



Shawn Can Write

# Key Copywriting Rules

Free guide from:  
[ShawnCanWrite.com](http://ShawnCanWrite.com)



by Shawn Forsythe

# What Is This Guide?

*This* guide is a succinct yet powerful tool that covers the most important copywriting rules. These rules make content writing more interesting, crisp, and readable. *This* document is a companion to 3 writing guides that are available on Shawn's website:

- [Mini Writing Guide](#)
- [Tiny Writing Guide](#)
- [1-Page Writing Guide](#)

The rules presented here are from Shawn's proprietary 19-page content article writing guide. He created that guide in 2009 and has continually updated and revised it since then.

*This* guide is meant to be used with 3 other documents: Piece Prep Notes, Piece Writing Elements, and Headline Writing. These free documents can be found on [www.ShawnCanWrite.com](http://www.ShawnCanWrite.com).

Shawn is the creator of **Shawn Solutions** group of websites. Currently he focuses on content writing for websites and professional social media accounts.

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### Focus on the reader and the reader's benefit

- “You” = a lot.
- “I” and “me” = seldom.
- “We/Us” more than “I”.
- Use ‘because’ sometimes.
- Use ‘so you can’ sometimes.
- Focus on the results for the reader.
- Tell the reader what to do to obtain the results.

### Phrases & Sentences

- **No ultra-long sentences.**
- **No cliches.**

### Word choice

- Single words instead of phrases that mean the same thing.
- Conversational and informal – style, words, slang, contractions, fragments.
- Use verbs and adjectives, not noun forms (nominalizations).
- Use nouns instead of adjectives when possible.
- Say what things are, now what things are not.
- Strong statements, not tentative or qualified statements.
- Super-specific words.
- “You” when writing about desires, strengths, and other positive tendencies; and for asking questions.
- “We/Us” when writing about fears, weaknesses, negative tendencies, and such.
- “am”, “is”, “are”, “was”, “were”, “be”, “been”, “have”, “has”, “had” = seldom.
- **NO:**
  - unnecessary **that**
  - **redundant words**
  - **jargon**
  - **there is/are, here is/are, it is**
  - **going to**
  - **I think, I hope, in my experience, etc.**
  - **possibly, maybe, not sure, somewhat, sometimes, may, might, some people, etc.**
  - **a lot, kind of, just**
  - **really, very, completely, not + adjective** (use power adjectives)



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