

# ELIMINATE BE VERBS

(Word Choice)

These words are not always bad, but they are weaker than active, powerful verbs. Also, be verbs often make sentences more verbose.

<u>The 8 "Be" Verbs</u>			
Be	Are	Am	Been
Being	Were	Is	Was

(Despite sometimes needing "be" verbs, strong writers reword sentences to utilize more active, powerful verbs. In doing so, the paper becomes less verbose.)

## Strategies for Eliminating Be Verbs

1) Change the *be* verb to a strong verb:

Example: Tony **is** afraid of notebook checks.

Revised: Tony **fears** notebook checks.

2) Eliminate the *be* verb by writing one or more showing sentence(s).

Example: Alligators **are** mean.

Revised: The alligator, angry at being disturbed, lurched forward and swallowed the boy's cat. Unsatisfied, the grouchy gator swam circles around the screaming toddler, showing all the while the kitten's severed head.

3) Rearrange the order of the sentence.

Example: The monster was in the dark tunnel creeping.

Revised: Down the dark tunnel crept the monster.

4) Combine sentences to eliminate the *be* verb.

Example: The inefficient time manager **is unfulfilled**. He heads to bed, disappointed, despite having finished his to do list.

Revised Sentence: The inefficient time manager **heads to bed, unfulfilled**, having checked everything off on his to do list.

5) Change another word to the verb.

Example: Charles Schulz was the creator of the Peanuts cartoon strip.

Revised: Charles Schultz created the Peanuts cartoon strip.

## **When you can't get rid of the be verb**

- 1) Eliminate the entire sentence if its omission does not change the meaning of the passage.
- 2) Leave the *be* verb if changing it alters the meaning, diminishes the passage, or makes the structure unworkable