

# Stop Writing 'Thing'

The Craft of Writing · By Simon Townsend · 1 min read

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You're using that awful word "thing" . . . it's a vague word. It has little real meaning. Well, it has many meanings if you look it up in a dictionary, but they're all vague and conversational. A "thing" is, in fact, anything. Anything detectable by the five senses (hearing, sight, taste, touch, smell). I'm a thing. You're a thing. Your saucepan is a thing. My mustard jar is a thing. We all use "thing" in casual conversation when we can't quite think of the right word fast enough. I use "thing" in my handwritten notes to you, because I write in a casual and abbreviated form. But in writing journalism, where you have had time to think about it, it's a poor effort to use a lazy, vague, meaningless, indefinable word like "thing". I'm not saying don't EVER use it. I'm saying if you are considering using it, consider NOT using it, and 99% of the time you'll decide on a more appropriate word. Of course, if you're quoting someone who says "thing" you have to use it in a direct quote. But don't YOU, as a writer, use "thing" . . . PLEASE!?!

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