

Power Words

When writing, try to use words which convey ideas concisely. "Power words" can bring out your meaning clearly and directly. Note the following guidelines:

1. Use specific nouns and verbs

There is a tall tree in back of my neighbor's house.

A stately elm adorns Mr. Smith's back yard.

He quickly opened the door and went out of the room.

John exited the room quickly.

John hurried out the door.

2. Be precise with adjectives and adverbs.

Last week I really enjoyed visiting my grandmother at her house near the beach.

I spent an enjoyable week with Grandmother at her beachside cabin.

3. Use specific images.

He played the piano.

His nimble fingers lightly touched the keys.

4. Combine sentences when possible.

It is nice to be a student in the ELI program. We have a lot of opportunities to learn the language of English.

Being students in the ELI program, we have many opportunities to learn English.

As ELI students, we have many opportunities to learn the English language.

The ELI program provides us myriad English study opportunities ...

A good way to determine power word usage is to count the number of "power words" in a sentence and compare it to the number of "simple words."

Underline the Power Words in the above sentences.

What is the power/simple word ratio?
