

The Paramedic Method

(from Richard A. Lanham's *Revising Prose*)

Here's how it works:

1. Circle the prepositions.
2. Circle the "to be" forms.
3. Ask, "Where's the action?"
4. Put this action in a simple active verb.
5. Start fast! No windups!

Before:

I think that all I can usefully say on this point is that in the normal course of their professional activities social anthropologists are usually concerned with the third of these alternatives, while the other two levels are treated as raw data for analysis.

After:

Social anthropologists usually concentrate on the third alternative, treating the other two as raw data.

Try these sentences:

1. The most important thing to remember is the fact that interest in the arts has not declined in popularity.
2. Heartfelt House has earned a reputation for excellence for the sharing of the wisdom of the path of compassionate service in the natural healing arts.
3. Throughout our lives, we are exposed to a lot of different teachings and one of them, in our society, is the value placed upon a life in which we are successful.
4. The main reason why he is worried is because he is afraid of what people will think if they get home late.
5. One of his major themes that he returns to repeatedly is that a lot of the people who are making the claims that the U.S. was hasty in using the bomb are not coming from a position of experience in combat.