

How to Use Words To Get What You Want

Do What Elite Leaders Do

Wiley Brooks



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When choosing words, go with *the short ones*.

Exercises & Resources

Famous Quote

Quickly write down the first famous quote that pops into your mind. It can be from anything or anyone.

Fox Exercise

Compared to the dog, the fox was clearly more energetic. He demonstrated his agility with his attempts to tease the canine by bounding over him. The dog, though, didn't seem to notice, much less care, preferring to lie there motionless with his chin on the floor. And this fox, at least, was definitely not red, as is the case in all the storybooks, but more of a brownish color.

'Greek' Word / Better Word

(Two syllables okay, too)

'Greek' Word	Better Word
1. Participation	join
2. Annihilation	
3. Education	
4. Remuneration	
5. Discrimination	
6. Jubilation	
7. Conclusion	
8. Notation	
9. Demarcation	
10. Observation	
11. Progression	
12. Creation	
13. Cessation	
14. Registration	
15. Occupation	

Mind Game No. 1

Mind Game No. 2

Step-by-Step Editing

We encourage you to inquire of your departmental employees to determine how much fluency they have in the new auditing principles so we can ascertain where additional resources need to be allocated.

We encourage you to inquire of your departmental employees to determine how much fluency they have in the new auditing principles. With that info, we can ascertain where additional resources need to be allocated.

~~We encourage you to inquire _____ of your departmental~~
~~employees _____ to determine how much fluency they have~~
~~_____ in the new auditing principles~~
~~_____ . With that info _____ , we can ascertain~~
~~_____ where additional resources need to be allocated~~
~~_____ .~~

Friend of the Year

- Write one paragraph to nominate someone to win the "Friend of the Year" award. Use ONLY one-syllable words. Write up to 75 words.

Prepare for War!

When World War II broke out, President Roosevelt feared that Germany might carry out bombing raids on Washington, DC. He asked an aide to put together a short document on how to prepare for a bombing. The aide got right on it and submitted this paragraph for FDR's okay.



- *Such preparations shall be made as will completely obscure all federal buildings and non-Federal buildings occupied by the Federal Government during an air raid for any period of time from visibility by reason of internal or external illumination. Such obscuration may be obtained either by blackout construction or by termination of the illumination. This will, of course, require that in building areas in which production must continue during the blackout, construction must be provided that internal illumination may continue. Other areas, whether or not occupied by personnel, may be obscured by terminating the illumination.*



Roosevelt was appalled. Like other great leaders, FDR understood the value of using simple words in short sentences. He returned this draft to the aide with the following comment in the margin:

- *Tell them that in buildings where they have to keep work going, to put something across the window. In buildings where they can afford to let the work stop for a while, turn out the lights.*

The aide's version, which some might call the worst of bureaucratic writing, scores a lowly 21.5 on the Flesch Reading Ease scale. That makes it almost impossible to easily get through and understand. Roosevelt's comments, though, scored an 85.2 on the same scale. Almost everyone would be able to quickly read FDR's version and know exactly what would be expected of them.

• 5 Steps to Clear Writing

1. Use fewer, shorter words
2. Put them in simple sentences
3. Choose visual, short, action verbs
4. Keep focused on one thing
5. Review and revise

Easy Peasy Lemon Squeezy

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Foot Wiley Brooks *WB*

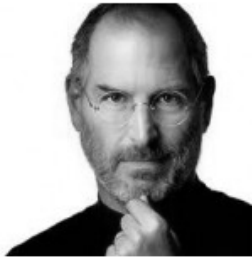
69

Good writers. . .

. . .never write just one draft. The first draft is just to get your ideas and key points into a document. The second and subsequent drafts are where you turn it into good writing.

WHAT YOU CAN LEARN FROM THE SIMPLE ELEGANCE OF STEVE JOBS' WORDS

Posted By [Wiley Brooks](#) On September 11, 2014 @ 9:00 pm In [clear writing](#), [Inspirational](#), [key message](#), [Leadership](#), [speeches](#), [Wiley Brooks](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)



[1]

In June 2005, Steve Jobs found himself standing before the soon-to-be graduates at Stanford University. He gave a speech that many say set him apart from most other admired business leaders. It was a talk that fixed his place as the most inspiring business leader of a generation. There are lessons we can all take from what he said that day, but there are also lessons to take from how he said it. Why? Because it's not just what you have to say, but how you say it that counts.

Jobs was a master of simple elegance. It washed over everything he did. So it shouldn't come as a surprise that when he spoke- no matter how complex the topic - he chose simple, yet elegant words. It was if he were sitting next to you on the sofa with no reason to impress you, but did so time and again. People who speak as Jobs did earn your trust.

I like everything about the Stanford speech. One of my favorite parts comes about midway through the talk.

"Sometimes life hits you in the head with a brick. Don't lose faith. I'm convinced that the only thing that kept me going was that I loved what I did. You've got to find what you love."

People who inspire us, whether it's on a large national stage or in a small business conference room, use words that are accessible. Simple, short words in simple short sentences. It makes it so they can say things that roll off the tongue. More importantly, they are easy to recall. *"Sometimes life hits you in the head with a brick. Don't lose faith."*

Jobs always spoke with the clarity that comes with simple language. This speech at Stanford scores better than 75 on the Flesch scale. That score tells you that what he said was very easy for the listener to follow and to grasp the nuggets he was serving. That special quote that I like about the brick and not losing faith scored a perfect 100.

A lot goes into how we write or talk. You are the product of your upbringing and your habits and tendencies have formed over many years. But leaders prepare. They practice. They get better and better. So can you. Start by running everything you write through a tool like the [Clarity Tool](#).^[2] I have here on my site. It's free. Be eager to revise and run what you have written through the tool again. And again. After a while, you will find that you are naturally using simpler words. As that happens, you'll find that you will make better word choices when speaking, too.

If you have the time, read Steve Job's entire speech. You can do it by [following this link](#) ^[3] to the page on Stanford's website.

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USE SHORT WORDS IN SIMPLE SENTENCES TO INSPIRE AN AUDIENCE

Posted By [Wiley Brooks](#) On October 2, 2014 @ 12:08 am In [clear writing](#),[Inspirational](#),[Speech writing](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)



[1]

Most people, even those who give lots of speeches, will tell you that a good speech is a blend of strong content and an engaging delivery. But if you rely on just content and delivery, odds are that your audience will find what you said to be forgettable.

No one wants that. You want to inspire them.

A good speech is like a 3-legged stool. It's equal parts content, delivery and structure. History shows that structure is the cornerstone of great speeches. The words you choose to use and the way you build sentences with them will make a speech memorable, even if you're having an off-day and your delivery is just so-so.

So what makes for good structure? Simple language. The talks that people remember rely on short words used in easy-to-grasp sentences. Even if the subject is complex, the structure is not.

Back in the 1950s, a Columbia professor named Rudolf Flesch found that the clarity of a piece could be measured using a series of algorithms. The higher the score, the easier it was to know what was said. Now, more than 6 decades later, the Flesch score is still the gold standard for clarity. It is the engine used in my [Clarity Tool](#).^[2] on this website.

Most of what business people write scores in the 40s. Stories in the popular press tend to fall in the low 50s. Good speeches, though, always are at 60 and above on the Flesch scale. Anything less than that fails to roll off the tongue in a way that's easy to follow.

When JFK became president, he gave his famous "Ask not. . ." speech. It scored a 60. A few years later, Martin Luther King stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to tell a crowd of more than 200,000 that "I have a dream." That speech scored a 66. Even Honest Abe himself, speaking at a time when language was much more formal, recorded a 64 for the Gettysburg Address.

The speech I like to call most attention to, though, was by a business icon. Steve Jobs spoke to the graduates at Stanford in 2005. This very smart man speaking to some of the best young minds in the country gave a talk that measured 75 on the Flesch scale. Many cite it as one of the greatest commencement speeches of all time.

The next time you have a speech to write, follow the path of great speakers and use mostly one-syllable words in sentences that rarely go past 15 words. If you do, people might actually quote you long after the speech itself. That's what happens when you inspire them.

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WANT TO WRITE BETTER? SPEND \$7 ON THIS APP INSPIRED BY PAPA HEMINGWAY

Posted By [Wiley Brooks](#) On November 17, 2014 @ 11:16 am In [clear writing](#), [Speech writing](#), [Writing](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)



[1]

Would you spend 7 bucks to make everything you write better? I think you'd be a fool not to. But \$6.99 is the one-time cost of a new app that you can download to your desktop and use on whatever you write from now on. Take my word for it, the Hemingway App is worth the money.

It's easy to use. First, buy the app and download it to your PC. It will then always be there to highlight words and sentences where you can make something you just wrote better. My Clarity Tool app gives you the Flesch score, which helps make what you write easier to read and remember. The Hemingway App, though, gives you more. It highlights the hard-to-read sentences, the adverbs and where you used passive voice.

I like that I can copy and paste what I wrote into the Hemingway App and it will show me instantly where I should focus my edits. Of course, you don't have to follow what the app says. You might want to use an adverb or have a great reason for using passive voice in a sentence. In the end, you get to make that call, not some piece of software. (For example, the app flagged the word "instantly" in the first sentence of this paragraph. It's an adverb that some might want to cut. I chose to keep it.)

I've made the Hemingway App part of my writing process. It's my last step. Think of it as quality control. I start with a draft. When I'm satisfied with it as a draft, I copy and paste it into my Clarity Tool. I get the raw score and work to make it better. If I'm writing an important email, the first draft might score a 60. I'll want it to be at 80, so I keep reworking it until it is. When I get the text to the score I want, I launch the Hemingway App, then copy and paste the text into the app.

The Hemingway App never fails to show me something I can do to make what I was just happy with better. It has helped me, for instance, cut down on adverbs that my documents don't need. Most people use too many adverbs.

Like my Clarity Tool, the Hemingway App won't help you with content. You have to know what you want to say. It just helps you fine-tune your structure. And like my Clarity Tool, the words you paste into the field can be complete gibberish. Both my tool and the app ignore content to focus on structure. If you are starting with a draft that reflects what you want to say, though, the words will make sense. If not, your writing truly sucks. (The Hemingway App would have just flagged the adverb "truly.")

You can try the app before you buy it at <http://HemingwayApp.com> [2]. Click on the green button for the desktop version. The one you download is cleaner than the one on the website. The app is available in both Windows and Mac OSX for the same \$6.99 price. (I'm not connected to the Hemingway App people.)

The app says that this blog copy is "Good." (That's the top rating.) It did flag five adverbs, but "truly" was there three times and "instantly" twice so I could make my point. Flesch gives it an 89.1. Doesn't get much better than that.

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Remember to use my Clarity Tool. It's free and completely private. I have no access to anything you might place in the text box. To use the tool, go to **WileyBrooks.com**, then click on the **Clarity Tool** tab at the top.



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