

Orwell's Rules

Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.

Never use a long word where a short one will do.

If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.

Never use the passive where you can use the active.

Never use a foreign phrase, scientific word, or jargon if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.

Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

Edward Tufte's Presentation Rules

Show up early: Something good is bound to happen.

Lay out the problem: who cares about it and what the solution is.

When presenting complicated material, follow PGP (particular/general/particular).

When you talk, TALK: avoid the obvious reliance on notes.

Give everyone in your audience a piece of paper.

Match the information density in your presentation to the highest resolution newspapers.

Avoid overhead projectors. Keep the lights up in the room.

Never apologize.

Use humor, but make it relevant and never irritating.

Use gender-neutral speech.

Practice intensely beforehand.

Meetings have a very low rate of information transfer.

Take questions, but NEVER condescend to the questioner.

Keep in mind that most questions arise from personal concerns.

Express enthusiasm about your material, but only if your enthusiasm is real.

Finish early.

Orwell's Questions

What am I trying to say?

What words will express it?

What image or idiom will make it clearer?

Is this image fresh enough to have an effect?

Could I put it more shortly?

Have I said anything that is avoidably ugly?

Strunk and White: Principles Of Composition

Choose a suitable design

Use the active voice

Put statements in positive form

Use definite, specific, concrete language

Omit needless words

Place yourself in the background

Write naturally

Write with nouns and verbs

Revise and rewrite

Do not overwrite

Avoid qualifiers

Do not affect a breezy manner

Use orthodox spelling

Do not explain too much

Do not construct awkward adverbs

Avoid fancy words

Avoid dialect

Avoid mixing languages

Prefer the standard to the offbeat

Evil Passive Verbs:

is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been, I'm,

it's, he's, here's, she's, that's, there's, they're,

we're, what's, who's, you're

Heinlein's Rules

You Must Write

Finish What You Start

You Must Refrain From Rewriting, Except to Editorial Order

You Must Put Your Story on the Market

You Must Keep it on the Market until it has Sold

Start Working on Something Else

Evil Metaphors and Phrases

on steroids

think outside the box

longpole in the tent

stove pipe

the long and short of it is

the fact (of the matter) is

reinvent the wheel

open a can of worms

talk off line

herding cats

same sheet of music

at the end of the day

to be honest with you

on a weekly basis

touch base

building bridges

teach how to fish

keep the plates spinning

run it up the flag pole

sooner rather than later

lessons learned

synergy

zero tolerance

self licking ice cream cone

not ready for prime time

showstopper

barking up the wrong tree

holding feet to the fire

the cart before the horse

goat rope

ground truth

devil is in the details

break down barriers

food fight

bear fruit

sense of urgency

dog in the fight

with all due respect

utilize (prefer use)

low hanging fruit

slippery slope

straw man

work in a vacuum

grease the skids

let a thousand flowers bloom

red herring

leaning forward in the saddle

ahead of the curve

crawl, walk, run

cookie cutter

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A B C D E F G H I K L M N
O P Q R S T V X Y Z

abcdee fgg h i k l m n o p q r s t u x
y z z & &

*Est modus in rebus: sunt
certi*

deniqz fines

Quos ultra citraqz nequit consistere
Rectum

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R S T V X Y Z

Medium tenuere Beati

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O P Q R S T V X Y Z

abcdee fgg h i k l m n o p q r s t u x
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