

One Page of Important Information About Writing

1. Most don't choose words carefully. It makes me sad.
2. Read *The Ultimate Sales Letter* by Dan Kennedy.
3. Words to use less and/or eliminate: very, that.
4. Compelling verbs are better than adjectives. Example:
 - 1) He sprinted past the finish line.
 - 2) He ran fast past the finish line.
5. What materials does your ideal client read?
6. Can you emulate the writing style of those publications?
7. Grab a copy of *Words that Sell* by Richard Bayan.
8. People care about themselves first.
9. Anyone who tells you "a picture is worth a thousand words" is a terrible writer and should not be trusted. Or he/she is a photographer. Also not to be trusted.
10. Your writing reflects the last thing you read. Are you reading compelling stories or only legal briefs?
11. Baseball stories, especially in newspapers from the 1920's to the 1960's, will improve your writing's rhythm.
12. Your vs. you're
13. Read great fiction and great non-fiction. Both will improve your writing abilities.
14. Their vs. there vs. they're
15. You don't need to be a great writer. You just need to be better than the majority who don't care.
16. Are vs. our
17. Social media is where good language goes to die.
18. Write short sentences.
19. And short paragraphs.
20. Long sentences should be long because of analogies and metaphors, not because of jargon.

1. Use analogies, metaphors, similes, stories, etc.
2. Specificity keeps people interested. Example:
 - 1) I opened my office in the summer of 2005.
 - 2) I opened the doors to Mann Law during the uncomfortable August heat wave of 2005.
3. Writing is not always fun. Sometimes it is a matter of putting words on a page until you can assemble them in a way that makes sense. You can slow to a crawl, you can write half-sentences, you can start paragraphs with no ending in mind, but never come to a complete stop.
4. The only way to improve your writing is to do more of it. My earliest emails and sales letters were awful. You can make plenty of early mistakes in newsletters, e-newsletters, basic follow-up sequences, and more.
5. Music is the devil's tool. It ruins writing – even music that doesn't have lyrics.
6. Write separate paragraphs or sections; then piece them together in an order that makes sense.
7. People are looking for words related to their problems. The more ground you cover, the more opportunities there are for self-identification.
8. Use formatting to draw attention to key phrases.
9. You need to order a copy of *Everybody Writes* by Ann Handley. Seriously. You have my permission to ignore anything going on right now and order a copy on Amazon.
10. Big blocks of text are impenetrable to most readers. They get flashbacks of their college textbooks.

1. Build a "swipe file" of emails, letters, books, reports, etc. for your reference. I regularly reach into large boxes and folders of material to inspire me.
2. You don't get to break the rules until you know the rules.
3. Be intentional in the design of what you write. The appearance of the words and the page are important.
4. Never pitch down the middle.
5. Spend more time on your headline than feels reasonable.
6. The job of every sentence is to get the reader to the next sentence.
7. Don't be afraid to delete.
8. Don't be afraid to restart from the beginning.
9. Avoid equivocating.
10. Build your voice, and don't try to be someone you're not.
11. If you don't feel the emotion, neither does your reader.
12. 200 words rarely does the trick.
13. Provoke a response. Even a head nod will do.
14. How did I forget to tell you to get a copy of *The Robert Collier Letter Book*? It is by Robert Collier. No surprise there.
15. Develop alternate paths of readership. Some people read every word. Others read only the headlines and captions.
16. Don't forget about captions.
17. The best trick I have to jumpstart the writing process is to physically put yourself somewhere different – just at the beginning. Sit in a different part of the office. Go to the library. Grab a notepad and scratch out an outline in your car. Then finish the piece where you normally write.

-Charley Mann Chief Marketing Officer Great Legal Marketing