

The Elements of Style

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Foreword

Introduction

1 Elementary Rules of Usage

- 1.1 Form the possessive singular of nouns by adding 's.
- 1.2 In a series of 3 or more terms with a single conjunction, use a comma after each term except the last.
- 1.3 Enclose parenthetic expressions between commas.
- 1.4 Place a comma before a conjunction introducing an independent clause.
- 1.5 Do not join independent clauses with a comma.
- 1.6 Do not break sentences in 2.
- 1.7 Use a colon after an independent clause to introduce a list of particulars, an appositive, an amplification, or an illustrative quotation.
- 1.8 Use a dash to set off an abrupt break or interruption & to announce a long appositive or summary.
- 1.9 The number of the subject determines the number of the verb.
- 1.10 Use the proper case of pronoun.
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2 Elementary Principles of Composition

- 2.1 Choose a suitable design & hold to it.
- 2.2 Make the paragraph the unit of composition: 1 paragraph to each topic.
- 2.3 Use the active voice.
- 2.4 Put statements in positive form.
- 2.5 Use definite, specific, concrete language.
- 2.6 Omit needless words.
- 2.7 Avoid a succession of loose sentences.
- 2.8 Express coordinate ideas in similar form.
- 2.9 Keep related words together.
- 2.10 In summaries, keep to 1 tense.
- 2.11 Place the emphatic words of a sentence at the end.

3 A Few Matters of Form

4 Words & Expressions Commonly Misused

5 An Approach to Style (With a List of Reminders)

- 5.1 Place yourself in the background.

“Write in a way that draws the reader’s attention to the sense & substance of the writing, rather than to the mood & temper of the author. If the writing is solid & good, the mood & temper of the writer will eventually be revealed & not at the

expense of the work. Therefore, the 1st piece of advice is this: to achieve style, begin by affecting none – i.e., place yourself in the background. A careful & honest writer does not need to worry about style. As you become proficient in the use of language, your style will emerge, because you yourself will emerge, & when this happens you will find it increasingly easy to break through the barriers that separate you from other minds, other hearts – which is, of course, the purpose of writing, as well as its principal reward. Fortunately, the act of composition, or creation, disciplines the mind; writing is 1 way to go about thinking, & the practice & habit of writing not only drain the mind but supply it, too.” – Strunk Jr. and White, 2019, p. 78

5.2 Write in a way that comes naturally.

5.3 Work from a suitable design.

5.4 Write with nouns & verbs.

5.5 Revise & rewrite.

5.6 Do not overwrite.

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5.21 Prefer the standard to the offbeat.

6 Afterword

References

Strunk Jr., William and E. B. White (2019). *The Elements of Style*. Fourth edition, p. 110.