

Strategies for Concision

When writing, it is important to remain focused. If a paragraph covers too many points at once, it becomes bloated and hard to follow. But, if there is little to no explanation for the arguments given, the writing starts to lose its reader as well. What is a good balance, and how do you reach it?

Crafting a Concise Sentence

When writing a sentence, always keep in mind what it is meant to communicate. Ask: What is the most effective way to deliver your ideas to the reader?

Keep in mind:

- Concision does not always mean fewer words.
- How you express an idea can be as important than the idea itself.
- Unconcise sentences can cause the reader to miss the main ideas/points.

Some examples:

Unconcise: Sally felt as if she was merely a speck of dust in comparison when she was younger and would see the majestic space whale pods fly by her ship.

Concise: Sally felt small as a child when the space whales would fly by.

This is a case of concision by way of dropping excess words. Too many words can slow down the reader and confuse them with unneeded information.

Unconcise: The endangered space whale has many unconfirmed or suspected causes that made them endangered, and some people think that asteroid miners might be killing them.

Concise: Many think that one reason the space whale is endangered is the hostility received from asteroid miners.

The above example demonstrates concision by replacing vague words and phrases with more specific language. This is similar to dropping excess information, but also helps to outline the main idea of the sentence.

Crafting a Concise Paragraph

Paragraphs are meant to contain related sentences that converge onto one idea, plot point, argument, etc. Ask: How can you keep the paragraph focused and self-supported?

Keep in mind that:

- Most paragraphs are only a few sentences long.
- The main idea should be easily accessible to the reader.
- Paragraphs should have a good continuity, or "flow."

Some examples:

Unconcise: Space whale pods usually contain 6-10 whales. The pods acted as a deterrent for the ancient predators of the space whale. Now they serve as social arenas and hunting packs. Pods are known to play with stray meteors as well.

Concise: Space whale pods contain 6-10 whales, and used to deter ancient predators. Today, pods are social arenas that hunt together and play games with stray meteors.

In the first paragraph, the related sentences can be combined to reduce the number of pauses the reader goes through. Combining sentences also allows for related ideas to be closer together in the writing.

Unconcise: When people think of space whales, they tend to imagine them as similar to whales in the ocean. New conservation methods have been made to help with the unique difficulties that space whales face. This is because space whales are in fact very different from common planetary whales.

Concise: When people think of space whales, they tend to imagine them as similar to whales in the ocean, but space whales are in fact very different from common planetary whales. New conservation methods have been made to help with the unique difficulties that space whales face.

The underlined sentence is in a very awkward spot in the first paragraph. Moving it to where it is in the second paragraph allows for a better flow of ideas, and connections between the different points are easier to make.