

web content workshop

writing, preparing, and optimizing text for the web

Cynthia Mijares • Stanford Web Services

our guiding principles



structure

ENTRANCE

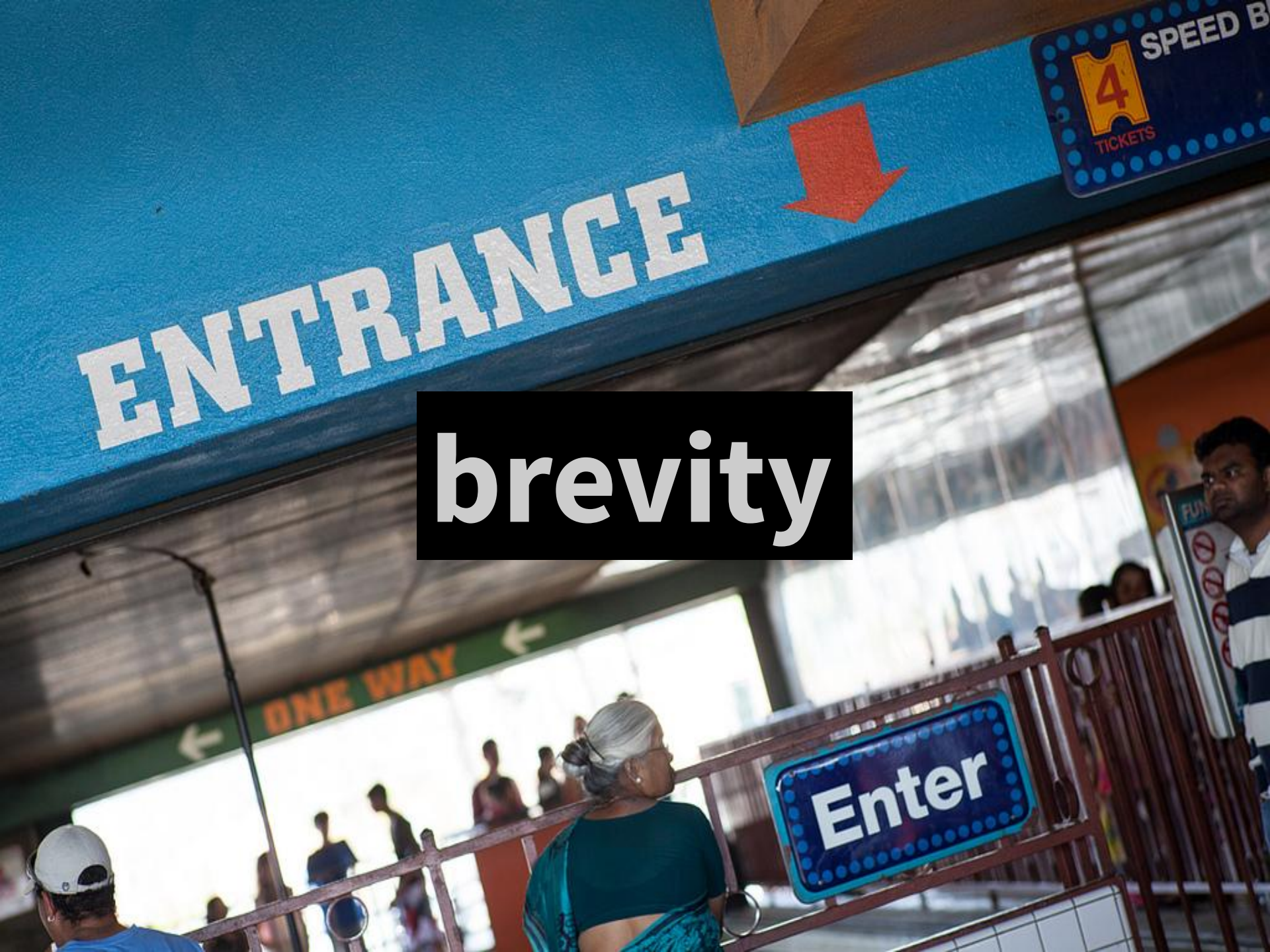


4 SPEED B
TICKETS

brevity

ONE WAY

Enter



A young child with light hair is sitting on the floor, smiling and holding a red string attached to a large red balloon. The child is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt with a panda face graphic and white pants with black stripes. The background is a white wall with large black line drawings of a hand holding a book. A large black rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text "our audience" in white lowercase letters.

our audience

let's talk about structure

Fast Pancakes

1 C all-purpose flour

1 Tbs sugar

? 2-1 tsp baking powder

1/2 tsp salt

1 C milk

1 egg

1 Tbs

Buttermilk Pancakes

1 C flour

1 Tbsp sugar

1 tsp baking powder

1/2 tsp baking soda

1/2 tsp salt

Nutty Orange Pancakes

1 C flour

1 Tbsp sugar

1-2 tsp baking powder

1-2 tsp baking soda

1/2 tsp salt

types of content

Corn Pancakes

1/2 C corn meal

1/2 C flour

1 Tbs sugar

? 1-2 tsp baking powder

? 1/2 tsp baking soda

reduce milk: 3/4

1 C milk

1 egg

1 Tbsp oil

or cream-style corn

1 Tbs oil

1 Tbs oil

1/2 C chopped pecans

links and navigation



link examples

Navigation (menu items)

WEAK

Explore

NSO Vols

Community & Connect

Offices that support you

Most popular links

Links

Other/Misc

vs.

STRONG

Explore publications

Orientation Volunteers

Community

Additional postdoc support

Popular resources

(divide these into meaningful groupings)

(find a place for these!)

link examples

Calls to action

WEAK

Our Mission

More

Read More

Apply Now

Orientation Volunteer Application

Full list of our programs

Student Project Gallery

here

Click here

vs.

STRONG

Read more about our mission

See More Events

Read more about the author

Download PhD Application

Apply to be an Orientation Volunteer

Find the program that is right for you

Check out our Student Project Gallery

**titles and
headings**

SPEED-BUMPS

Señor Ted's
Tacos, Burritos, More...



title and heading examples

Keep it short: skip unneeded words

But not too short: include keywords

Keep it simple: avoid jargon

WEAK

About

Directions

What can I do after an BA in English?

Learn about how to declare

UAR Advisor Appointments

BOSP Opportunities

vs.

STRONG

About our galleries

Directions to the Haas Center

Career Options for English Grads

How to declare

Undergrad Advisor Appointments

Study abroad opportunities

using title or sentence case

Which of These Sentences is Easier to Read?

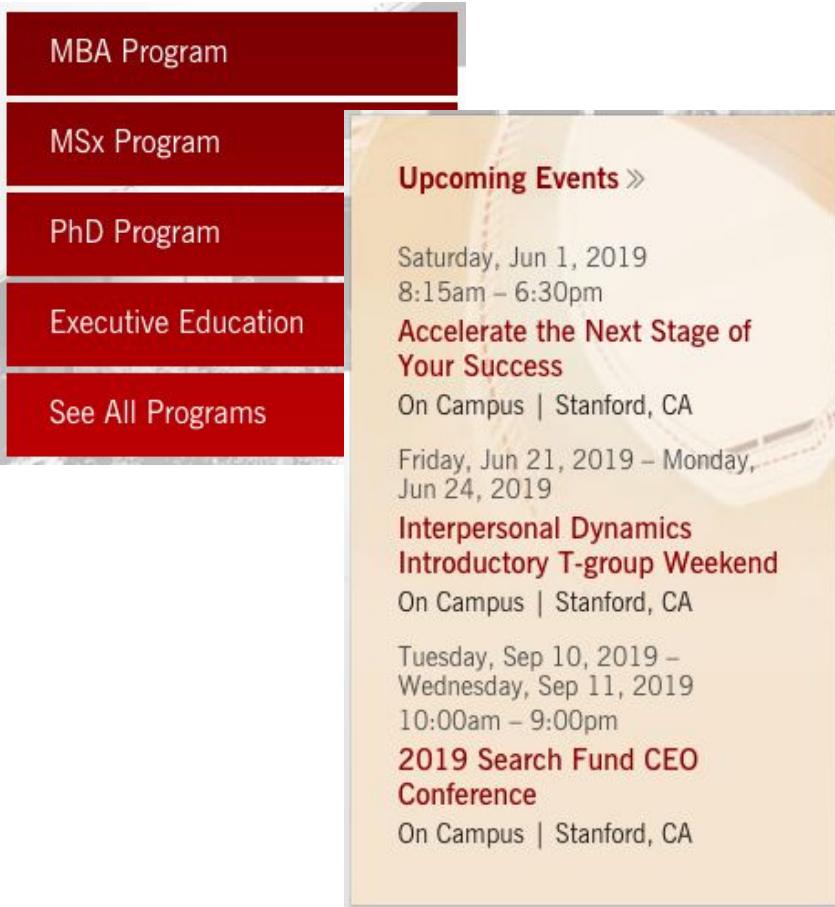
Which of these sentences is easier to read?

title examples

Title Case

vs.

Sentence Case



MBA Program

MSx Program

PhD Program

Executive Education

See All Programs

Upcoming Events »

Saturday, Jun 1, 2019
8:15am – 6:30pm
Accelerate the Next Stage of Your Success
On Campus | Stanford, CA

Friday, Jun 21, 2019 – Monday, Jun 24, 2019
Interpersonal Dynamics Introductory T-group Weekend
On Campus | Stanford, CA

Tuesday, Sep 10, 2019 – Wednesday, Sep 11, 2019
10:00am – 9:00pm
2019 Search Fund CEO Conference
On Campus | Stanford, CA

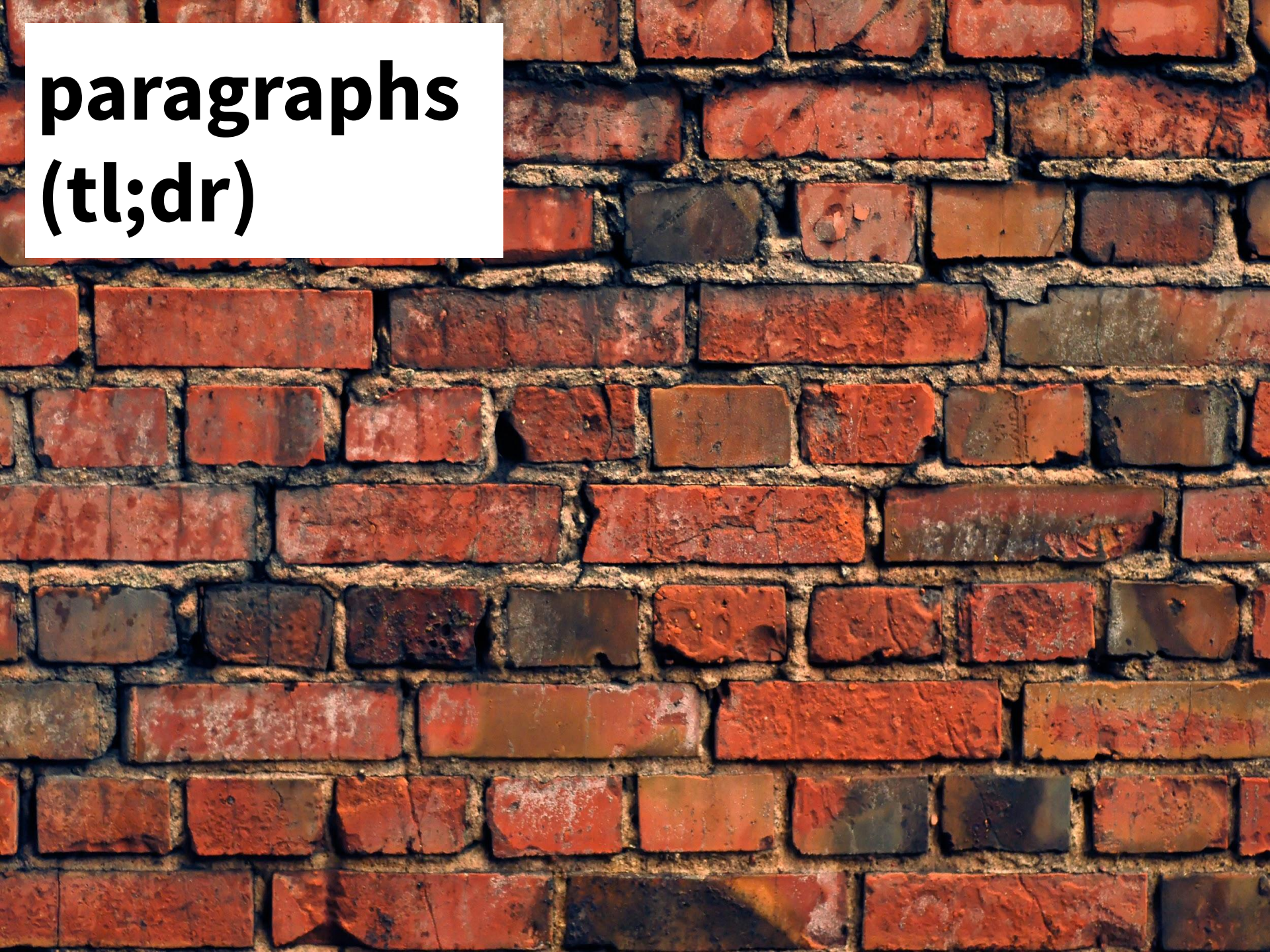


Innovative Marketing for Strategic Advantage

Drive marketing innovation through an understanding of customer behavior »

Lisa
Fennell

**paragraphs
(tl;dr)**



“Most of the time, an acceptable print paragraph is too long for the web.

It’s a retinal thing. We can stare at a well-designed book for hours without eye fatigue. Staring at a monitor is different. The eye needs to move, to fight that fatigue. So we break longer paragraphs into shorter ones. It’s the same content, spaced differently.

Even writers who are not designers must be mindful of this.”

<http://alistapart.com/article/writing-for-the-web>

bulleted and numbered lists

A close-up photograph of a colorful board game spinner. The spinner is divided into several colored segments: yellow, blue, and dark blue. In the center of the spinner, there are three white circular markers with black outlines, each containing a number. The largest marker, located in the blue segment, contains the number '10'. Below it, in a smaller blue segment, is a marker with the number '4'. In the dark blue segment, there is a marker with the number '6'. The background is dark, and there are some blurred lights, possibly from a game table or a display case.

10

4

6

bulleted list example

WEAK

Hawaii's diverse natural scenery, warm tropical climate, abundance of public beaches, oceanic surroundings, and active volcanoes make it a popular destination for tourists, (wind) surfers, biologists, and volcanologists alike.

STRONG

Hawaii's attractions include:

- diverse natural scenery
- warm tropical climate
- abundance of public beaches
- oceanic surroundings
- active volcanoes

Tourists, surfers, wind surfers, biologists, and volcanologists alike enjoy Hawaii.

numbered list example

WEAK

To change a paragraph into a numbered list, read through your text for directions in a paragraph form. Then identify each individual step. Next, try to restructure the directions into a numbered list to make it easier for your users to read and scan. With the simple approach above, you can significantly improve your web content!

STRONG

To change a paragraph into a numbered list:

1. Read through your text for directions that are in a paragraph
2. Identify each individual step
3. Restructure the directions into a numbered list
4. Success! Your users are happier.

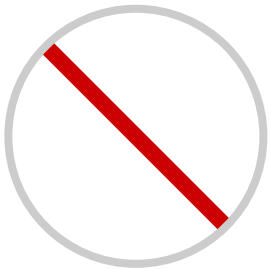
tables

Hamilton, Ont.	Niagara Falls, Ont.	North Bay, Ont.	Ottawa, Ont.	Owen Sound, Ont.	Peterborough, Ont.	Port Arthur, Ont.	Quebec, Que.	St. Hyacinthe, Que.	St. Johns, Que.	St. Thomas, Ont.	Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.	Sherbrooke, Que.	Sorel, Que.	Three Rivers, Que.	Toronto, Ont.	Valleyfield, Que.	Windsor, Ont.	Between the Falls of Ontario and Quebec				
327	227	51	397	148	69	262	325	147	141	891	571	433	427	58	520	498	449	492	64	432	145	Brantford
302	202	76	372	123	44	237	300	159	116	866	546	408	402	83	495	473	424	467	39	407	187	Hamilton
	120	378	119	268	344	240	2	385	185	875	291	148	142	384	504	213	171	207	263	86	488	Hull, Que.
72		278	163	206	244	278	118	161	113	907	335	199	193	284	536	264	215	258	163	143	387	Kingston
100	112		448	199	119	313	376	141	192	942	620	484	478	15	571	549	500	543	115	483	111	London
366	993	873		445	414	364	112	455	262	993	172	36	30	454	622	101	52	95	333	35	558	Montreal
546	172	284	1157		167	115	266	180	93	744	619	481	475	206	373	546	497	540	112	480	310	Muskoka
495	622	502	250	786		281	342	203	160	955	586	450	444	115	539	515	466	509	81	449	226	Niagara Falls
39	333	261	856	507	485		244	294	207	629	528	400	394	320	258	465	416	459	227	399	424	North Bay
808	2906	2786	1913	3078	2284	2769		383	183	873	284	148	142	382	502	213	164	207	261	84	486	Ottawa
326	1424	1304	431	1596	802	1287	1482		199	490	627	491	485	156	240	556	507	550	122	490	252	Owen Sound
909	1260	1214	1359	1429	1456	997	3142	1594		836	434	298	292	198	465	363	314	357	77	297	301	Peterborough
326	341	450	1334	390	963	587	3246	1754	1104		1157	1029	1023	1255	250	1094	1045	1088	856	1028	570	Port Arthur
73	402	370	965	575	568	109	2872	1390	888	478		129	159	628	786	143	165	77	507	207	730	Quebec
473	837	764	736	1009	486	508	2345	863	731	999	527		30	490	658	65	36	131	369	71	594	St. Hyacinthe
484	1866	1789	1776	2034	1382	1523	1745	1345	1523	2024	1552	1025		484	652	78	66	125	363	47	588	St. John's
87	569	492	637	736	387	226	2617	1135	722	724	251	272	1297		578	555	506	549	121	489	111	St. Thomas
274	1651	1579	1724	1824	1374	1677	3186	1704	496	1568	1253	915	1348	1087		723	674	717	485	657	320	Sault Ste. Marie
84	386	427	1371	555	1000	515	3292	1810	874	217	411	912	1937	662	1338		101	93	434	125	659	Sherbrooke
69	297	450	1290	318	919	630	3203	1721	1212	108	561	1082	2107	807	1676	325		48	385	87	610	Sorel
69	1046	1166	1448	1219	769	713	2516	1034	607	1184	706	283	916	482	700	1065	1267		428	130	653	Three Rivers
69	1112	992	884	1418	490	908	1973	453	1141	1409	937	410	892	682	1251	1322	1492	564		206	224	Toronto
327	3191	3071	2749	3364	3000	2857	1136	2318	2750	3353	2881	2354	1454	2626	2444	3266	3436	2624	2238		593	Valleyfield
396	2939	2878	2005	3170	2255	2861	150	1574	2992	3236	2764	2237	1595	2509	2943	3149	3319	2391	1823	958		Windsor
15	614	655	1407	786	1010	557	3320	1838	646	458	442	813	1810	668	1110	228	566	894	1223	3167	3027	
Hamilton, Ont.	Montreal, Que.	Ottawa, Ont.	Port Arthur, Ont.	Quebec, Que.	Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.	Toronto, Ont.	Vancouver, B. C.	Winnipeg, Man.	Atlanta, Ga.	Boston, Mass.	Buffalo, N. Y.	Chicago, Ill.	Denver, Col.	Detroit, Mich.	New Orleans, La.	New York, N. Y.	Portland, Me.	St. Louis, Mo.	St. Paul, Minn.	San Francisco, Cal.	Seattle, Wash.	Washington, D. C.

guiding principles



- Always use column or row headings
- Only display tabular data
- If it's too big for the page, you need a database



Never use tables to make layouts

table?

NAME OF STATE	CONSTITUTIONAL OR STATUTORY	DATE EFFECTIVE
Alabama,	Statutory,	1915
Arizona,	Constitutional,	1915
Arkansas,	Statutory,	1916
Colorado,	Constitutional,	1916
Florida,	Constitutional,	1919
Georgia,	Statutory,	1908
Idaho,	Constitutional,	1916
Indiana,	Statutory,	1918
Iowa,	Statutory,	1916
Kansas,	Constitutional,	1881
Maine,	Constitutional,	1884
Michigan,	Constitutional,	1918
Mississippi,	Statutory,	1909
Montana,	Constitutional,	1918
Nebraska,	Constitutional,	1917
Nevada,	Statutory,	1918
New Hampshire,	Statutory,	1918
New Mexico,	Constitutional,	1918
North Carolina,	Statutory,	1909
North Dakota,	Constitutional,	1889
Ohio,	Constitutional,	1919
Oklahoma,	Constitutional,	1907
Oregon,	Constitutional,	1916
South Carolina,	Statutory,	1916
South Dakota,	Constitutional,	1917
Tennessee,	Statutory,	1909
Texas,	Statutory,	1918
Utah,	Statutory,	1917
Virginia,	Statutory,	1916
Washington,	Statutory,	1916
West Virginia,	Constitutional,	1914
Wyoming,	Constitutional,	1920

table?

Arabic	Roman	Arabic	Roman	Arabic	Roman
1	I	16	XVI	90	XC
2	II	17	XVII	100	C
3	III	18	XVIII	200	CC
4	IV	19	XIX	300	CCC
5	V	20	XX	400	CD
6	VI	21	XXI	500	D
7	VII	22	XXII	600	DC
8	VIII	23	XXIII	700	DCC
9	IX	24	XXIV	800	DCCC
10	X	30	XXX	900	CM
11	XI	40	XL	1,000	M
12	XII	50	L	2,000	MM
13	XIII	60	LX	3,000	MMM
14	XIV	70	LXX	4,000	M \bar{V}
15	XV	80	LXXX	5,000	V $\bar{}$

table?

Back Bay	the Gaza Strip	Skid Row
the Badger State	the Gulf	the South Side
the Badlands	the Holy City	the South Seas
the Bay Area	the Jewish Quarter	the Sun Belt
the Beltway	the Lake District	the Twin Cities
the Bible Belt	the Left Bank	the Upper West Side
the Cape	the Loop (Chicago)	the Village
the Delta	the Old World	the West End
the Eastern Shore	the Panhandle	the Wild West
the East End	the Promised Land	the Windy City
the Eternal City	the Rust Belt	
the Fertile Crescent	Silicon Valley	

“summary” text



guiding principles

One or two sentences only

Tell people what they'll find on this page

EXAMPLE

This is the third article in the blog series on Writing for the Web. I will be addressing how to leverage lists to make your content more scannable.

A marionette stage with a yellow sun in the background and three puppets in the foreground. The puppets are a brown dog, a girl in a white dress, and a duck wearing a floral hat. The stage is made of wood and has a black background. The text "a real life example" is overlaid in a black box with white text.

a real life example

before

Stanford Sites is a self-service tool for building and managing websites for University work. Websites are hosted on a dedicated Drupal infrastructure optimized for performance, streamlined maintenance, and community-requested features. Stanford Sites is available to current faculty, staff, and students to use free of charge and requires little technical expertise.

Those who need help with their Stanford Sites web pages can request assistance at below-market rates from the [Stanford Web Services unit](#).

Stanford Sites are provided on a dedicated hosting infrastructure designed and maintained by Information Technology Services, using the Drupal (versions 6 and 7) open source content management framework.


General features:

- Install easily with a web-based form.
- Edit content through a simple web interface — no HTML required.
- Upload up to 100MB of user files (attachments, images, etc.) to protected space.
- Use WebAuth and Stanford workgroups for account management and access control.
- Employ optional features by way of [included modules](#) (add-ons) commonly used and requested by Drupal website developers at Stanford. *Note: Unlike Stanford's [Collaboration Tools Installer/Upgrader](#), Stanford Sites does not permit users to install their own modules.*

Look-and-feel (themes):

- *Stanford Basic* is an adaptable theme designed individual and general-purpose websites.
- *Stanford Modern* is for official university websites only. *Stanford Modern* is included on department websites by default, but is available to groups by request (see Getting Started section below).
- Stanford Sites does not permit user-installed (custom) themes.

Site names (URLs):

- For individuals, the URL includes your SUNet ID username (e.g., "people.stanford.edu/sunetid").
- For department and group sites, you can choose an appropriate name (e.g., "sites.stanford.edu/classics") that complies with the University's [Name Assignment Policy](#)  (new website names are reviewed and vetted).
- Optional department vanity URLs (e.g., "yourdepartment.stanford.edu"), subject to availability. (Vanity URL requests are answered within three business days.)

Website (Drupal instance) limit:

- Individual users can install one Stanford Sites website.
- Departments and groups can install up to five Stanford Sites websites.

Should you use Stanford Sites or "Drupal on the Stanford Web Service" (Collaboration Tools Installer/Upgrader)?

- [Compare Drupal hosting options](#)

Getting Started

Request a Stanford Sites website by visiting sites.stanford.edu/drupal/admin.

If your website is for a Stanford group and you wish to use the official Stanford Modern theme, you can [submit a HelpSU request](#) separately. Requests are answered within three business days.

Setup instructions and video tutorials are available at learnsites.stanford.edu.

after

Stanford Sites is a self-service tool for building and managing websites for University work. Websites are hosted on a dedicated Drupal infrastructure optimized for performance, streamlined maintenance, and community-requested features. Stanford Sites is available to current faculty, staff, and students to use free of charge and requires little technical expertise.

Feature highlights

- Responsive and accessible themes make Stanford Sites work well on phones, tablets, and desktop browsers, as well as with assistive technologies (for people with disabilities). [Learn more about available themes and tips for online accessibility at Stanford.](#)
- The [WebAuth Module for Drupal](#) enables you to use WebAuth and Stanford workgroups for account management and access control.
- Add features using [included modules](#), many of which were built and contributed by Stanford developers.
- For information about site names (URLs), storage and number-of-sites limits, and more, see the [complete list of features and benefits](#).

Getting started

Request a Stanford Sites website by visiting sites.stanford.edu/drupal/admin. If you need help setting up a site for your group or department, assistance is available at below-market rates from [Stanford Web Services](#).

If your website is for a Stanford group and you wish to use one of Stanford's official themes, you can [submit a HelpSU request](#) separately. Requests are answered within three business days.

[Setup instructions](#) and video tutorials are available at learnsites.stanford.edu.

Learn more

- [Complete list of Stanford Sites features and benefits](#)
- [Setup instructions and video tutorials](#)
- Find upcoming training opportunities at drupaltraining.stanford.edu.
- For general Drupal tasks and topics, a wide range of community-contributed video tutorials are available at learndrupal.stanford.edu.

Not what you're looking for?

- See [Publish a Website](#)

A collection of four action figures is displayed against a blurred background of the Statue of Liberty. From left to right: Superman in his classic blue suit and red cape; Iron Man in his iconic red and gold armor; Wonder Woman in her blue and red outfit with a yellow star on her forehead; and Captain America in his blue suit with a white star on his chest and holding his shield. A black banner with white text is superimposed over the center of the figures.

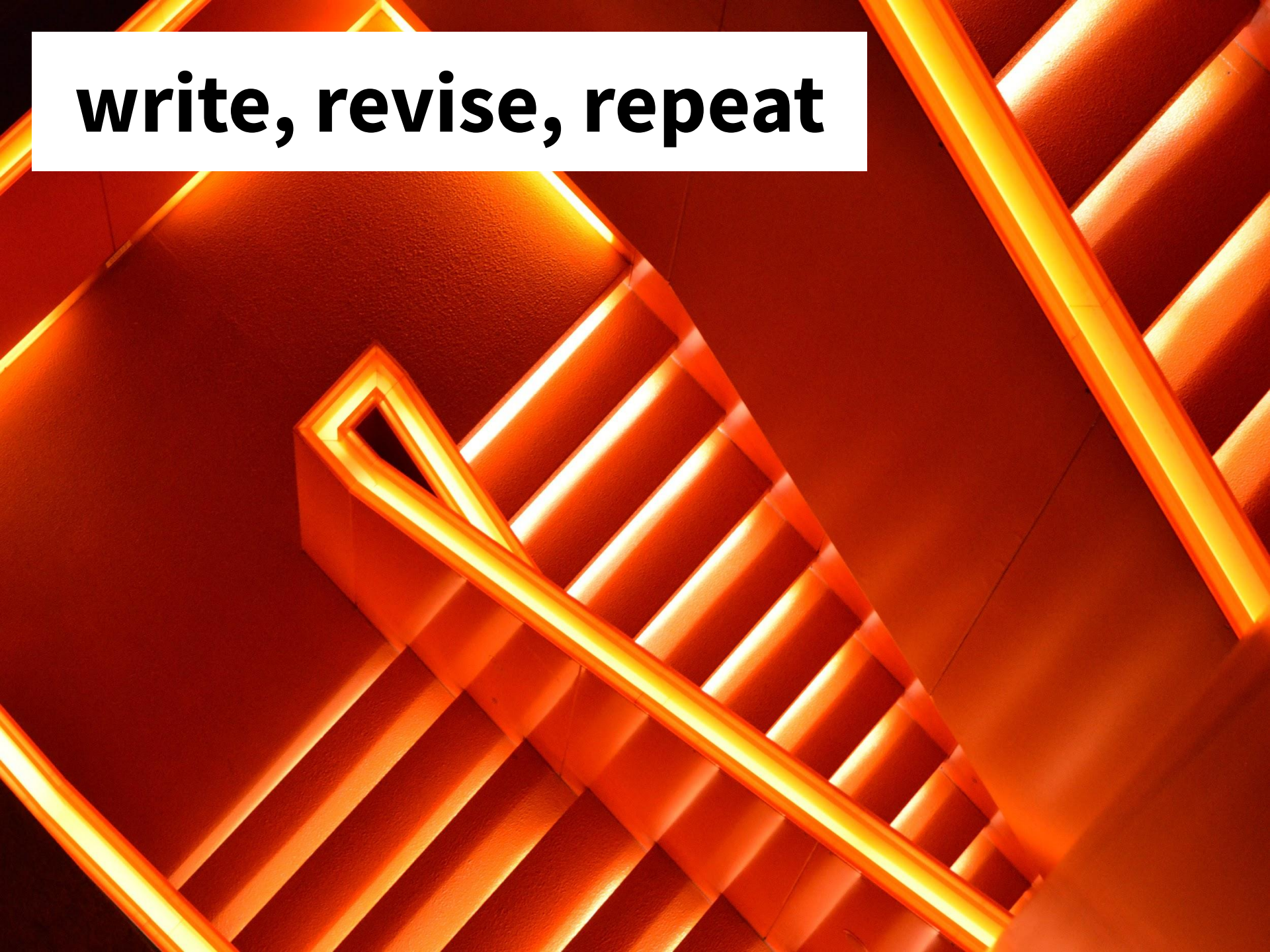
Ready for HTML power!

demo website

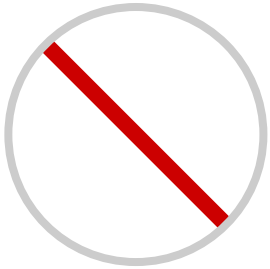
<http://endriga1.people.stanford.edu>

what about process?

write, revise, repeat



don't let your content die



“Don't let crappy content ruin your website!”



Consider:

- annual review of all pages on your site
- editorial calendar - put it on your calendar
- quarterly “web team” meetings

seek feedback



Some quick options

Add a feedback form to your website!

Conduct user testing:

- The 5 second test
- The “hey, does this make sense?” test

questions?

thank you!!!

writing, preparing, and optimizing text for the web

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