

An “IS” to Avoid The “is” of identification

The word “IS” and its relatives, were, am, are, been, etc. can reduce the effectiveness and sometimes the truthfulness of our speaking and writing. In this instance our little trouble maker identifies one entity with another, usually a specific person or object with a larger generality. In reality, these two entities cannot equal one another—but we speak as though they can. Here are some examples.

Marisha is an athlete. This tells us very little about Marisha. If we consider professional basketball players as athletes, does Marisha equal them?

More informant statements without is.

Marisha excels in athletics.
Marisha has considerable athletic ability.

Example 2.

Juan is a soccer player.

More informant statements without is.

Juan plays soccer.
Juan plays soccer competently.
Juan plays soccer for the national team.

Example 3.

Lahoya and Rachel are honors students.

More Informant statements without is.

Lahoya and Rachel regularly make the honor roll.
Lahoya and Rachel received academic honors.

You probably use “IS” the way shown above and do not even think of it. Try not using the word is when you put someone into a category. Tell something about the person or thing, which makes a truer or stronger statement. On the lines below write an example of how you might make a statement using is in the manner above, and how it you might say it without the use of the verb “to be.” Bring this back to class for discussion

The way I say it using is.

The stronger, truer way I might say it.
