

## **CRISP Editing**

The most important thing to remember is that writing should be a series of deliberate choices. Whether it's a word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph, each element of your writing should reflect the act of thoughtful choice. The great American novelist Don DeLillo wrote, "Writing is a form of personal freedom. It frees us from the mass identity we see in the making all around us. In the end, writers will write not to be outlaw heroes of some underculture but mainly to save themselves, to survive as individuals." Writing an analysis essay may not save you, but it should be an opportunity to uniquely express the person and think you want to be.

### **Combine Sentences**

*Avoid a string of short, disconnected sentences unless you intend to use them for effect. They tend to make your writing less natural. It also makes the writing choppy for the reader. See what I mean Most of the time, you will want to combine data (evidence or textual support) with your claim, rather than separating them into separate sentences.*

### **Compare these passages:**

- She shows the ability of Americans to follow society's system of authority by saying that people had been "flocking to Florida" as a vacation place. She makes the comparison between birds and Americans by using the word "flocking". She symbolizes the idea that Americans follow one another, mimicking the more powerful and influential ones rather than finding their own path. Birds are the same way because they always seem to be together in a massive group, especially when migrating to the south.
- Price compares Americans to "flocks" of birds, sardonically suggesting that Americans are just as likely to flock towards the latest trend as birds are to mindlessly migrate together each change in season.

### **Reduce Wordiness**

*Eliminate filler phrases that exist only to add words to the piece. Think about George Orwell and his argument against meaningless phrases. Make sure that your diction is deliberate and meaningful. Be mindful of unnecessary qualifiers that weaken your language as well.*

Phrases to excise include:

### **Intensify Verbs**

*Look at all the verbs in your piece. Circle the being verbs and eliminate those that don't need to exist. Especially watch for the use of the passive voice. If you didn't intend to use it (special circumstances), eliminate it.*

### **Sharpen Diction**

*Word choice is responsible for tone and precision of meaning. Evaluate word choice carefully to determine how it will affect the reader's perception of your attitude. Eliminate vague pronouns.*

*At least once per paragraph, make a deliberate decision to change a word or phrase to something more specific, more powerful, and with more precise meaning.*

### **Pack Phrases and Reduce Clauses**

*Move phrases behind nouns.*

- Instead of "A proposal presented by Derek Bok, the president of Harvard, was defeated," (12 words) pack it to "Harvard president Derek Bok's proposal failed." (6 words)

*Almost all clauses can be reduced in some way, to appositives or phrases, etc.*

- Instead of "Barack Obama, who is the President of the United States" simply write "Barack Obama, President of the United States."

*Derived from an original handout by Dixie Dellinger*