



“Look for the clutter in your writing and prune it ruthlessly. Be grateful for everything you can throw away. Reexamine each sentence that you put on paper. Is every word doing new work? Can any thought be expressed with more economy? Is anything pompous or pretentious or faddish? Are you hanging on to something useless just because you think it’s beautiful? Simplify. Simplify.”

-William Zinsser, *On Writing Well*

GOAL: **get your sentences down to just a couple prepositions.** Here’s how:

1. Highlight the prepositions. Print this list and stick it on your wall.
2. Take out any highlighted words & corresponding phrases that don’t change the sentence’s meaning.
3. See if any can be replaced with a simple verb. If so, do it.
4. See if any can be turned into adverbs or adjectives. If so, try it.
5. Consolidate your verbs, adjectives, & adverbs as much as possible.
6. Sentence still meandering, confusing, or clunky? Consider breaking it up into two.

LIST OF PREPOSITIONS:

[take no prisoners.]

aboard	beside	near	under	by way of
about	besides	of	underneath	due to
above	between	off	until	except for
across	beyond	on	up	in addition
after	but	onto	upon	to
against	by	out	with	in back of
along	despite	outside	within	in case of
alongside	down	over	without	in front of
among	during	past	COMPOUND:	in regard to
around	except	round		in spite of
as	for	since	according to	instead of
at	from	through	ahead of	out of
before	in	throughout	along with	up to
behind	inside	till	as for	
below	into	to	away from	
beneath	like	toward	because of	



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