*. The methods of analysis are explained, as is the focus adopted, which is less on the more obvious, lexical choices made by the presenter, David Attenborough, and more on the grammatical patterns which we suggest play a significant role in the depiction of the wide range of species represented in the programs. Three grammatical features – pronouns, the connective *so*, and the *to* infinitive form – were explored in context, and the results demonstrate how, separately and together, they play a significant role in the representation in these texts of animals' perspectives, connoting in subtle ways both intention and evaluation. We suggest a need for greater dialogue between broadcasters, discourse analysts, and ethologists.

Keywords: anthropomorphism; TV documentaries; corpus analysis; wildlife; pronouns; infinitives.

David Attenborough talks about animals like people, which is why his stories are so good.

Your audience isn't dumb

Sediment in under the fuel pickup can clog the fuel filter and cause an engine to run lean. If this happens, you may notice pinging, detonation or "knocking" that indicates a lean AFR. This can damage the rotating assembly and top end of your engine. This also causes hotspotting on the head which can anneal and warp causing head gasket damage.

Don't put sand in your fuel tank.

Your audience isn't dumb

Articles

Effect of ready-to-use supplementary food on mortality in severely immunocompromised HIV-infected individuals in Africa initiating antiretroviral therapy (REALITY): an open-label, parallel-group, randomised controlled trial

Jane Mallewa, Alexander J Szubert, Peter Mugyenyi, Ennie Chidziva, Margaret J Thomason, Priscilla Chepkorir, George Abongomera, Keith Baleeta, Anthony Etyang, Colin Warambwa, Betty Melly, Shepherd Mudzingwa, Christine Kelly, Clara Agutu, Helen Wilkes, Sanele Nkomani, Victor Musiime, Abbas Lugemwa, Sarah L Pett, Mutsa Bwakura-Dangarembizi, Andrew J Prendergast, Diana M Gibb*, A Sarah Walker*, James A Berkley* on behalf of the REALITY trial team

oa OPEN ACCESS

Summary
Background In sub-Saharan Africa, severely immunocompromised HIV-infected individuals have a high risk of mortality during the first few months after starting antiretroviral therapy (ART). We hypothesise that universally providing ready-to-use supplementary food (RUSF) would increase early weight gain, thereby reducing early mortality compared with current guidelines recommending ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) for severely malnourished individuals only.

Not starving helps sick people get better(???)

Your audience isn't dumb

They're just differently specialised.

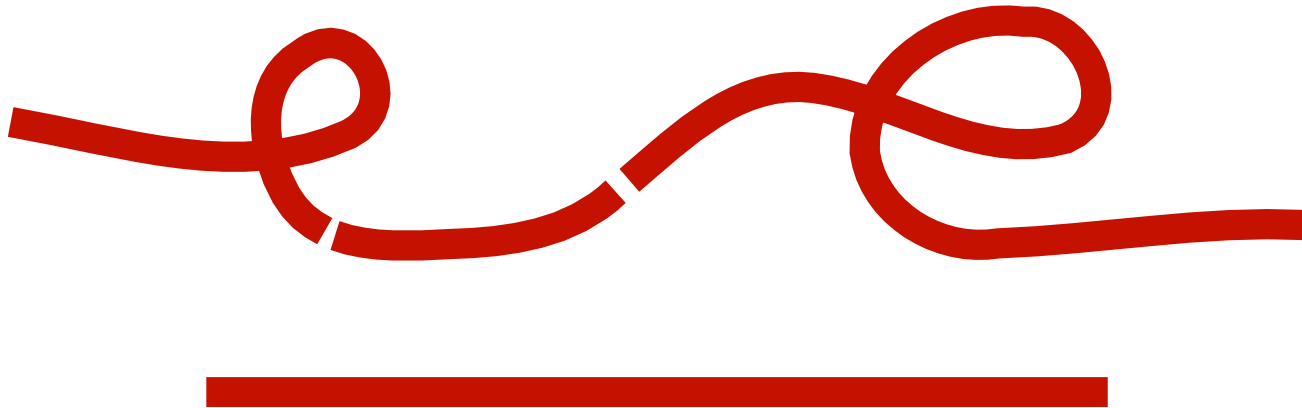Use common words
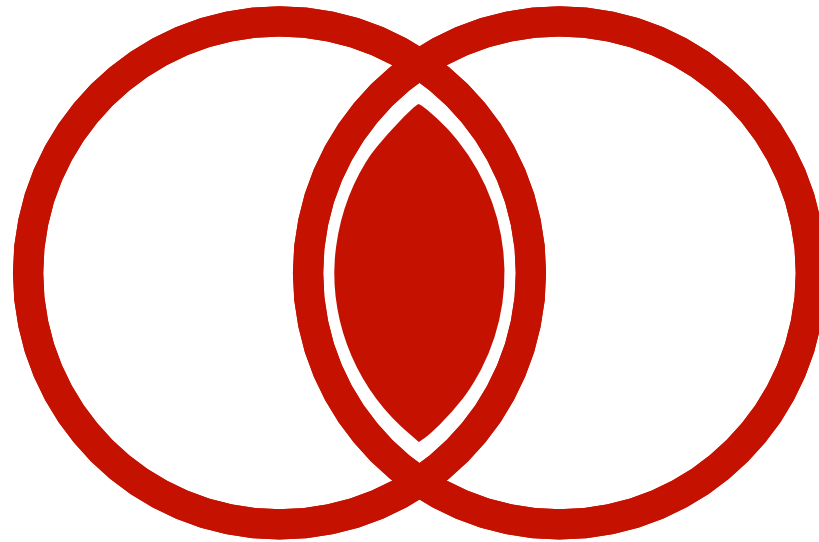
xkcd.com/simplewriter

One thing happens in every single sentence.

Every sentence is the same.

Subject → Verb (→ Object)

Something does something (to something)

One idea per sentence…

If it has a list, it's too long.

If it has more than one conjunction, it's too long.

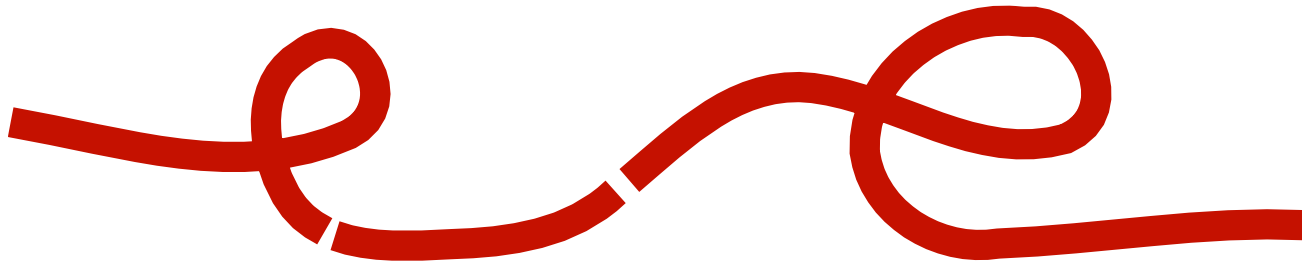If it has more than one comma, it's too long.

If there are semicolons, it's definitely too long.

…as simply as possible…

Avoid being indirect.

The passive voice should be avoided.

Avoid the nominalisation of verbs.

…as simply as possible…

Be direct.

Use the active voice.

Don't turn verbs into nouns.

…and nothing else.

In addition, as far as brevity is concerned, you might consider removing words that bring no additional meaning to your sentence in order to make all your words as meaningful as possible.

…and nothing else.

Remove words that add nothing to make every word meaningful.

…and nothing else.

Don't dilute your words.

"What is actually happening here?"

…then write it down.

hemingwayapp.com

Who has ever read just the headline?

(I know I have.)

People won't read your thing.

At least, not all of it.

Make sure the most important stuff is at the front.

This is the opposite of what you've practiced!

If people only read one thing about your thing, what would it be?

Put the most important thing first

Background	Why we did it
Method	How we did it
Results	What we found
Discussion	What it means

Put the most important thing first

Discussion	What it means (for me)
Results	What they found
Method	How they did it
Background	Why they did it

Put the most important thing first

National | World | Lifestyle | Travel | Entertainment | **Technology** | Finance | Sport

science ▶ **human body**

Chemical in McDonald's fries may be the cure for baldness, study finds

CONSUMING McDonald's may be the answer to preventing baldness, according to Japanese researchers, who discovered a link between the fast food and hair growth.

Staff writer   News Corp Australia Network 🕐 FEBRUARY 6, 2018 9:58AM

Put the most important thing first

FOR YEARS men have been searching for the cure for baldness and finally scientists may have the answer — McDonald's fries!

Scientists have discovered that the chemicals used to cook McDonald's French fries may assist with hair regrowth.

According to MSN News, a research team from Yokohama National University in Japan have found that dimethylpolysiloxane helps hair grow on mice. The chemical is put into the oil used to cook fries in order to prevent it from splattering.

The study, which was published in the journal *Biomaterials*, believes the findings will be applicable to human subjects too.

Put the most important thing first

"This simple method is very robust and promising," said Junji Fukuda, one of the study's authors. "We hope that this technique will improve human hair regenerative therapy to treat hair loss such as androgenic alopecia."

Scientists were able to produce around 5000 "hair follicle germs" using dimethylpolysiloxane. When these hair follicles were transplanted onto bald mice, new hair started to grow.

While further research still needs to be done before it can be applied to humans, scientists said the results were "promising".

Put the most important thing first

"We hope this technique will improve human hair regenerative therapy to treat hair loss such as androgenic alopecia (male pattern baldness)," said Fukuda.

According to Andrology Australia, significant balding affects about 20 per cent of men in their 20s and 40 per cent of men in their 40s, while a journal article written by Quan Q Dinh and Rodney Sinclair says that more than 55 per cent of women will also experience some degree of hair loss in their lifetime.

Come grab some scissors!

(Please don't cut up your laptops though.)

Everybody loves peer-review!

It's one of the cornerstones of science.

Also, coincidentally, of writing.

Getting good feedback

1. Read it to yourself. Aloud.

Try it!

Don't worry, nobody's listening.

Getting good feedback

1. Read it to yourself. Aloud.

2. Get a colleague to read it.

Try it!

Swap with the person next to you.

Getting good feedback

1. Read it to yourself. Aloud.

2. Get a colleague to read it.

3. Test it on the people you're writing for.

Try it!

This is your homework for tonight.

Getting better at writing

1. Read the stuff you want to write

2. Practice – just like any other skill

3. Keep track of what works (and what doesn't)

So, to summarise:

Common words (xkcd.com/simplewriter)

Short sentences (hemingwayapp.com)

Important bit first (scissors and glue)

Get feedback (other humans)

Practise! (time)

Any questions?

If you think of some later, get in touch!

email rockwell@mcgell.in or tweet [@rockym93](https://twitter.com/rockym93)

Bonus Round:
Metaphors

Metaphors are like… something.

Using something we know to explain something we don't.

Metaphors have to be familiar.

Metaphors have to be similar.

Use one that already exists.

Don't go too far.

Good metaphor, bad metaphor

The eye is like a refractor telescope.

The eye is like a water balloon.

The eye is like a camera.

They're both machines for catching and detecting light. Rather than film, it has light-sensitive nerves.

It doesn't have a shutter though, and our eyes can't zoom in like a camera does…

Invent a metaphor

using something you've got with you.