THE ROAD
RichWords Newsletter

Discover why having more full stops improves readability, where RichWords is delivering its next training courses, and what the differences are between 'affect' and 'effect'

RichWords recommends... using more full stops

To improve readability, include more full stops while keeping the total number of words the same. Let's say you have a paragraph of 100 words, with three full stops. The average sentence length (ASL) is 33 words.

Readability research shows that, when the ASL is 32 words or more, people fail to understand your meaning on the first time of reading. With an ASL of 16, 75% of your readers will get it on the first read-through.

So, the higher the ASL, the more likely you are to confuse and lose your readers. Since everyone in your audience is probably short on time, and your message is competing for attention, it's a good idea if your writing is instantly understandable. But how do you ensure that happens?

1. Use shorter sentences and simpler language
To achieve an ASL of 16, identify the sentences with 25 or more words. Now divide each sentence into two or more separate sentences. Look for instances where you have more than one idea in a single sentence, and create a new sentence for each idea instead.

Make your words as straightforward as possible too (e.g. "help" rather than "facilitate"). This brings your text to life and aids understanding.

2. Use the Spelling & Grammar function in Word to check ASL
Keep checking it, and refining your words, until your average is about 16.

If you've read this far, you won't be surprised to learn that the ASL for this article is 16.2.

Clients

"You never forget that our primary aim is to increase sales, and your copy always manages to help us do that."

**Guy Marong, Marketing Manager,
Sony e-Solutions Europe**

Training news

RichWords' training courses take you on a journey to copywriting mastery, helping you improve your written communications - and your business - at every step.

If you'd like us to tailor a course to the needs of your organisation, email Richard with an outline of your requirements.

Alternatively, you can attend one of our open courses at London's Royal Exchange, or the Framlingham Technology Centre. See the dates and book at **http://richwords.eventbrite.co.uk**

World of words

Many people confuse the verbs "effect" and "affect", and the noun "effect".

As a noun, "effect" means:
1. A change that's a consequence of an action e.g. "The experiment had the effect of..."
2. The state of being, or becoming, operative e.g. "The law came into effect on..."

As a verb, "effect" means to "accomplish" or "bring about" e.g. "They wanted to effect a change in attitudes."

As a verb, "affect" means:
1. Have an effect upon; make a difference to; touch the feelings of; influence e.g. "How will the company's actions affect you?"
2. Pretend to have, or feel e.g. "To gain attention, he affects a pretentious air."

If including these words, make sure you've used the correct one in the right context. Or, consider replacing them.

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