**The Beauty of Verbs**

Verbs are the very heart of the language; they tell you what is happening. Use them freely.

Consider the two sentences below. Which sentence gives you the information more clearly?

Ai: We held a meeting to conduct an investigation into the situation.

Aii: We met to investigate the situation.

Bi: The client provided a description of their requirements before submitting a request for our support.

Bii: The client described their requirements then requested our support.

The verb makes the writer’s intention clearer; it generally makes the sentence shorter.

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| **Correct but . . .** | **. . . this is better** |
| Acid rain accounts for the destruction of ancient stone-work. | Acid rain destroys ancient stone-work. |
| When you take into consideration . . . | When you consider . . . |
| Clicking the icon causes the execution of the program. | The program executes when you click the icon. |
| The testing of the software was carried out by Jane. | Jane tested the software. |
| It was reported by Helmut that the new method facilitated the utilization of inspection techniques by the testing team. | Helmut reported that the new method helped the testing team use inspection techniques. |
| The analysis of the software was carried out by Fred. | Fred analyzed the software. |

**Clarity of Verbs**

Take the verb; it makes your text less cluttered. For example:

* Applies pressure \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Arrive at the conclusion \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Cause annoyance \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Come to an agreement \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Conduct an investigation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Give an indication \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Make a reference \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Make an application \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Carry out an examination \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Provides a description \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Provides clarifications \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Realize a saving \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| **agree / annoy / apply / clarifies / conclude / describes /**  **examine / indicate (show) / investigate / pushes / refer / save /** |

**Choosing the right words**

**Wasteful phrases**

Match the wasteful phrases with a cleaner, clearer and easier alternative.

**Wasteful Short and Sweet**

* a large number of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* applies pressure \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* as well as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* at a point in the near future \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* at the current time \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* during the course of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* exhibits the ability \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* has proved itself to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* in excess of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* in spite of the fact that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* in the majority of instances \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* in the vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* on a weekly basis \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* prior to that time \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* that is to say \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* until such a time as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| **although / and / before / can / during / is / many / near /**  **now / pushes / soon / that is / until / usually / more than / weekly** |

**Reader-friendly words**

Your utilization of high-frequency vocabulary supports the reading audience in its endeavours to comprehend the given text.

Use words that the readers know. It helps.

or

**What is a simpler alternative to the words listed below?**

* ascertain \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* assist \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* commence \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* comprehension \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* demonstrate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* elucidate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* endeavour \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* enquire \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* facilitate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* terminate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* initiate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* necessitate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* terminate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* transmit \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| **use / help / start / end / stop / find out / ask / try / explain /**  **send / show / begin / help / need / understanding** |

* utilize \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Trainer notes**

**A fair number of learners I deal with speak reasonably well, but struggle when it comes to putting their ideas into writing. This is often a result of their trying to apply an over-complex, formal style they picked up at school.**

**This piece, when linked with written work they have produced at work or in your session, highlights the importance of simplicity. Easier to write, easier to read - it’s a clear win:win.**

The key is to help the learners to realise that complexity is not their friend – apart from anything else, it is more likely to confuse than impress the reader.

* Learners analyse the structure of the alternative statements
* Consider the alternatives to use of nouns
* Link this back to documents they have produced.

**Option**

Learners draw up a report of a recent project using only the simplified form.

This piece will form part of an-ongoing programme to improve the quality (and raise the readability) of written work. This might include:

* Clarity of structure
* Chunking and labelling content
* Simplicity of vocabulary, and
* Avoiding the sins of sloppy writing