

What Is "Good" Writing?

Read Writing

FUNDAMENTAL GUIDEPOSTS—

1. Clarify in one simple sentence what you want to accomplish in your essay/article/paper.
 - a) Be as behavioral as possible—e.g., I want people to affirm they believe that x is true and that y is the basis on which one should believe x is true. This is a two part objective—what is true and how one ascertains it is true.
 - b) Another example: I want people to know what I feel about x and that I will understand what they know about what I know about x because they will ask questions related to my understanding of x, not theirs, not others, but my understanding.
2. Use short sentences—they're more readable. Readable writing is read writing; short sentences contribute to readability.
3. Use familiar words whenever possible—they're more readable. Readable writing is read writing. Familiar words create less confusion and facilitate more attention to the ideas you're trying to share. Readable writing is read writing; familiar words contribute to readability.

Of course, sometimes unfamiliar words must be used:

 - a) For example, there are no familiar synonyms for "hypostatic union." Ergo, you will need to provide a definition using familiar words to demonstrate (1) you know what it means, and facilitate that (2) your reader will know what it means.
 - b) Technical terms have their place, but NOT when a familiar word could serve as a substitute. For example, using "teleological cessation" might impress your reader, but what you want them to understand is the end of time. Use end, not cessation. Use time, not teleological. Your goal is to communicate, not to impress. Great ideas impress; grand vocabulary does not.
4. Vary the length of your sentences. Long sentences bore if not confuse readers. Short sentences often fail to communicate the complexity of the ideas you're sharing. Varying sentence length is more readable using familiar words whenever possible and shorter sentences whenever possible contributes to readable writing. Readable writing is read writing.
5. And yes, redundancy contributes to readability. Readable writing is read writing. Readable writing is understood writing. Readable writing is persuasive writing. Write readable.

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