

### **Writers show how it's NOT done**

Studies indicate that 25 (OH) vitamin D is most likely transferred by a passive or facilitative process transplacentally.

*Studies indicate that 25 (OH) vitamin D is most likely transferred passively or actively across the placenta.*

Thus, it would seem reasonable that shortening of 10 cm at skeletal maturity or predicted shortening of this amount when the child reaches adulthood would be sufficient to consider Syme amputation.

*A Syme amputation should be considered for a shortening or predicted shortening of 10 cm at skeletal maturity.*

If the organism demonstrates to be a staph on the gram stain, one may consider drilling the femoral neck for prophylactic decompression as this may be secondary to a metaphyseal osteomyelitis.

*If the gram stain shows staphylococci, consider drilling the femoral neck to drain the metaphyseal abscess.*

A 3-year-old female presented with pain and swelling of the right elbow and was noted to have decreased use of the arm.

*A 3-year-old girl had pain and swelling of her right elbow and decreased use of her arm.*

It has been suggested that the utilization of surgical intervention be deferred until attenuation of the infectious symptomatology.

*Jones recommends that surgery be delayed if the patient has an infection.*

It is common for the need to voluntarily evacuate the pouch to occur on one occasion nightly; more frequent defecation interfering with the patient's sleep has not been encountered in our continent patients.

*Patients who are continent need only empty their stomach pouches once each night.*

The study confirmed the hypothesis that clinical instructors of undergraduate medical students would choose instructional techniques limiting active student involvement in patient care activities when faced with problematical situations.

*Medical teachers of undergraduates tend not to let students look after difficult patients.*

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- Goodman NW, Edwards MB. Medical Writing - A Prescription for Clarity, 2nd Edition. Cambridge University Press. © 1997.
  - Staheli, LT. Speaking & Writing For The Physician. Raven Press. © 1986.

<b>Avoid</b>	<b>Use</b>
Ancillary	additional
Attenuate	weaken
Elucidate	clarify, explain
Endeavour	try
Expire	die
Facilitate	assist, support
Initiate	begin
Modifications	changes
Symptomatology	symptoms
Terminate	end
Utilize	use
Due to the fact that	because
As a consequence of	because
Based on the fact that	because
Owing to the fact that	because
In order to	to
With the exception of	except for
During the period from...to	from...to
In spite of the fact that	although
For the purpose of	for
Take into consideration	consider
Subsequent to	after
Prior to	before
Has the capability of	can
In a satisfactory manner	satisfactorily
In the event that	if
Lacked the ability to	couldn't
A majority of	most
At the present time	now
During the course of	during
Give rise to	cause
Smaller in size	smaller
With the possible exception of	except
End result	result
This result would seem to indicate	this result indicates
It has been reported by Smith	Smith reported
It is suggested that	I think (or) Smith thinks
Presented to or with	had
Was noted to have	had
After having been treated	after treatment
A diagnosis consistent with	diagnosed (or) diagnosis of

### **Omit unnecessary words and phrases**

Actual	Actually	Exceptionally	Very	Really	Truly	Quite	Rather
It is interesting to note that				It should be pointed out that			
The point here is that				Needless to say			

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As he is examining each word and checking its meaning, the author can also delete redundant words such as “in colour,” “in size,” “in number” from such descriptions as “red in colour,” “small in size,” “few in number,” and pompous expressions such as “adult human organism,” which the reader has to waste time and concentration on translating for himself.

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The passive voice is appropriate and useful when you need to emphasize the action or object of action rather than the doer.

*Passive (weak):* An appendectomy was performed.

*Active (better):* We performed the appendectomy.

*Passive (weak):* The thigh is then abducted and the “clunk” of the femoral head reduction is felt.

*Active (better):* Abduct the thigh to feel for the “clunk” of the femoral head reduction.

*Passive (weak):* It is thought that this technique might carry a high risk of infection.

*Active (better):* We found this technique carries a high risk of infection.

*or:* Preliminary results indicate this technique may carry a high risk of infection.

An example of acceptable use of the passive voice

The patient has been shot in the abdomen. (Who did the shooting is not relevant to the medical information.)

An 18-gauge needle is inserted through the skin wound and advanced through the renal parenchyma. (The emphasis is on method.)

### **Better English Style**

Any textbook of English grammar will tell you the six rules of writing clear correct English.

1. Choose the correct word
2. Prefer the simple word to the pompous one
3. Prefer the single word to the circumlocution
4. Prefer the short word to the long
5. Prefer the word derived from Anglo-Saxon to that derived from Romance
6. Use the active rather than the passive voice