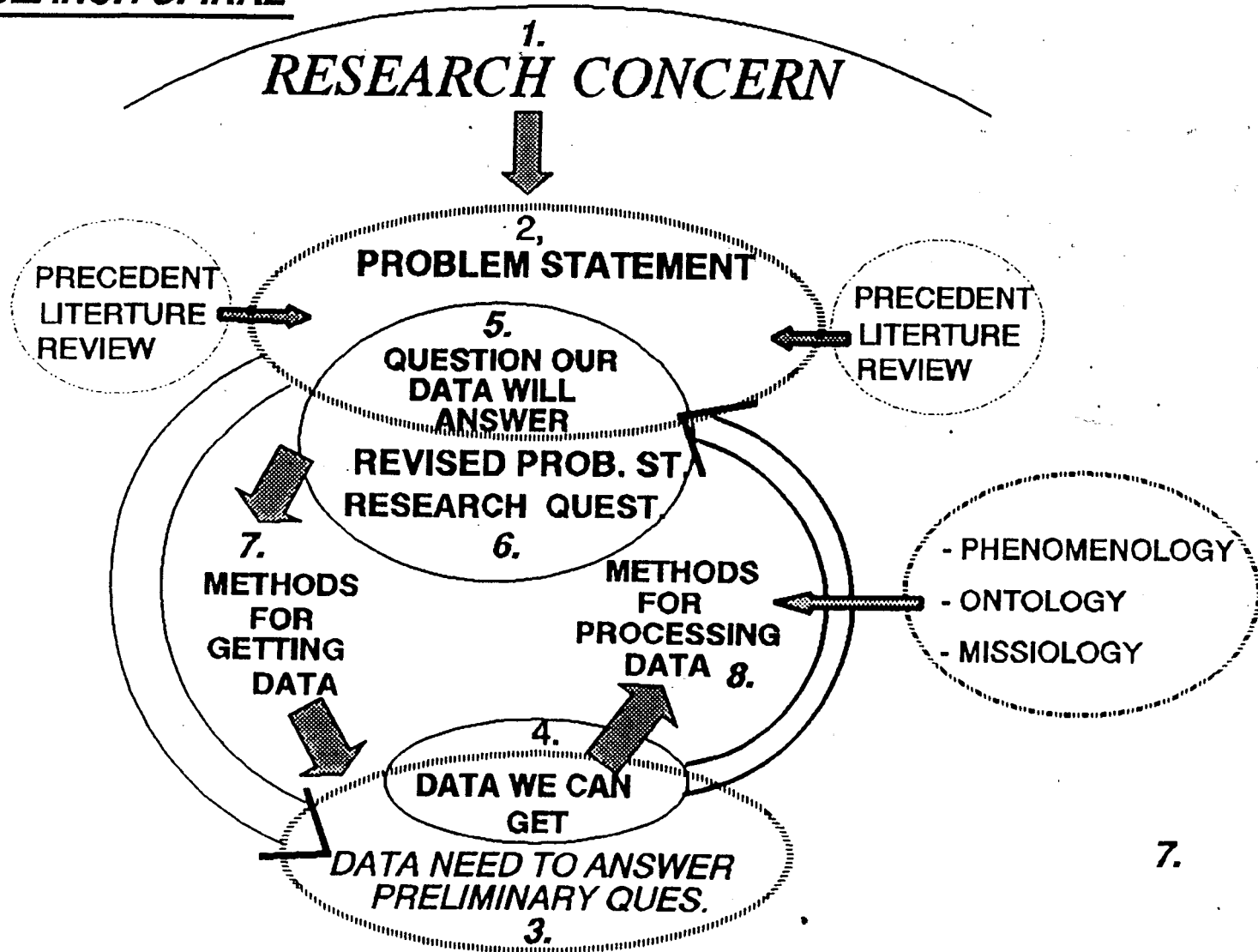


# **THE RESEARCH SPIRAL:**

**- *defining the research topic***

- 1. Research concern [RC]**
- 2. Problem statement [PS]**
- 3. Data needed**
- 4. Data we can get**
- 5. Questions our data will answer**
- 6. Research questions [RQs]**
- 7. Methods for gathering data**
- 8. Methods for processing data**

**FIGURE 2.**  
**THE RESEARCH SPIRAL**



7.

8.

# **THE RESEARCH SPIRAL:**

***- doing the literature review***

- 1. Precedent literature on the theories you will use.**
- 2. Precedent literature on the research methods you will use.**

# **ORGANIZATION OF A DISSERTATION**

## **GIVENS:**

### **CHAPTER 1: Introduction**

- research concern [RC]

### **CHAPTER 2: Theoretical Framework**

- precedent literature review on theory
- theoretical model
- problem statement [PS]
- research questions [RQs]
- limitations and delimitations

### **CHAPTER 3: Methodology**

- methods for gathering data
- methods for processing data

## **BODY OF THE DISSERTATION:**

### **CHAPTER 4: Setting**

### **CHAPTERS 5 - Q:**

- data and analysis

### **CHAPTERS R - S:**

- evaluations

## **ENDING:**

### **CHAPTERS Y - Z**

- findings
- implications and extrapolations
- recommendations
- suggested further research
- closing statement

## **WRITING YOUR DISSERTATION**

- start writing with chapter 4, the introduction to the setting.
- write the body of the dissertation, then the last chapter, and finally go back and revise the first chapters to tell us what you **did do**, not what you wanted to do.
- the last step is to put on the title of the dissertation.

## **WRITING YOUR DISSERTATION**

1. Dump the first draft. Get as many ideas down on paper as you can.
2. Start a new draft and focus on the headings (L1, L2, L3 ...) to make sure the logic is clear.
3. Rework the second draft to make sure that the material under each heading is complete and clear.
4. Rework the third draft to make sure the English is clear and concise (see 'Better Writing')
5. Edit the fourth draft to make certain that the spelling, punctuation and formatting are correct.

***REMEMBER:***

**THERE IS NO GOOD WRITING . . .**

**THERE IS ONLY GOOD REWRITING.**

## ANALYZING HUMAN SITUATIONS

For analytical purposes it is helpful to study humans in terms of 1) a synchronic analysis (structure), and 2) a diachronic analysis (history). In a synchronic analysis it is helpful to examine humans in terms of different systems, and then to look at the relationship between these systems in a 'system of systems' model.

### I. SYNCHRONIC ANALYSIS

#### 1. **Geo-Physical Systems:**

- physical system: geography, terrain, land use, physical features, transportation, etc.
- ecological systems: climate, population density, use of time, diet, etc.
- proxemics: use of time and space

#### 2. **Biological Systems:**

- population distribution
- biological systems: food, health, assimilation, reproduction, diseases, longevity, etc.

#### 3. **Personal Systems:**

:

3.1 Conscious and subconscious processes: thoughts, feelings, values

3.2 Drives, needs, desires

3.3 Conflicts, strategies: ways individuals handle life situations.

#### 4. **Social Systems:**

##### 4.1 Dimensions of Social Systems:

4.11 *Social*: the definition, allocation and use of relationships. Examine the relationships between individuals, within groups, in the society as a whole, and globally.

- interpersonal relationships: statuses, roles, communication
- networks:
- groups: kinship, geographic, associational
- societal categories: classes, ethnic groups, religious/political/linguistic and other categories
- societies: band, tribe, peasant, urban

4.12 *Economic*: the definition, allocation and use of resources. Examine the use of material and nonmaterial resources.

- gifts
- redistribution
- market



4.13 Political: the definition, allocation and use of power. Look at how power is allocated and used.

4.14 Legal: the definition, allocation and use of legitimacy. See how legitimacy is symbolized and used.

- stateless and state societies
- uniform and multicultural legal systems

4.2. Function: look at the functions of activity your are observing.

4.3 Levels of Social Analysis:

4.31 Interpersonal relationships: roles, statues, communication, etc.

4.32 Networks

4.33 Groups:

- kinships groups: marriage patterns, relatives, extended family
- geographic groups: dorms, neighborhoods, towns
- associational groups: clubs, gangs, unions, army, churches, committees

4.34 Societal categories:

- classes and interclass relationships
- ethnic groups, and intra- and inter-ethnic relationships, and migration and assimilation
- religious groups

4.35 Societies:

- band, tribal, peasant, and urban societies

4.36 Global Systems:

- globalization, regionalization and localization

## ● 5. Cultural Systems:

5.1 Dimensions of culture:

5.11 *Cognitive*: categories, logic, ideas, beliefs

5.12 *Affective*: feelings, prejudices

5.13 *Evaluative*: judgments regarding 1) truth and falsehood, 2) like and dislike, 3) right and wrong.

## 5.2 Levels of culture:

5.21 Behavioral patterns and products.

5.22 Sign systems [semiotics]: examine the different sign systems humans use.

- audio: words, sounds
- visual: print, pictures, signs
- tactile: touch
- taste, etc.

5.23 Myths and rituals: observe the formalized patterns of behavior required or expected in specific situations, and find the paradigmatic stories people believe about reality.

- greetings, partings, beginning and closing functions
- class rituals, sports rituals
- sacred rituals

5.24 Knowledge systems: gather information on the different domains of knowledge, such as technology [how to bake a cake, fix a care, etc.], business, religion, etc.

5.25 Worldview: look at the unquestioned 'givens' which the people have.

- deep cognitive assumptions: related to formation of categories, semantic domains, logics used, nature of reality.
- deep affective assumptions: related to feelings
- deep evaluative assumptions: related to deep values, loyalties and allegiances.

## 6. **Spiritual Sphere:**

6.1 Human spirits.

6.2 'Spirit' of corporate systems.

6.3 Activities of angels and demons.

6.4 God's work in the event.

## II. DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS

We need to study the history of a people in order to understand their present situation. Ultimately, meaning is found more in understanding peoples' histories and stories than in their structures.

## Steps in Missiological Research

1. Describe your Research Concern [RC]. This provides the reason and drive for the research.
2. Formulate a Problem Statement [PS]. Make this as specific as you can.
3. Derive the Research Questions [RQs] that you must answer to solve the problem.
4. List the data you need to gather to answer the research questions. Check to see if you can in fact gather this data.
5. List the data you can realistically gather related to the problem statement.
6. Reformulate the problem statement and the research questions to fit the data you can gather. Do further literature search in the light of the changes in PS and RQs.
7. List the methods you plan to use in gathering the data, and look at the precedent literature on these methods.
8. List the ways you plan to process the data after you gather it [imagine a large pile of papers with the data on them. What will you do to process that data?]
9. List the bodies of literature you need to search to know the current state of the debate regarding theories and data related to the Problem Statement, and do a preliminary search on these bodies of literature.

## Appendix 1

**NOTES ON WRITING A Ph. D. DISSERTATION**

Dissertations are research documents, and as such follow standard research procedures. Some of these are as follows:

1. Remember, your audience is the **academic community**. It is not written for the general public, nor a missionary audience. You are writing for your peers in the academy.
  - you can assume your audience knows the basic information you are covering. **Do not** spend time introducing them to the subject. Your task is not to 'teach' the readers new information, but to look at the arguments in the field, to provide new data, and to argue your case.
  - you must give the readers some idea of the theories and bodies of data you will be using. This is done in the "review of the literature." In this you **do not** survey the whole of the literature in the field, but only literature that relates specifically to your topic, and on which you plan to draw in your discussion, either in critiquing the position or in borrowing ideas from it. In the review of literature, simply mention the writers and cite their sources.
  - you should spend your time arguing for and/or against various positions related to your topic, and then presenting your position and giving reasons for it. You should also give some defense against attacks that might be made against your position. In choosing a position, you may use someone else's model without modification, or you may formulate your own.
  - you should draw conclusions only from the narrow field of your data. The readers will apply these findings to their own parts of the world. Do not generalize beyond your data.
2. You should build on previous theories and research, and end by pointing to further research.
  - begin with a review of the literature on which you will build your theory. Do not review the broad literature of the field. If you draw from several theoretical domains (e.g. from the fields of anthropology and theology) review the literature in each that is relevant to your argument.
  - at the end, suggest further research that should be done on the subject.

**PREVIOUS THEORIES ----> YOUR DISSERTATION -----> FUTURE  
AND RESEARCH RESEARCH**

3. **Prepare a proposal.** The more carefully you do this, the clearer your dissertation will be. Also, a good proposal saves you much time later on.

**3.1 Chose a specific topic and focus it in one problem statement:**

- decide on the type of dissertation you will write: eg. history, biblical exegesis, theology, anthropology, sociology, psychology, education, ethnohistory, etc.
- formulate the topic either in the form of a question, or a hypothesis.

**3.2 Break the problem statement down into research questions that need to be answered in order to solve the problem.**

**3.3 Note the specific data you will need to gather to answer the research questions.**

- remember, a Ph.D. requires you to gather original data. You cannot build your dissertation on secondary, library sources (books and journal articles). Primary data include archival materials, letters, diaries, personal interviews, etc. [in historical dissertations]; biblical texts in Greek and Hebrew [in exegetical and theological studies]; and fieldwork, interviews, key informants, case studies, questionnaires, statistical analysis, etc. [in scientific studies].
- decide what data you need to gather to answer your questions. Be very specific in noting what these data will be, and whether or not you can gather them in the time you have set to do so.
- look at the data you plan to gather - does it answer the questions you are asking. In most cases the data will not do so, only a smaller question. For example: you may want to find out the affect of immigration on Chinese coming to the U.S. This requires: a) that you study the Chinese immigrants in L.P., San Francisco, Seattle, Chicago, New York, Minneapolis, etc. and b) that you study immigrants in the 1800s, early 1900s, and recent immigrants. Obviously this is far too big a topic for a dissertation, or even a lifetime. That is why Ph.D. dissertations have titles like: The effect of immigration to the U.S. on Chinese in Evanston, 1990-1995.
- be specific about what data you plan to gather and where it is. For example, if you plan to use historical sources such as letters, reports and so on, note where these can be found. If you plan to do fieldwork, note where you plan to go, how long you will take to gather the data, what types of date you hope to gather, and the methods you want to use. Here be very realistic. Image yourself going to the field, meeting people you probably know, being asked to minister in churches and struggling to get food and laundry cared for. How long will it really take to get the data you need for the dissertation. A few weeks is never enough. A few months will suffice in some cases. Often it takes longer to get the

information you need.

- generally you will find that the data you can gather does not fully answer the question you pose. Therefore, reformulate your questions to fit the data you can gather. When the data

### 3.4 Decide on the specific methods and strategies to gather your data:

### 3.5 Give a rough outline of the dissertation as you see it developing.

- clearly you don't know what the actual dissertation will look like, but a tentative outline helps you think through the whole process.

- normally an outline consists of three parts:

1) **the givens:** The introduction to the dissertation sets the stage for your data and argument. You do not need to prove what you give here, only note reasons for what you do. Some things generally included in this section:

- = general introduction, and reasons why you are interested in this topic.
- = statement of the problem and the research questions
- = review of the bodies of literature related to your research questions
- = methods you plan to use to gather the data
- = theological givens
- = limitations

2) **the body of the dissertation:** Here you present your data and arguments for the case you are making. This is your original contribution to academic knowledge, and must be based on original data and carefully reasoned. Do not draw generalizations in these chapters that go beyond your data. You can suggest such generalizations in the concluding comments below. This section generally has several chapters in it.

3) **conclusions and closing comments:** Here you should draw together your argument and present your findings in a concise, well argued case. Remember, the conclusions are **not** a summary of what you have said in the dissertation. They should draw together your final arguments, make your final case, and make applications to missiology. You should also suggest any further research you feel would help substantiate your case, or carry it further. You may also draw inferences suggested by your findings that go beyond your specific research. For example, you may suggest that what you found may fit in India, or Latin America.

### 3.6 Review of literature.

- list the body of literature (theoretical and informational) you will need to review for each of the research questions you must examine to answer your larger question. Discuss briefly the books and articles you plan to read for each section and the reasons why these are important for your dissertation.

- do not give a general review of a field of knowledge. Remember, you are addressing experts who know the field better than you. Therefore focus the review only on the specific arguments you wish to make in the dissertation as these relate to the previous literature.

#### 4. Writing your Dissertation.

**4.1 Order of writing.** After you have read widely, gathered and processed your data, and are ready to write, you should begin by writing the central body of the dissertation. This is the easiest to write because it is concrete, fresh and yours. After writing the body of the dissertation, go back to write the introductory chapters making explicit what you did do in gathering your data and arguing your case. Finally, write the concluding chapter(s).

**4.2 Writing.** Some of you find it easiest to first 'dump' a chapter--in other words, writing down the ideas you want to include in the chapter without thought to specific wording, or even the detailed order of presenting the information. Then begin with a new page or file and start writing the chapter seriously. This second draft is the one you refine for the final dissertation. "Dumping" the chapter the first time around helps you get over "writer's block," the problem of trying to write what you believe is the final, finished draft. If you know you are going to discard the first writing, you can simply pour out the words and not worry because you know you will start again a second time. Worry about precise wording only in the final stages of writing the dissertation. You will find that the words and paragraphs you spent so much time choosing early on are not even in the final dissertation.

In writing your dissertation, make certain that your headings are on the proper level and follow a logical order. Periodically, outline your headings and their levels to make sure that your overall argument is progressing logically. Remember, in writing a dissertation, are handling, probably for the first time, a very long document. To keep it logical, you must give particular attention to the headings. Use several levels of headings to keep the progression clear. You can drop the lowest level headings in the final draft to avoid chopping the dissertation up with too many of them, but early on they help keep your logical clear to you.

**4.3 Rewriting.** Remember: There is no good writing. there is only good rewriting. A good thesis requires several drafts and a great deal of revising (moving pieces around, working on the language for clarity and precision, and making sure that the sections and chapters are connected to one another by ending and beginning sentences and paragraphs. Expect to complete at least three drafts of the dissertation before it is finally approved.

#### **4.4 Odds and Ends.**

- make certain that every citation in the text is found in the bibliography.
- if you wish to make editorial comments on the matter your are discussing but do not

- want to put them in the main text because they distract the reader from your central argument, put them in foot or end notes.
- underline all foreign terms except those that are capitalized titles.
  - avoid using words such as '.etc,' and 'et. al.' in the text.
  - when you refer to a person for the first time, give the first and last name, or first name, middle initial and last name. In later references use only the last name except when you cite more than one person with the same last name.
  - normally in academic writing we avoid titles such as Dr. and Professor.
  - above all, try to be consistent in the way you handle headings, citations, page breaks, numbering, spelling and so on.

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## Appendix 2

# BETTER WRITING

You are a student, not a writer. So why worry about writing? You write for the same reason you talk: to get your point across. Writing is one of the tools you use to pass on your ideas. Writing is one way to communicate. A person who cannot talk is seriously handicapped. So is the person who cannot write clearly. In a clear sense, he or she is dumb.

You want your readers to understand exactly what you are saying. If they ask, "What does this mean?" you have not done the job. If a professor misunderstands what you have written on an exam, he or she may mark your answer wrong. If the readers do not understand your dissertation, it will gather dust on the shelf.

Writing clearly reduces misunderstandings and helps avoid errors. You have developed strong writing habits already. You may need to dig out the bad ones and unlearn them. Unlearning is more painful than learning, but it can be done. You will also need to learn new habits that can strengthen your writing.

As your readers pick up what you write, they ask themselves, "What's this all about? What's in it for us? What am I asked to do?" Your message must answer these questions clearly and completely. The important thing in writing is the end, not the means; the point you make, not the fancy phrases you choose. The goals of writing are to:

- \***to be read:** a confusing message is too much trouble to read.
  - \* **to be understood:** if your reader misunderstand completely, you would have done better not to write.
  - \* **to convince:** is your writing direct, conversational--as you would say it face to face?
  - \* **to cause some sort of action:** direct, precise, active writing moves the reader to act.
- To achieve these goals, adopt one basic measuring stick for your writings: **Is it clear?**

How hard or easy a piece of writing is to read depends on two things: 1) how tough the subject matter is; and 2) how complex the language is. A complex subject does not demand complex language. In fact, for the careful writer, this is a good guide. **The harder and more involved the subject, the greater the need for simple writing.** This is particularly true in academic writing. Academic jargon is **not** a sign of being learned or of knowing the subject.

### I. IS YOUR WRITING CLEAR?

There are some simple rules that can make your writing clear.

#### 1. Use Short Words and Short Sentences.

Long words and long sentences make writing unnecessarily hard to read. The key word

here is "unnecessarily." A long word is sometimes the right, the precise word; but writing larded with big words is tough reading. Also long sentences are often effective and they do add variety. However, long sentences in quantity burden the reader.

How to keep your sentences short:

- \* do not use words that say nothing.
- \* do not use words that something you have already said.
- \* do not use three or four words when one will do.
- \* use periods.

Here is an illustration:

"Notwithstanding the fact that he believed that the company, as a whole, was not operating well, he expressed doubt with reference to an eventual sales slump that one ever happen, but he advised the heads of the departments that they should consolidate together as one unit."

If we throw out words that do not say anything and those that are redundant, if we substitute one word for three or four, and if we had one period, we come up with the following: "Although he believed the company was not operating well, he doubted a sales slump would occur. However, he advised the department heads to consolidate."

## 2. Avoid Excess Words

If there is a Golden Rule for clear writing, it is this: **avoid excess words**. Researchers estimate that the average piece of writing can be cut from 20% to 40% and be improved by the operation.

Using too many words is a common fault, and forgivable. However, there is no excuse for padding sentences deliberately. Nonprofessional often pad their writing: to achieve what they mistakenly believe is style; to make small ideas sound important; to cover up fuzzing thinking; or to soften direct statements. However, these are rather poor reasons.

To give you some idea of how wordy we have become, here is a short list of common phrases. Each of them is weak, and can be replaced by one strong word:

- |                            |                                     |                      |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| - in the amount of         | - on the order or magnitude of      |                      |
| - for the purpose of       | - which is of a confidential nature |                      |
| - in the nature of         | - along the lines of                | - prior to           |
| - subsequent to            | - on the basis of                   | - with reference to  |
| - with regard to           | - in connection with                | - in accordance with |
| - on the occasion of       | - in the event that                 | - in the case of     |
| - in view of the fact that | - for the reason that               | - with a view to     |
| - despite the fact that    | - give consideration to             | - have need for      |
| - give instructions to     | - is of the opinion                 | - in large measure   |
| - make an adjustment       | - the improvement of                | - the purchase of    |

With a little effort, you can double or triple this list.

### 3. Use Simple Words

Write to be understood (better yet, write so you cannot be misunderstood) and not to impress the reader. So pick the simplest word that says clearly what you mean. Simple words are not always short words, nor are they always common words. Sometimes the simplest word you can find is a long hard word.

In successful writing, from the Bible to Ernest Hemingway, you will find the same wise use of plain language. The point is this: **there is no end to ways you can express ideas without resorting to fancy words.**

### 4. Use Short Words

Because a word is short, it may seem insignificant. Many writers hurl them into the trash can and rely instead on long important-sounding words. When they do so, they are tossing away the hardest working part of our language. Simple words more often than not are the clearest possible way to express an involved concept. What are little words?

- \* they are vigorous
- \* they are flexible
- \* they are clear
- \* they are easy to use and to understand
- \* in short, little words are effective.

### 5. Say it Once

A common type of excess word is redundancy--needless repetition. These are redundancies:

- \* "Consolidate them together as one unit . . ."
- \* "The rules and regulations say . . ."
- \* "We needed a settlement that is fair and equitable . . ."

How do you get rid of unnecessary repetition? The same way you get rid of other extra wordage: by reading and re-reading what you have written, and asking, "Does it really have to be said here?" If it doesn't, don't.

### 6. Use Strong Verb.

Strong verbs make writing strong. Lack of them makes writing feeble. A verb describes action or a state of being. For direct, clear, forceful writing, you cannot beat the active verb. It shows direction by the subject. Active verbs move. They convince. They crackle with vitality. They describe action the way that you perform action. You act directly; active verbs describe

directly.

Other types of verbs and verb substitutes exist. These include:

- \* **verbs of being** (forms of the verb "to be"). They are weak substitutes for action verbs. Instead of "it is the finding of the court. . ." or "We are in agreement. . ." try "This court finds. . ." or "We agree . . ."
- \* **passive verbs** (expressing action done to the subject). Passive verbs, when over-used, result in wordy writing. They may indicate indecision. They create vagueness. Yet, much academic writing avoids strong verbs and relies instead on these weak substitutes.
- \* **smothering verbs** (action turned into a thing or quality). When you take **err** (a verb) and turn it into **error** (a thing), or change it to **erroneous** (a quality) you smother it and rob it of its action. the electricity vanishes. The force dissipates. Watch out for words ending in **-ion, -tion, -ing, -ent, -ant, -ency, -ancy**. Verbs of being often accompany smothering verbs.

#### 7. Write, rewrite and rewrite again

Allan Tippet noted, "There is no good writing. There is only good rewriting." Do not be content with writing down your ideas. Look at your writing from the perspective of the reader. Would you enjoy reading it? Would you read it if you didn't have to?

## II. IS YOUR WRITING LOGICAL?

Good writing depends much more on careful thought than it does on a detailed knowledge of the language. Writing without thought is like shooting without aim. Writing things down, on the other hand, helps us clarify our thinking by forcing us to state our ideas. When you write ask:

- \* Am I saying all that must be said?
- \* Am I saying it right?
- \* Is it clear, or could it be clearer?
- \* Am I adding anything that does not have to be said?

Messages suffer from being over-stuffed--not only with extra words, but also with pointless information. Your reader wants to know the point of what you have written, enough background to understand it--and not much more.

When you write like a writer, try to think like a reader. Your writing will be shorter, more to the point, more effective. Sure it take effort. As one writer put it: "**Easy writing's vile hard reading.**" Most people, when they write, say much more than they need. What you must say depends on several points:

- \* What action are you taking? "Open the window."
- \* How much background information does the reader need to understand clearly? "It's too hot

in here. Open the window."

\* How much courtesy or tact does he/she deserve? "It's too hot in here. Please open the window."