***CRISP*-it: A Style Revision Workshop**

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CRISP your writing.

C ut words

R educe clauses

I ntensify verbs

S harpen diction

P ack phrases

1. First, C ut words. Cut out every word that can be spared. That gets "due to the fact that" and "in order to" and all other wordy constructions that don't say anything. Without harping on any single "pet peeve," it calls attention to meaning.

Examples for the group to revise:

*Students will often write required writings that fulfill a grade requirement towards graduation.*

*Once hired, Stephanie was required to produce a syllabus which needed to include the learning objectives she intended for her students to accomplish.*

Now cut unnecessary words and phrases in your vignette.

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2. Next, R educe clauses. Almost all clauses can be reduced in some way; to appositives or phrases, etc. Instead of "George Washington, who was president of the United States, . . . " by simply whacking out "who was" reduces from a relative clause to an appositive noun.

Example for the group to try:

*Madison, who invented the word “tyradical,” now thinks of meaningful ways to use it.*

Now reduce clauses in your vignette.

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3. Then, I ntensify verbs. Circle verbs and intensify the weak ones.

Creative Suggestion: How does this verb choice intensify the comparison in the previous sentence?

*“Doc awakened very slowly and clumsily like a fat man getting out of a swimming pool. His mind broke the surface and fell back several times.” ~John Steinbeck*

Why is “broke” a better word choice than “coming up from”?

Now intensify clauses in your vignette.

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4. After that, S harpen diction. Find the very BEST words for the audience and the purpose. Pay attention to the level of diction that is best for the writer to address that audience about that subject on that occasion and change any words that are either "higher" or "lower" than is best.

Example:

“Once I was sure there was nothing going on, I step inside, letting the door shut.”

“Once I was sure there was nothing going on, I stepped inside, letting the door thud shut.” ~Phillip Larkin

Why is this better?

Now sharpen diction in your vignette.

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5. Finally, P ack phrases. Move them behind the nouns. Instead of "A proposal presented by Derek Bok, the president of Harvard University, was defeated," pack it to "Harvard president Derek Bok's proposal failed." Using the example above: “George Washington, former president of the United States,” becomes "U. S. president George Washington. . ."

Now pack phrases in your vignette.