**Better Writing**

(bullets + notes + exercises)

1. Nothing good is ever written, only re-written.

What is meant by this phrase?

1. Separate writing from editing.

(Write, and then let it sit.)

(Don’t self-edit as you write; just write, even if it’s bad.)

Your subconscious brain works on material you’re actively engage in.

Self-editing introduces self-doubt. Just write your ideas, then edit later.

Writing and editing are two distinct processes.

1. Use the active voice.

(Straightforward sentence structure – subject, verb, object)

The ball was thrown by Mike. → \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

One can often recognize the passive voice by use of the word “was” or any form of “to be.” (**am, are, is, was, were, be, being, been)**

1. Consider your audience.

Don’t assume they know what you know. Guide them through your work in a logical fashion.

(What is wrong with this material?)

FOP patients suffer from dysregulation of the ACVR1 gene. Mutations of this gene allow ossification to go unchecked throughout life, turning skeletal muscle into bone and causing joints to fuse.

1. Say something new with each word or sentence. Avoid redundancy.

I awoke from sleep. →

At this point in time →

You may need to repeat certain key concepts for emphasis. Try to rephrase so as to add something new to your discussion.

1. Vary sentence structure and length.

(Consider including an occasional question or command.)

Most doctors write boring sentences.

They should stop writing boring sentences.

Usually, doctors’ sentences are long.

This makes them even more boring.

Thankfully these are all short boring sentences.

1. Write more!

(Practice, practice, practice!)

A man with a violin under his arm is walking on a straatje in Amsterdam. He hails a cab. …

1. Microsoft Word’s thesaurus is your friend.

What are all the synonyms for “friend?” → \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Mike threw the ball. → \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Avoid run on sentences.

The tipoff is often the word “and.”

Avoid run on sentences, and do so whenever you write. → \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Generally, lead with your main idea.

(The “topic” sentence states the main idea of the paragraph in the first sentence.)

1. Put key words and ideas at the beginning (sometimes the end) of a sentence.

Cola is useful to relieve esophageal food bolus impactions.

Esophageal food bolus impactions can be relieved by cola.

1. Vary sentence length.

(Use short sentences to emphasize ideas. Use longer ones to explain, define or illustrate ideas.)

Cola is great! It provides lots of work for pediatric dentists. It’s also an excellent treatment for esophageal food bolus impactions. Cerumen impactions may respond to cola application as well. I predicate that there will many cola-related ED studies. Fecal impactions may be next. Who knows?

1. Cut the clutter.

This morning at 6:30 a.m., I woke up out of a sound sleep to hear my alarm go off, but the alarm was turned off by me, and I returned back to a sleeping state. →

1. Read aloud when you revise.

(Caution! Almost everything sounds OK when read aloud.)