

Lesson Two: Talk Like a Human (And Not a Robot)

In Lesson one, we covered two ways to talk to your reader:

The first way is to Picture that person and the second way is to write in “you” voice.

Lesson two covers three tips to help your writing sound more human:

The first tip is Write the way you talk.

The second tip is Read it aloud.

And the third tip is Use contractions.

Let’s cover the tips now.

Tip number one: Write the Way You Talk

Most conversational writing advice suggests you write the way you talk. The reason is to encourage you to write using

spoken language and to share your unique way of expressing yourself.

When you talk to someone, you give that person a sense of your personality through your word choice, your vocal variety, and your unique expressions, experiences, and preferences.

A way to write the way you talk is to dictate your thoughts as a first draft. I'm not suggesting, however, that you simply dictate and hit publish or send without editing.

Recording your spoken words can allow you to more quickly get your thoughts down. Once recorded, you can take note of particular expressions and words you use.

By dictating your writing, you can also increase your productivity and develop your personal writing style.

Some people use recording apps on their phone or devices to get their thoughts down.

Google Docs, for example, has a free voice-to-text feature that's easy to use.

Once you transcribe your spoken words, you want to go over them to take note of any words and expressions you use.

You'll also want to remove filler words such as um, ah, and like. You'll also want to do a good edit. I'll cover more on how to make your writing clear and flow in future lessons.

Tip number two: Read It Aloud

Reading your work aloud helps you detect parts you need to improve.

Are there parts of your writing that are confusing? Do your words flow? Do you repeat words or use words that are boring?

If you find your writing lacks that certain oomph, your readers will most likely feel the same way.

Another suggestion, which is related to this tip, is to print your writing. With a print copy, you can highlight areas you need to improve with a pen or pencil.

Tip number three: Use Contractions

Using contractions to make your writing conversational is one of the easiest tips to apply.

Here's a quick recap for those wondering what a contraction is:

A contraction is a combination of two words linked with an apostrophe into one shortened word.

We use contractions when we speak because they're easier to pronounce. Yet, I notice a lot of writing that doesn't use this simple conversational technique.

Here are some examples:

- **Won't** is the contraction for **will not**.
- **You're** is the contraction for **you are**.
- **I'm** is the contraction for **I am**.

Contractions can shorten your sentences and make your writing less formal or robotic.

If you want to write with a friendlier, conversational tone (and who doesn't?), contractions are essential.

Important: **It's**, spelled with an apostrophe, is the contraction for it is. **Its**, without the apostrophe, is a possessive adjective, as in, "The robot lost **its** memory."

A possessive adjective comes before a noun in the sentence to show ownership and to let us know who the noun belongs to.

Test: Try talking without the use of contractions and note how it sounds. (Do you feel like the robot from *Star Wars*?)

Exercise

1. Try recording your text using Google Docs or a device of your own that has voice-to-text capability.
2. Read the text you recorded aloud and note the areas for improvement.

(PAUSE)

Next lesson, I'll share the number-one way to make your writing clear, along with handy tools to check for readability.