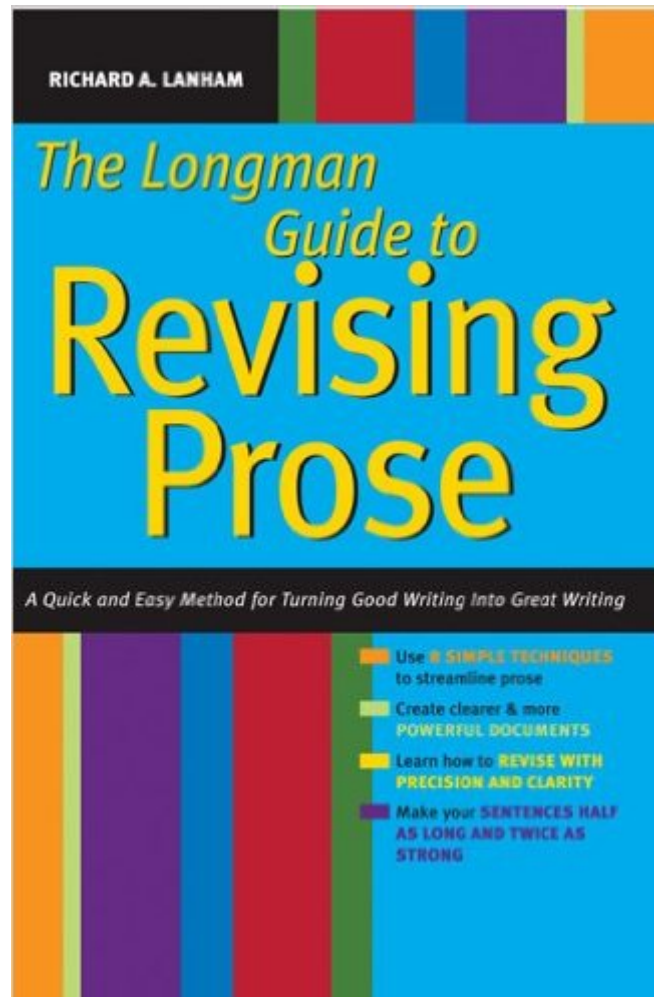


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Longman Guide To Revising Prose: A Quick And Easy Method For Turning Good Writing Into Great Writing



Synopsis

"True to its title, *Revising Prose* is about revising, not about original composition. It will not teach you how to pray for inspiration, marshall your thoughts, or find the willpower to glue backside to chair. All writers face these dragons in their own idiosyncratic ways. But revision belongs to the public domain. Anyone can learn it. *Revising Prose* teaches you how, using a simple, rule-based, eight-step process called "The Paramedic Method" that concentrates on turning the bureaucratic official style so common today in business and government writing into plain English. Its focus on the individual sentence enables you to identify the surplus verbiage (what Lanham calls the Lard Factor) in an effort like this: The history of new regulatory provisions is that there is generally an immediate resistance to them. And turn it into this: People usually resist new regulations. A Lard Factor of 69%. Lanham's method aims to eliminate 50% from most writing, to create a sentence half as long and twice as strong. A saving of 50% in writing time, in reading time, in paper and screen space, in human patience and understanding-it all adds up to real money. It also adds up to a more persuasive and amiable presentation of self, as *Revising Prose* argues in its final chapter."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

.Reviewed by C J Singh (Berkeley, California, USA) This less expensive version of Richard Lanham's acclaimed *Revising Prose* (5th Edition) reprints its 134-page main text. The excluded 30 pages comprise a brief glossary of grammatical terms and 35 exercises for the reader. Since the 35 exercises in the complete book do not come with the author's solutions anyway, I suggest an easy

procedure to make either version self-teaching: First, read the book through -- won't take long; it's slim. Second, on a separate page note down each statement of the flabby sentences in the main text that includes the author's solution. Third, do each of these examples on your own and compare your solution with the author's. (For my sample solution to one of the 35 exercises in the complete edition, see my review of the complete book.) * * * Years ago, I attended a weekend workshop for instructors of college composition that was led by Professor Richard Lanham, author of *Revising Prose*, visiting from UCLA, and Professor Joseph Williams, author of *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, visiting from the University of Chicago. They presented witty and lucid summaries of their books, Lanham focusing on revising at the sentence level and Williams on paragraphs.

If you read this book, you will discover how to recognise passive prose, and how to transform it into active prose. Having read this book, one can recall books read in the past which used tedious stuffy prose, and convert it into better language. Good prose has an operator, an action, and an object. For example, Winston Churchill said: 'We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the shores.' He did not say: 'Hostilities shall be commenced on the coastal perimeter.' One can learn much more than this, the academic style has become somewhat too popular, although there may be appropriate contexts, but if you wish to polish up your prose, and make it vastly more dynamic, you can do this in a matter of hours with this book, and eliminate a lifetime of passive noun styles. Other lessons include using 'is' less, the less you use passive verbs like is, the more powerful, and attention grabbing your prose will become. If you're like me, it will change your whole understanding of writing style, and it will enable you to make your point clearly, briefly and succinctly, in about half the words you normally use. More active prose leads to a more active and clearer mind. The more you use the techniques in this book, the better you will get at not only revising prose but writing prose, as you notice yourself becoming more aware of what you write, and you realise how rewarding revising your words can be. I recommend *Analyzing Prose* if you can get it at a reasonable price.

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