

7 Easy Steps to Writing Good Copy

1. **CONNECT** to the impulse/urge to write. Stay connected to this feeling as you write.
Just **tune in**, energetically, to the feeling of the overall project – the purpose, the audience, the situation.
2. **FOCUS**. What are you trying to say? Clarify your intention.
3. **ARTICULATE**. Say it. Be direct and clear. Avoid trying to "sound important."
"Talk to a friend" as you write. Imagine yourself simply explaining everything to someone else.
Write it all down – ideas, thoughts, phrases, clever wording, etc. "Stream of Consciousness" writing.
Brainstorm ideas, without censoring anything.
4. **ORGANIZE**.
Move your sentences around. **Group** sentences and sentence fragments by topic/idea/theme.
Label your "paragraphs" with **headings**, to distinguish one group from another, especially in longer documents/writings. Sometimes these distinctions are subtle. Being able to "name" the intent/focus of each paragraph leads to greater clarity about what you are saying.

Sequence. People remember the first and last things you say. Facilitate understanding.
Order your paragraphs/ideas/groupings, to guide your readers through your topic. Find a "flow."

Possible sequences:
 - general to specific
 - big idea to minute details
 - simple to complex
 - steps in a process
 - temporal, spatial
 - alphabetical or numerical
5. **REFINE**. Simplify. Shorter **paragraphs** of 2-3 sentences are more readable, especially for on-line text.
One sentence paragraphs, used sparingly, are very powerful for emphasis.

Be direct and succinct, without compromising tone, friendliness, important details, accessibility.
Eliminate **redundancy**. Same words, same ideas used repeatedly.

Is it cohesive? Eliminate ideas/sentences that don't contribute to the understanding of your message.

Is it effective, compelling, fun, interesting, alive? Use **stories**, specific examples, colorful details.
Help the reader to connect to your information. Find mutual connections through metaphor and analogy.
6. **CORRECT**. Grammar, spelling, punctuation.
<http://www.copyblogger.com/grammar-goofs/>
<http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2011/08/punctuating-around-quotation-marks.html>
<http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl>
7. **CLEAN UP**.
Beautify. **Aesthetics**. Color of titles, images, font style.
Visual **Alignment**. Add space. Keep phrases together. Adjust margins, break the line. (notice #1)
If your sentence continues on the next line, continue with the entire phrase, not a single word.