



# Making bad copy less bad: A cheat sheet for anyone who proofs copy

## #1 Linking words and phrases

How do we move from one idea to the next? Junior writers and LLMs both suck at leading people by the hand between sentences and sections.

Add more conjunctions at the start of sentences (like 'And...' or 'But...') and use linking phrases like 'That's why' or 'Finally.'

## #4 One big message

You can say several things in your copy, but one thing is always more important than the rest, intentionally or accidentally. Intentionally is better.

Draw a triangle on a piece of paper. Your 'main message' goes at the top, with other, smaller messages that support it. That's the balance you need to find in the copy.

## #2 Verb-led headlines

Good headlines help the reader imagine how their life is better with whatever crap you're selling them.

Start with verbs: not 'An easier way to do your accounts' but 'Finish your accounts in minutes, not hours.'

## #5 Rhythmic variety

Different sentence lengths and structures achieve different things. Long ones are great for making something seem value-packed. Short ones land harder.

Run through the copy and see whether there are long sentences you can quickly break into a couple of shorter, sharper ones.

## #3 You (not us)

Frame everything you write around the people who are reading it.

Less 'Berkshire is a great place to live' and more 'You'll love life in Berkshire.' This doesn't mean extract every instance of 'We' - use some common sense, yeah?

## #6 Format variety

Paragraphs aren't boring. Lists aren't boring. But too much of any one thing makes people lose interest.

Forget the words: think about your copy visually. Where can you break things up with another subhead, or jump into bullet points? Even better, can you say less and show more with a visual?

**Need more help?  
Let's talk.**



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