



The Writer's Diet: A Guide to Fit Prose (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing)

Helen Sword

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Do your sentences sag? Could your paragraphs use a pick-me-up? If so, *The Writer's Diet* is for you! It's a short, sharp introduction to great writing that will help you energize your prose and boost your verbal fitness.

Helen Sword dispenses with excessive explanations and overwrought analysis. Instead, she offers an easy-to-follow set of writing principles: use active verbs whenever possible; favor concrete language over vague abstractions; avoid long strings of prepositional phrases; employ adjectives and adverbs only when they contribute something new to the meaning of a sentence; and reduce your dependence on four pernicious "waste words": it, this, that, and there.

Sword then shows the rules in action through examples from William Shakespeare, Emily Dickinson, Martin Luther King Jr., John McPhee, A. S. Byatt, Richard Dawkins, Alison Gopnik, and many more. A writing fitness test encourages you to assess your own writing and get immediate advice on addressing problem areas. While *The Writer's Diet* is as sleek and concise as the writing ideals contained within, this slim volume packs a powerful punch.

With Sword's coaching writers of all levels can strengthen and tone their sentences with the stroke of a pen or the click of a mouse. As with any fitness routine, adhering to the rules requires energy and vigilance. The results, however, will speak for themselves.

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