

Writing 121

N. Noteboom

How to Improve Your WORD CHOICE

1. Use concrete, specific nouns and modifiers

BAD:

old blue car

pretty

BETTER:

rusted sky blue Buick

dimple-faced with laughing brown eyes

2. Avoid cliches and platitudes

hotter than a pistol, loved her more than life itself, water under the bridge, everything happens for a reason, c'est la vie, what comes around goes around, I had a realization....

3. Avoid slang - got so into it, kids, way out of hand, till (for until)

Lots of kids saw thru his plans.

It's not cool b/c most people can't afford those kind of bucks.

4. Chose active verbs over passive verbs

PASSIVE/BAD:

I was struck.

The World Trade Center towers were bombed.

ACTIVE/BETTER

Jim struck me. Lightning struck me.

Terrorists bombed the WTC towers.

5. Avoid "to be" verbs: is, are, am, be, was, were, been - let the subject do something!

BAD:

There *are* several moons *orbiting* Jupiter.

Homecoming *is* when alumni return home.

BETTER:

Several moons *orbit* Jupiter.

Alumni *return* home during homecoming.

AVOID "To be" verbs:

be, being, been

is, am, was

are, were

<i>Person, Number</i>		<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>
1st, singular	I	am	was
2nd, singular	you	are	were
3rd, singular	he/she/it	is	was
1st, plural	we	are	were
2 nd , plural	you	are	were
3rd, plural	they	are	were

Improving the *verbs*!

1. The first ad is focused on Budweiser.
2. The beer is famous, especially among college students.
3. It is shown with the American flag.
4. The Clydesdales are prancing down the street.
5. The message in the ad is simple.
6. This ad is targeted toward all Americans.