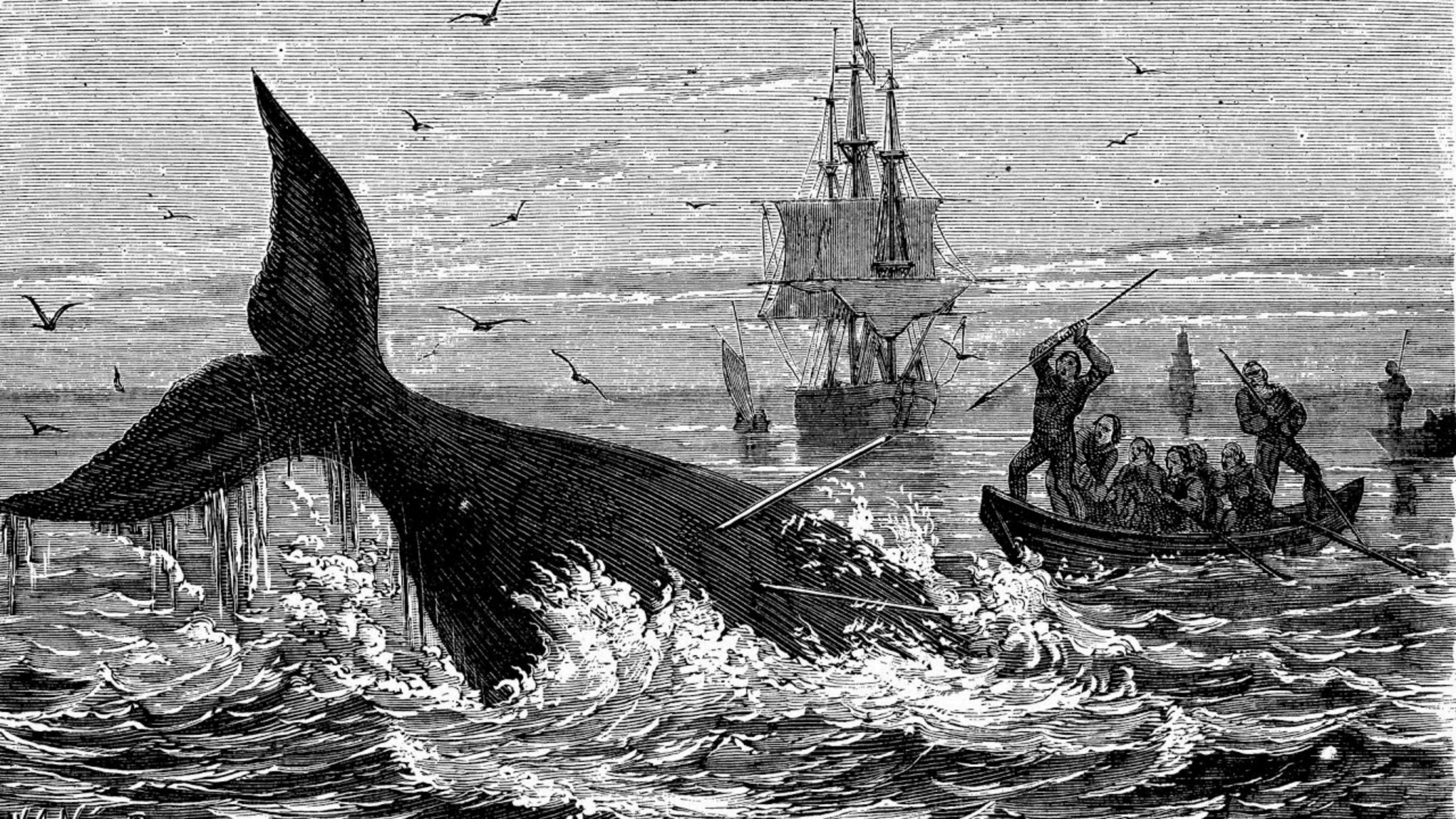
Hello.

Writer.
Reader.
English major.

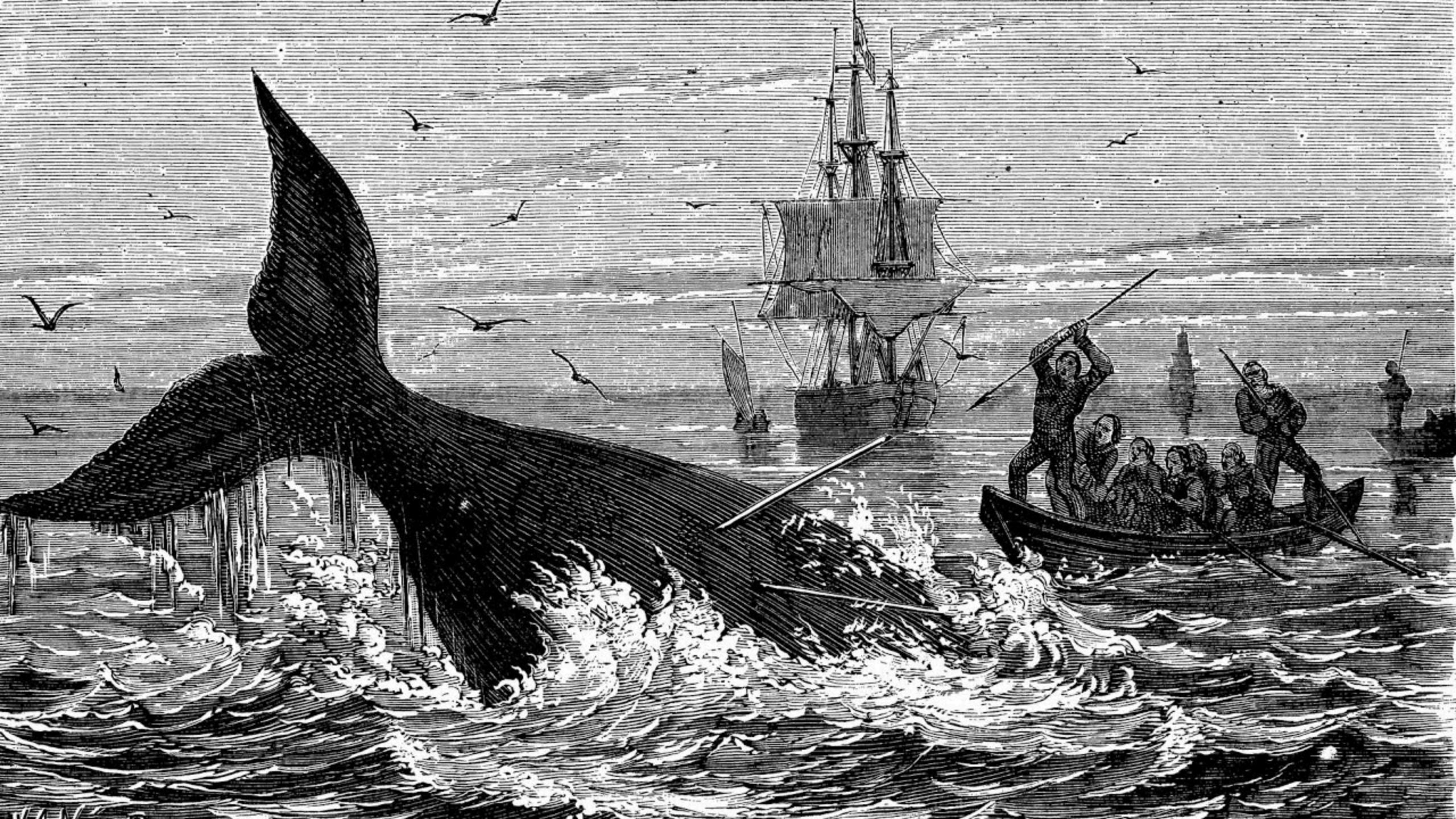
Moby Dick is trash.

* Cliff Lewis, noted writer

Dreamer.
Storyteller.
Man of letters.



Pull On Volume
Push On-Lock Color
Push AFT Tint
Bright
Color
VHF
UHF



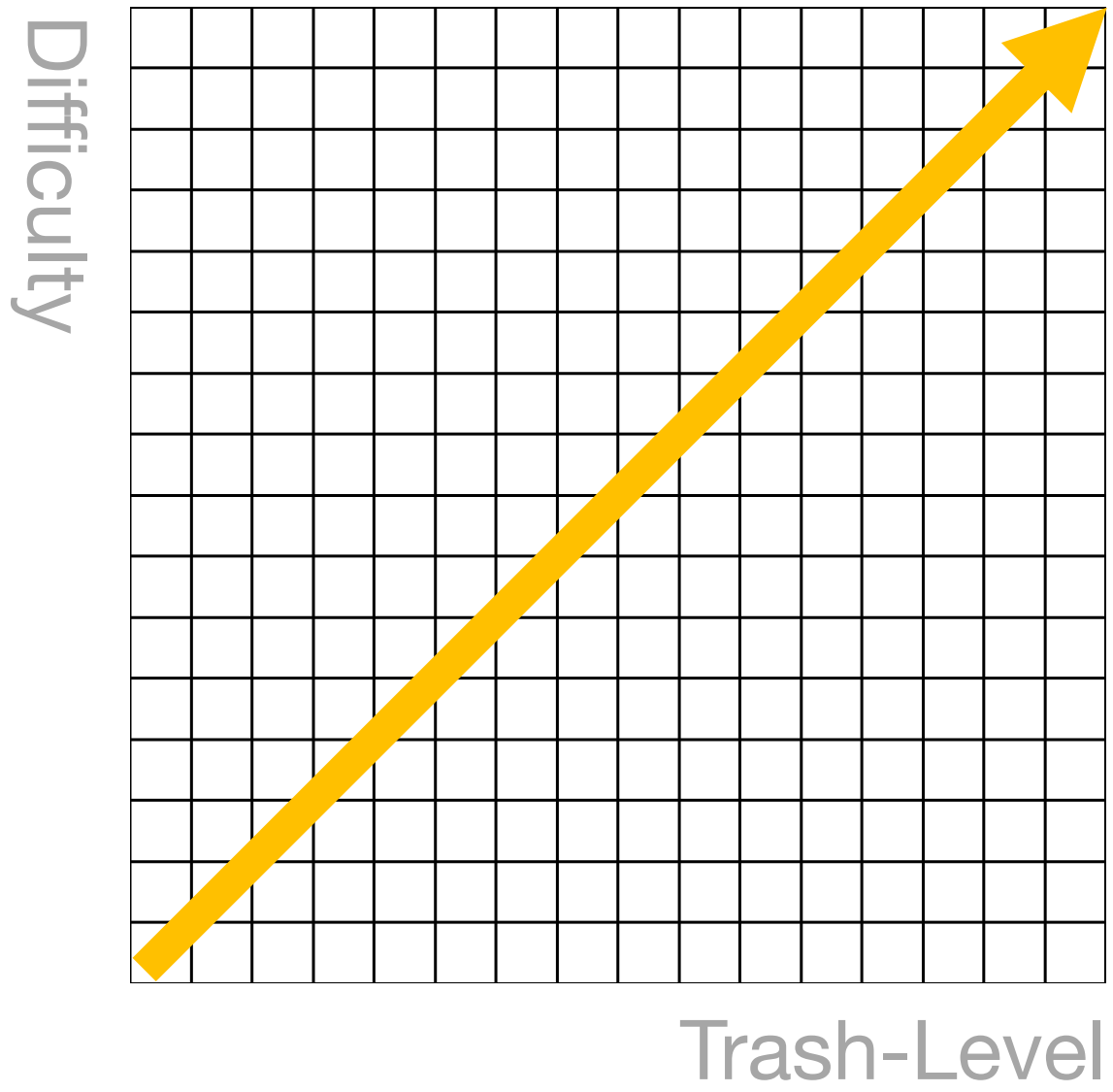
24
Evening
Bus ride
Silent reading
Lunch
Bus ride

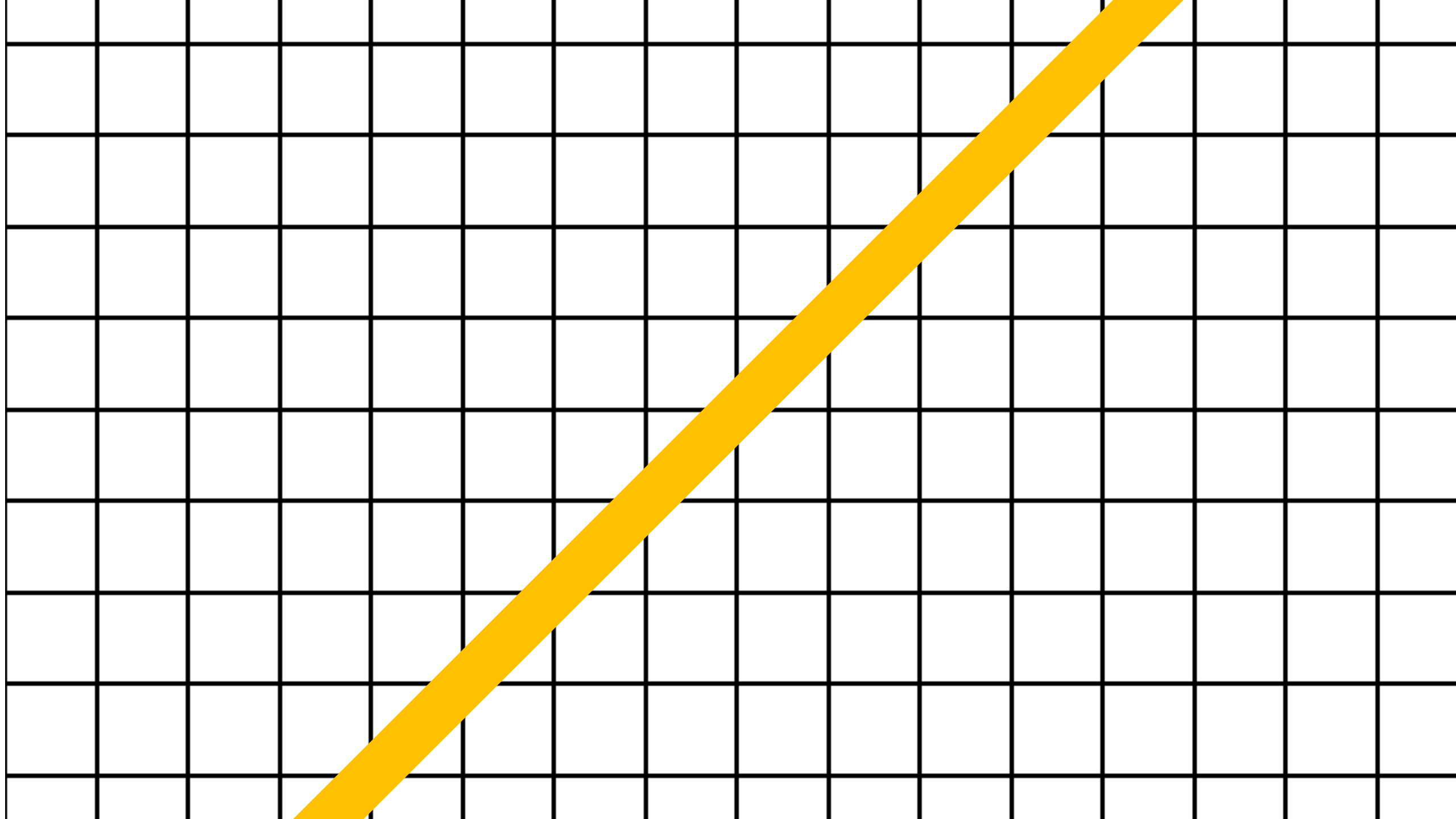
1
Evening
Bus ride
Silent reading
Lunch
Bus ride

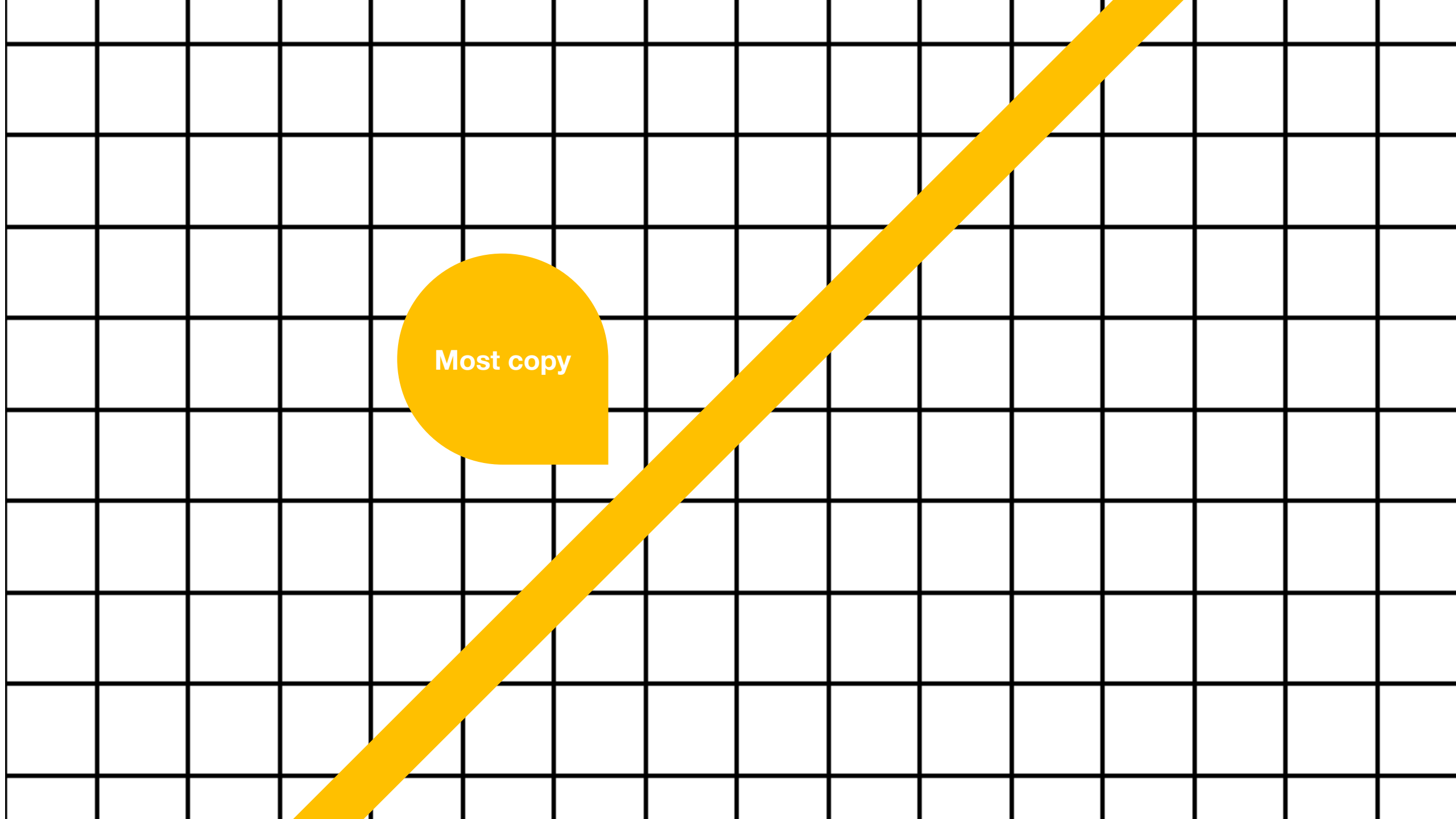
Moby Dick is trash.

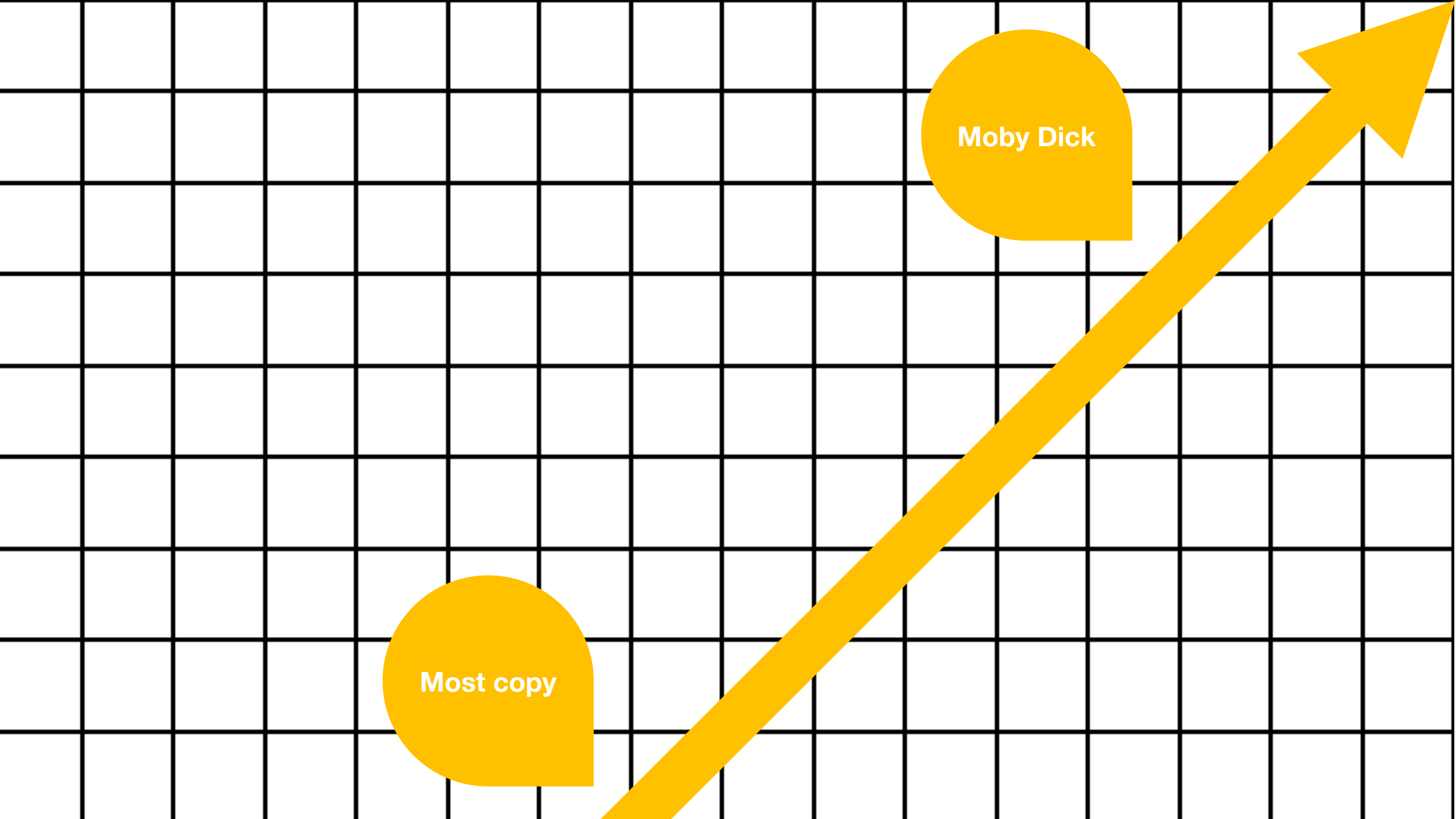
Not
Moby Dick
Level.

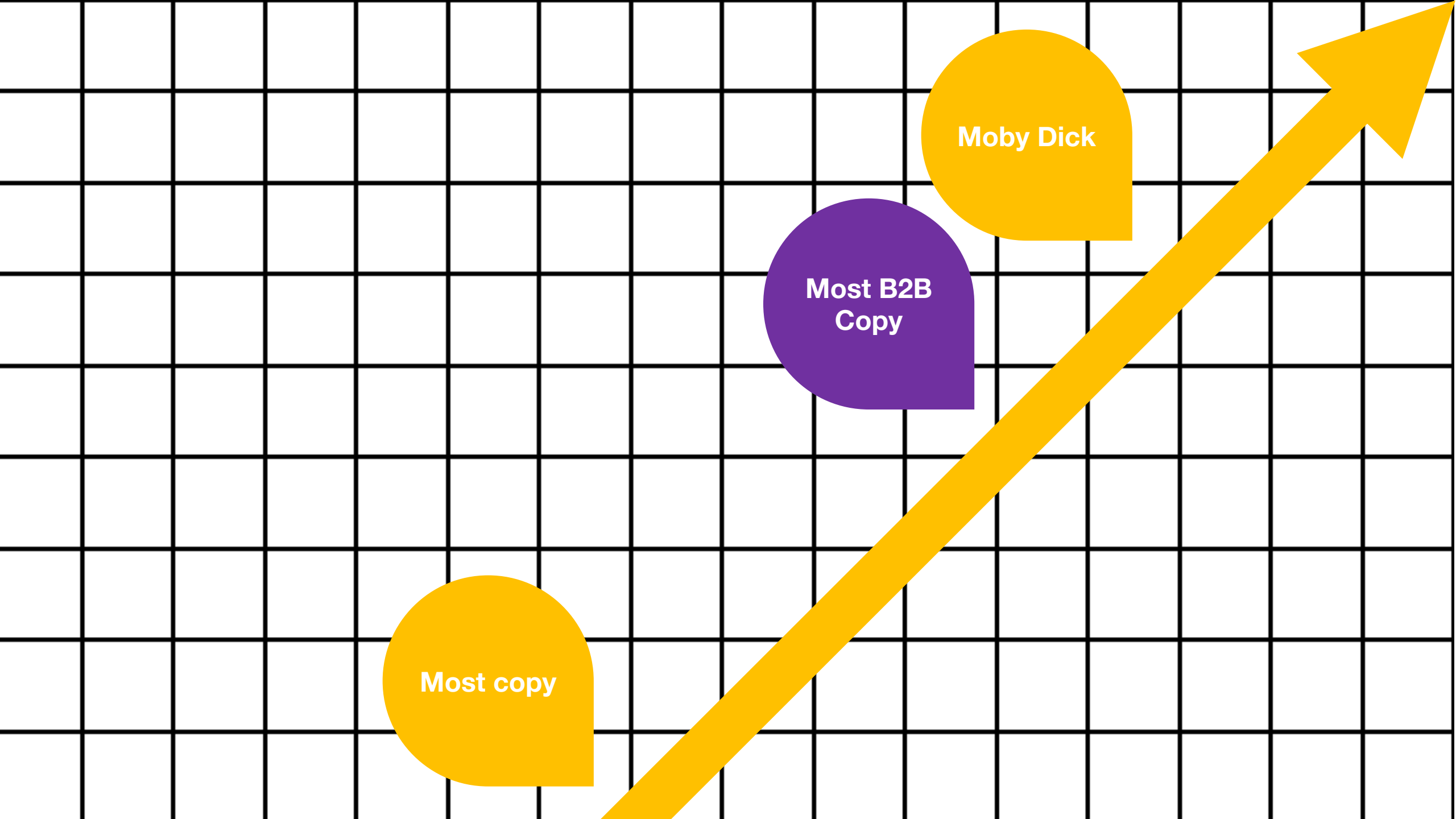
Inaccessible =
Useless =
Trash.


Difficulty
Trash-Level




Most copy


Moby Dick
Most copy

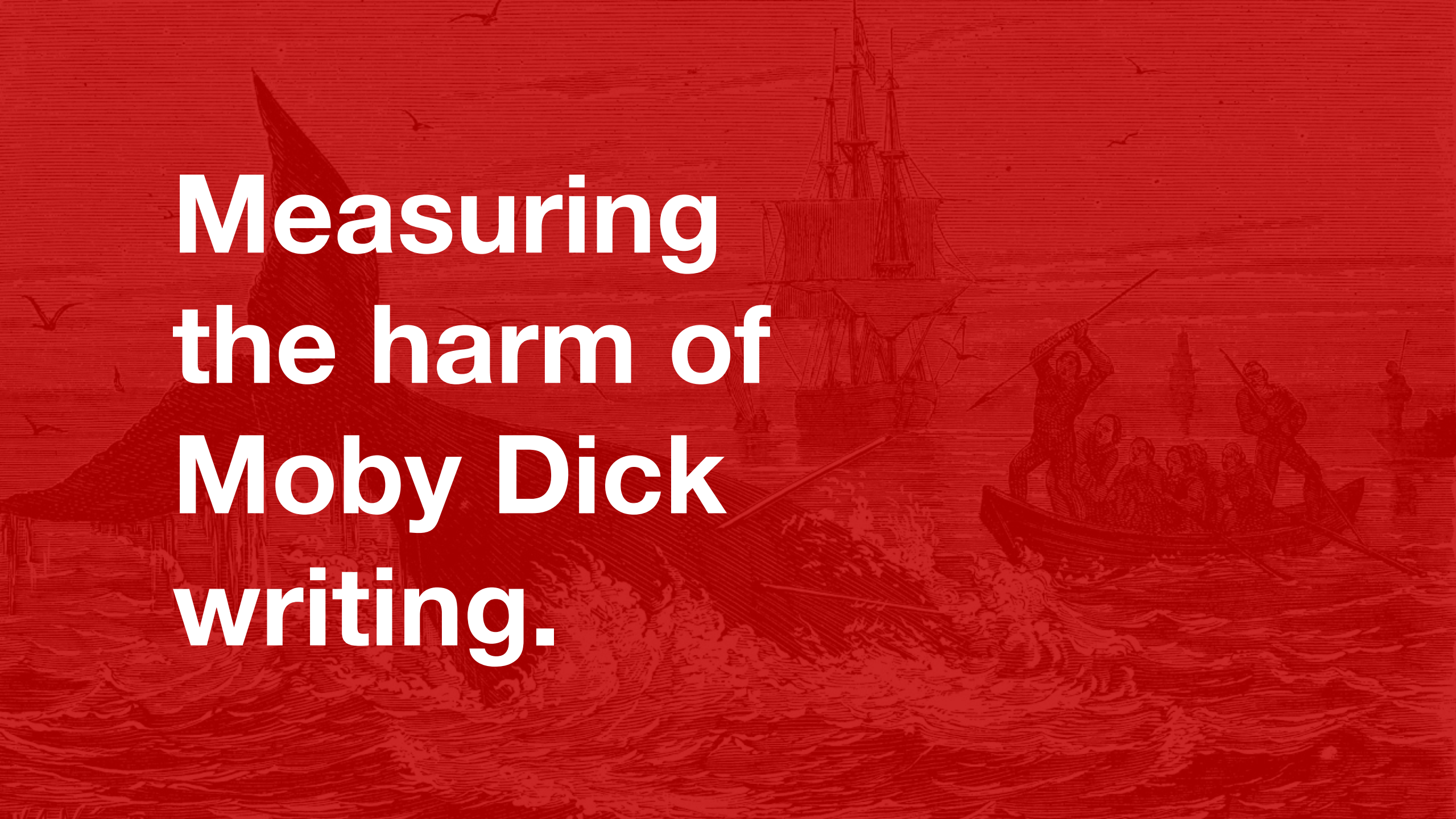

Moby Dick
Most B2B Copy
Most copy

The Engineer.

The Engineer.

The large importance attached to the harpooneer’s vocation is evinced by the fact, that originally in the old Dutch Fishery, two centuries and more ago, the command of a whale ship was not wholly lodged in the person now called the captain, but was divided between him and an officer called the Specksnyder.

With our core competency focused on supporting customer firms with low to medium capacity systems delivering critical highspeed and precision enterprise applications, Initech thoughtfully leverages decades of expertise to support its customers in improving systems so that they are standards-compliant as well as fiscally sound and perfectly scalable.



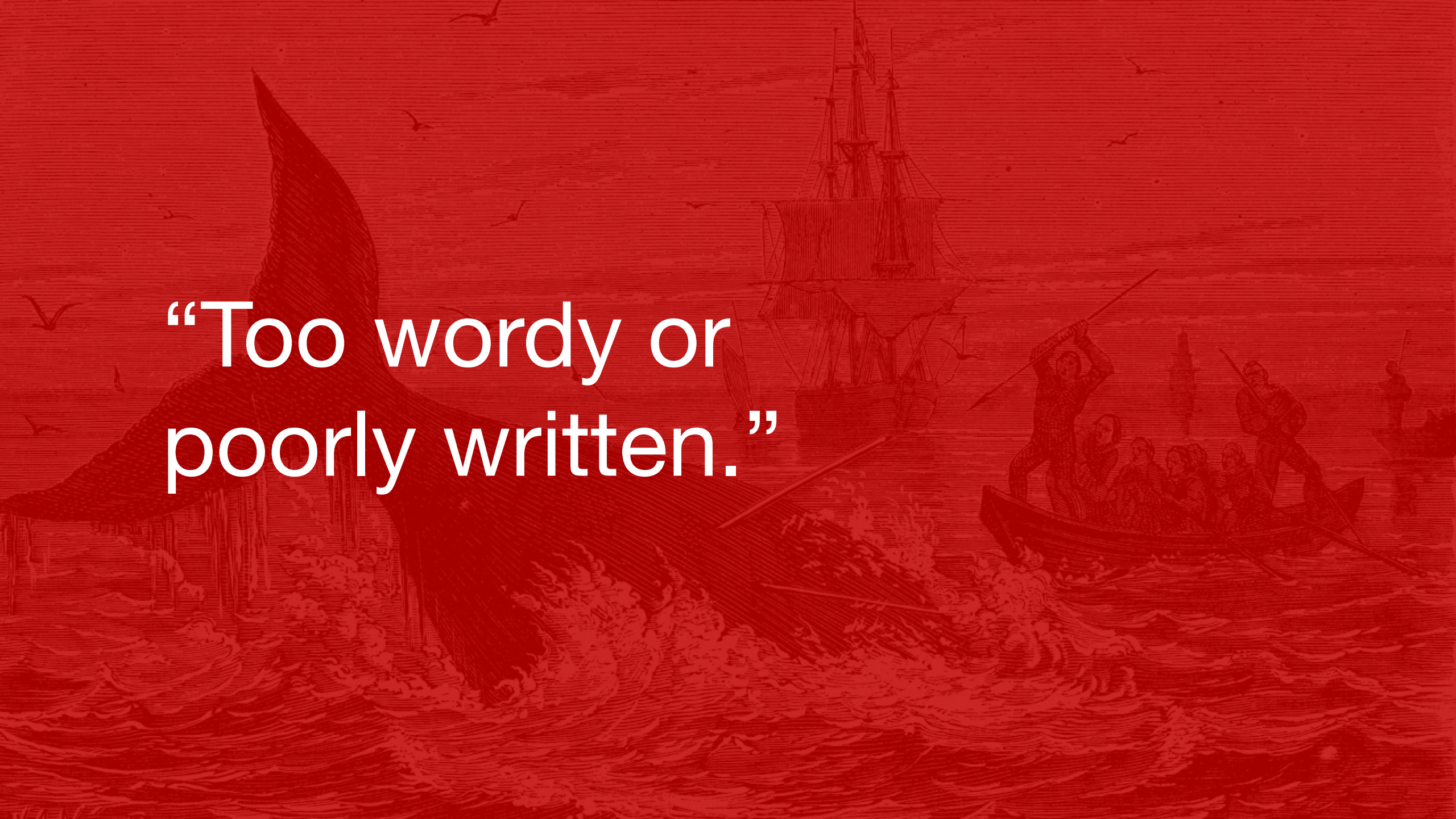
Measuring the harm of Moby Dick writing.

Adobe

What's most annoying in content?

Adobe

#1 answer.
+11 margin.



“Too wordy or poorly written.”

Keep you from buying?

Keep you from buying?
3
in
5

BAD NEWS FOR ENGINEERS

Writing matters. A lot.

GOOD NEWS FOR ENGINEERS

Writing = Math.

UNITED STATES
NAVY

“The ability of military personnel to understand narrative technical material has for many years been a problem.”

083161

NAVAL TECHNICAL TRAINING COMMAND

RESEARCH BRANCH REPORT 8-75

DERIVATION OF NEW READABILITY FORMULAS (AUTOMATED READABILITY INDEX, FOG COUNT AND FLESCH READING EASE FORMULA) FOR NAVY ENLISTED PERSONNEL

FEBRUARY 1975

AD A006655

DDC
RECEIVED
MAR 14 1975
B

APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE
DISTRIBUTION UNLIMITED

CHIEF OF NAVAL TECHNICAL TRAINING
NAVAL AIR STATION MEMPHIS - MILLINGTON, TN

REPRODUCED BY
NATIONAL TECHNICAL
INFORMATION SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
SPRINGFIELD, VA. 22161

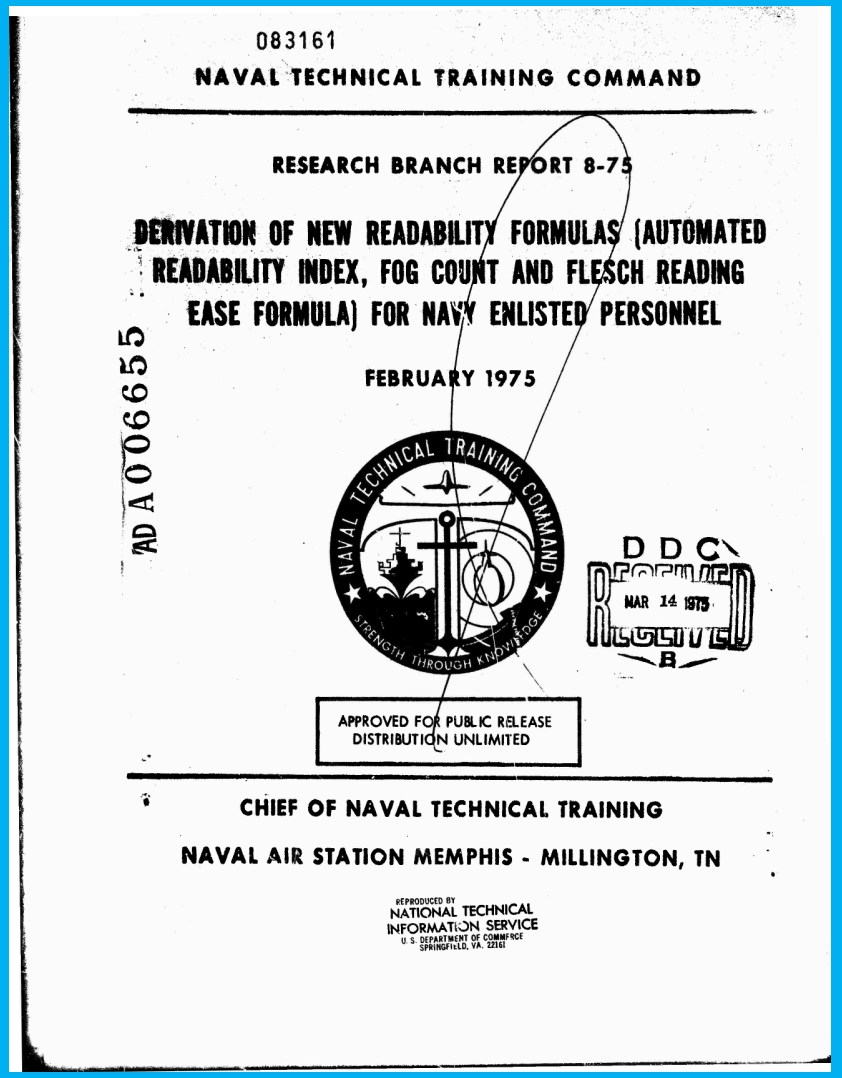
INTRODUCTION

The ability of military personnel to understand narrative technical material has for many years been a problem. Studies conducted by all three military services have verified that the material that must be comprehended to do the job is written at a level of difficulty well above the reading ability of the man reading the material (Kincaid, 1967; Smith & Kincaid, 1970; Klare, 1963; Caylor, Sticht, Fox & Ford, 1972; Carver, 1973a, Duffy & Nugent, 1974). The effects of faulty communication are well known and disastrous. One recent Air Force study (Johnson, Relova & Stafford, 1972) has traced many costly errors to the reading difficulty level of the instruction in manuals to be followed. The more difficult the material, the more mistakes were made.

There are two basic ways to improve comprehension of written material by Navy personnel. The first is to improve the reading ability of the man using the material either by remedial instruction or by selecting men who have high reading ability. Remedial instruction requires a great deal of effort for significant gains in reading ability to be achieved. Selecting personnel with high reading abilities is getting progressively more difficult both because the average high school graduate is not reading as well as ten years ago and because of the new all-volunteer concept in the military services. Carver (1973b) estimates that the average reading ability of Navy enlisted personnel is about the ninth grade. Pinning (1974) estimated this reading ability to be 10.0 and projected that it would fall to 9.0 by the 1979-1982 time frame. Duffy and Nugent (1974) measured the reading ability

to do the job is written at a level of difficulty well above the reading ability of the man reading the material (Kincaid, 1967; Smith & Kincaid, 1970; Klare, 1963; Caylor, Sticht, Fox & Ford, 1972; Carver, 1973a, Duffy & Nugent, 1974). The effects of faulty communication are well known and disastrous. One recent Air Force study (Johnson, Relova & Stafford, 1972) has traced many costly errors to the reading difficulty level of the instructions in manuals to be followed. The more difficult the material, the more mistakes were made.

[redacted] The effects of faulty communication are well known and disastrous. [redacted]. The more difficult the material, the more mistakes were made.



083161

NAVAL TECHNICAL TRAINING COMMAND

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STRENGTH THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

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THE GOLD STANDARD

Flesch-Kincaid Grade-Level Test

$$206.835 - (1.015 \times ASL) - (84.6 \times ASW)$$

TARGET READING LEVEL

9 - 10

But what about me?

THE GOLD STANDARD

Plain Language Is for Everyone, Even Experts (2017)

TARGET READING LEVEL

10 - 12

TARGET READING LEVEL

“No one has ever complained that a text was too easy to understand.”

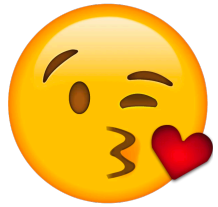
TARGET READING LEVEL

9 - 12

Four Formulas for Better Writing

FORMULA 1

(Any sentence) ≤ 25 words

Your sentences
are too damn long. 

FORMULA 1

25

Limit each sentence to 25 words.

But what about—

FORMULA 1

EXCEPTION A

Cataloguing (a.k.a. Listing)

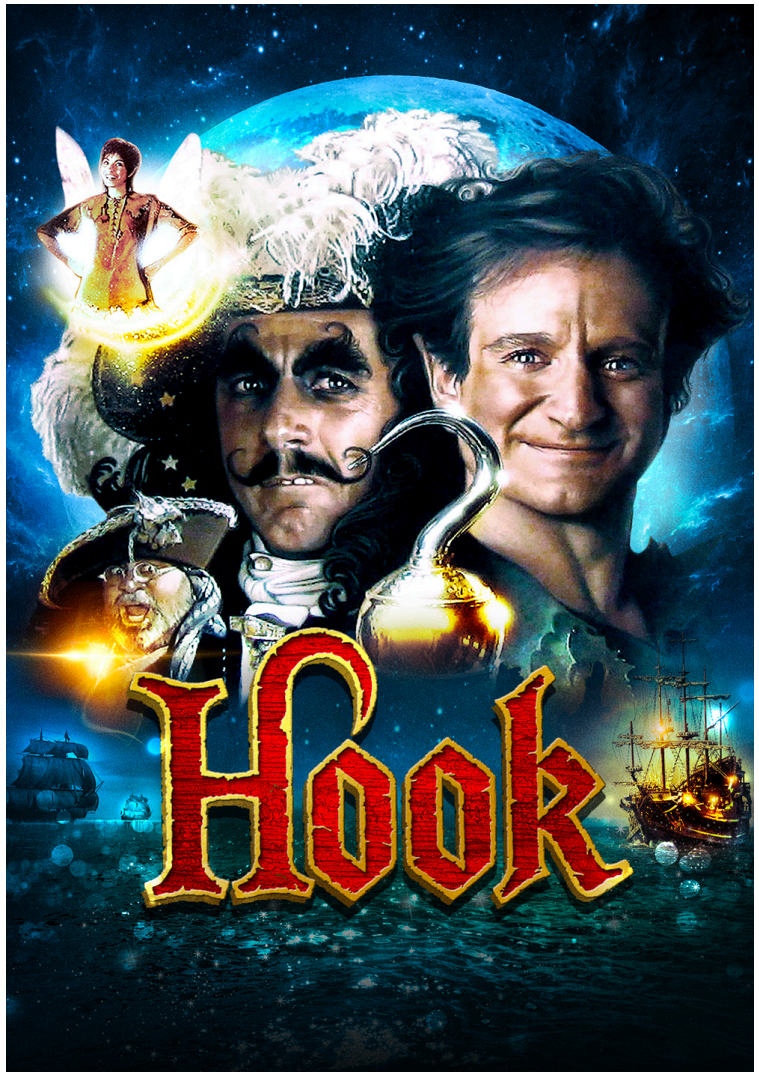
By the time she was six years old, the only books Matilda had not read were Love in a Time of Cholera, Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret, and A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius. (36 words)

By the time she was six years old, the only books Matilda had not read were Love in a Time of Cholera, Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret, and A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius. (22 words)

FORMULA 1

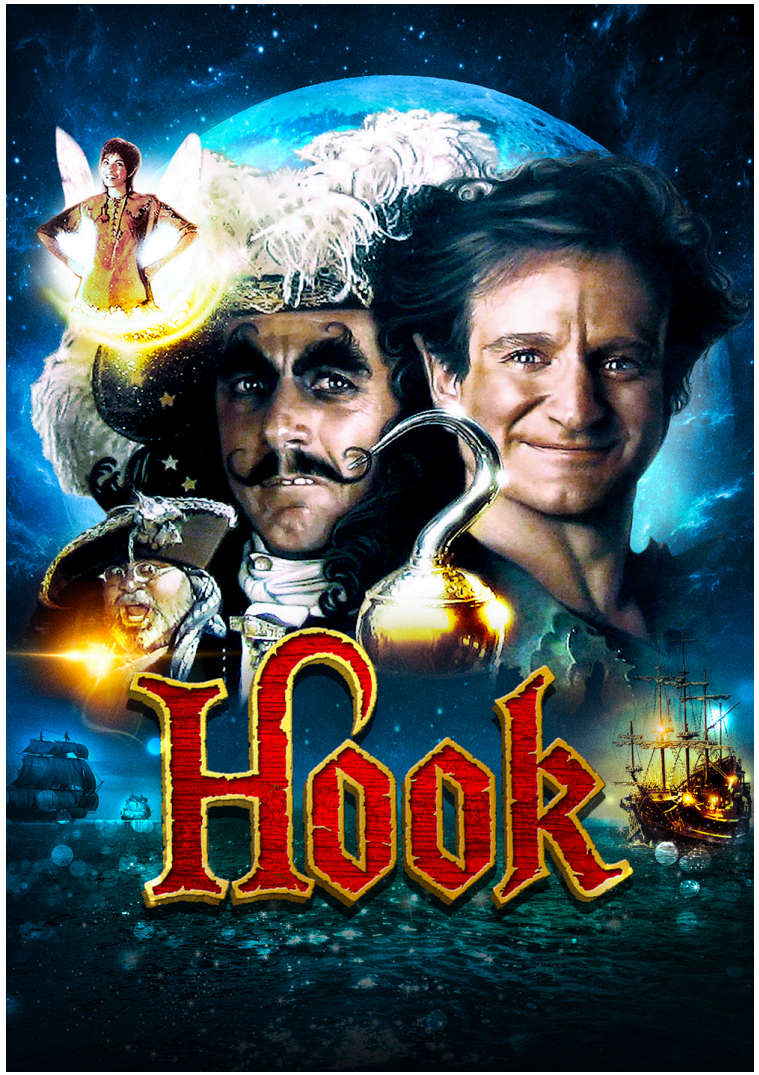
EXCEPTION B

Using “and” or “but” to add 2 sentences together.



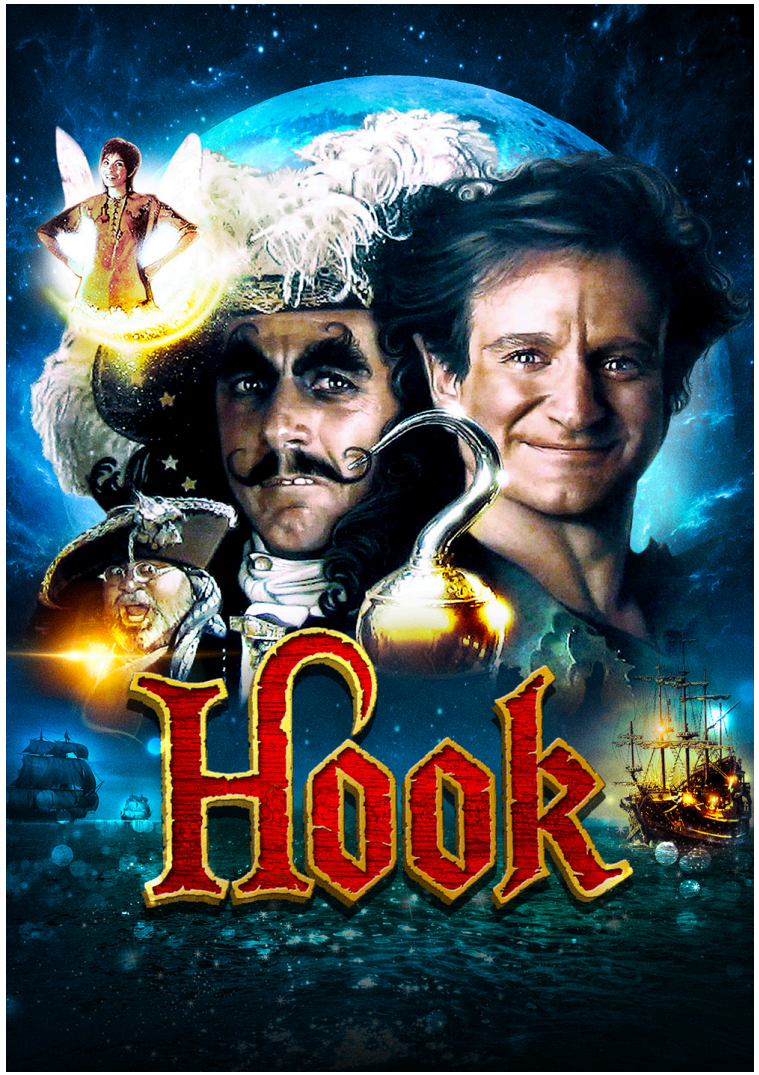
I refuse to believe that Steven Spielberg has ever released a bad movie, but plenty of film critics would argue that Spielberg's Hook was in, in fact, quite bad.

(29 words)



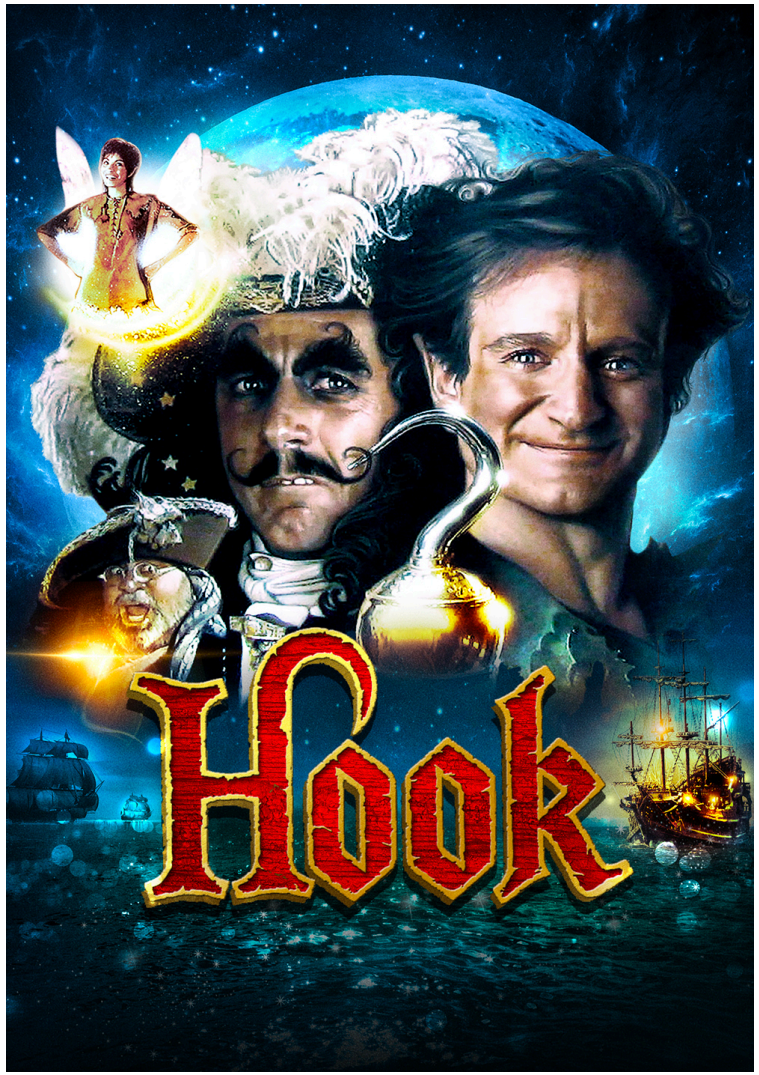
I refuse to believe that Steven Spielberg has ever released a bad movie.

(13 words)



Plenty of film critics would argue that Spielberg's Hook was in, in fact, quite bad.

(15 words)



I refuse to believe that Steven Spielberg has ever released a bad movie, but plenty of film critics would argue that Spielberg's Hook was in, in fact, quite bad.

(13 + but + 15)

FORMULA 1

25

Limit each sentence to 25 words.

HOW TO FIX IT

Due to the fact that I am a very big fan of Milli Vanilli, at the present time I am the owner of several different pieces of Milli Vanilli merchandise, including a rare branded mood ring from their 1990 world tour. (41 words)

HOW TO FIX IT

- ❑ Omit needless words

Due to the fact that I am a very big fan of Milli Vanilli, at the present time I am the owner of several different pieces of Milli Vanilli merchandise, including a rare branded mood ring from their 1990 world tour. (41 words)

HOW TO FIX IT

- ❑ Omit needless words

Because I am a big fan of Milli Vanilli, I now own several pieces of Milli Vanilli merchandise, including a rare branded mood ring from their 1990 world tour. (29 words)

HOW TO FIX IT

- ❑ Omit needless words
- ❑ Split the sentence in 2

Because I am a big fan of Milli Vanilli, I now own several pieces of Milli Vanilli merchandise, including a rare branded mood ring from their 1990 world tour. (29 words)

HOW TO FIX IT

- ❑ Omit needless words
- ❑ Split the sentence in 2

Because I am a big fan of Milli Vanilli, I now own several pieces of Milli Vanilli merchandise. I even own a rare branded mood ring from their 1990 world tour. (18 words. 13 words.)

FORMULA 1

25

Limit each sentence to 25 words.

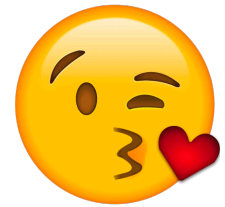
FORMULA 1

(Any sentence) ≤ 25 words

FORMULA 2

(Word-count) ÷ (Sentence count) = 15

You are reading an example of a sentence containing no more or less than twenty-five words written in the English language by a human engineer. This particular human engineer remained complaint with the standards set forth by Formula 1 of the “Writing is Math” system proposed by one Cliff Lewis.

Too damn long. 

FORMULA 2

15

Limit average sentence length to 15 words.

FORMULA 2

BONUS RULE

Only repeat sentence length when repetition is intentional. Otherwise, diversify.

You are reading an example of a sentence containing no more or less than twenty-five words written in the English language by a human engineer. This particular human engineer remained complaint with the standards set forth by Formula 1 of the “Writing is Math” system proposed by one Cliff Lewis.

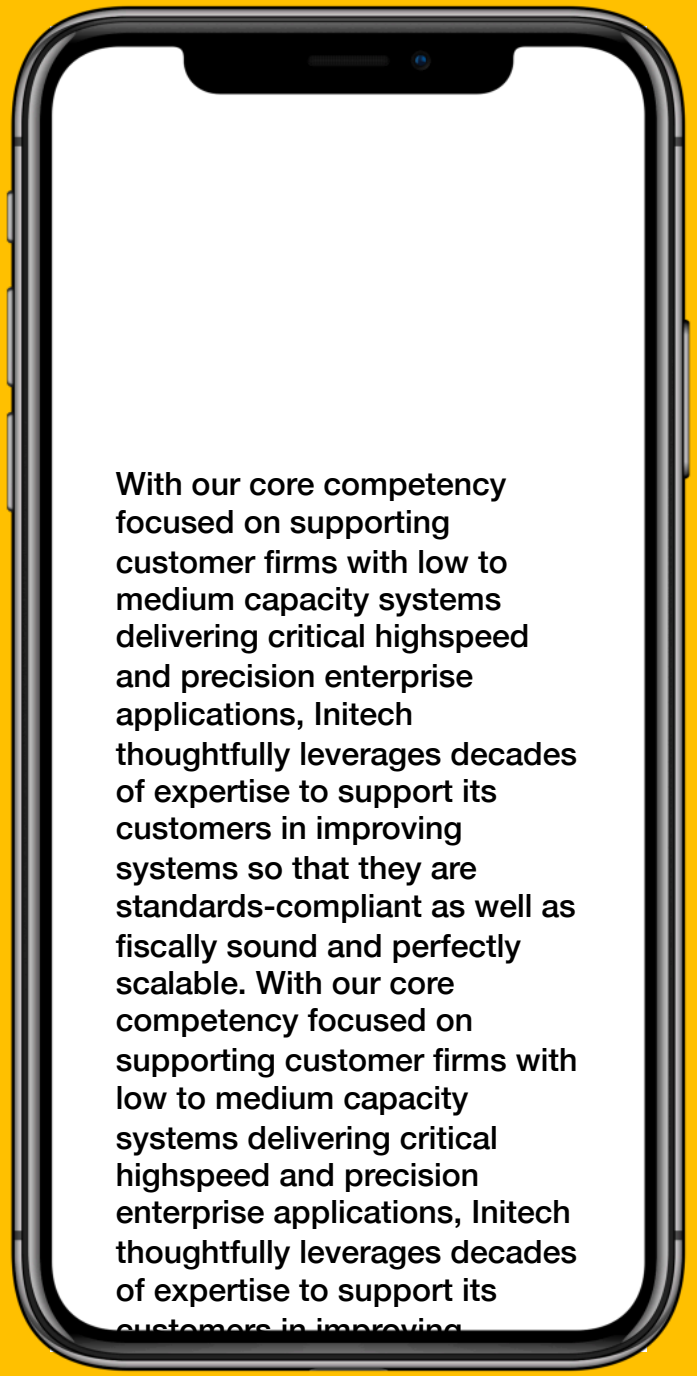
FORMULA 2

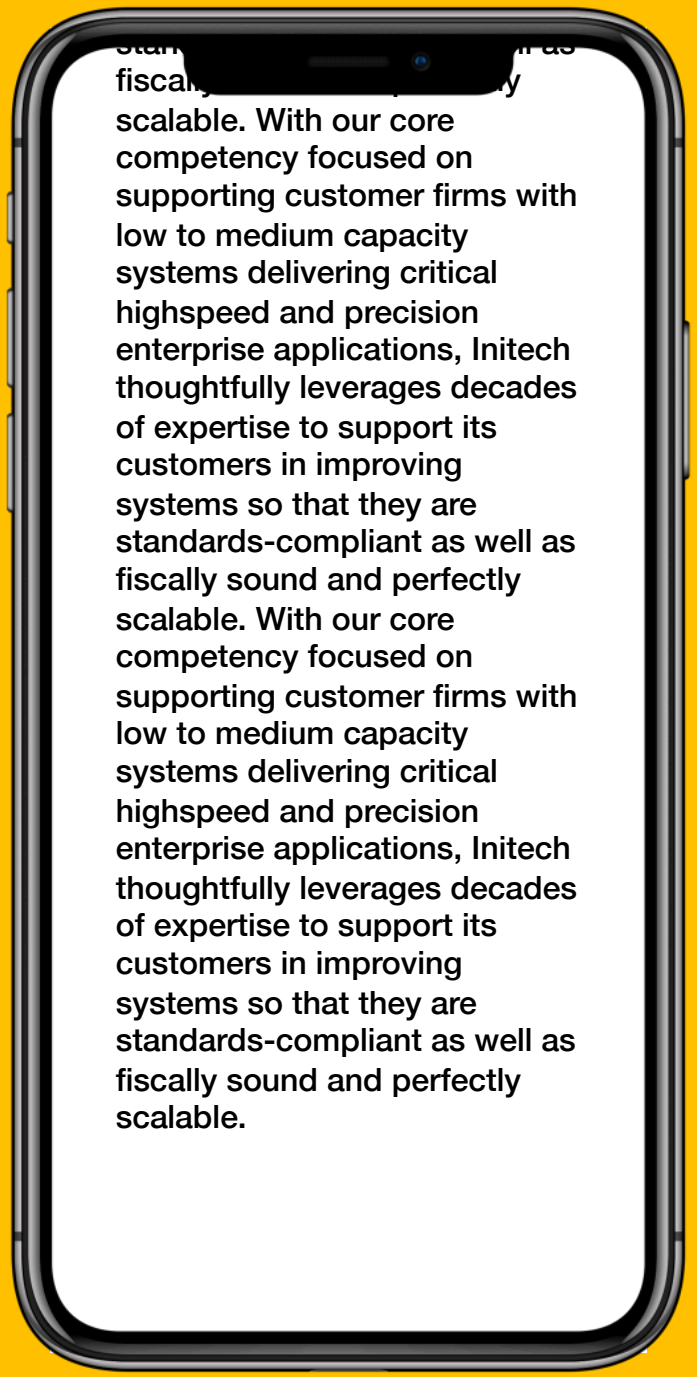
(Word-count) ÷ (Sentence count) = 15

FORMULA 3

(Any paragraph) ≤ 75 words

Your paragraphs
are too damn long.


With our core competency focused on supporting customer firms with low to medium capacity systems delivering critical highspeed and precision enterprise applications, Initech thoughtfully leverages decades of expertise to support its customers in improving systems so that they are standards-compliant as well as fiscally sound and perfectly scalable. With our core competency focused on supporting customer firms with low to medium capacity systems delivering critical highspeed and precision enterprise applications, Initech thoughtfully leverages decades of expertise to support its customers in improving


fiscal
scalable. With our core competency focused on supporting customer firms with low to medium capacity systems delivering critical highspeed and precision enterprise applications, Initech thoughtfully leverages decades of expertise to support its customers in improving systems so that they are standards-compliant as well as fiscally sound and perfectly scalable. With our core competency focused on supporting customer firms with low to medium capacity systems delivering critical highspeed and precision enterprise applications, Initech thoughtfully leverages decades of expertise to support its customers in improving systems so that they are standards-compliant as well as fiscally sound and perfectly scalable.

FORMULA 3

75

Limit each paragraph to 75 words.

25
15
75

FORMULA 4

1 (thought) = 1 (sentence)

Two thoughts:

With a commitment to sustainable business practices, Initech is the only IT firm entirely focused on the water treatment industry.

Align your thoughts:

As the the only IT firm entirely focused on the water treatment industry, sustainable business practices are a natural part of what we do.

Split your thoughts:

Initech is the only IT firm entirely focused on the water treatment industry. We are also unmatched in our commitment to sustainable business practices.

FORMULA 4

1

One thought
per sentence.

Moby Dick
is trash.

But I am smart.

Four Formulas for Better Writing

25

15

75

1

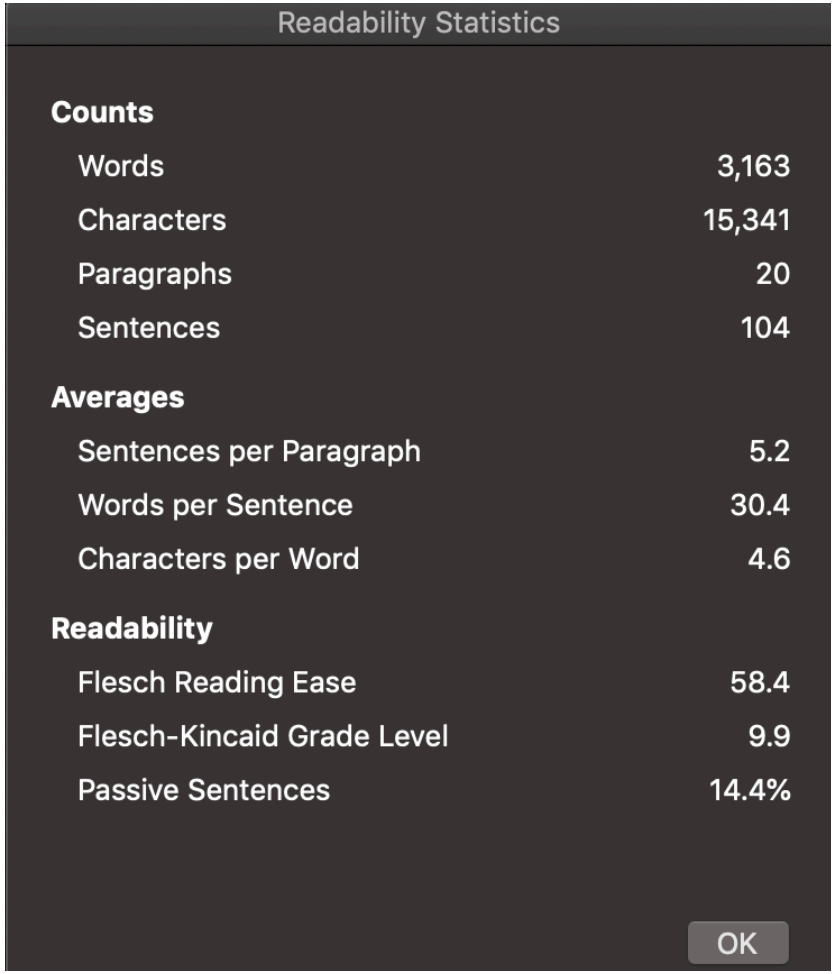
Limit each sentence to 25 words.

Average sentence length of 15 words.

Limit each paragraph to 75 words.

One thought per sentence.

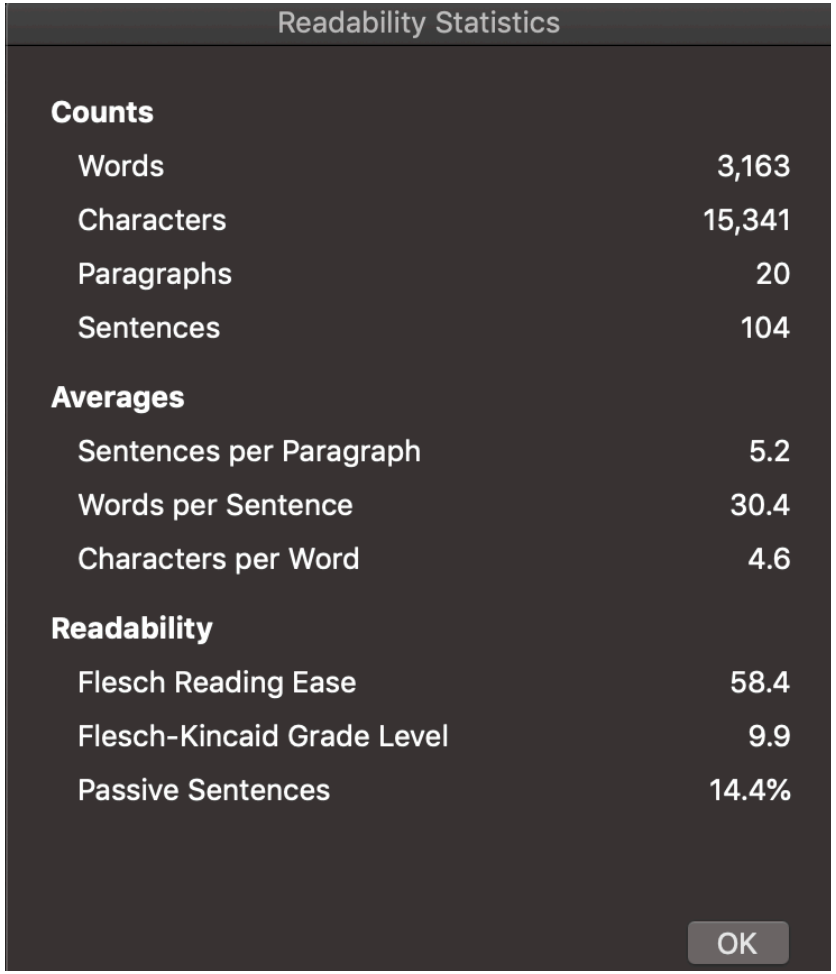
But does it work?



TEST READABILITY IN WORD

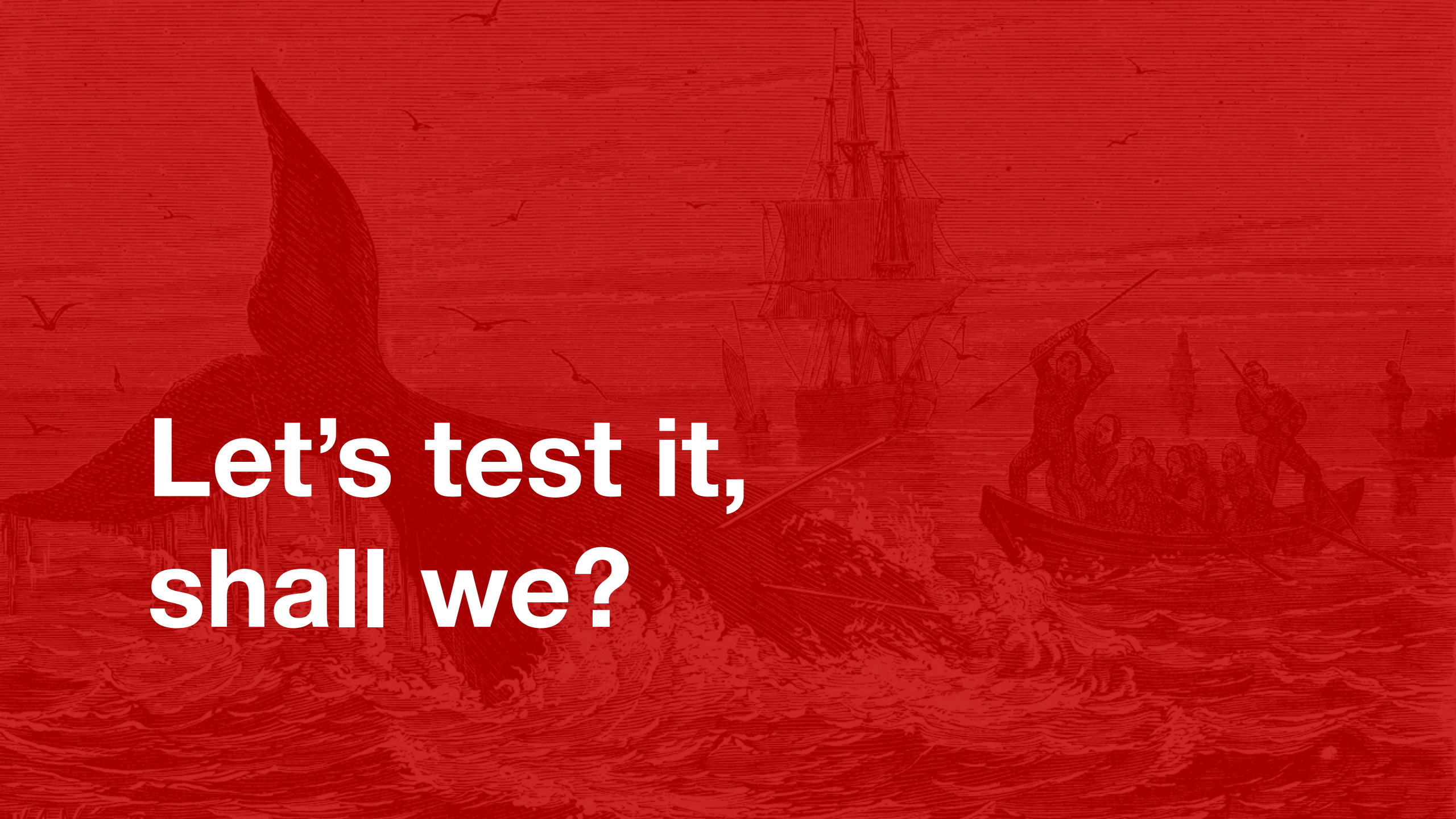
Preferences →
Spelling & Grammar →

- [ ] Show Readability Statistics



TEST READABILITY IN WORD

Then run
Spell-check.



Let’s test it, shall we?

The large importance attached to the harpooneer’s vocation is evinced by the fact, that originally in the old Dutch Fishery, two centuries and more ago, the command of a whale ship was not wholly lodged in the person now called the captain, but was divided between him and an officer called the Specksnyder.

Grade Level: 23

The importance of the harpooneer’s role goes back to the old Dutch Fishery. There, two centuries and more ago, the command of a whale ship was not wholly lodged in the person now called the captain. Instead, the command was divided between him and an officer called the Specksnyder.

Grade Level: 23

The importance of the harpooneer’s role goes back to the old Dutch Fishery. There, two centuries and more ago, the command of a whale ship was not wholly lodged in the person now called the captain. Instead, the command was divided between him and an officer called the Specksnyder.

Grade Level: 8

Thanks,

Math.

Limit each sentence to 25 words.

Average sentence length of 15 words.

Limit each paragraph to 75 words.

One thought per sentence.