





# **Words That Can Make Your Readers Squirm...**

Writing what you really mean



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## **INTRODUCTION**

Everyone is required to write at some time or other. Unless you are writing in your diary, you are writing something for someone else to read. Most everyone who is reading this publication will be writing to an audience that will hopefully be persuaded to either buy something, or subscribe to a newsletter or email list.

This is a short PDF which will give a few brief guidelines on constructing effective sentences that will influence others to be interested in your information. Whether you are writing to build a business, or writing to build credibility for yourself (such as a resume'), you will need to keep people's attention long enough to get your point across.

You will also want to make certain that what you say is what you mean. Words have meaning, and if you are not attentive to what you are writing, and how you are putting together your words and sentences, you can deliver a different message from the one that you had intended.

If your message is skewed, misunderstood, or not clear, then you not only reduce your credibility, but you also will find that you will lose readership and/or customers.



## **Working Words**

Some of the hardest working words are those action words, also known as adjectives. These words are nothing less than *amazing, incredible, astounding, invaluable, useful, direct, forceful, peaceful*, and so on.

These “Action” words put movement into the reader’s mind as they go through written copy. Whether it is a book, article, or directions on how to put together your child’s favorite dollhouse, the wording needs to be clear to the reader, and the concept simple, or the meaning can be lost.

Maybe someone should tell that to the toy manufacturers that keep parents up all night trying to figure out how to put together that stupid dollhouse.

An example of an action word that becomes unclear might be something like:

*“While reloading his pistol, and looking at the foam on his beer, he blew his head off”.*

Okay, which head did he blow off? The beer’s head of foam, or his own? I guess it makes a mess either way.



I think that most of us have tried to follow written, or even verbal directions at some time or another, and most of us have had the same kinds of experiences - FRUSTRATION! This is especially prevalent when the person who is writing then "How-To" directions does not have an excellent command of the language in which they are writing.

Some directions do not even come with words, but just have a few pictures. It is up to the user to figure out what is suppose to happen in between the images.

Other hard workers, that cause many people some major problems, is punctuation. Not placing a comma in the correct place, or leaving out a comma when it is needed, can completely change the meaning of a sentence. Read this magazine cover.



Poor dog! Clear and concise wording will avoid any misinterpretation or mixed message that can easily occur if the



words used do not convey an accurate representation of the thought, idea, or the action that you wish the reader to understand.

Even experienced people can screw up and make mistakes that can cause an uproar. The following is an example of one the U.S. government made a while back.

When the former U.S. president Jimmy Carter was in Warsaw, Poland delivering a speech, he told the crowd that he wanted to get to know them better. To his (Carter's) and especially the crowd's surprise, the crowd let out a gasp of astonishment.

The reason? The interpreter messed up the vocabulary and told the crowd that Carter wanted to get to know them in a sexual context. OOPS! Words and context must be consistent and correct. If you don't, then you may find yourself having sex with a crowd of Polish people.

We have all had occasions where what we have said to someone else has been either misunderstood, or misinterpreted. We can usually we can go back and clear up any misunderstanding that may have occurred.

When you are writing for people that you do not know, you do not have that option. You get only one shot. That is why careful writing proofreading are very important, and using proper punctuation and grammar.

There are numerous examples of mistakes that have been made in the print media that are amazingly funny, and should have been caught by the the editors, but were not.



Let's eat grandpa.  
Let's eat, grandpa.

**correct punctuation can  
save a person's life.**

Obviously, in the first line, grandpa is in big trouble. It is really easy to screw up punctuation, and often it just goes unnoticed. However, and it happens often, a punctuation error can really change the meaning and intent of a sentence.

You may be writing something that is suppose to be completely serious, and end up with your readers laughing their heads off, or worse, being very offended.

Something else that can change what you are attempting to say is using words that sound the same, but have a completely different meaning. When you misuse any of these in a sentence, it can make for some interesting reading for your audience.

Classified ads are notorious for delivering hilarious messages. These ads are written by people who can be in any age range, educational background, and are just trying to get a few dollars for what they are selling.

Since thousands of people from around the country are writing classified ads to newspapers every day of the week, there are a lot of errors made, and most of them will have you either rolling your eyes or laughing until you wet your pants. You think I'm joking? Check out the next page.



Just try these happy mistakes on for size.  
This first one is for a headstone:



Given that the name is extremely popular - somewhere, I'm sure that their phone was ringing off the wall. Speaking of "Off The Wall", check these ads out...

DOG FOR SALE: EATS ANYTHING AND IS FOND OF CHILDREN.

MIXING BOWL SET DESIGNED TO PLEASE A COOK WITH  
ROUND BOTTOM FOR EFFICIENT BEATING.

TIRED OF CLEANING YOURSELF. LET ME DO IT.

FOR RENT: 6-ROOM HATED APARTMENT.

3-YEAR OLD TEACHER NEEDED FOR PRE-SCHOOL.  
EXPERIENCE PREFERRED.

I'm sure that there are a lot of experienced 3-year olds



who answered this ad.

If you are talking desperation, then this must be a winner.

**HAVE VIAGRA. Need  
woman. Any women  
between 18 & 80. PO Box  
1151, Boise, ID 83701.**

Businesses also run a lot of ads, and these folks  
should know better, but they don't.

VACATION SPECIAL: HAVE YOUR HOME EXTERMINATED

VACATION SPECIAL: HAVE YOUR HOME EXTERMINATED  
(Their lawyers are: "Dewey, Cheetum, and Howe")

MT. KILIMANJARO, THE BREATHTAKING BACKDROP FOR THE  
SERENA LODGE.

SWIM IN THE LOVELY POOL WHILE YOU DRINK IT ALL IN.

DINNER SPECIAL -- TURKEY \$2.35; CHICKEN OR BEEF \$2.25;  
CHILDREN \$2.00

This next one must be a classic:



**CORRECTION**

The China Seafood Restaurant  
ad that ran in last Saturday's  
Green Section was incorrect. It  
read 中國海鮮飯店. It should  
have read 店飯鮮海國中. We  
regret any inconvenience this  
may have caused.

**CHINA SEAFOOD RESTAURANT**  
**6400 HORSEPEN RD. 282-7055**

point. There are  
of

Okay, you get the  
many examples

these typos and misdirected wording. As you can easily see,  
the English language can be somewhat confusing, and can  
quickly put a person into that maze of language difficulty.

*Here are a few that were actually written by professionals.*

These may not necessarily have typographical errors, but they  
illustrate the fact that sometimes we are not exactly saying the  
things that we mean to say.

Six men, their faces covered  
with red bandanas, got out of the  
Cherokee carrying a knife, base-  
ball bat, billy club and rolling pin,  
said Davis, 20.

"I knew when I saw the rolling  
pin that something bad was going  
to go down," Davis said.

IT TAKES  
MANY  
INGREDIENTS  
TO MAKE  
BURGER KING  
GREAT BUT...



"The Secret Ingredient  
is our People"

Co



There are many more examples, but I think that I have made my point. Be sure to have your words edited by someone, or at least double and triple check your work. Even then, things may slip past you. Don't sweat it, (@#it happens).

## **What Keeps Your Attention?**

So, what holds your attention when you read something? One thing to remember, what is going to catch and hold your attention will likely do the same for others.

When you are writing your copy, think about what YOU would want to hear if you were in your reader's shoes. If you were interested in penny stocks, and the headline you read said something like "Read More About Penny Stocks", would you be interested? You entered what are called your "Keywords" into your browser (penny stocks), and that is what you first saw when you looked at the results.

I wouldn't read any further. Here's why.

Why am I into penny stocks? **I want to make money!** So why would I just want to "Read More"? It is important to write what your reader wants to read. If you just write boring, lack luster words on your page, then most people are going to ignore you and what you want them to see.

**- - - NEWS FLASH - - -**



It doesn't make any difference how great your information is, no one is going to see it! Why, because they will never click on a link that doesn't give them what they want.

What the reader wants is to profit and make money with penny stocks, not just get some screwy information about them.

Instead of "Read more. . ." you should maybe consider writing something like "Make \$3,000 in 30 Days With Penny Stocks". I would be more interested in reading information that is actually "On Point" and going to tell me what I want to know. Look at ads and other offers in magazines, on TV, on the internet, and also on the radio. Often the radio is overlooked, but most ads run from 15 to 30 seconds. Not much time to get your point across. Listen to the opening and closing lines as these are usually designed to get your attention, and ask you to do something (in that order).

Of course, there are a few news ads that you don't want to pay attention to. Here are a few newspaper headlines that I could not help but share with my readers. **Idiocy!** I can't actually believe that anyone could overlook such obvious mistakes. It goes to show the level of education (at least in the journalism departments) that is being passed off as "Learned" to the public these days. No offense meant to journalism majors. It's not your fault.

Hold your nose (and eyes), here they are:

**Meat head resigns**  
 WASHINGTON — The head of the federal agency overseeing meat and poultry inspections is resigning, after repeated attacks by consumer groups.



Barbershop singers bring joy to school for deaf

Worker suffers leg pain  
after crane drops 800-  
pound ball on his head

Meeting  
on open  
meetings  
is closed

City unsure why  
the sewer smells



**Homicide victims rarely talk to police**

**Hospitals resort  
to hiring doctors**

**Miracle cure kills fifth patient**



***REALLY!*** Here's another news flash...  
“Reading newspapers may be damaging to your intellect!”

## **THE 7 KEYS TO WORD SUCCESS**

### **1. Make It Memorable**

Use easy-to-remember short quotable “Gems of wisdom”. Everyone remembers the Golden Rule. Will you remember “The 7 Keys To Word Success”? You may not remember what they are, but you will remember that there are 7 of them.

### **2. Use The Unexpected**

When you surprise your reader with something that they did not expect, you will get their attention, hence it will be remembered.

### **3. Don't Insult Your Reader's Intelligence**

Even though this may be tempting at times, it is usually not wise (or necessary) to state what is obvious. I recently read a semi-autobiographical book on a famous magician. He was tutoring a student. The trick required covering an object that was being held in the hand with a silk cloth. The student, practicing for the audience said: “Now I am covering my hand and the coin with this



blue cloth". This student was immediately told that they could see what was happening and did not need to be told.

#### **4. Use Metaphor and Detail**

Depending upon your application, you will want to give detail and use some analogy in your description. Using the penny stock theme, *"This unique system is like money in the bank"*. Make sure you follow it up with WHY it will be money in the bank.

If you are short on space, such as for a squeeze or landing page, then a lot of description will not be possible and you will need to stick to the basic details of why your item is important to your reader. Use bullet points to emphasize major benefits.

#### **5. Make it Emotional**

Go ahead, stir up those emotions. Do you really want your writing to FOREVER SUCK? Do you not care at all about your credibility? Then grab some of those emotional strings (like I just did) and keep your readers involved.

#### **6. Rule of 3**

There is something that writers use that is called the rule of three. Grouping things in three's seems to work wonders when trying to get readers to remember things. Who doesn't remember the 3 R's? Well, if you are too young you may not know this, but for those of us who have been around for a while, we know it as "Reading, (w)Riting, and (a)Rithmetic".

#### **7. Use Colorful Adjectives**

Use incredible, lustrous, and delightful adjectives to spice up



your copy. Make sure that they add something to your topic. If your topic is money, then using words like “Colorful” or “Zesty” are probably not good choices. Save them for your food survey. Better choices might be “*INCREDIBLE* detail” or “*ASTOUNDING* returns”. Okay, I am sure that you get the idea. I do not wish to “Insult” all of you readers by picking this topic apart.

I hope that you have found this short manual informative and a worthwhile read.

There are many online resources that will give you greater detail on some of the finer points of writing. This writing has only scratched the surface, but has offered some of the crucial basics that are very important for successful writing.

The following are a few more resources that you can use to improve your writing skills, and learn more about wording and proper use of sentence structure.

[Purdue Online Writing Lab \(Owl\)](#)

[Free Copywriting Information](#)

I have only included these two resources, there are others. Purdue “OWL” will provide you with anything you want to know about sentence structure and grammar.



The second resource will give you some more detailed information on the “Ins and outs” of why you need to write a certain way.

If you liked this, or have suggestions on additional things that you would like to learn about, please let me know at:

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