

Worksheet | Shortening

(Source: Graduate Academy of TU Dresden after Scheuermann, Ulrike, 2014: Die Schreibfitness-Mappe, Wien: Linde)



Graduate School
of Geosciences

Shortening

... is suitable for writers who

- initially write texts that are too long,
- want to bring out the essence of their texts,
- want to increase the chances that their texts will be read.

Material:

Printout of your text (raw text or revised version), blank sheets, a red and a green pencil,
later: text file

Method:

- 1) Write the main message of your text on a sheet of paper.
- 2) On another sheet of paper, complete the following statement five times: "My readers are most interested in ... and the least in ...".
- 3) Read through your text quickly. Ask yourself: Where do I get bored or listless while reading? Where do my thoughts wander off? Where am I embarrassed reading my own text? Where did I repeat myself?
→ Mark these text passages in red.
- 4) Before reading your text again, look once more at the main message and the reader interests and let them have an effect on you.
- 5) Now read the text a second time and search for text passages that relate to the main message and reader interests.
→ Mark them green.
- 6) Compare the sections marked in different colours: Where do they overlap? Those are the sections you still have to work on. If necessary, rephrase or decide whether these sections should be deleted or retained.
- 7) Finally, delete all sections marked in red from your text file (and save them in a separate text file for future reference).