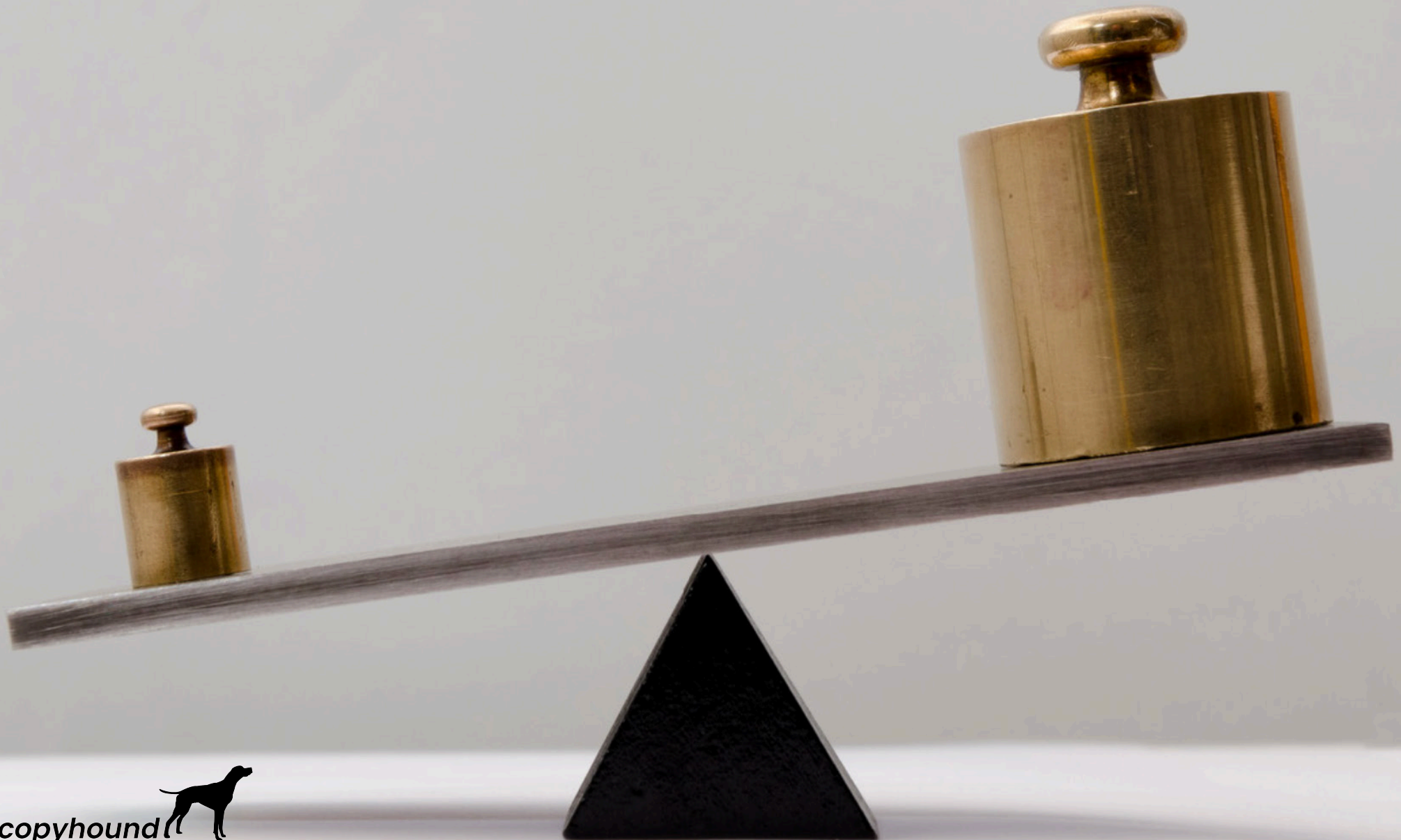


HOW TO BE A MORE CONCISE WRITER

The Delete Button Leads
to Better Writing



LESS IS MORE

People write too much.

They believe everybody wants to read their beautiful words or, worse, they want to hit an arbitrary word count.

So they add fluff, filler, and topic detours.

The result is writing that's not appealing to the reader – but hey, I reached my word count!

Writing less doesn't mean draining all personality from your copy or writing 50 words.

Less Is More means: Don't make it longer than it needs to be.



Chère amie, vous doutez de ma confiance
ma tendresse? Ah! N'achevez pas
abîmer votre malheureuse Pauline...
je vais vous dire tout ce qui m'a
travéillé. Je vous affligerai sans
vous instruire. Je vous donnerai la plus
grande preuve de confiance sans vous
révéler mon secret. Mais à mon tour
j'exige de votre amitié, que vous cessiez
de m'interroger sur ce triste sujet, et
que vous brûliez cette lettre quand vous
l'aurez lue. Oui, ce mal subit fut pro-
duit par une cause morale! Par la con-
science d'un mystère effrayant et
douloureux... J'ai éprouvé dans l'espace
quelques minutes tout ce qui peut
rappeler l'imagination et déchirer le cœur:
Surprise, le Saisissement, la terreur,
l'indignation... et d'autres mouve-
ments encore plus pénibles et plus violents.
Je n'en demande pas davantage, ô mon
amie, je me fais une vertu de mon silence.
Spectez-le, vous ne pourriez le faire rompre.
Soyez point inquiète de ma santé, je
sais, elle est utile à quelques êtres. Ah!
La douleur ne cause point la mort... Ce
corps périssable, malgré sa fragilité, est for-
cé de résister, sans se détruire, aux souffran-
ces de la vie. Comme les fleurs...

A LESSON FROM THE GREATS

"Vigorous writing is concise.

A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts."

William Strunk & EB White,
Elements of Style



WILLIAM
STRUNK JR.
A N D
E.B. **WHITE**

*"...still a little book, small enough and important enough
to carry in your pocket, as I carry mine."*

— Charles Osgood

The
ELEMENTS
of
STYLE

FOURTH EDITION

FOREWORD BY ROGER ANGELL

WHY WRITE LESS?

It's More Inviting to a Reader

When you're editing your draft, think "Would I read this?"

It Forces You to Only Focus on the Important Stuff

It makes your writing much tighter and more concentrated.

It Prevents You from Taking Topic Detours

Write down the specific goal for your piece before you start.



FOCUS
FOCUS
FOCUS
FOCUS
FOCUS

"I try to leave out the parts people skip." – Elmore Leonard

SIX STEPS TO BE MORE CONCISE

- 1 Have a specific goal for a piece.
- 2 Write freely.
- 3 When you're finished, delete the parts that don't relate to your goal.
- 4 Delete all unnecessary words. Be ruthless. Delete at least 20% of your copy.
- 5 Go do something else and come back to it with fresh eyes.
- 6 Repeat Steps 3 & 4.



***"If it is possible to cut a word out,
always cut it out." – George Orwell***

THOSE STEPS IN ACTION

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Less Is More means: Don't make it longer than it needs to be.



Original Version:

~~Most p~~ People write too much. ~~It's one of the biggest obstacles for a writer to overcome.~~ They believe everybody wants to read their beautiful words or, worse, ~~they think~~ they want ~~need~~ to hit an arbitrary word count.

So ~~they~~ **people** add fluff, ~~and~~ filler and topic detours.

The result is writing that's ~~beefed up and too long and~~ not appealing to the reader – but hey, ~~at least~~ I reached my word count!

~~Being concise and w~~ Writing less doesn't mean draining all personality from your copy, or ~~that you need to only write~~ **writing** 50 words.

Less is more means **something else**: Don't make it longer than it needs to be.

ONE FINAL THOUGHT

Short sentences are powerful.

Too often people shy away from short sentences. It's one medium sentence after another. But short sentences are a great way to add emphasis and rhythm to your writing.

That's what makes short sentences a powerful tool to grab the reader. Think of situations when you *really* need to get somebody's attention.

Fire!
Help!
Look out!

**Make your biggest point in the
fewest words possible.**

