

STRONG Verbs, Adjectives & Adverbs

Strong Modifiers

Good descriptions are clear and specific. You want the reader to be able to form a clear picture of what you're describing. Modifiers can help by giving the reader more information about the nouns and verbs you've used.

Adjectives 'modify' or add more detail to nouns. They tell you which one, what kind, how many.

- The man wore a suit.
- The **dapper old** man wore a **neat, chocolate brown business** suit, **shiny from wear**.

Adverbs 'modify' or add more detail to verbs. They tell you how something happened or how someone did something.

- The girl considered her options before jumping into the river.
- The girl considered her options **carefully** before jumping **reluctantly** into the river.

Try and think of unusual adjectives and adverbs to make your writing more interesting and memorable. The first ones to pop into your head will probably be the most commonly-used ones – a *soft* pillow, a *sunny* day. These are boring and clichéd – try and find something more exciting.

- I was **sick** and **tired**, and I had a **bad** headache.
- I was **feverish** and **exhausted**, and I had an **excruciating** headache.

Strong Verbs

Strong or descriptive verbs are action words that add to the picture in the reader's mind, giving it a boost of colour and energy. In many cases an interesting verb is more concise – it provides more information in a single word – than a simple, commonly-used verb can.

- **Weak verbs:** she walked into the room and sat on the couch.
- **Strong verbs:** she sauntered into the room and plopped down on the couch.

Weak verbs are commonly used words that describe the bare minimum of the action. They are simple and direct, but they can also be vague, dull, and lacking in personality. Instead of using a generic verb, try and think of a verb which is more interesting and specific.

Weak verb	Strong verb
Run	Bolt, sprint, jog, dash, fly, tear, hurtle
Walk	Slink, trot, saunter, creep, hurry, stride
Make	Create, forge, brew, build, design, produce
Say	Mutter, howl, prattle, whisper, drawl, stammer
Sit	Slouch, plonk down, slump, perch, settle
Laugh	Chuckle, guffaw, giggle, snicker, wheeze

Sometimes a strong verb can remove the need for an adverb, which makes your writing less wordy.

- **Weak verb + adverb:** The man ran quickly towards the smoke.
- **Strong verb:** The man sprinted towards the smoke.