

## Stylistic Revision

### Rhythm, Balance, Simplicity, Wit and Humor

#### Step 1: Condense

##### Eliminate Intensifiers (adverbs that modify adjectives and other adverbs)

Words like *very*, *extremely*, *incredibly*, *exceedingly*, *remarkably*, etc. drag down sentences and weaken what they're supposed to strengthen. Choose a strong word and it won't need an intensifier:

<i>very</i> ugly	hideous, gruesome, repulsive, monstrous
<i>extremely</i> red	scarlet, crimson
<i>really</i> quickly	quickly, fast

##### Eliminate Adverbs (all those *-ly* words)

Adverbs modify verbs (as well as adjectives and other adverbs). Choose the right verb to carry the action's full force. Don't let them sag, only to pump them up again with needless adverbs

The woman walks away <i>quickly</i> .	She darts. She whizzes. She zips. She zooms.
The woman walks away <i>slowly</i> .	She saunters. She strolls She ambles.

#### Step 2: Expand

##### Use plain language and concrete details, samples and examples

I was up very late writing my paper.	I stayed up late writing. All around me was so still I could hear the dust settling on the black lamp above my paper and the soft breathing of my suitemates asleep across the hall.
We had a lot of fun in Dad's old Chevrolet.	Dad's old Chevrolet became our clubhouse on wheels. We'd drive for miles and miles, the radio cranked, Jimmy slapping time to the rap on the dash, and Lenny, his blonde Mohawk nodding in furious rhythm, at the wheel.
I've seen a range of shoe styles among teachers.	Page 133 of <i>Student Anthology</i>

### **Step 3: Spark it up with analogies, metaphors, and dialogue**

#### **Good Ones Work**

“That adrenaline rush [of running], like an injection to the heart!” (J. C. Oates)

“Blogging is to writing ... what extreme sports are to athletics.” (A. Sullivan)

“Life is like a ladder; you can’t climb up with your hands in your pockets.” (Xiaona Dong)

#### **Mixed Ones Don’t Be careful of cliché traps**

Both his legs had to be amputated, but at least he was still alive and kicking.

When the deadline came, instead of biting the bullet, I punted.