

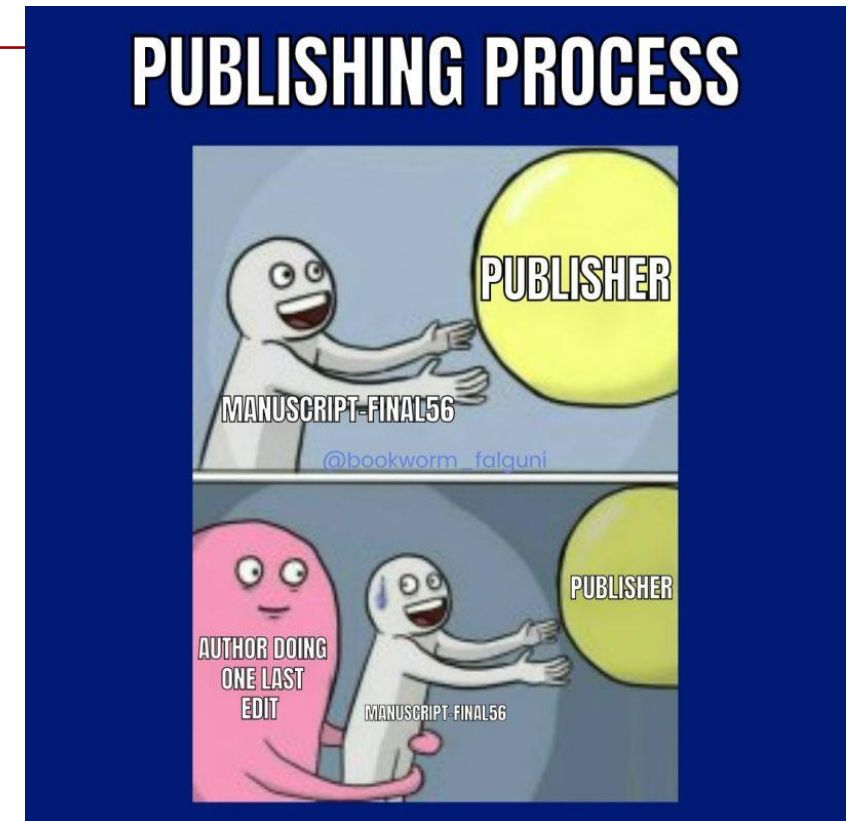
# Draft, Submit, Revise: A Manuscript Writing Series

## Edit Like a Reviewer

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Jen Merems, PhD. (she/her), Scientific Editor,  
Institute of Clinical and Translational Research

David Puthoff, PhD. (they/them), Scientific Writer,  
Marshfield Clinic Research Institute





## MY WRITING PROCESS:

1. Procrastinating about writing
2. Reading about writing
3. Thinking about writing
4. Writing about writing
5. Crying about writing

#WritersLife



# Levels of Edits

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Big picture: *Document Audience, Style, Tone, Argument*

Containers: *Paragraph Organization, Flow, Transitions, Redundancy, Logic*

Nuts and Bolts: *Clarity, Redundancy, Logic, Wordiness, Verbs*



# Big Picture: Audience, Style, Tone



## Audience

- Too often neglected
- Who are they?  
What style/tone?
- Values,  
Expectations,  
Needs



## Style

- Characteristics of  
the writing
- Expression of  
attitude
- Complexity of  
sentence & diction
- Ensure consistency
- No changes in  
voice, perspective,  
tense



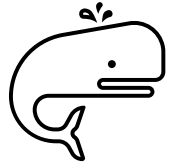
## Tone

- Author's attitude  
towards subject
- Found in details:  
events, situations,  
vocabulary choice
- Ensure consistency



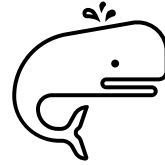
# Big Picture: Style Example

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## Scientific audiences

Whales, as charismatic megafauna of the marine realm, exhibit a sophisticated communication system that has long intrigued scientists. Their intricate vocalizations, often in the form of haunting songs, propagate efficiently across oceanic expanses, serving as a means of long-range communication and social cohesion within their populations. The study of whale communication not only sheds light on their complex social structures and behaviors but also plays a crucial role in informing conservation efforts aimed at protecting these iconic marine species and their habitats.



## Lay audiences

Whales, the majestic giants of the ocean, possess a complex form of communication that astonishes researchers. Their haunting songs, which can travel for miles underwater, unite individuals across vast distances, echoing through the ocean depths. Beyond their captivating melodies, understanding whale communication holds the key to unraveling the mysteries of these enigmatic creatures and safeguarding their fragile ecosystems.



# Big Picture: Argument



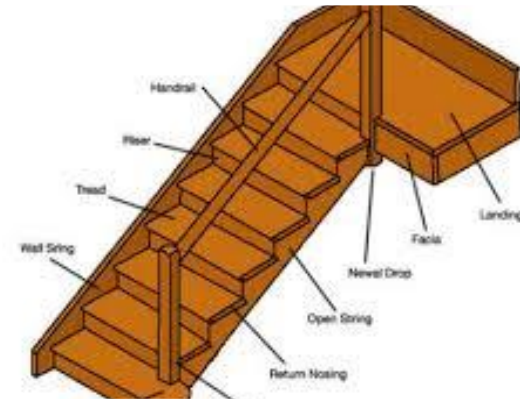
Promise the ending:

“There were four underlying symptoms behind our diagnosis.”



Go in order

“The first of these underlying symptoms was...”



Clearly mark the pieces:

“Fourthly, initial lab results were inconclusive. These inconclusive results...”



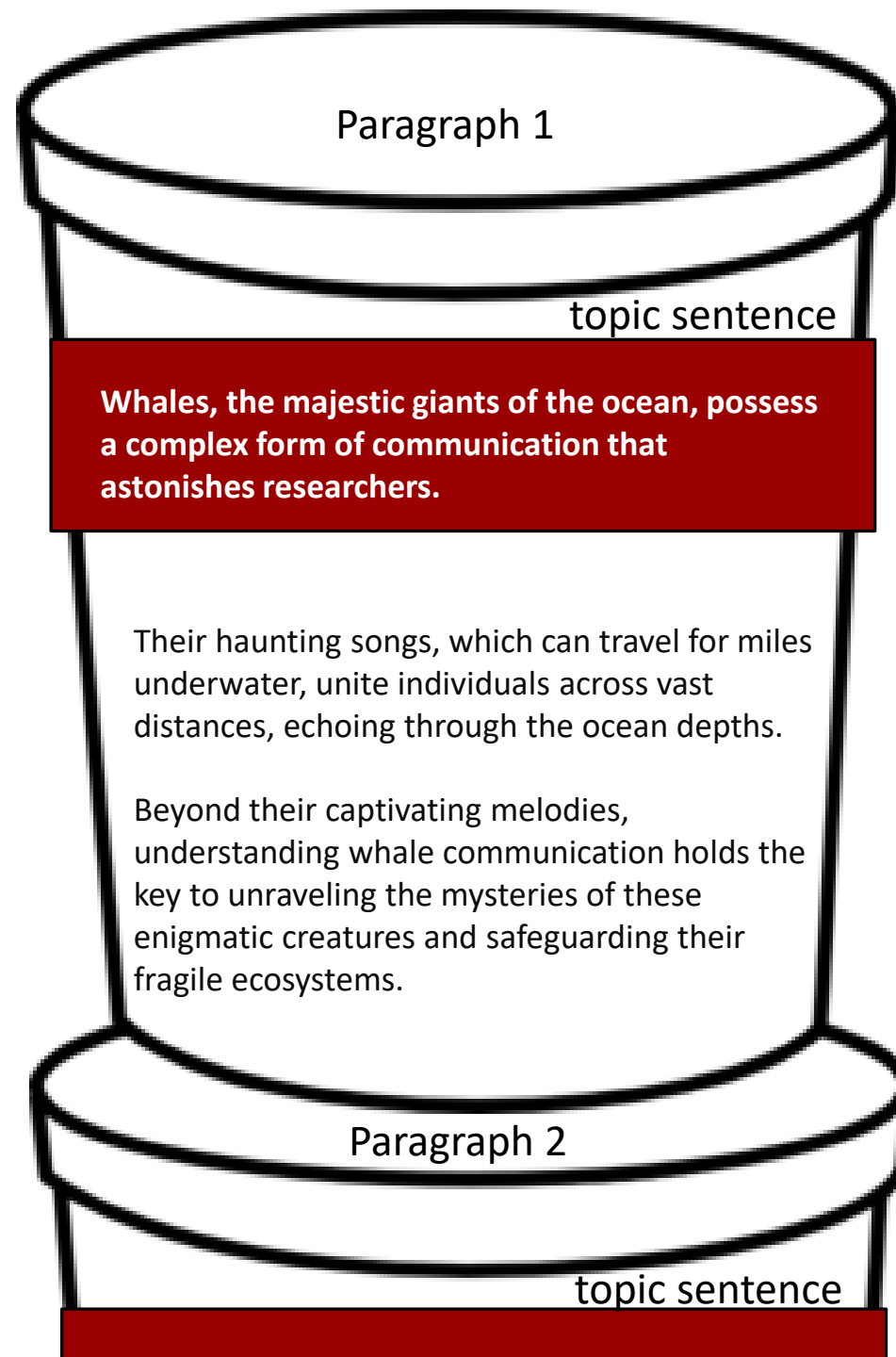
Stick to the landing:

“These four causes led us to conclude that...”



# Containers: Paragraphs

- Each paragraph is a container of information.
- Your topic sentence is the label.
- The transition is how you organize them.





### Without Coherence

The dog barked loudly in the park. My favorite color is blue. Time flies when you're having fun.

### With Coherence

The dog barked loudly in the park, startling the nearby joggers and drawing attention to its playful antics. Meanwhile, I contemplated my favorite color, blue, envisioning serene skies and tranquil waters that evoke a sense of calm within me. Reflecting on the passage of time, I realized how it seems to speed up when immersed in enjoyable activities, a phenomenon often remarked upon but seldom fully understood.

# Containers: Coherence & Cohesion

- Coherence (i.e., global flow)
  - Ideas are sequenced logically at the higher levels (e.g., paragraphs, sections).
  - Readers move easily from one major idea to the next without confusing jumps.
  - Readers can follow organization and understand how ideas are connected.
- Cohesion (i.e., local flow)
  - Ideas are connected clearly at the sentence level with clear connections between sentences.



### Without Cohesion

The sun shines brightly in the sky. Birds chirp cheerfully amidst the trees. The clock strikes midnight, signaling the end of the day.

### With Cohesion

As the sun shines brightly in the sky, birds chirp cheerfully amidst the trees, creating a harmonious melody. However, as the clock strikes midnight, signaling the end of the day, the nocturnal creatures begin to stir, their activities shrouded in darkness.

# Containers: Coherence & Cohesion

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# Containers: Tips to Enhance Flow

- **Known-to-new sequencing**
  - Readers process familiar (“known”) information more quickly.
  - More familiar information at the beginning of sentence allows readers to concentrate attention on new information in later parts.
- **Transitional expressions**
  - Indicates the logical relationship between ideas.
  - E.g., similarity, contrast, addition, cause and effect, or exemplification.

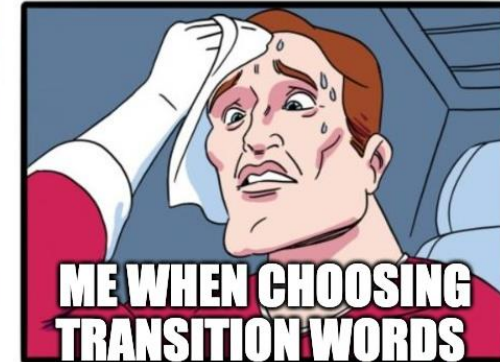
Known



**Writing is known to shape cultures and preserve knowledge for future generations, something it has been doing for over 5,000 years.**



New



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JAKE-CLARK.TUMBLR



# Containers: Tips to Enhance Flow

- **Parallel structure**
  - Using same grammatical structure for things that come it sets.
- **Getting to the verb**
  - Changing the verb to a noun (disguise actions as things).
    - Decide = decision
    - Notify = notifying
  - Leads to excessively long subjects, pushing the action very far away from the beginning of the sentence.
  - Too many words before the verb.
  - Results in an unclear connection between the subject and verb.



Not Parallel	Parallel
walk <u>ing</u> , talk <u>ed</u> , and chew <u>ing</u> gum	walk <u>ing</u> , talk <u>ing</u> , and chew <u>ing</u> gum

### Example:

The office became the focus of a scandal, derailing the peace talks. – **Unclear!**

### It could mean:

The office became the focus of a scandal that derailed the peace talks. **OR**  
The office became the focus of a scandal, which derailed the peace talks.



# Nuts and Bolts: Cohesion

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Transitions also play an important role in sentences. Consider:

A patient presented to the department complaining of chest pain. Diagnosed in 1992, he was treated with fludarabine. His laboratory work-up showed disease progression. His CLL reoccurred and he was treated with ABCDamine due to an XYZamine intolerance. He developed B symptoms; lab work-up showed leukocytosis. The patient received 2 doses of OBINamine and his white count dropped; peripheral smear showed morphology indicative of prolymphocytes. His PLL progressed rapidly, causing difficulty swallowing and breathing. Unfortunately, the patient died. He was started on combination chemotherapy.



# Nuts and Bolts: Clarity & Wordiness

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- **Check for wordiness**
  - Filler words - words that don't add to the meaning of the sentence.

At this point in time, I believe that it is absolutely essential for us to commence the process of scheduling a meeting to discuss the matter in greater detail.



**THIS or THAT**





# Nuts and Bolts: Clarity & Wordiness

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**THIS or THAT**



We need to schedule a meeting to discuss the matter.



# Nuts and Bolts: Clarity & Wordiness

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- **Remove wordy constructions**
  - Qualifiers
    - Removing some will allow for a stronger, more direct point.
    - Some are necessary but should be used carefully and thoughtfully.
    - e.g., very, often, hopefully, practically, really, basically.

**What qualifiers could be removed?**

"The experiment yielded promising results, suggesting a potential breakthrough in cancer treatment."



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**What qualifiers could be removed?**

"The experiment **yielded promising** results, suggesting a potential breakthrough in cancer treatment."



"The experimental results suggest a potential breakthrough in cancer treatment."



# Nuts and Bolts: Clarity & Wordiness

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- **Remove wordy constructions**
  - Overused prepositional phrases
    - Little words like as in, over, of, for, at, etc.
  - Stock phrases you can replace with 1 or 2 words
    - Phrases like “the reason for”, “For this reason”, and “Due to the fact that” can be changed to “because”, “since”, or “why”.

When you're writing a 500 word  
essay and your current word count is ~~487~~: <sup>535</sup>







# Nuts and Bolts: Verb trouble

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- Passive voice
  - When the actor is hidden somewhere behind the action rather than the usual subject part of the sentence.

**Passive example:** The car was wrecked.

**Active example:** I wrecked the car.

**Tip:** locate passive voice by finding “to be” verbs (am, is, are, was, were, be, been, being).

- Not all will indicate passive construction
- If the “to be” verb is sitting next to another verb (especially one that ends in “ed” (or “was lost”, “was wrecked”) it may be passive.





# Nuts and Bolts: Verb trouble

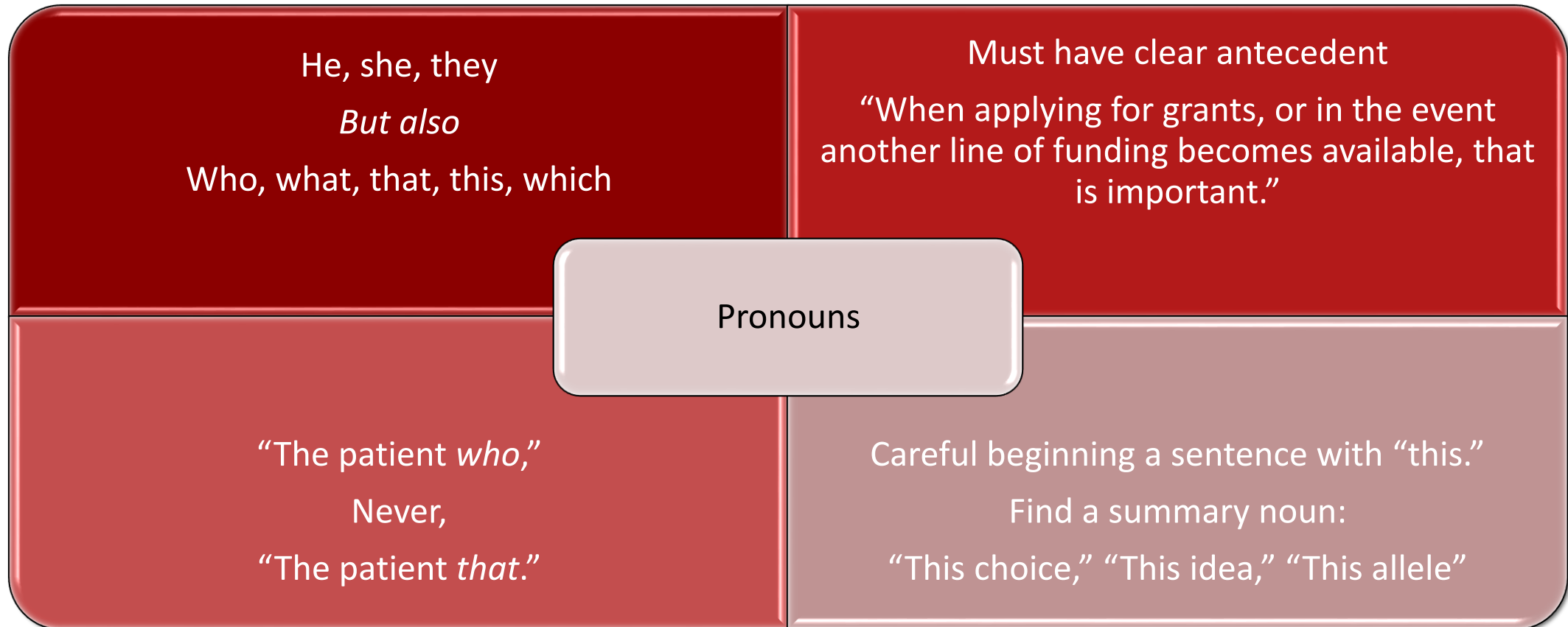
A portion of an essay with verbs revised by a rising sixth grade student

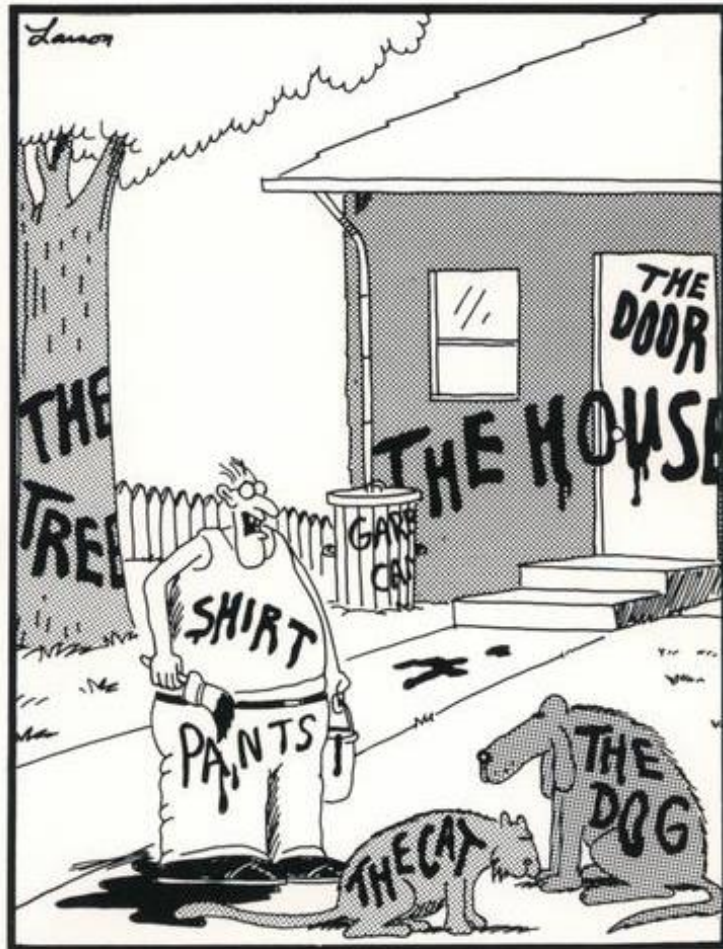
sat on regular seats on a theater stage. Then, the curtains ~~went up~~ <sup>rose</sup>.  
 My eyes ~~looked at~~ <sup>scanned</sup> the whole room and ~~saw~~ <sup>spotted</sup> my parents. I could hear the clapping and the  
 screaming of babies. My heart ~~beat~~ <sup>trembled</sup> in fear as my palms ~~got wet~~ <sup>sweated</sup>. My legs ~~trembled~~ <sup>shook</sup>. There  
~~were 180 students graduating~~. First, our school honored the people who ~~did~~ <sup>participated in</sup> clubs. Second,  
~~the principal distributed~~ <sup>they gave out</sup> presidential awards for best academic grades. When I ~~got~~ <sup>received</sup> one I ~~was full of joy~~ <sup>smiled,</sup>  
~~and happiness~~. Third, we ~~got~~ <sup>accepted</sup> our diplomas from our teachers and principal.

- “Weak” verbs
  - Looking for verbs that lack meaning or directness.
  - Ex: “have a positive effect” can be changed to “improve”.



# Nuts and Bolts: Pronouns





"Now! . . . That should clear up a few things around here!"

# Conclusion: Three Levels

**Big Picture:**

*Document Audience, Style, Tone, Argument*

**Containers:**

*Paragraph Organization, Flow  
Transitions, Redundancy, Logic*

**Nuts & Bolts:**

*Redundancy, Logic,  
Verbs, Clarity  
Wordiness*



**Piece to be edited:**

# Editing Activity!

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- 25 minutes
- Use your Quick Reference Sheet
- Partner up if you prefer
- Reconvene at 9:30 for Editing Review

Don't hesitate if you have questions!

Don't forget to fill out our quick survey with the  
QR code on the Quick Reference Sheet!

Brain injuries such as traumatic brain injuries, tumor, brain aneurysm, hydrocephalus, concussion, meningitis, stroke, brain hemorrhage, and encephalitis can manifest in infants either before or shortly after birth, and these alterations in the brain's structure and function can give rise to challenges in motor skills. Occasionally resulting in a diagnosis of cerebral palsy (CP), a condition often identified around the age of 2. CP is a movement disorder that has been documented to affect 2.1 out of 1000 live births. Despite the fact that the region governing movement undergoes significant development prior to the age of 2, an early CP diagnosis in infancy may facilitate the intervention during this crucial period of the rapid neurological advancement, which may lead not only to enhanced limb functionality but also an overall improved quality of life. However, our ongoing study delves into the intricate nuances of how the infant brain evolves following a stroke or brain bleed.

We are recruiting infants that are between 0-6 months, corrected for prematurity. Infants will participate in 4 or 5 study time points depending on their age when they begin. The time points occur at 0-2 months, 3-6 months, 12 months, 18 months, and 24 months of age. Most of the timepoints will include 2 visits at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The first visit will include MRI. The scan will take pictures of the brain of your baby. Your baby will be asleep. The comfort of your infant is important to us, thus swimming ear plugs and headphones will be provided to make it less noisy and the scan will take less than one hour. During the second visit which will include transcranial magnetic stimulation and movement tests, your infant will undergo a series of procedures. The transcranial magnetic stimulation, applied over the scalp, delivers short painless magnetic pulses to the brain. It helps us further determine the connections between the brain and muscles in your baby and is deemed safe for children less than two years. Your infant will be ensured comfort before, during, and after, stimulation, and they will participate in up to three tests to assess their movement, while being recorded while they are awake and moving naturally. Developmental exam will then be conducted following this three-to-five-minute long video recording. This exam consists of the motor, cognitive, and language scales. Finally, neurological exam will be completed. This exam will look at your baby's reflexes, muscle tone, posture, and movement. Second visit will be 2-3 hours in total. The 0-2 month timepoint will only include an MRI scan and the 3-5 minute video assessment. These will be completed in one visit.

The results will be analyzed and shared using descriptive statistics and figures. The early detection of atypical brain development after brain injury may be facilitated by our findings. This may lead not only to an earlier CP diagnosis but also allow for more individualized therapies to occur during the optimal time frame. Overall the motor development and the quality of life for babies that experienced a brain injury early in their life maybe enhanced by this.