



## Module Five

### Task: Clear, concise, simple prose

Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts. [Strunk and White, Elements of Style]

In picture book writing, less is more. You'll be surprised how short a text can be yet still maintain its integrity. Think of vacuum sealed food: suck out all the air and moisture and just leave the essential ingredients. This is what we are doing when editing our picture book texts.

#### Exercise

##### Part A

Simplify these sentences.

1. Teddy's hand lost grip on the ball of wool, and it tumbled down to the ground.
2. The endless and cruel bullying was the single reason why Emily could no longer attend the school, where she used to go.
3. The big friendly giant came striding towards her rapidly.





## Part B

Think of a simpler version of the following words:

1. Rectify
2. Accommodation
3. Victorious
4. Melodious.

## Part C

Now, look at your own work.

1. Examine every word in your manuscript. Is there a simpler, clearer version you can use?
2. Examine every sentence and see if there is a simpler way of saying what you mean. Try cutting words to see what happens.
3. Examine every sentence and see if it needs to remain. What would happen if you removed it altogether? Try removing it and see if the story still works.

