Principle 1: Use SUBJECTS to name your main characters. In other words, keep your subjects short and concrete, naming your main characters.

Original:
In the twentieth century, governmental intervention in fast changing technologies has commonly resulted in a distortion of the evolution of a market or interference in its dissemination of new products.

Revised:

Principle 2: Use VERBS, not nouns, to name those characters’ actions. In other words, use verbs to communicate actions; do not bury actions in abstract nominalizations.

Original:
Many colleges have come to the realization that continued increases in tuition are no longer possible because of strong resistance from parents to the high cost of higher education.

Revised:

Principle 3: Get to a verb quickly. In other words, help readers quickly get past a short subject to its verb.

Original:
Lincoln’s claim that the Civil War was God’s punishment of both North and South for slavery appears in the last part of his speech.

Revised:
Principle 4: Begin sentences with information that is familiar to readers. (old → new, familiar → unfamiliar)

Principle 5: End a sentence with long and complex units of information. (short → long, simple → complex)

Original:
Two aims—the recovery of the American economy and the restoration of America into a military superpower—were in Reagan’s mind when he assumed the office of the presidency. The drop in unemployment figures and inflation, and the increase in the GNP testify to his success in the first. But our increased involvement in international conflict without any clear set of policy goals indicates less success with the second.

Revised:

Principle 6: Keep your subjects consistent. Avoid beginning several sentences in a row with unrelated subjects. In other words, don’t vary subjects randomly; limit them to just a few different characters.

Original:
The power to create and communicate a new message to fit a new experience is not a competence animals have in their natural states. Their genetic code limits the number and kind of messages that they can communicate. Information about distance, direction, source, and richness of pollen in flowers constitutes the only information that can be communicated by bees, for example. A limited repertoire of messages delivered in the same way, for generation after generation, is characteristic of animals of the same species.

Revised: