



Next to last, but not least, William Zinsser would teach: To think clearly, write clearly. Most of us write crummy. And it is tough to unlearn some of the crummy things we have been taught in school, such as never starting a sentence with the word “but.” But all that would change with Zinsser as task master. He has certainly helped us grow to become more careful writers—respectful of that fidgety fellow (perhaps you at this very moment) who is just looking for an excuse to put away what we have written. Strength through pruning, Zinsser would mind us. And then he would remind us of the importance of constructing a conclusion as a memorable crescendo—what the reader takes away from your piece— rather than a highly forgettable rehashing of what you have already said. As your writing improves, you will watch your clear thinking soar. Your reading will also change. More important than reading a journal or book cover-to-cover, you will begin to look for statements, phrases, even single words that will provide some of that Emersonian provocation—the provocation that makes you think about your thinking.

Have you ever considered how your writing influences your reading? Is it time to re-think the way you write?

Suggested Readings:

1. Zinsser W. On writing well. 3rd ed. New York: Harper & Row; 1980.
2. Zinsser W. Writing to learn. New York: Harper & Row; 1988.

Learn More about Zinsser:

<http://www.williamzinsserwriter.com>