



How can I improve my writing?



Holy Trinity's handbook for becoming an excellent writer

Time Connectives

Used throughout the text or to start sentences with.

Examples:

- seconds later...
- soon...
- finally...
- within seconds...
- subsequently...
- suddenly...As he spoke these words...
- early one morning...
- a whole year passed...
- by early evening...
- immediately...
- afterwards...
- next, we will...
- following that...

Using a range of words instead of 'said'

Examples:

- ordered
- commanded
- barked
- bellowed
- growled
- hissed
- chuckled
- spluttered
- continued
- shouted

Similes

Writers use similes to explain things, to express emotion, and to make their writing more vivid and entertaining.

A simile is where two things are directly compared because they share a common feature. The word AS or LIKE is used to compare the two words.

Examples:

- Shadows fluttered about him like a swarm of butterflies.
- Her sparkling eyes were as blue as the ocean.
- The dragon flew as fast as the wind
- The small pool in the mountain side glittered like a mirror.

Metaphors

A metaphor compares two things directly WITHOUT using as or like.

Examples:

- The farm crouched on the edge of the hillside.
- There's more life in a tramp's vest.
- The little shop was a gold-mine.
- His heart sank when he heard the dreadful news.

Using complex sentences to provide more detail

(Containing a main clause and a subordinate clause)

Examples:

- Carefully placing her book down, Emma peered out of the window.
- Despite having an enormous plateful of food, Rachel was still hungry.
- Lacking in sympathy for a man who had treated him so cruelly, Jim's mind quickly turned to the prospect of getting away.

Language of persuasion

Phrases using **that**

- I believe that...
- I think that...
- It seems to me that...
- It is clear to me that...
- It strikes me that...
- There is no doubt that...
- There can be no doubt that...
- I am convinced that...
- It appears that...
- It is obvious that...

Rhetorical questions

- Is it any wonder that...?
- Don't you think that...?
- Isn't it clear that...?
- Isn't it the case that...?
- How can anyone believe this to be true?
- Does anyone really believe that...?

Other phrases to start a sentence with

- In my opinion...
- As I see it...
- As everyone knows...
- Clearly...
- Obviously...
- Inevitably...
- My own view is that...
- Despite...
- Above all...
- Similarly...
- In the same way...

<p><u>Initial phrases followed by a comma</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surely, • Firstly, • Secondly, • Thirdly, • In addition, • Furthermore, • Moreover, • Besides, 	
<p><u>Cause and effect language</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consequently... • As a result of this... 	
<p><u>Illustrative language</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example... • For instance... 	
<p><u>Phrases to use when providing evidence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example... • I cite, as an example... • My evidence to support this is... • I would draw your attention to... • I would refer to... 	
<p><u>Phrases to finish off with</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To sum up. • My last point is... • My final point is... • Finally, • In conclusion, • In summary, • To conclude I would like to say... • On the basis of the evidence presented... • On balance... <p>The evidence presented supports the view that...It is my sincere belief that...</p>	

Starting a sentence with a verb in the -ing form to emphasise movement or action

Examples:

- Grabbing Jim by the hair, Nick marched him out of the wooden hut.
- Mustering all his strength he heaved the sack up the deserted beach.
- Using his entire body he flung the water from the boat.
- Crawling on all fours gingerly, Tim gradually made it to the door.
- Fumbling for the bolt, Laura's fingers stung in the bitter wind.

Adding more detail by 'dropping in' a clause separated by two commas

Examples:

- Suddenly, without warning, the dog leapt on him!
- Finally, after what seemed like forever, the ice started to crack.
- She agreed, despite loathing the taste, to give it another try.

Ellipsis show that:

a) an action is interrupted

b) a speaker has been interrupted and an utterance is left unfinished

Examples:

- He was unconscious within minutes...but not for long!
- "Joe, Joe be reasonable..."

Using imagery to improve the quality of description

(creating a more vivid picture)

Examples:

- “He won’t be much good to me, he’s as thin as a stick,” whispered the gentleman.
- It was like trying to shift a giant boulder.
- Like a panther creeping up on its prey, Colin tiptoed over to the group.
- His face was as black as tar.

Using personification to bring an action to life

Examples:

- Every muscle in his body howled.
- His arms cried out for him.
- The tree groaned and shuddered as it was heaved from the ground.

Using the word ‘as’ to show two things happening simultaneously

Examples:

- Jim squealed loudly as he was kicked in the rib cage.
- Peter winced as the rope pulled through his fingers.
- As he clambered onto the boat he noticed an unfamiliar shape disappearing.
- It was still snowing as Jenny turned the ignition in her rusty old car.

Using short sentences to speed up the pace and create suspense leading to a climax

Examples:

- Almost there! Now he had to run for it. Glancing back at Nick Jim didn’t notice one of the ropes that tied the boat to the land. He tripped.
- Clunk! It was secure.
- The heavy wooden door creaked as it opened. She froze!

Using questions to create impact

Examples:

- Was he still asleep?
- But where was Snipe?
- Had the time really slipped through her fingers?

Using colons when one sentence follows on directly from another

Examples:

- They were grimy: the tops of his fingernails were encrusted in dirt.
- Suddenly it dawned on her: the scruffy dog was from the farm.
- No reply. He wasn't dead: he was still breathing.

Using semi-colons for pause of a longer duration than a comma. The two parts of the sentence are linked in meaning and of equal importance

Examples:

- Jim could barely see him; his silhouette blended in amongst the trees.
- The house was filthy; even the rats had left.
- Hannah knew her Grandfather well; he would sleep deeply now.

Using sentences starting with the word 'if' to show possibility

Examples:

- If he could be sure she would not see, he would make a run for it to the log pile at the end of the garden.
- If he could pull the metal gates closed before they arrived he may stand a chance.

Using dashes:

a) to show an after thought

Examples:

- “I’ll give you that – and it’s my final offer.”
- Jim’s body was trembling – he sensed imminent danger.
- “It’s extremely cold there – beware.”

b) to separate a group of words from a sentence (used like brackets)

Examples:

- He was wearing old trousers – that were far too short for him – and a battered pair of trainers.
- Sprinting across the field – not caring who saw him – Nick whooped in excitement!

Polite directives

Examples:

- Please come to...
- It will be ...
- It will take place at...
- It starts at...
- It finishes at...
- Don’t forget to...
- It would be good if...
- If you can remember to...
- It is anticipated that it will finish around...
- The easiest way to get here is...
- During the afternoon there will be...

Starting a sentence with an adverb

Examples:

- Carefully pulling the sacks over his shivering body, Jim settled down to sleep for the night.
- Fearfully, she peered into the darkness.
- Fortuitously it turned out that the brute had descended into the cellar.

- Eagerly
- Patiently
- Cautiously
- Delicately
- Furiously

Sentence Starters

A	H	Q	
Above all	Hopeful	Quite a while later	
After a while	I	R	
After that	Immediately	S	
Afterwards	In addition	Shortly after	
Again	In a flash	Shortly before	
Although	In a second	Simultaneously	
A moment later	Indeed	So	
As well as	Initially	Sometimes	
At that precise moment	Instantly	Soon	
At that time	In the meantime	Subsequently	
At that very moment	J	Suddenly	
B	Just before	Surprisingly	
Before long	Just after	T	
By the time	Just then	Thus	
C	K	Time passed before	
Confident of	L	To everyone's amazement	
Consequently	Later	To my amazement	
Considering	Long before	To my horror	
Curiously	Long after	To my surprise	
D	M	Towards	
Days passed before	Meanwhile	U	
Despite	Mindful of	Ultimately	
During	Moments later	Unexpectedly	
E	Moreover	Unfortunately	
Even though	Much later	Unusually	
Eventually	N	Usually	
Evidently	Next	V	
F	Notwithstanding	W	
Finally	Now	What followed was	
Following that	O	Within minutes	
For some time	Obviously	Within no time	
Fortunately	Of course	With this in mind	
From time to time	P	Without hesitating	
Furthermore	Presently	With determination	
G	Previously		
Generally			

Exemplar play script stage directions

A	H	R	
(After a short time)	(Harshly)	(Raising his voice)	
(After some time)	(He picks up...)	(Respectfully)	
(After considering his suggestion)	(Hesitantly)	(Rising to her feet)	
(Angrily)	(He shows her...)	S	
(Aside)	(Hiding her true feelings)	(Shaking his head)	
B	(Hysterically)	(Sitting on the sofa)	
(Becoming excited)	I	(She takes the...)	
C	(In a hushed voice)	(Short pause)	
(Coming towards her)	(Ignoring)	(Screaming)	
(Confidently)	J	(Smiling)	
(Confused)	(Jokingly)	(Sneakily)	
(Courteously)	K	(Suggestively)	
(Crosses to the...)	L	T	
D	(Laughing)	(The door opens/closes)	
(Doing his best to trick them)	(Looking at her watch)	(The scene cuts to...)	
E	(Looking anxious)	(The telephone rings)	
(Enter...)	(Looking away)	(They hug each other)	
(Examining...)	(Looking confident)	(They laugh)	
(Excitedly)	M	(They glare at each other)	
(Exiting the stage)	(Matter-of-factly)	(Thoughtfully)	
F	(Moving away)	(Truthfully)	
(Fidgeting)	(Moving forward)	U	
G	N	(Uncertain)	
(Gently)	(Nodding)	(Unpleasantly)	
(Generously)	(Nonchalantly)	V	
(Giggling)	O	W	
(Gruffly)	(Off stage)	(Winking at him)	
	P	(With tears in her eyes)	
	(Pauses)	(Without showing his emotion)	
	(Peering behind him)	X	
	(Persuasively)	Y	
	(Politely)	(Yawning)	
	(Preparing to leave)	Z	
	(Proudly)		
	Q		

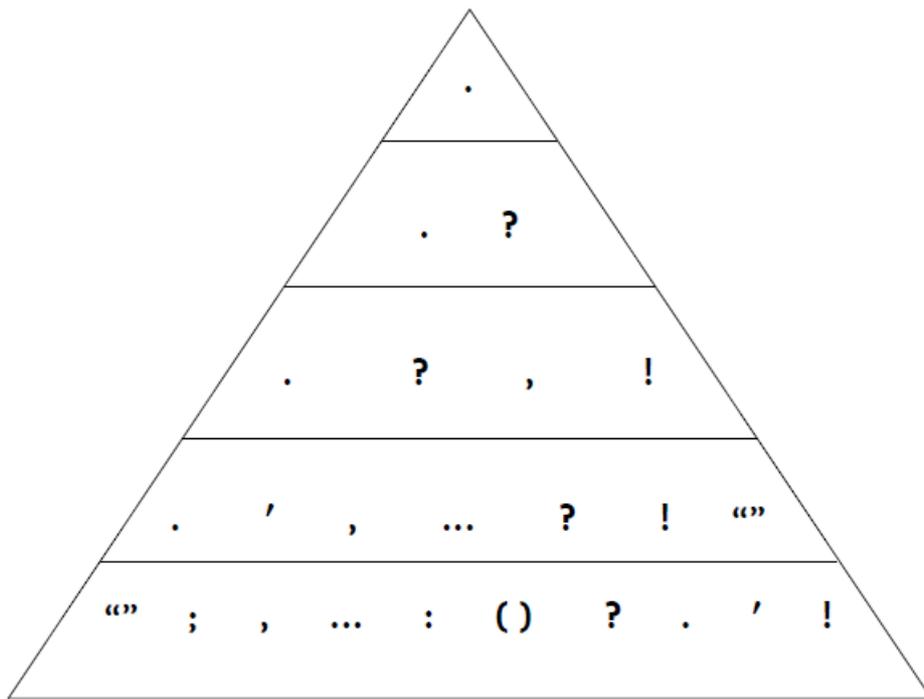
Adverbs

accidentally	fondly	obediently	urgently
admiringly	forcefully	painstakingly	unexpectedly
adoringly	forgetfully	patiently	vacantly
aggressively	frankly	perilously	vaguely
angrily	frantically	persistently	viciously
anxiously	gallantly	pessimistically	violently
assuredly	generously	ponderously	vivaciously
awkwardly	gently	positively	victoriously
boldly	gingerly	promptly	wisely
bravely	graciously	quickly	wistfully
caringly	gradually	rapidly	worriedly
carelessly	gratefully	reluctantly	wildly
casually	greedily	resiliently	warmly
cautiously	harshly	resourcefully	
clumsily	hesitantly	respectfully	
continually	hysterically	sarcastically	
convincingly	imaginatively	sensitively	
courageously	impatiently	seriously	
courteously	impressively	silently	
daringly	inquisitively	spitefully	
defiantly	innocently	sternly	
desperately	insensitively	stupidly	
determinedly	insistently	suggestively	
dishonestly	irritably	surreptitiously	
dramatically	jokingly	suspiciously	
ecstatically	lazily	sympathetically	
eloquently	loosely	swiftly	
emphatically	maliciously	stealthily	
energetically	majestically	solemnly	
exquisitely	menacingly	tantalizingly	
erratically	modestly	tenderly	
excitedly	mysteriously	theatrically	
expressively	needlessly	thoughtfully	
fairly	nervously	thoughtlessly	
ferociously	nonchalantly	timidly	
fiercely	optimistically	truthfully	
foolishly	obnoxiously	tensely	

Powerful Adjectives

- crafty
- delicious
- dazzling
- weary
- inquisitive

Punctuation Pyramid



Features of a good **discussion text**

- In the first paragraph say what the issue is
- Use titles and sub headings to break up your writing into sections
- Stick to one subject in each section
- Don't show your opinion – give both sides of the argument
- Use technical words where possible
- In the last paragraph, sum up the discussion

Features of good texts about your **point of view**

- Use a title that shows your point of view
- Say exactly what your point of view is in the first paragraph
- In each paragraph give a reason for your point of view
- Include facts and evidence to back up your point of view
- Use clear, concise, formal language

Features of a good **argument**

- Start with a short introduction, saying what you think
- Stick to 3 or 4 main points, to keep your argument simple and strong
- Make your points in clear, simple sentences
- Don't just give your opinions – back them up with lots of convincing facts
- Sum up your argument at the end

Features of good **diary writing**

- Write in the first person – use 'I'
- Write the diary entries in the same order that they happened
- Write about one day's events in each entry
- Give personal feelings and points of view
- Start each diary entry with the date as a sub heading

Features of a good **recount**

- Only include key facts
- Use clear sentences that give as much information as possible
- If you were there, write in the first person – use ‘I’
- Don’t put conversations in – just describe what people said

Features of a good **article**

- Cover all the important facts about the event or subject you’re writing about
- Use interesting and exciting vocabulary to keep the reader interested
- Present all the facts fairly and write about both sides of the argument
- Include quotes from people involved in the story
- Use your conclusion to sum up the facts and mention your own opinion

Features of a good **biography**

- Write about the person’s whole life, not just a short time in their life
- Concentrate on the most interesting events in their life
- Cover events in the same order that they actually happened
- Only write about facts – don’t make things up
- Use sub-headings to break it up

Features of good **instruction** texts

- Write a new instruction for each different thing you have to do
- Number, or bullet point, each instruction
- Make each step clear and easy to understand
- Put the steps in the right order
- Always re-read the finished instructions to check they make sense

Features of good **newsletters**

- Tell the audience exactly what they need to know
- Use capitals, titles and subheadings to make important information stand out
- Use formal English
- Use persuasive, powerful language to create a buzz

Features of a good **explanation**

- Use headings, sub-headings and glossaries to break up your writing into sections
- Only include the key facts
- Make sentences short and to-the-point
- Use technical vocabulary but make sure you explain what the words mean
- Think about what your readers/audience know – don't make your writing too complicated/simplified

Features of a good **advert/flyer**

- Use exciting, attention-grabbing vocabulary and phrases
- Use an interesting layout and clear, bold writing to hook the readers' attention
- Make the reader believe they couldn't live without the product
- Use clear language so the reader understands what you are saying

Features of a **factual report**

- Tell the reader when and where the event took place
- Write about the important facts-don't include irrelevant details
- Tell the events in the order that they happened
- Use formal language that's clear and to-the-point
- Don't include lots of long descriptions
- Finish with a conclusion

Features of a good **formal letter**

- Write your address in the top right hand corner with the date two lines underneath
- Use formal English
- Say clearly why you are writing the letter in your opening sentence
- Start a new paragraph for each new point you make
- If you don't know the name of the person you are writing to, start your letter with 'Dear Sir or Madam' and end with 'Yours faithfully,'
- If you do know the name of the person you are writing to start 'Dear...'
and end with 'Yours sincerely,'

Features of a good **informal letter**

- Write your address and the date in the top right hand corner
- Start your letter with 'Dear...' and use their first name
- Use your first sentence to ask how they are and give the reason for your letter
- Write about what you have been doing – about three paragraphs
- End your letter with a friendly comment, like 'Lots of love,' and your first name

Features of a good **description**

- Mention every part of whatever you are describing
- Pay special attention to anything that's different or unusual about the thing you're describing
- Write descriptions that use all five senses – sight, touch, hearing, smell and taste

Features of a good **conversation**

- Use punctuation accurately – especially speech marks
- Each time a different person speaks, put their speech on a new line
- Use interesting verbs – think of alternative words to ‘said’
- Just have two or three people speaking – if you have more it gets confusing

Features of a good **play script**

- Make sure that most of what you write is what people actually say
- Describe the setting and use stage directions to describe how the actors should say their lines
- Don’t put speech marks around spoken words
- Tell the story through what the characters say

Features of **stories that raise real issues**

- Choose an issue that lots of people know about (loneliness, bullying, divorce...)
- Begin by introducing the main character, then their problem
- Have a familiar setting
- Write in the first person ‘I’ so that you can describe the emotions felt by the main character
- Have a happy ending, where the problem has a solution/ is sorted out

Features of a good **description**

- Mention every part of whatever you are describing
- Pay special attention to anything that’s different or unusual about the thing you’re describing
- Write descriptions that use all five senses – sight, touch, hearing, smell and taste
- Use powerful adjectives and descriptive language to paint the picture

Features of a good **adventure story**

- Have a problem that forces the characters to go on a journey
- Include some dangers that they come across on the journey
- Think of original ways that the characters overcome the dangers they meet
- Build up suspense through a series of twists and turns, each one worse than the last

Features of a good **horror story**

- Choose a spooky setting, like a run-down fairground or an old, empty house
- Have an unusual ghost or creature/monster as a main character
- Build up the suspense with descriptive vocabulary, short sentences and cliff-hangers
- End with a surprise

Features of a good **story with a twist**

- Put twists at the end of mystery stories
- Put clues in the story to make readers expect one ending
- In your twist make the clues add up to a different ending
- Save your twist for the very end of your story

Features of a good **story with a flashback**

- In flashbacks, write about the character at an earlier time in their life
- Use flashbacks to help readers understand what's happening in the story
- Only use flashbacks once or twice, so that they are effective
- Write flashbacks in the past tense

Features of good **fantasy adventure stories**

- Base your story on a quest (a journey to find someone or something)
- Set your story in a made-up place
- Have some main characters who aren't human – the stranger the better
- Include some difficult challenges for the main character to face

Features of a good **story with a familiar setting**

- Set the story in ordinary places
- Have ordinary people as your main characters
- Write about unusual or surprising events
- Include detailed descriptions to make the story convincing

Features of a good **mystery story**

- Begin with something unusual or dramatic to set the scene
- Give the reader clues to what has happened to build the suspense
- Add drama by making the main character ask questions
- Include mysterious sounds, lights or smells to add surprise
- Sometimes add a twist at the end, to surprise the reader

Features of a good **historical story**

- Historical stories are adventure stories based on facts
- Use facts from history to make the story sound realistic
- Give the characters a mission or send them on a difficult journey
- The characters should talk and act like people did at that time in history

Features of a good **science fiction story**

- Set your story in the future or in space
- Write about a group of friends on a journey – as if it's an adventure story
- Include unusual species from different planets
- Include unbelievable settings and hi-tech gadgets and machines

Features of a good **humorous story**

- Have characters that are either funny or have funny features/behaviours and describe them really well
- Include a boring character that makes the funny characters seem even funnier
- Turn normal, familiar situations into funny, odd situations
- Use conversations and detailed descriptions to make the readers chuckle

Features of a good **story with a dilemma**

- Introduce the main character first, then the dilemma
- Have an innocent central character or characters
- Choose a dilemma that readers will have experienced or heard about
- In your story explain how the main character solved the dilemma
- Write a moral ending that makes the reader think

Features of a good **fable**

- Base the story around a moral (a lesson for the readers)
- Use animals as characters
- Include simple conversations between characters
- Have a simple beginning, middle and end
- Choose a title that explains the story