



Cassie Hart Copywriting  
& Editorial Services



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### INTRODUCTION

I received several comments (from subscribers who know me personally) after the March/April issue of *WriteTips* was sent out. Most of the commentary was along the following lines: "I received my ezine two days after you had your baby... how'd you manage to put everything together after *that*? I'd never be able to manage...you're amazing!"

I must come clean here... I'm not really all that amazing. I just planned ahead. (The article was completed way before my due date, just in case!) And the timely distribution is due to my trusty design partner, Franklin Givens of [Branmarc Design](#). (Thank you Franklin!) So I really didn't do anything out of the ordinary, but thanks for thinking I did/could. (By the way, the baby is a girl and is doing great!)

And since I've revealed my excuse for being short on time, I also must confess that because the entire article was so lengthy, I decided to split it up into two sections — this gives you a break from reading lots of text and me a break from writing a new article during these insanely busy first months with baby. So...this issue explores five more tips for creating better prose. Enjoy!

All the best,  
Cassie Hart

## Feature Article

### 5 tips for better prose (part I)

#### #1 Define unfamiliar/unusual terms.

If you're writing for an audience that may be unfamiliar with certain terminology, be sure to explain the meaning of certain words or phrases before using them in a sentence. Better yet, leave jargon entirely out of the picture if possible.

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## **#2 Spell out acronyms.**

Acronyms are everywhere! It's virtually impossible to know what every acronym stands for, so it's always a good rule of thumb to explain the acronym's meaning the first time it appears in a document. Once the acronym has been explained, subsequent references need only include the abbreviation. For example:

OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) offers on-the-job safety training. Our department has a training session with an OSHA representative scheduled for next week.

## **#3 Incorporate formatting techniques.**

Reading page after page of text can be hard on the eyes, so give your readers a break — use headings to separate sections of related text and incorporate bulleted lists when necessary to improve readability and enhance the flow of information on the page.

## **#4 Don't overuse commas.**

Knowing how to use commas effectively can be tricky. Here are a few tips to help avoid common comma errors:

### *1. Don't place a comma before the first item in a series.*

*Incorrect:* Items needed for the experiment include, milk cartons, scissors, and string.

*Correct:* Items needed for the experiment include milk cartons, scissors, and string.

### *2. Don't place a comma after a coordinating conjunction such as and or but.*

*Incorrect:* The game starts at 10:00 pm but, the pre-game begins an hour earlier.

*Correct:* The game starts at 10:00 pm but the pre-game begins an hour earlier.

## **#5 Avoid clichés.**

Popular words and phrases are coined every day. Whether these terms are the "hot" new biz speak or an old phrase that's been around for years, remember that they can be overused very quickly. To keep your writing fresh, think independently and try not to rely on others' ideas. Some phrases that may be considered cliché include *think outside the box*, *quick as a wink*, *last but not least*, etc.

## **RESOURCES**

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New resources will be announced in the next issue. Thanks

again for reading!

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### **FEEDBACK CENTRAL**

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Have suggestions or comments about how to make this ezine even better? I'd love to hear from you! Are the articles useful? Have any of these tips helped with your own writing? Send me an [email](#) and let me know how I'm doing!

### **ABOUT CASSIE HART**

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Over nine years of professional writing experience has afforded me the opportunity to learn the finer points of writing efficient, effective, and creative copy. Press releases, brochures, newsletters, website content, and articles are among the many types of marketing and promotional communications I regularly generate for clients. To discuss potential projects not listed here (or to obtain more information about any project types listed above) please [contact me](#). All initial consultations and estimates for projects are FREE!

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