

Legal writing and written advocacy

**David Stratas
Federal Court of Appeal**

Writing refresher

Overall concepts:

- **Always write for your audience**
- **Point first / context before detail:
your readers should always know
where you are going and why you
are telling them something**

Writing refresher

The three “rules”:

- 1. Eliminate wimpy words**
- 2. Use one plain, good word if you can**
- 3. Concentrate on connections**

Concentrate on connections

Build sentences with easily-discerned meaning. Then connect them.

- Glue sentences together. The 4x100 relay.**
- Keep subjects and verbs right together. This creates a “strong sentence core.”**
- Divide information into bite-sized, connected chunks and then arrange the chunks logically. Don’t challenge your audience.**

Exercises

Although Smith Hall is regularly populated by students, close study of the building as an architectural work is seldom undertaken by them.

Reminder: one word if you can [neighbour; delete adverbs/adjectives, let the strong verbs play]; avoid indirect expressions; war on “to be”

Exercises

Although Smith Hall is regularly populated by students, close study of the building as an architectural work is seldom undertaken by them.

The students living in Smith Hall ignore its architecture.

Exercises

It was decided by them to submit their resignations as students on account of the fact that it was necessary for them to help support their family.

Reminder: one word if you can [neighbour; delete adverbs/adjectives, let the strong verbs play]; avoid indirect expressions; war on “to be”

Exercises

It was decided by them to submit their resignations as students on account of the fact that it was necessary for them to help support their family.

They decided to drop out of school to support their family.

They left school to support their family.