One of the crazy joys of writing is that others' response to *what you say* often depends on *how you say it*. Using concise sentences and powerful verbs is one way to engage readers and strengthen the force of your meaning. Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

Replace long word strings with vivid verbs.

Adequate: The girl was <u>rather surprised by the fact</u> that her brother was dating her friend.
Power-Packed: The girl was <u>shocked</u> that her brother was dating her friend.

Adequate: The boy <u>felt kind of annoyed</u> that his sister <u>seemed less-than-enthusiastic</u>.
Power-Packed: The boy <u>was irritated</u> that his sister <u>did not approve</u>.

Use verbs that have powerful connotations.

Adequate: The girl <u>tried hiding</u> her feelings, but they <u>showed through anyway</u>.
Power-Packed: The girl <u>attempted suppressing</u> her feelings, but they <u>would not be silenced.</u>

Adequate: The boy <u>was angry with</u> his sister, despite his <u>efforts not to be</u>.
Power-Packed: The boy <u>grew resentful toward</u> his sister, despite his <u>better judgment</u>.

When building an argument, avoid clichés and enlist verbs that carry credibility.

Adequate: After praying, they <u>decided to set aside their differences</u> and <u>be friends</u>.
Power-Packed: After praying, they <u>reconciled</u> their friendship.

Adequate: <u>Because of this experience, I believe</u> that Jesus <u>will help us to live in peace</u>.
Power-Packed: <u>This example demonstrates</u> that Jesus <u>empowers us to live peacefully</u>.

Here is a list of power-packed verbs that can replace "say" in a sentence:

- Argue
- Assert
- Assess
- Boast
- Caution
- Concede
- Conclude
- Confess
- Criticize
- Demand
- Deduce
- Deny
- Dictate
- Directed
- Echo
- Elaborate
- Explain
- Extrapolate
- Find
- Hold
- Imply
- Include
- Infer
- Justify
- Lament
- Muse
- Pontificate
- Predict
- Pretend
- Promise
- Propose
- Qualify
- Quantify
- Query
- Question
- Reason
- Reply
- Show
- State
- Suggest
- Suppose
- Summarize
- Surmise
- Understand
- Voice
- Vouch
- Vow
- Waver