

Overview and Review
The Twelve Ingredients of Good Writing

#1 - Avoid slang and colloquialisms (words used in familiar or local conversation).

- Incorrect: He is really into skateboards.
 - Correct: He enjoys skateboarding.

 - Incorrect: Jenny has got to go to Ohio for a week.
 - Correct: Jenny must go to Ohio for a week.

 - Incorrect: Scott has been doing science for eight years now.
 - Correct: Scott has been a scientist for eight years now.

 - Rewrite: Cindy Clark sure knows her stuff.
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- Rewrite: Having something funny to say is totally awesome.
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#2 - Avoid sentence fragments and run-on sentences. Do NOT begin sentences with subordinate conjunctions like: after, because, since, until, whenever, while, before, etc.

- Sentence fragments:

- Incorrect: Why do I think the author's position is preposterous? Because he makes generalizations that I know are untrue.
 - Correct: I think the author's position is preposterous because he makes generalizations that I know are untrue.

 - Incorrect: Seattle is a great place to live. Having mountains, the ocean and forests nearby. If you can ignore the rain.
 - Correct: Seattle is a great place to live with mountains, the ocean, and forests nearby; however, you need to ignore the rain.

 - Rewrite: The academy has all the programs Angie will need. Except the sports program, which has been phased out.
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- *Run-on sentences:*

- Incorrect: Current insurance practices are unfair they discriminate against the people who need insurance.
 - Correct: Current insurance practices are unfair. They discriminate against the people who need insurance.
 - Correct: Current insurance practices are unfair; they discriminate against the people who need insurance.
 - Correct: Current insurance practices are unfair because they discriminate against the people who need insurance.
 - Rewrite: Current insurance practices are discriminatory, furthermore they make insurance too expensive for the poor and the middle class people also pay too much.
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#3: Use commas correctly.

- Incorrect: My advisor suggests that I compile a portfolio of, stock, bonds, and futures.
 - Correct: My advisor suggests that I compile a portfolio of stocks, bonds, and futures.
 - Incorrect: The newspaper, that has the most unpleasant editorials, is the *Record Times*.
 - Correct: The newspaper that has the most unpleasant editorials is the *Record Times*.
 - Incorrect: After the banquet Harold and Martha went dancing.
 - Correct: After the banquet, Harold and Martha went dancing.
 - Rewrite: It takes a friendly energetic smart person to be a successful salesman.
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- Rewrite: Pushing through the panicked crowd the security guards frantically searched for the suspect.
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#4: Use semicolons correctly.

- Incorrect: Whooping cranes are an endangered species; and they are unlikely to survive if we continue to pollute.
 - Correct: Whooping cranes are an endangered species; they are unlikely to survive if we continue to pollute.
 - Correct: Whooping cranes are an endangered species; there are only 50 whooping cranes in New Jersey today.
 - Rewrite: You should always be prepared when you go on a camping trip, however you must avoid carrying unnecessary weight.
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#5: Use colons correctly.

- Incorrect: I want: a slice of pizza and a small green salad.
 - Correct: This is what I want: A slice of pizza and a small green salad.
 - Rewrite: The chef has created a masterpiece, the pasta is delicate yet firm, the mustard greens are fresh, and the medallions of beef are melting in my mouth.
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#6: Use hyphens and dashes correctly.

- Incorrect: Sixty five students constitute a majority.
 - Correct: Sixty-five students constitute a majority.
 - Incorrect: The president elect was invited to chair the meeting.
 - Correct: The president-elect was invited to chair the meeting.
 - Incorrect: The three year old boy ate a large lunch.
 - Correct: The three-year-old boy ate a large lunch.
 - Rewrite: The child was able to count from one to ninety nine.
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- Rewrite: The adults only movie was banned from commercial TV.
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#7: Use apostrophes correctly.

- Incorrect: You're new suit is a great color.
 - Correct: Your new suit is a great color.

 - Incorrect: The dog hurt it's paw.
 - Correct: The dog hurt its paw.

 - Incorrect: We saw the foxes' bushy tail.
 - Correct: We saw the fox's bushy tail.

 - Rewrite: The presidents limousine had a flat tire.
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- Rewrite: Your going to love this movie.
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#8: Pay attention to subject-verb agreement.

- Incorrect: The family have a long history.
 - Correct: The family has a long history.

 - Incorrect: The committee decide how to proceed.
 - Correct: The committee decides how to proceed.

 - Rewrite: The team run during practice.
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#9: Use modifiers correctly.

- Incorrect: Tom and Jen sat talking about the movie in the office.
 - Correct: Tom and Jen sat in the office talking about the movie.

 - Incorrect: The dentist instructed him regularly to brush his teeth.
 - Correct: The dentist instructed him to brush his teeth regularly.

 - Rewrite: Coming out of the woodwork, he was surprised to see termites.
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- Rewrite: The governor's conference met to discuss racial unrest in the auditorium.
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#10: Use pronouns correctly.

- Incorrect: The teacher told the student he was lazy. (Does "he" refer to the teacher or the student?)
 - Correct: The student was lazy, and the teacher told him so.

 - Incorrect: I would rather settle in Phoenix than in Albuquerque, although it lacks wonderful restaurants.
 - Correct: I would rather settle in Phoenix than in Albuquerque, although Phoenix lacks wonderful restaurants.

 - Rewrite: Sam told Mark he was upset that he arrived late.
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#11: Pay attention to parallelism.

- Incorrect: They are sturdy, attractive, and are only costing a dollar each.
 - Correct: They are sturdy, attractive, and only cost a dollar each.

 - Incorrect: All students should learn word processing, accounting, and how to program computers.
 - Correct: All students should learn word processing, accounting, and computer programming.

 - Rewrite: The grocery baggers were ready, able, and were quite determined to do a great job.
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- Rewrite: The requirements for a business degree are not as strict as a law degree.
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#12: Don't shift narrative voice.

- Incorrect: Just by following the news, you can readily see how politicians have a vested interest in pleasing powerful interest groups, but one should not generalize about this tendency.
 - Correct: Just by following the news, one can readily see how politicians have a vested interest in pleasing powerful interest groups, but one should not generalize about this tendency.
 - Rewrite: I am disgusted with the waste we tolerate in this country. One cannot simply stand by without adding to such waste; living here makes you wasteful.
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