

The **ENTREPRENEUR'S** Guidebook Series™

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*It's one of the
best of its kind.*
- Alan Caruba
Bookview.com

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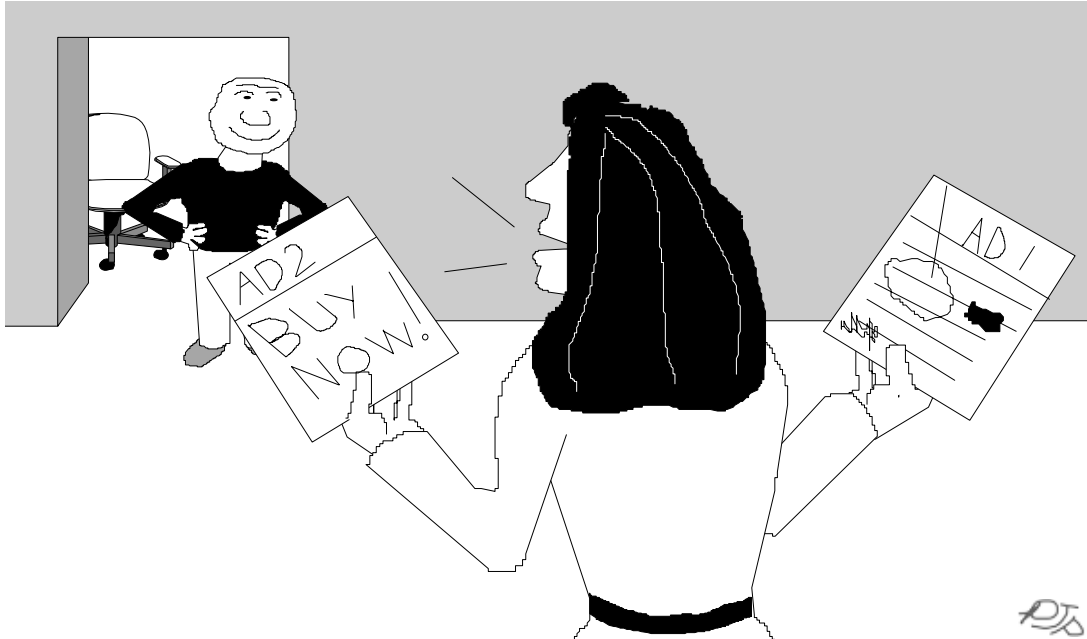
PERSONAL PLANNING

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*“All I can say is this EDITED version
sure doesn’t waste words!”*

Smallbusinesstown.com

WRITING & EDITING LIKE A PRO

IT has been said that writers are born not made. This is not true. It has also been said that writing is 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration. This is almost true.

Writing is discipline. Good writing results when you refuse to give up until you have expressed **EXACTLY** what you want to say.

In other words, if you want to write and edit like a pro, you must first become obsessed with words and word combinations, and then you must believe that for every thought you could possibly have that there is one and only one perfect way to express that thought.

NOTE The ideas, tips and strategies contained in this Guidebook are applicable to most any style of writing or copywriting. Use this course as a guide, reference, or quick pick-me-up whenever your thoughts become muddy, lifeless or inarticulate.

ESSENTIALS OF PUNCTUATION

THE WRITING process can turn any mild mannered person into a raving lunatic. Sometimes thoughts, no matter how much care is given to organize them, refuse to become coherent. However, if one day someone came up to you and offered you a set of easy to use tools specifically designed to help organize, unify, emphasize, group and clarify your ideas, wouldn't you jump at the opportunity to buy these tools? Isn't anything that helps a writer manipulate their words so readers can recognize patterns in their thoughts and thus increase their comprehension, worth its weight in gold?

Originality does not consist in saying what no one has ever said before, but in saying exactly what you think yourself.

JAMES STEPHENS

These miraculous tools are the tools of punctuation. Understanding punctuation is the biggest and easiest step you can take to improve your ability to communicate with words.

NOTE In spoken language, we automatically use pauses and inflections – along with gestures and facial expressions – to help show how our words, phrases and sentences are related to each other and in what way we intend them to be understood. In written language, however, punctuation takes on this role. Each punctuation mark serves one of four general aims, to:

terminate

introduce

separate

enclose

Ultimate Punctuation Rule

1. Use punctuation to **group** and **relate** thoughts.

Two More Punctuation Rules

Many people find punctuation intimidating. Consequently, they never fully take advantage of the different ways it allows them to express themselves. They think there are too many rules, when in fact, there are only a few rules tempered with an abundance of conventions.

Bearing this mind, whenever the weight of *punctuation hell* seems on the verge of sapping your last ounce of patience, use the following two simple strategies:

Many people find punctuation intimidating and thus never fully take advantage of the different ways it allows them to express themselves.

1. If you don't need it, **don't use it.**
2. If you don't know how to punctuate a particular type of sentence structure, **copy** what everybody else **does.**

Out of these two rules, only the second needs clarification.

If you're having trouble punctuating a sentence, pick up a magazine, newspaper, or book and see how someone else does it. If what they do makes sense, then copy it. If you do this often enough, the rule or rather convention, will become second nature. In this respect, learning how to punctuate is very similar to learning how to spell, talk and even walk.

15 Basic Punctuation Symbols

Defined

‘ [] : , - ... ! - () . ? “ ‘ ;

Apostrophes

Use apostrophes to:

- a. indicate the omission of letters or numbers in contractions.

winter of ‘69, can’t, they’re, it’s,
she’s, cryin’

- b. form plurals of abbreviations that have periods.

M.D.’s

- c. form plurals of letters, figures and signs etc., where the addition of an “s” alone would be confusing.

p’s and q’s, four 7’s, six five’s

- d. indicate possession.

Children’s toys, Mike’s bike, one’s car,
cross’s wood, Smiths’ cottage, Joneses’
garden, Jessus’s birth, girls’ sweaters

- To indicate possession, as a general rule, add an apostrophe and an “s” to a singular noun.

dog’s, John’s, lady’s,

- To form the possessive of a plural noun, add only an apostrophe if the plural ends in an “s”.

ladies’, Smiths’, Services’
allocation, Burns’ poems

- Otherwise, add an apostrophe and an “s.”

men’s, children’s, Marx’s theories,
Berlioz’s opera

Use apostrophes to indicate the omission of letters or numbers in contractions.

- If, however, the last sibilant (the "s") is silent, the apostrophe and "s" are added whether the word is monosyllabic or not:

Des Moines's business community

- Also, add an apostrophe and an "s" to singular nouns ending in an "s" for whose plural you would normally pronounce an extra syllable.

boss's, class's and congress's

- In forming the possessive of an underlined or italicized word or title, do not underscore or italicize the apostrophe and 's.

The *Tribune's* circulation

- For shared possession, use possessive case for the last noun in the group.

For shared possession, use possessive case for the last noun in the group.

Jack and Larry's room; Smith, Albert and Doe's office

- Also, remember, that for inanimate objects possessive case does not exist.

The front door of the house NOT the houses' front door

Except for personified objects.

the ship's sails, the plane's engine

- And idiomatic applications to time or money.

day's work, five dollar's worth

Do not use the apostrophe to:

- a. form the plural of number or initialisms.
The mid-1950s, the early 1930s, 9700s, CLARs

NOTE In constructions such as “the ‘90s,” use an apostrophe in both the numeric form and the spelled-out version, the ‘30s, the ‘thirties.

Brackets

Use brackets to:

- a. enclose editorial additions to quoted material.

“The president of the company referred to him [Ned Bowman] as a natural born leader.”

NOTE Editorial additions are words or passages written by someone other than the original writer.

Capitals

Capitalize:

- b. names of holidays.

Christmas Day

- b. days of the week.

Friday

- c. months of the year.

November

- d. proper nouns.

John, Athens

- e. trade names

Acrilan, Lucite, Monotype

- f. first and last words in a title.

The Last of the Mohicans

Let your discourse with men of business be short and comprehensive.

GEORGE

WASHINGTON

NOTE Capitalize all other words in a title except articles, conjunctions, and prepositions of fewer than four letters.

- g. components of the names of societies, institutions, companies, conferences,

etc.

American Marketing Association
University of Alberta

- h.** proper names of the components of schools, colleges, and related institutions of universities

Harvard Law School
College of Business Administration

- i.** general words when they form a special name.

Compaq Service Center

NOTE Also capitalize textual callouts in art, emphasis in running text, header and footer text, initials and acronyms, logos and network addresses.

Do not capitalize:

- a.** “a,” “an,” or “the” before a title or name

unless it is a specific part of the title or name.

the Boston Globe, the Washington Post, The Time Machine

- b.** “appendix,” “chapter,” “section,” “figure,” “table,” or similar words when used in a phrase.

in **section 4**, see **item 5**, in **appendix A**, refer to **table 4-3**

- c.** nouns that follow a product program name unless they are a specific part of the name.

Chrysler car, Doublemint gum, Xerox Integrated, Composition System, Volkswagen Dasher, General Mills Wheaties, Xerox copier

- d.** machine parts, menus, or generic terms.

font, memory, printer, telephone, pop-up menu, Centronics 100 interface, laser printing system, read-only memory, product delivery process

- e. trade names that have been integrated in the language.

rayon, nylon, diesel, dynel

Lowercase:

- f. the defining term of such names when used alone, even though reference is being made to a specific organization

the university (when referring to University of Southern California)

- j. seasons

fall, spring

- k. the defining term of proper nouns when

used in the plural.

Xerox and Data General corporations
Atlantic and Pacific oceans

- l. terms that are not actual names but are merely being used descriptively.

He attended the annual convention of the state computer society.

- m. terms being used to indicate classes of organizations and the like.

state medical associations
the Sand Diego high schools

- n. common nouns, adjectives, and verbs that were originally derived from proper nouns but have acquired a specialized meaning.

Lowercase terms that are not actual names but are merely being used descriptively.

venetian blind, biblical, portland cement, anglicization

- o. departments in colleges and schools.
department of history

Colons

In general, the colon gives the reader an extra push toward the next part of the sentence. More specifically:

Use colons to:

- a. introduce words, phrases, clauses or lists that explain, amplify, exemplify or summarize what has preceded.
There are three kinds of people in this world: the good, the bad and the ugly.
- b. follow a phrase in which the words as

follows or *the following* are either expressed or implied.

The ingredients for two-minute carrot soup are as follows: chopped carrots, water, garlic and a fistful of parsley.

- c. anticipate a conclusion or important point.

Jack lived for only one thing: power.

- d. introduce a formal quotation.

Lyndon B. Johnson stated: “A President’s hardest task is not to do what is right, but to know what is right.”

- e. separate hours from minutes and chapters from verses.

At 2:45, George read from the Bible, Psalm 34:16.

The trend in most publications is towards less capitalization.

SUPERTIP

- f. punctuate the end of the salutation of a business letter.

Gentlemen:

Dear Mr. Jones:

To Whom This Concerns:

NOTE Capitalize the first word after a colon if it begins a complete statement.

Commas

Use commas to separate:

- a. words, phrases, and clauses from each other when nothing heavier or more expressive is required or desired.
- On Monday, the day the mail carrier always came half an hour late, I had Frosted Flakes for breakfast.
- b. independent clauses of a compound

I leave out the part that people skip.

**ELMORE
LEONARD**

Commenting on the popularity of his novels

sentence joined by a coordinating conjunction such as *but*, *and*, *nor*, *or*, *for*, *yet*, *so*, or *whereas*.

Alex and Trevor were best of friends, whereas their sisters, Lucy and Hilda, were sworn enemies.

EXCEPTION: Independent clauses of five words or less joined by *and*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, or *so* do not require a comma (e.g., He laughed and she cried.).

- c. elements in a series of words, phrases, or clauses – commas before a concluding *and* or *or* is optional if the sense is clear.

To be happy, love, laugh, and stay single.

He bought yellow, white, blue and red

shirts (items are all the same).

- d. contrasted sentence elements.

She asked for a steak, not a hamburger.

- e. interjections and words of direct address.

Oh, I completely forgot.

I've been planning for weeks, for goodness sake, to see you in Vancouver.

Janet, you forget your sweater.

No, I don't feel like going to a movie.

Use commas to set off:

- f. key phrases and clauses.

No, Jean, I am not getting fat.

- g. sentences modifiers – words and

phrases which modify a whole sentence instead of a single word.

Nevertheless, I think you should come.

The pedestrians, on the other hand, were no so lucky.

- h. a long phrase or clause preceding the subject.

After having practiced for many months, I finally learned how to play my favorite Chopin waltz.

When the hour of death approaches, the silence within can be deafening.

Use commas to set off a long phrase or clause preceding the subject.

- i. a direct quotation.

Helen said, "He will do as I tell him."

- j. nonrestrictive elements (*restrictive* is essential to the meaning, *non restrictive* is not essential to the meaning – the in-

tention of the writer usually determines whether material is restrictive or nonrestrictive).

Philip, my brother, was three inches taller than I.

My aunt, who always talked with her mouth full, started choking on an olive pit.

Use commas:

- k. after introductory words and abbreviations such as *for example*, *e.g.*, *i.e.*, *that is*, *namely*, *such as*, *accordingly*, *furthermore*, *however*, *therefore*, *thus*, and *nevertheless*.
Indeed, it was a grand party.
- l. between consecutive adjectives where the comma is essentially replacing the

word *and*.

She was a tall, blond, handsome girl.

- m. between elements of emphatic contrast.
Life is short, death is eternal.

- n. to prevent misreading.

He was waiting, for his girlfriend had not yet called him back.

- o. to indicate a pause where a word has been omitted.

What are you, Hey! Give that back.

- p. to indicate interruptions of normal word order.

The girl, tall and tanned in appearance, was more beautiful than words could describe.

Use commas k) after introductory words and abbreviations such as "for example," "that is" and "namely."

Also use commas in:

- q. the salutation of a personal letter.
Dear John,
- r. the close of a letter.
Yours truly,
- s. separating dates of the month from the year.
January 6, 1949
- t. separating parts of an address.
Sam Malone, 145 Oak Street,
Seattle, Washington
- u. separating numbered or letter divisions.
Genesis 2,11
Section 1, b
- v. separating names from distinguishing

tittles

Janice Joplin, Jr.

Barry Bilmore, MD.

- w. separating thousands in large figures.
3,432,3432

Also use commas in: q) the salutation of a personal letter; and r) the close of a letter.

Dashes**Use an "em dash" to:**

- a. indicate an abrupt change, to set apart a defining or explanatory phrase, or to create the expectation in the readers mind that what follows will be surprising, emphatic or in the least an unusual break in syntax (an "em dash" is called an "em dash" because it is the width of the letter "em").

What he needed – and he needed it badly – was to be liked by everyone.

NOTE It is better to use a bullet (a dot, square or other symbol at the beginning of a sentence) than a dash or an asterisk to illustrate a point. Also, be careful not to misuse the dash in place of a comma or colon (in typing two unspaced hyphens represent a dash).

Ellipses

An ellipsis is three spaced periods . . .

Use an ellipsis to –

- a. indicate an omission within a quotation.
“Life is like a beach . . .

Punctuating Dialog & Quoted Material

1. Use of Comma with Dialog & Quotations:

- Alice said bluntly, “I hate your tie.”
- “Where were you last night,” demanded Lori.
- “Ready now,” she asked, “to go home?”

2. The comma is omitted if a “?” or an “!” falls between the dialog or quotation and the indication of the speaker or writer.

- “Why won’t you pay?” queried Peter.
- In a quotation or dialog of more than one sentence, only one sentence is connected to the speaker or writer by a comma.
- “I was waiting for you,” she said angrily. “Why didn’t you hurry?”

3. Descriptive or narrative materials related to the speaker are placed in the same paragraph as the quotation.

- “The devil!” screamed the pious old man.

but the beach is not its goal.”

NOTE If a period occurs within the omission, four periods are used instead of three. If the ellipses occurs at the end of a sentence, the period terminating the sentence is also retained.

Exclamation Marks

Use an exclamation mark to:

- a. end sentences that indicate and outburst of strong emotion, emphatic surprise, or even emphatic query.

Punctuating Dialog & Quoted Material (cont.)

4. A new paragraph is used for each change of speaker.
 - “You said what?” demanded Larry.
 - “I said, she needed a face lift,” replied Wally.
5. When only two speakers are involved, the alternation of speakers can be indicated by paragraphing without the necessity of identifying the speaker in each paragraph.
 - “Allen, “ said I, “when you are finished eating your peas, you can have dessert.”
 - “I hate peas.”
 - “Then no ice cream for you, pal.”
6. When the conventional indications of speaker or writer (he said, they replied) are not used, internal punctuation and capitalization of quoted material is reproduced exactly as originally written.
 - Milton Berle summed up his views of group decision making with this famous line “A committee is a group that keeps minutes and loses hours.”

“What do you mean I’m going bald!”

“Hey! That’s my car!”

Hyphens

Use hyphens to:

- a. join words where you wish to avoid doubling or tripling a letter.

re-evaluate

bi-iliac

- b. join a prefix where the root word begins with a capital letter.

Un-American

- c. join the prefixes *all-*, *ex-*, *self-*, *vice-*, and the suffix *-elect*

ex-wife

- d. avoid awkward pronunciations or ambiguity

Use hyphens to avoid awkward pronunciations or ambiguity.

co-worker

- e. form certain compound words that wish to convey a single idea or thought unit.

solid-state, blue-green dress, a better-than-average shot

- f. write fractions and compound numbers from 21 to 99.

one-fourth

eighty-five

- g. combine numeral-unit adjectives.

6-inch ruler

- h. combine an initial capital letter with a word.

T-shirt

- i. divide 7 digit telephone numbers.

456-2340

- j. break a word into syllables at the end of a line (words may only be broken between syllables).

The man who was walking quite quickly along the beach was nude.

NOTE Don't hyphenate word-pairs in which the first word ends with "ly" (hyphenating *highly-toxic* is wrong).

Italics

Although, not a punctuation symbol, in the truest sense of the word, *italics* are often used in a similar manner to quotations.

Italicize:

- a. titles of books, long poems, periodicals, newspapers, motion pictures, ballets, and plays, or long works of any sort.

The Scarlet Letter
Romeo and Juliet

- b. words or letters used as such.

There is only one *the* and one *therefore* on the page.

- c. words you wish to emphasize, but only when absolutely necessary as in play dialogue.

"Where did you *say* it was?"

- d. foreign words and phrases in general, except for common foreign abbreviations (such as "ie" and "eg").

Kam-sa-ham-ni-da (thank you in Korean)

NOTE Do not italicize the titles of foreign places and organizations, nor medical and

Although, not a punctuation symbol, in the truest sense of the word, italics are often used in a similar manner to quotations.

legal terms.

Parentheses

Use parentheses to:

- a. de-emphasize explanatory matter.

As I said earlier (see p. 28), analyzing poetry can be fun.

Francis Albert (1601-1687) was born in England.

- b. enclose materials which intrude on the flow of thought.

What a crook (events later confirmed my suspicions)!

- c. write numbers.

Books are written (1) to instruct, (2) to inspire, and (3) to amuse

NOTE Enclose the punctuation associated with a complete statement within the pa-

rentheses. However, normal sentence punctuation should be placed outside and at the end of the parentheses.

Periods

Use periods to:

- a. terminate declarative or imperative sentences.

Do nothing and you will be nothing.

- b. to terminate most abbreviations.

Mr., Dr., Asso., Co., Inc.

- c. to demark units as in a list.

1. Spellman and Zinc.

NOTE When punctuating lists, place end punctuation on complete sentences, place no end punctuation on incomplete sentences.

Originality is the art of concealing your source.

FRANKLIN P. JONES

Use three spaced periods to:

- a. indicate a pause in a speech or a pause in an unfinished sentence.

Once upon a time . . .

Question Marks**Use question marks to:**

- a. end direct questions.
What is the capital city of Texas?
- b. in parentheses to indicate doubt.
Born in 1873 (?), he was one of the world's greatest singers.
- c. Write seeming statements intended interrogatively.

Why should I?

Quotation Marks**Use double quotation marks to:**

- a. indicate titles of short works or parts of larger works such as single short poems, journal articles, short stories (unless they have been published as separate books), essays, comic strips,

TV and radio programs, songs, paintings, and statues.

“Ode to the West Wind” (short poem)

“The Lottery” (short story)

“My Way” (song)

“Making a Tent” (chapter heading)

“Is Government Getting too Big?” (magazine article)

- b. indicate the names of ships, airships, airplanes, and trains.

"Titanic"

Use question marks to end direct questions; in parentheses to indicate doubt; or seeming statements intended interrogatively.

- c. indicate slang, obsolete and other unusual words, a special meaning for a word, or a word being used ironically.

Where is the "thing."

- d. indicate a definition of a word.

"Oui" means "yes" in French.

- e. enclose all direct speech within a sentence.

Walter eyed Melissa curiously, then spoke crustily, "Give me a light baby! And make it snappy."

- f. enclose direct quotations.

Simpson said, "I'm innocent" (direct).

The company president stated that he "did not wish to resign," but had been given no choice by the board members (combined).

Simpson claimed he didn't do it (indirect).

NOTE Indirect quotations that quote the substance, but not the exact words, should not be enclosed by quotation marks.

- g. enclose words or phrases following terms like *entitled*, *classified*, *endorsed* or *signed*.

The movie has been classified as "restricted."

Use single quotation marks to:

- a. indicate a quotation within a quotation.

"The boss said, 'no vacations for you!'"

NOTE When using quotation marks, commas, periods, question marks and exclamation points are placed inside the quotation marks, while colons and semi-colons

In general text, use quotation marks and italics as little as possible.

SUPERTIP

are placed outside (unless they are part of the material being quoted). Other punctuation marks can be placed according to logic: inside if they punctuate the quotation, outside if they punctuate a sentence of which a quotation is a part of (e.g., Billy shouted, “Why won’t you give it to me?”; Wendy replied “Why don’t you say, ‘Please give it to me Wendy, honey’? And then maybe I’ll think about it.”).

When using quotation marks commas, periods, question marks and exclamation points are placed inside the quotation marks, while colons and semi-colons are placed outside.

Harry bought cookies, bagels and cupcakes from the Italian bakery; barbecued chicken from the butcher; and milk, chips and paper towels from 7-11.

Semicolons

Use semicolons:

- a. to separate independent clauses.
Sally was sick; she did not go to school.
- b. to separate a series of phrases that already contain commas.

- c. to separate certain clauses that are too closely related to be written as separate sentences.
- d. to precede explanatory phrases introduced by words such as *for example* when you want a stronger break than a comma.
- e. to separate independent clauses that are very long and otherwise difficult to understand.
- f. when you need a heavy separator, almost equivalent to a full stop or period.



ESSENTIALS OF GRAMMAR

GRAMMAR can be defined as an alliance with the way words phrases and sentences function together in our language. It is a vital tool for helping us think, speak and write with precision and panache.

Parts of Speech

There are 8 parts of speech, basic to understanding the English language.

- noun
- adjective
- pronoun
- verb

- adverb
- conjunction
- preposition
- interjection

A noun is a word that names or stands for a thing, class, concept, quality, or action.

Noun – A noun is a word that names or stands for a thing, class, concept, quality, or action. They function in sentences chiefly as subjects, objects, complements and appositives and can be grouped as common nouns, proper nouns, concrete nouns and abstract nouns.

Common nouns are names applying to any or all member of a class (dress, dresses, tree, trees). *Proper nouns* are names of specific persons, places, or things and begin with a capital letter (Fred, Amtrak, America). *Concrete nouns* are

names of tangible objects (boy, vegetable, utensil). *Abstract nouns* are names of intangible things or ideas (liberty, honor, happiness). *Appositives* are a special kind of modifier consisting of a noun or a group of words functioning as a noun. It is placed immediately after another noun which it further defines or identifies (e.g., *Fred, the boy who lived next door, had a rich uncle.*).

NOTE A common noun becomes a proper noun when used as a title to specify one particular course, city, region, firm or person (Philosophy 101, Cedar Rapids, the old Southwest, Oak Tree Tavern, Father).

Adjective – An adjective is a word that modifies a noun or a pronoun. Normally it

An adjective is a word that modifies a noun or a pronoun.

precedes the word or words it modifies (ex. *pretty girl, brown fox, white hair*).

Pronoun – A pronoun functions as a noun and usually refers back to a noun that has appeared earlier (e.g., he, she, I, you, it, who, which, himself, everyone).

NOTE An *antecedent* is the word for which the pronoun stands for (e.g., For the clause “Sam ate his supper,” the pronoun is *his* and the antecedent is *Sam*. A *relative pronoun* relates a dependent clause to a word in the main clause. An *interrogative pronoun* asks a question: Who? Which? What? A *demonstrative pronoun* points out without naming (e.g., this, that, these, those).

Verb – A verb describes action, condition, state of being or process (count, sing, run,

move, walk, think). It is inflected to show tense, person and number. The basic forms of a verb are the infinitive form (to go), the present tense form (go); the present participle form (going); the past tense form (went); and the past participle form (gone).

Adverb – An adverb modifies a verb, an adjective, another adverb, or a whole statement (e.g., *they talked loudly* – loudly modifies verb talked; and *an extremely interesting show* – extremely modifies adjective interesting). Adverbs answer the question how, when, where, why, and to what degrees. Many adverbs are formed by the addition of the suffix “ly” to an adjective (ex. *slowly, quickly, ill, well*).

The Importance of Proper "Word Position"

SUBJECT, VERB, OBJECT is the most common order of words in English sentences. Other words, such as modifiers, are added to increase and clarify meaning. A simple way to illustrate the importance of word position in English grammar is to observe what happens when the adverb “only” is put in different places:

Only he operated the printer yesterday.

He **only** operated the printer yesterday.

He operated **only** the printer yesterday.

He operated the **only** printer yesterday.

He operated the printer **only** yesterday.

He operated the printer yesterday **only**.

Conjunction – A conjunction links together phrases, words, or clauses (and, but, or, whereas, since, nor, for, yet, so, because, wither, if, although, when, until, in order that).

NOTE *Coordinating conjunctions* connect elements of equal importance (e.g., and, but, or, nor, for, so, whereas, yet). *Correlative conjunctions*: pairs of words which are coordinate (e.g., both, and; either, or; not, only; but, also). *Subordinating conjunctions* join less important elements to more important ones (e.g., as, after, although, because, before, if, since, that, though, unless, until, when where, while, who, which). They frequently function as relative pronouns and subordinating conjunctions simultaneously.

The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug.
MARK TWAIN

Preposition – A preposition is a connecting word that introduces a prepositional phrase, which consists of the preposition itself followed by a noun or pronoun which is its object plus any modifiers of the noun

or pronoun. Common prepositions are: about, after, against, among, around, at, before, behind, below, beside, between, beyond, by, down, for, from, in, inside, into, like, of, on over, to, toward, under, up, upon, within.

Interjection – An interjection is a word that stands alone or is interjected into a sentence usually in order to express strong emotion (e.g., *Oh! How pretty! Ah! How wise*). Since interjections are simply thrust into sentences and play no part in their syntax, they cannot be said to have a grammatical function.

Parts of a Sentence

In its most simplest form, a sentence contains a subject and a predicate. It ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point. In its more complex form the various parts of a sentence fall under either of the three following categories: subject, predicate (verb) or modifier.

Being able to single out and relate these main parts to the whole sentence, is a valuable aid to organizing your thoughts. However, being able to rip apart a sentence and attach to each of its parts a fancy title in most cases is unproductive. Therefore, below is a list of only the main parts of a sentence. Leave expletives, nonrestrictive clauses, predicate adjectives and the like,

A clause is a group of words, which contains a subject and predicate.

to linguistic guru's with nothing better to do than revel in grammatical analysis.

Articles – Articles, such as *the*, *a* and *an*, are words used with a nouns to limit or give definiteness to their application. *The* is a definite article while *a* and *an* are indefinite articles.

Clauses – A clause is a group of words, which contains a subject and predicate. A clause or a phrase may function as an adjective, an adverb, or a noun. The phrase or clause that modifies, must be placed in the correct relationship to the word it modifies.

Independent Clause – An independent clause, also called the main clause, can stand by itself. It can also be the main clause of a large sentence (e.g., *I ran to the bank* so that I could make a deposit.

He watches the late news before he goes to bed.)

Dependent Clause – A dependent clause, also called the subordinate clause, cannot stand by itself as a complete sentence. It is incomplete and usually meaningless alone.

It depends on the main clause (e.g., *If it rains, we'll go home. He watches the late news before he goes to bed. I ran to the bank so that I could make a deposit.*).

Noun Clause – A clause that consists of a noun and its modifiers (e.g., *That nobody is perfect* is an observable fact.).

Adjective Clause – A clause that modifies a noun (e.g., He solved the problem *which had baffled others.*) Modifies *problem*.

If you haven't struck oil in five minutes, stop boring.

**GEORGE
JESSEL**

Adverbial Clause – A clause that modifies the verb (e.g., He painted *whenever he could.*) Modifies *painted*.

Complements – A complement is a noun or adjective in the predicate that follows a linking verb. Complements modify the subject.

Direct Objects – The direct object is acted upon directly by the subject and predicate (e.g., Cats scratch *children*). It is a noun or noun equivalent that answers the question asked by adding “what” or “whom” to the verb.

Gerunds – A gerund is the -ing form of a verb that serves as a noun. Like a present participle is a verbal ending in -ing. But whereas present participles function as ad-

jectives, gerunds always function as nouns (e.g., *Talking quickly, Albert walked out the door.*).

Indirect Objects – An indirect object is a noun that answers the question asked by adding, “to who or what.”

Infinitives – An infinitive functions either as a noun or a modifier (to talk, to think). Infinitives usually begin with the word to (e.g., *To save the horses was his primary intention.*).

Linking Verbs – A linking verb is a verb that expresses a condition (to be, to seem) rather than a direct action.

Modifiers – A modifier may modify a word, a phrase, a clause, or a whole sentence. A modifier may be a word, a phrase,

a clause, or a whole sentence. Common modifiers are adjectives and adverbs (e.g., *The raucous noise almost deafened the audience.*).

Objects – An object is a word or group of words that receives or is affected by the action of a verb.

A participle is a verb form which functions as an adjective.

Participles – A participle is a verb form, which functions as an adjective. Present participles end in -ing; past participles end in -ed (e.g. paint, painting, painted, talked, talking, thinking, thought, *glowing* coals, *frayed* collars, *whipped* cream).

Phrases – A phrase is a group of closely related words that do not contain both essential elements, a subject and a predicate, yet function as a grammatical unit

within a sentence. It functions as a modifier or as part of a complete subject or predicate.

Prepositional Phrase – A phrase introduced by a preposition (e.g., He sat *in a shed* all night.)

Participle Phrase – A phrase introduced by a participle (e.g., He saw the child *eating a cookie*.)

Infinitive Phrase – A phrase introduced by an infinitive (e.g., Mother hated *to cook spaghetti*.)

Gerund Phrase – A phrase introduced by a gerund (e.g., *Smoking a pipe* is an economical form of enjoyment.)

Verb Phrase – A phrase that consists of main verbs and auxiliary verbs (e.g., He *must have gone home*.)

A subject is what is being talked about.

Predicates – A predicate is what is being said about the subject. The predicate consists of a verb and all words related to the verb.

Simple Predicate – A *simple predicate* consists of the verb or a verb phrase (e.g., Cats *scratch*.)

Compound Predicate – A *compound predicate* consists of two or more verbs joined by a coordinating or correlative conjunction (e.g., They *ate, slept, fished, swam and basked* in the sun.)

Complete Predicate – A *complete predicate* consists of the verb and all its modifiers (e.g., In late October, John *put up the storm windows on his house*.)

Subjects – A subject is what is being talked about. It usually appears before the verb and consists of a noun or a noun equivalent.

Simple Subject – A *simple subject* consists of a single noun or pronoun or group of words like a book title, referring to one single item (e.g., *Cats scratch.*).

Compound Subject – A *compound subject* consists of two or more simple subjects joined by a coordinating or correlative conjunction (e.g., *The Edmonton Oilers and the L.A. Kings fought their way to a tie.*).

Complete Subject – A *complete subject* consists of a simple subject together with its modifiers (e.g., *The house in the valley was painted green.*).

First learn the meaning of what you say, and then speak.
EPICETUS

Basic Sentence Structures

THERE ARE four basic kinds of sentences: simple, complex, compound, and compound-complex:

Simple – A simple sentence has one subject and one finite verb, and therefore contains only one independent clause:
He walked fast.

Complex – A complex sentence consists of one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses:
He walked fast down the street.

Compound – A compound sentence consists of two or more independent clauses and no subordinate clauses. The clauses are linked together by a coordinating conjunction: *He walked fast while he whistled.*

Compound-Complex – A compound complex sentence contains two or more main clauses and *one or more* subordinate clauses: *He walked fast down the street while he whistled.*

Basic Paragraph Structures

THERE ARE three basic kinds of paragraphs: the opening paragraph, the transitional paragraph and the concluding paragraph.

Opening – An opening paragraph typically asks a question, makes a statement, presents a short anecdote, begins with a quotation, or cites an opinion by an authority.

Transitional – A transitional paragraph typically summarizes what has gone before, finds a link for the ideas before and

after, or pick up a word or phrase from the preceding paragraph.

Concluding – A concluding paragraph typically summarizes the ideas gone before, draws conclusions, or states further questions to be explored. (ze. quotati)5

WRITING TIPS

SOME PEOPLE say that there are six stages of writing, that writing is a process of preparation, frustration, incubation, illumination, evaluation, and elaboration. But this is a little abstract. Writing for most purposes is only one thing: *discipline*. It is discipline that gets your first word down. It is discipline that gets you through writer's block. It is discipline that gives you the strength to rip up a weeks worth of work and start all over again.

So how do you get this discipline?

Discipline starts with will power, but blossoms when one creates and recog-

Using a cliché indicates more than anything else lack of originality of thought.

nizes environments that are conducive to success.

To create the necessary mental and physical environments:

- seek out places of solitude or in the least be able to block out distractions
- make writing a routine so your body and mind can't trick you into being lazy (don't give yourself a choice in the matter, for choices means decisions and too many decisions can lead to procrastination)
- most importantly, train yourself to do at least a little each day rather than a whole bunch once in a blue moon

Writing Better Sentences



1

Avoid using clichés. Using a cliché indicates more than anything else lack of originality of thought. Avoid using: *the bottom line*, *male chauvinist pig*, *bite the bullet*, or *at this point in time*. And especially avoid using clichés inappropriately like shipping *ground to a halt* (how can shipping ground to a halt?).

NOTE However, use a cliché if it expresses your meaning exactly rather than using some labored circumlocution. It would be hard, for example, to improve on such tiny gems as *sour grapes*, *cry wolf*, or *tip of the iceberg*.

People who are too insistent on their views find lots of people to disagree with them.

POWERPOINT



2

Avoid using complicated phrases.

Simple phrases and sentences are more pleasing and create a more lasting impression than longer phrases and sentences of the same creative quality. It is a fact, that most readers are not comfortable with long sentences, or paragraphs, and it is also a fact that only about ten percent of the population does voluntary reading. This means that the average reader doesn't like reading at all.

To create strong simple sentences, and help keep your writing crystal-clear, avoid putting more than one thought in a sentence, clearly relate everything to the same subject, keep clauses parallel (i.e., linked by meaning), and write your

advertising copy so an eight year-old can understand it (you only want one interpretation).



3

Avoid using negative statements. Positive statements and words are easier to read and understand than negative statements and words. Make definite assertions rather than ones that beat around the bush. **DON'T SAY:** *He was not very often on time.* **SAY:** He usually comes late. Likewise, **DON'T USE:** not honest, not important or did not pay attention. **USE:** dishonest; trifling, or ignored. Furthermore, **DON'T SAY:** Optional CD-ROM: \$299. **SAY:** Add a CD-ROM drive for only \$299.

Say, *“The manager called a staff meeting,”* **instead of** *“The manager called a meeting of his staff.”*



4

Avoid using sexist language. Word choices and grammatical constructions that ignore or minimize the presence and contributions of one sex in society – at home or school or the workplace, in business or professional spheres, in social or personal relationships – may be considered sexist. Many writers and speakers try to avoid such usages, and they reject as well language that calls attention to the sex of an individual when it is irrelevant to the role or situation under discussion.

To Avoid Making Reference to Gender:

- **Say,** “The manager called a staff meeting,” **instead of** “The manager called a meeting of his staff.”

- **Say**, “The doctors receive reports on their patients,” **instead of** “The doctor received a report on his patients.”
- **Alternate** gender references by using she or he, his or her, she and he, his and her.
- **Create** an imaginary person to establish gender so as not to create any ambiguity such as: Fred buys our shirts here at Rodale’s because . . . ;
- **ALSO**, CHANGE Gender Specific Words TO Non-gender Specific Words. See chart below.

CHANGE Gender Specific Words TO Non-gender Specific Words

advertising man
anchorman
authoress

advertising agent
anchor
author

bellman, bellboy

bellhop

businessman

business person, executive, owner, manager, retailer

cameraman

camera operator, cinematographer

chairman

chair, chairperson

cleaning lady, cleaning woman

housecleaner, office cleaner, housekeeper

clergyman

cleric, member of the clergy, rabbi, priest, minister, pastor

congress man

representative, member of Congress, legislator

fireman

firefighter

forefather

ancestor

foreman

supervisor

he, his, him (when referring to a person who could be of either sex)

they, their, theirs, them, one, you, we

hostess
 housewife
 insurance man
 layman
 mailman, postman
 man
 man and wife
 mankind
 men and girls
 Mrs. Miss
 policeman
 salesman
 spokesman
 stewardess, steward

host
 homemaker
 insurance agent
 lay person
 mail/letter carrier
 human, person, individual, being
 husband and wife
 humankind, humanity, people, society, men & women
 men & women
 Ms.
 police officer, law enforcement officer
 salesperson, sales representative
 spokesperson, representative
 flight attendant

usherette
 waiter, waitress
 weatherman
 workingman

usher
 waitron, server
 weather reporter, weathercaster
 worker



5

Avoid using tame colorless, hesitating, noncommittal language. Avoid using *would, should, could, may, might* and *can*, for situations that don't involve uncertainty.



6

Avoid using technical jargon. Don't use a technical term unless 95 percent or more of your readers will understand it. Only use a technical term if there is no

other available term and the one in question communicates precisely what you want to say. DON'T SAY: hydrogen dioxide. SAY: *water*.



7

Avoid using too many clauses. Beware of using too many dependent clauses, especially in mid-sentence where they break word flow. Each clause adds further diverse ideas to the sentence, making it harder and harder to grasp.

WRONG: *The U.S. vice-president flew in from Bonn, accompanied by the West German Chancellor, with*

To write copy that is clear, distinct, firm, clean-cut, assured, enthusiastic, somewhat aggressive, and most of all persuasive, reflect the decision making process by following the pattern: get attention, hook the reader's interest, create a desire for the product, prove the products superiority, build belief, and ask for action.

SUPERTIP



8

Use definite, specific, concrete words. Avoid using words or abstractions that fail to present a picture or show an act. Be direct. Don't use unknown quantities or vague modifiers like *fairly, really, pretty, quite,* and *very*. Stimulate the reader's imagination with significant details. Ask yourself: how does this look?

whom he held talks Monday on disarmament strategy, on the first stop of a seven-country tour.

sound? feel? taste? smell? Tell who, what, when, where, why, and how, and whenever possible, use tangible figures in your copy.

For example, to attract attention and increase reader's response CHANGE: *a period of unfavorable weather set in* TO: *it rained every day for a week*. Or CHANGE: *you'll improve your bottom line* TO: *improved you bottom line by 12%!*

CHANGE Abstract (general) Words TO Concrete (specific) Words

institution	Cambridge College
work	running a bulldozer
organization	Lions Club
a politician	The mayor of Vancouver
emotion	anger
vehicle	Rolls Royce
color	Burgundy
food	cheesecake
an educator	history teacher

CHANGE Vague COPY TO Active COPY

He is associated in various teaching capacities with several local educational institutions

Adverse weather conditions will not result in structural degradation.

He teaches copy-writing at New York University and technical writing at Brooklyn Polytech.

The roof won't leak if it rains



9

Use dramatic, colorful language. Use words that illuminate and help recreate a scene. DON'T SAY: The couple were overjoyed. SAY: The couple kissed and hugged each other. DON'T SAY: Mary is tired. SAY: Mary is a thirty-two-year old woman with blue eyes and brown hair. She is sitting to my right, leaning back in a chair.

She is drinking a Diet Coke, with her eyes defocused and breathing shallow. **DON'T SAY:** The statue of the goddess is housed in a quiet gallery at the museum. **SAY:** The white porcelain goddess stands in a cool, sunlit gallery remote from the din of traffic. Visitors find themselves whispering, as if afraid they might disturb fellow-worshippers.

10

Use everyday words. Use words that everyday folk use themselves and words that will be familiar to your readers, not words that will be cumbersome and have a tendency to sound stuffy. Assume your readers know something about your subject but are looking to your ad to increase their knowledge. However, if you do need

to use a difficult word or phrase, make sure you explain it without speaking down to your reader. Remember that readers like to feel that the people explaining or giving advice are wiser than they are, but not a whole lot smarter, and certainly not conceited.

CHANGE Stuffy Words TO Everyday Words

alternative	other
ameliorate	improve
attempt	try
beverage	drink
commence	begin
envisage	foresee
feasible	possible
integrate	combine
magnitude	size

majority
objective
partake
purchase
reside
subsequently

most
aim
share
buy
live
later



11

Use short words. Words five letters or less are in general easier to understand and far more powerful than their lengthy equivalents. Short words are power packed. There is strength and force in words like boom, throb, thump, clank, chime, hiss, buzz and zoom. There is also grace and charm in words like lull, hush, purr, sweet, lush, silky, musky, sour, tart, dank, muck, drench, crisp, parch, husk and swan's down. Short words can also work

hard, pry, push, slash, hack, cut, clip, chip, drill, saw, nip, tuck, bite and twang.



12

Use simple words. Cecil Hoge, a mail order expert, says, "Words in your copy should be like the windows in a storefront." In other words, to write good advertising copy, readers should be able to look right through your words and see your product. To achieve this you need to use words that are logical, clear, and easy to understand (headline-type words), not words that are long, unfamiliar, pompous or fancy. Remember that in advertising copy you are trying to communicate with people – not impress them or boost your own ego. As well, keep in mind, that the average reader has a vocabulary, usually between 3,000

to 5,000 words.

NOTE Straightforward, simple language leads to better comprehension.

CHANGE Complex Words TO Simple Words

accomplish

assist

automobile

component

facilitate

garment

indicate

lengthy

modification

obtain

select

substantiate

terminate

do

help

car

part

ease, help

suit, shirt, dress

tell, say, show

long

change

get

pick

prove

end, finish

utilization

use



13

Use the language of the audience you are targeting. If you are writing to a specific audience, use words that they can respond and relate to. These words may be generation, gender, culturally or job related. In other words, when in Rome do as the Roman's do.



14

Use verbs that suit the action. Don't say he *washed* down a fine wine, when you should say *sip*. Likewise, don't say he munched on soft sandwiches while *sipping* his beer.

 15

Use words that are lean and compact.

It is better to say anticipate, motivate, brainstorm, and compare, rather than, get ready, perk up, think hard, and then go shop around.

 16

Use words that show, not

describe. Don't tell people about your products and services: show them. Show them what happened after one week of continuous use. Show them how good your product made its user feel the minute after they took it out of the box. Make it seem that whatever your describing is happening right now, as the reader reads. Let your readers feel, hear, see and think that they

In advertising copy, for every 100 words you write, make sure that approximately 75% are words of five letters or less.

MAXWELL ROSS

are participating. **DON'T SAY:** *He responded angrily.* **SAY:** *He slammed his fist on the table.*

NOTE Adverbs describe actions, verbs show action. Adjectives describe people, places and things, nouns are people, places and things. For the most part, writer's should minimize their use of adjectives and adverbs and especially superlatives when writing copy that demonstrates rather than describes, and concentrate instead on using active verbs and pictorial nouns.

Writing Better Paragraphs

 17

Construct paragraphs made up of

simple sentences. Effective paragraphs are built with sentences that are short and with sentences that usually convey one central idea or several closely connected ideas (ideas expressed in the same sentence should be strongly linked by meaning).

The average sentence length for business writing should be 14 to 16 words (take an ad, a magazine or a newspaper, and add up the number of words in each sentence and you will notice invariably that the word count in each sentence averages from 10 to 15

Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts. this requires no that the writer make all his sentences short, or that the avoid all detail and treat his subjects only in outline, but that every word tell.
WILLIAM STRUNK JR.

words). Twenty to twenty-five words is passable, but above forty, reading becomes difficult.

NOTE It is even more important to keep sentences short when your content is complex or abstract. However, if you must make a sentence longer, make sure each added increment more than pays its way.



18

Leave space between paragraphs. Whether you indent, leave a line, or do some strange combination of both, you must make it clear to the reader than your paragraph has ended and a new one is beginning.



19

Maintain the same point of view or person throughout a paragraph.

Switching from *you* to *they* to *I* (i.e., second person to third person to first person, within a paragraph), can be very disconcerting to a reader.

However, if you must do so (for example to show a character's thoughts while doing a story), consider starting a new paragraph or using italics.

NOTE *First person* is the person who is speaking or writing: I, my, mine, me, we, our, ours, us. *Second person* is the person spoken or written to: you, your, yours. *Third person* is the person, place, or thing spoken or written about: he, she, his, hers, him, her, it, they,

Comparing or contrasting brand X to brand Y is another way to keep your paragraphs clear and easy to understand.

its, their, theirs, them.



20

Use a demonstrative adjective to create effective sentence and paragraph transitions.

Words like *this*, *that*, *these*, *those* and a noun or noun phrase from a preceding sentence or paragraph, can keep your ideas flowing.



21

Use comparison or contrast to tie successive sentences together. Comparing or contrasting brand X to brand Y is another way to keep your paragraphs clear and easy to understand. However, the dominant method of creating paragraph continuity is to tie one sentence

with the next through meaning.

22

Use carrier words and phrases at the ends and beginnings of sentences and paragraphs to keep people reading.

Start paragraphs and sentences with *also*, *moreover*, *for instance*, *what is more*, and anything else to keep the reader moving and signal that some added interesting information is coming up. End your paragraphs with a question or by saying, “*And there’s more.*”

23

Use parallel syntax to tie successive sentences together. Each paragraph should be complete and whole and func-

Paragraphs should be kept as short as possible, about 4 to 6 lines, and usually no more than two or three sentences.

tion as a unit. This means that each paragraph should present a complete thought and expand on it fully before beginning another paragraph. In other words, stick to one subject within each paragraph. Don’t drift. Readers need to see each sentence tied to the next sentence by meaning. If you introduce two or three new subjects in one paragraph, they will quickly lose focus.

24

Use short paragraphs. Paragraphs should be kept as short as possible, about 4 to 6 lines, and usually no more than two or three sentences. This creates lots of white space in newspaper columns and makes it look inviting.

 **25**

Vary paragraph length. Once in a while, it is a good idea to throw in a one-sentence paragraph. This creates emphasis and breaks up the rocking back and forth effect of using paragraphs consistently of the same length.

By the time readers get to the end of a long sentence, they might remember the beginning but they probably have difficulty remembering everything in the middle.

POWERPOINT

 **26**

Vary sentence length and construction. Although the average sentence length for ease of readability is about 16 words, good copywriters balance their paragraphs using a variety of sentences (short, long, compound and complex). Variety gives paragraphs rhythm, keeps the reader moving, and adds snap to your writing.

Writing Better Body Copy

 **27**

Avoid boring your reader. You can't bore people into buying your products or services. If your ad is boring than it probably means, your company and your products are also boring. To escape from being classified as such, make sure your ad passes the following test:

What's in your ad that makes it different and better than everyone else's?

 **28**

Avoid using headline language in

your body copy. Headline language though action packed is often overly terse and grammatically incorrect for regular body copy. Overuse of it creates slow moving copy that quickly becomes irritating to read. For example, although “*Property Damage Linked to Road Salt Use*” makes a fine headline, it would seem miserably out of place in any body text.

29

Avoid using the “negative mood” when writing advertising. Negative news sells, but in advertising, the negative approach leads to disaster. In copywriting, always try and use positive action words. Convince readers by telling them what’s in it for them. Avoid trying

Negative news sells, but in advertising the negative approach leads to disaster.

to create doomsday scenarios if they fail to do as you ask.

30

Create a conversational tone. A conversational tone is created by:

- Beginning sentences with conjunctions *and, or, but, for*.
- Ending with a preposition (if a preposition falls naturally and comfortably at the end of the sentence, leave it there – *John wants to know which team he’ll be on*).
- Making all the mistakes you usually make in English (writing naturally though not necessarily grammatically correct).

- Not assuming your “In” terminology is familiar to the public.
- Using contractions they’re, you’re, it’s, here’s, we’ve, I’m (even though contractions are not appropriate in formal writing).
- Using *do* instead of *accomplish*.
- Using sentence fragments (*Fantastic output!*).
- Using simple words and avoiding the *language snob syndrome* at all costs (choose the \$1 word over the \$5 word).
- Writing like you talk (or more importantly how your reader might talk).
- Writing what you would tell someone if they asked you on a street corner; using pronouns – *I, we, you, they*; using

Far too much writing simply takes up space rather than say something meaningful.

colloquial or everyday expressions, like *a sure thing, OK, rip-off, totally awesome, and turn on.*

31

Get straight to the point. If you feel the need to warm up when you write copy, do so and then delete it from your final draft. All writers should seriously consider the advice in this strategy. Far too much writing simply takes up space rather than say something meaningful.

NOTE A good exercise is to take a full-page ad and condense it into one paragraph while still maintaining all major points. Make every word do the work of ten words.



32

Give your advertising “reading appeal.” Before you get in your sales pitch

you must make the reading worth something more than just product propaganda. To do this:

- don't get emotional but do get in lots of emotional appeal
- be enthusiastic but don't over exaggerate
- focus on product benefits not how great your company is
- constantly search for new ways to see your products and services and reflect those insights in your copy (be curious about how people respond

Disregard the length of a sentence when it is simply a list of closely connected ideas all referring to the same subject. It is content and structure rather than length, that make a sentence hard to understand.

SUPERTIP

to your ads)

- above all else be human (create a human angle or story in every ad)

NOTE Long romance novels, filled with tear jerking emotional appeal, can easily become best sellers, but short books of logic usually end up on the back shelves of bookstores gathering dust.



33

Make a clear distinction between fact sections and anecdote sections. Although, it can be quite effective to combine story

telling and fact giving, this kind of writing is difficult to pull off well, and can often lead to copy that sounds forced, confusing and lifeless. Rather than risk turning your

reader off, it might be better to clearly distinguish between fact giving and anecdote sections allowing your readers to more comfortably concentrate in the analytical or creative sides of their brain.



34

Make readers believe that you are an expert in your field. Although people strongly dislike copy that talks down to them or sounds conceited, they love to get their information from knowledgeable sources. One way to gain their trust and faith in your credentials is to generously sprinkle expert testimony in your copy. Expert testimony adds depth, detail, character; and dramatic effect to your copy. In the least, it associates

Although people strongly dislike copy that talks down to them or sounds conceited, they love to get their information from knowledgeable sources.

your company and products with leading trends in popular thought.



35

Place the time element in writing where it would fall naturally in speech. Time elements are usually placed after the verb or at the end of a sentence, and seldom before the verb. AWKWARD: CEO William Crush Thursday *said* . . . BETTER: Compaq *announced* Friday its new line of Armanda series notebooks.



36

Pretend you are a retail salesperson, when writing copy. It is sometimes useful when writing copy to imagine you are

the world's greatest living sales person sitting across the table from the world's most difficult consumer. Sales people learn about people's insecurities and needs very quickly or they don't ever become very good at what they do. They also become experts at knowing what and what not to say.



37

Put yourself in the reader's frame of mind.

Picture someone you know who is pretty much like your intended reader. Then honestly ask yourself: "Will this person understand what I have just written? Will this person be familiar with the

During World War II, the Civil Defense authorities had posters printed which read: "Illumination must be extinguished when premises are vacated." When he saw these signs, President Franklin Roosevelt exclaimed, "Damn, why can't they say 'Put out the lights when you leave'?"
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

special terminology I have used? Does my copy provide this person with some information that is important, new or useful? If I were this person, would my copy persuade me to buy my own product?"



38

Stick to one basic writing style.

There are four basic writing styles: *exposition* is to inform; *argumentation* is to convince; *narration* is the kind of writing that relates action or tells some kind of story; *description* is to enable a reader to see an object person, or scene as you have seen or imagined it (this requires specific visual de-

tails). Bouncing around from one style to the next, can be effective in certain contexts, but can also lead to confusion.

39

Use a grammar checker. Although, no grammar checker is complete nor can it compare to a good editor, it can prove to be an interesting exercise, and offer some insights into your own writing.

Picture someone you know who is pretty much like your intended reader.

40

Use a thesaurus and a dictionary. Keep a thesaurus and dictionary handy at all times. Although, many word processors come with built in spelling checkers and even a thesaurus, these are not as complete as their paperback counterparts.

41

Use a word processor. A word processor can increase your productivity dramatically. Not only can it check your spelling and grammar, but it makes it easy to cut and rearrange sections that you have otherwise grown attached to and just don't have the discipline to rewrite.

NOTE When using a word processor use typographer's quotes "like these" instead of quotes "like these." Also, don't use two spaces after a period. One will do.

42

Use the active voice rather than the passive voice. The passive voice, in English, is more a stylistic than a gram-

matical convention. It turns active verbs into past participles and muffles their impact.

The active voice is more direct, forcible, alive, economical, persuasive, and vigorous than the passive. The active voice makes readers see and experience things as they are happening rather than after the fact (the subject performs the action rather than talks about, remembers or receives it). It's as if the reader already owns the product or is taking it for a test drive.

To create the active voice and help people march towards action use verbs in the present tense such as *do*, *ran* and *climb*. Avoid using verbs in past tense such as *done*, *run* and *climbed*.

NOTE This rule does not, of course, mean that the writer should entirely discard the

passive voice. The passive voice is frequently convenient and sometimes necessary. Use it when a switch in emphasis is desirable or when the person who did the action is unimportant (*the road had just been plowed*).

CHANGE Passive COPY TO Active COPY

The ball was thrown.

He threw the ball.

The letter was received by the manager.

The manager received the letter.

My first visit to Boston will always be remembered by me.

I shall always remember my first visit to Boston.

There was a great number of dead leaves lying on the ground.

Dead leaves covered the ground.

It was not long before he was very sorry that he had said what he had.

No action was taken by the police.

A trend is shown by the study.

A proposal was made whereby nuclear waste can more effectively be disposed.

He soon regretted his words.

Police took no action.

The study shows a trend.

We've proposed a new method for disposing of nuclear waste.

more importantly to their hearts. Readers see themselves in stories or ads about others. They like to know how a welder was replaced by a robot, what happened to the single parent whose rent doubled, and what happened to the store owner who was robbed by a gunman with a shaking hand. Research has shown that people will remember stories before they remember explanations, and facts more so, if there is a story connected to them.

43

Use story-telling techniques. Story telling is the oldest form of communication and the most powerful. People like to read and hear stories about themselves, other people, and strange new worlds, because stories appeal not only to their minds, but

44

Use sidebars to break up body copy that is running a bit long. Often extra information, however meaningful, can slow down and ruin potentially exciting and effective copy. To avoid this, put interesting though not essential information in side-

bars. Sidebars can be used to highlight human-interest angles, how-to explanations, examples using real or admittedly contrived people, anecdotes, chronology of events, samplings of reports, testimonials, or even collections of quotes from credible sources.



45

Use the word WE and OUR when talking about your company or industry. Use of “we” and “our” instead of stuffy company and industry designation makes your company sound more friendly and open.



46

Use the word YOU and other personal pronouns like your, yours, and

Writing “you” copy makes the reader feel like you are speaking to them personally: that they come first.

yourself. Writing “you” copy makes the reader feel like you are speaking to them personally: that they come first. It also makes sure you talk about your prospect and not yourself or your company).

Advertiser-Oriented Copy: To cancel an order, return the merchandise to us in its original container. When we have received the book in good condition, we will inform our accounting department to cancel the invoice.

You Copy: If you’re not satisfied with our book, simply return it to us and tear up your invoice. You won’t owe us a cent. What could be fairer than that?



47

Write clear summary phrases here

and there. Summary phrases not only help readers comprehend what they have just read, but also promote “word of mouth” marketing. People who write articles or reviews on your product will appreciate these phrases to add clarity to their own writing.

48

Write copy so it moves logically from one point to the next and ends logically.

Grammatically, lead carefully from one point of interest to the next. The lead-in or your headline must tie in with the first sentence of your body copy. The body copy must cover all-important sales points in logical sequence. Copy must have a clearly defined beginning, a middle and an end.

In this AGE of skepticism, cleverness for the sake of cleverness is a liability, not an asset.

49

Write light copy, not clever copy.

More adults go to movies than to schools of instruction. People don’t want to be educated, they want to be entertained. However, nothing falls as flat as a poor attempt at humor. Humor, in advertising copy should always be used cautiously. Inject lightness into copy to make people see a product in a different way, but don’t clown around, don’t crack jokes, and don’t have the reader say: “What a clever fellow that writer is. But by the way, what was he selling?” If it doesn’t come naturally, don’t force it.

NOTE In this AGE of skepticism, cleverness for the sake of cleverness is a liability, not an asset.

Organizing Your Body Copy



50

Avoid taking writing formulas too seriously. “Writing formulas” and organizational strategies are good for outlining copy, but once you begin writing, belong in the back of your mind, in your subconscious. Otherwise, they have a tendency to ruin creativity.



51

Make your beginnings and ending strong. People remember beginnings and endings. Your lead paragraph should make them want to read, and your ending para-

graph should leave them wanting. Also, take this principle one step further: try and place an emphatic sentence at the beginning and end of each paragraph.

NOTE In sentences, as well as paragraphs, the most emphatic position is at the end. However, the second most emphatic position in a paragraph or sentence is the beginning. **EXAMPLE:** Out of the following two sentences which one do you think is more emphatic? A) *This steel is principally used for making **razors**, because of its hardness.* ✗ B) *Because of its hardness, this steel is used for making **razors**.* ✓

If you steal from one another it's plagiarism; if you steal from many, it's research.
**WILSON
MIZNER**



52

Organize your facts, benefits, and

ideas using writing patterns. Effective organization begins by using patterns to give your body copy structure and coherence. Below is a list of many structures that can be used to help organize and develop your paragraphs:

DEVELOP Your Paragraphs Using:

analogy	examples
analysis	explanation
argumentation	exposition
comparison	illustration
contrast	illustrations
definitions	narration
description	

ALSO DEVELOP Your Paragraphs by Using MOVEMENT FROM:

abstract to concrete	hybrids or combinations of any of the
----------------------	---------------------------------------

cause to effect

forward chronological sequence

from a statement to a refutation to a re-examination of the original statement

from general to particular

above

in descending or ascending order of importance

particular to general

reverse chronological sequence

reverse pyramid

NOTE Basically any pattern can be used to develop paragraphs and body copy as long as the pattern is easily apparent to the reader. However, out of all the above paragraph and body copy construction methods, the reverse pyramid method, starting with most important points and leading to least important, is the most often used in writing advertising.

 **53**

Start ad copy by expanding on the benefit in the heading. The body of the story develops the lead by providing more details, explanation, quotations, descriptions and sometimes other viewpoints.

NOTE It is also effective to start your copy by asking your prospects a personal question.

 **54**

Start ad copy by giving your most important or dramatic information first. Leads must state the point of your ad, not just its subject matter.

You know your lead or opening paragraph will fail if it doesn't summarize your content properly, is dull because it doesn't say how people were affected or bear directly on the lives of reader, or lacks key information.

SUPERTIP

In general, they should be short, elaborate further on your headline, act like a detailed summary statement of what you're whole ad is about, and promote the most interesting details of your product or service to seize and keep your reader's attention.

NOTE Always try and improve your lead.

 **55**

Use graphic organizers and layout strategies to enhance the impact and communicability of your writing. Some-

times writing, no matter how brilliant, gets lost especially when complex. To solve this problem, more and more writers are using special layout strategies to help organize

thoughts.



Write copy that repeats key points.

Repeat your basic message and key points in as many ways as possible (repetition is essential for creating action motivating images that endure).



Repetition is essential for creating action motivating images that endure.

EDITING TIPS

ONCE YOU have finished a first draft of your advertising copy, you will need to improve upon it and perfect it. Use the following 39 editing strategies to edit, eliminate, get rid of, cut out, rethink or reorganize your copy and improve its overall readability.

Editing Punctuation



Avoid using different kinds of punctuation for the same kind of sentence. In a series of three or more terms

with a single conjunction, the comma after the second term is optional in some cases.

EXAMPLE: the flag was red, white, and blue; and the flag was red, white and blue;

The comma is the most often used and misused punctuation mark.

are both acceptable. Nevertheless, choose one method and stick to it. Try and be consistent in your punctuation choices.



Edit improperly used commas. The

comma is the most often used and misused punctuation mark. Below is a list of its common misuses.

- *Do not place a between two independent clauses.* **WRONG:** The company picnic is an annual event, this year it will be held at the beach. The above sentence would be correct if a conjunction such as and were added or the comma replaced with a semicolon or period.
- *Do not place a comma before "however" when it joins two*

independent clauses. In this case, a period or semi-colon is needed. The transition word “however” usually requires a complete stop.

- *Do not place a comma between a conjunction and the word or words it introduces.* **WRONG:** Nobody is perfect but, villains are also scarce.

- *Do not place a comma between a subject and its verb, or a verb and its object, unless some intervening element calls for it.* *Eliminate punctuation you don't really need.*

WRONG: Jeremy, found that he could no longer keep his eyes open (there should be no comma after Jeremy).

WRONG: The lieutenant, as well as his subordinate was there (there should be no comma after lieutenant).

- *Do not place a comma between an*

independent and a dependent clause.

WRONG: He walked fast, down the street (there should be no comma after fast).

- *Do not place a comma words and phrases joined by an "and" or "or."* Use a comma only when the coordinate elements are clauses. **WRONG:** I wore a shirt, and a hat.

- *Do not use a comma if it interrupts the normal flow of thought.* **WRONG:** She thought, that he would ace the test.



3

Eliminate punctuation you don't really need. If you don't really need it cut it out, and if you don't know whether you really need it, try and find a published copy

that has the same construction and copy what they do (see **page 6** “Two More Useful Punctuation Rules”).



4

Remove apostrophes that have been added to the already possessive pronoun its. An apostrophe in the word *it's* indicates a contraction of it is. Its, hers, his, theirs, yours, ours, and whose, never have an apostrophe because they already show possession (with the exception of the possessive pronoun one's).

In business, 80% of your time is spent cutting expenses and 20% of your time is spent increasing sales. In writing, 80% of your time is spent editing and cutting your document and 20% of your time is spent adding new material.

SUPERTIP



5

Remove colons that are used when items of a list come immediately after a verb or preposition.

WRONG: The materials are: rice, water and flour. **CORRECT:** The materials are rice, water, and flour.



6

Rewrite sentences you find particularly hard to punctuate.

If you don't know how to punctuate a sentence, rewrite it until you do. Remember that punctuation should not be used as a crutch to prop up a poorly constructed sentence.

Editing Words



Eliminate extra and useless words.

Good copy is concise. Unnecessary adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, demonstrative articles, dependent clauses, and wordy phrases waste the reader's time, dilute the sales message, and take up space that could be put to better use. As well, excessive use of language, rather than increasing comprehension, tends to reduce it.

Our conversations are usually filled with extra and useless words that don't add a single thing to the final effect or value of our work. However, remember that each additional word costs money. So don't be overly articulate. Don't fill up your advertis-

ing with words you don't need. Don't use three words where one will do. Be brief and efficient. Remember, easy to read articles get read.

CHANGE Wordy Phrases TO Simpler Phrases

at first glance	at first
be of the opinion that	believe
free gift	gift
in a hasty manner	hastily
the fact that he had not succeeded to	his failure
take into consideration	consider
has occasion to be	was
whether or not	whether
in spite of the fact that	since
it is often the case that	frequently
he is a man who	he
They managed to use	they use

in the form of

as

general consensus of
opinion

consensus

exhibits the ability to
children's toys

can
toys

CHANGE Wordy Paragraphs

At first glance, he seemed to be a man who was most unique. He came to a complete stop, in front of a children's toy store, as if he considered it to be the only reasonable place in the entire New York area to be safe stopping in front of.

TO Simpler Paragraphs

He was a unique man. He stopped in front of a toy store as if it was the only safe place in New York to be.

*When in doubt
strike it out.*
MARK TWAIN



8

Eliminate improper arrangements of words and phrases that depend on accenting and tonal quality for real meaning.

Good conversationalists often capitalize on an improperly arranged sequence of words using accents, changes of tone, and other vocal tricks to make the arrangement sound better and in many cases convey a more clearer meaning. But carry that habit (and lots of people do) over into your writing and you're creating a real problem.



9

Eliminate misused words. The following words, are frequently used incorrectly and should be checked for proper use:

affect, effect

accept, except

among, between

eminent, imminent

that, which, who

than, then

to, too and two

who, whose, whom

10

Eliminate objectionable words and phrases. The average man or woman, educated or uneducated, usually has the horrible habit of filling his or her conversation with objectionable expletives (#\$%\$&) and other useless words or phrases (you know). When writing copy, you mustn't carry the adage *write the way*

you talk too far.

11

Eliminate pompous unintelligible words and expressions. Fine shades of

meaning that are of little import in social or even business conversations have a nasty habit of confusing readers when they appear in advertising copy. Most of us include in everyday conversation a lot of words we think we understand and can define. But more often than not, we use these words or expressions incorrectly. Eliminate murky language, gobbledygook and jargon. Be specific, direct and vigorous.

NOTE Think twice about using words that end in “ize” like *prioritize*, *optimize* and

The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do.

**THOMAS
JEFFERSON**

thematize because they have a tendency to sound self-important and ungainly in advertising copy.

12

Eliminate weakling modifiers. Weak-

ling modifiers that you can generally cut with no change to the sentence include: actually, any, both, carefully, certainly, definitely, effective, fortunately, herself, himself, hopefully, in fact, in general, in particular, in the future, meaningful, namely, necessarily, needless to say, overall, pretty, quite, rather, really, relative, total, and very unfortunately.

13

Eliminate unintentional jingles. Writing

involves the ear as well as they eye, so listen for unintentional jingles and alliteration.

AVOID: The *report* brought a sharp *retort* from consumers groups.

14

Eliminate over use of he said, she said, they said, once your source has been established.

This is particularly important when writing story based or news based copy.

Eliminate over use of "he said," "she said," "they said," once your source has been established.

15

Eliminate over use of the word "that."

The omission of the conjunction "that" often makes for smother reading, especially in short sentences. **AVOID:** The actress said (that) she wanted to be alone. How-

ever, use the word “that” to avoid misleading the reader even momentarily.

CORRECT: Carr said that on May 1st he was in Halifax.



16

Eliminate over use of the word “very.” The word “very” often signals sloppy writing. Overusing it weakens rather than intensifies your meaning. **CHANGE:** *His response was very quick and very emphatic*
TO: *His response was quick and emphatic.*



17

Eliminate words that disempower your company or your reader. A few

In composing, as a general rule, run your pen through every other word you have written; you have no idea what vigor it will give your style.

SYDNEY SMITH

careless words can destroy a company’s image or a writer’s credibility. Remove any words that seem suspect. As well, if you fear that an assemblage of words you are using might create meanings that disempower your audience or prospective consumer, get rid of those words and replace them with those that will empower them. Use the power of words to alter experiences in a positive manner.

NOTE Use labels and stereotypes with caution.

Editing Sentences



18

Edit fragmented or incomplete sentences for copy targeted towards re-

fined markets. Fragmented sentences are sentences without a subject and a predicate (e.g., “Holy tornadoes Batman!”). However, keep in mind that sometimes a fragmented sentence here or there is the perfect solution for copy that lacks drama and emotional impact.



19

Edit fused sentences. WRONG:

The class was dull I was bored.

CORRECT: The class was dull. I was bored.



20

Edit long-winded copy with lengthy sentences, and large unbroken chunks of text. If you run out of breath after reading one of your sentences out

loud, chances are its too long. Break it up into two or three easier to read shorter sentences.



21

Edit language that is not specific.

Although this point has already been clarified earlier, it is worth repeating. More than anything else, details create a reality or mental picture for readers. Details build images. Images sell products. Details reassure people that you know what you’re talking about and that they’ll get exactly what you’ve promised.

To improve your ad copy, take general phrases, sentences, words and paragraphs and make the come alive with more specific detailed language. **SAY:** Bill Denver,

your new product spokesperson, is a 6-foot-5 inch former linebacker for the Washington Redskins. **INSTEAD OF:** He's a big, former, pro football player.

22

Edit run-on sentences. A run on sentence occurs when two independent clauses are written as a single sentence, without any conjunction or punctuation separating them. **WRONG:** The tennis match ended in a tie, everyone agreed that it was too late to play a tiebreaker. **CORRECT:** The tennis match ended in a tie, because everyone agreed that it was too late to play a tiebreaker.

A run on sentence occurs when two independent clauses are written as a single sentence, without any conjunction or punctuation separating them.

23

Rewrite incoherent sentences. If a sentence lacks coherence, the fault probably, lies in one or more of the following:

- A) Faulty Arrangement or Word Order:**
 - *Adjectives Placed After the Nouns they Modify* – Analysis shows that in normal expressions, single words or compound adjectives usually precede the nouns they modify. **WRONG:** The map weather. **CORRECT:** The weather map.

NOTE Unlike adjectives, adverbial modifiers are almost always moveable.

- *Misplaced Modifiers* – A word, a phrase or a clause placed where it conveys a

meaning not intended by the writer or where it is linked to a word it cannot logically modify, should be removed or properly placed. In the following example, notice how many different meanings can be created by moving around the word “only.” **EXAMPLE:** Only his son works in Halifax (no other members of his family work there?). His only son works in Halifax (he has no other sons?). His son only works in Halifax (he does not live in Halifax, but commutes?). His sons works only in Halifax (he works in no other place?).

- *Related Words Placed in Different Parts of a Sentence* – Related words and parts of a sentence, should be kept close together. **WRONG:** He noticed a

A “split infinitive” occurs when the infinitive is separated from its verb.

large stain in the rug that was right in the center. **CORRECT:** He noticed a large stain right in the center of the rug.

- *Split Infinitives* – A “split infinitive” occurs when the infinitive is separated from its verb. **WRONG:** He wants to quickly *conclude* the business of the meeting. **CORRECT:** He wants to *conclude* the business of the meeting quickly.

NOTE In some cases, it is better to split an infinitive rather than create a confusing or unnatural sentence.

- *Words with Different Meanings Aligned Together* – An illogical sentence can result when a writer tries to make words do work that their meanings will not permit. **WRONG:** Many new inventions and techniques occurred during this

period (inventions can't occur).

B) Unclear, Missing or Illogical Connections & Relations Between Parts:

- *Ambiguous References* – **WRONG:** The captain told the lieutenant that he has unwittingly exceeded his authority.

CORRECT: The captain said to the lieutenant: "You have unwittingly exceeded your authority." **WRONG:** Everyone could see that he was a patient who looked closely. **CORRECT:** Everyone who looked closely could see that he was a patient.

A dangling modifier occurs when a modifier does not modify the subject of the main clause.

- *Dangling Modifiers* – A dangling modifier occurs when a modifier does not modify the subject of the main clause. In other words, it does not have a clear reference or is not clearly

related to and dependent on a definite word. Dangling modifiers usually occur at the beginnings of sentences.

EXAMPLE 1: Striding aggressively into the room, my eyes fell upon the figure cowering in the corner (eyes can fall but they can't stride). **EXAMPLE 2:**

Though sick, I saw him at work (who is sick?). **EXAMPLE 3:**

After crossing the street, the shop windows seemed less attractive (shop windows cannot cross the street). **CHANGE TO:**

After crossing the street, I found the shop windows less attractive.

- *Faulty Coordination* – If unrelated or unequal elements – usually clauses are presented as coordinate, in other words, having similar and related meanings, the result is faulty

coordination. Faulty coordination is another way of saying your sentence parts don't make sense together.

WRONG: Compact cars are usually good on gas *and* some models come in banana yellow.

- *Lack of Agreement Between Pronoun and Antecedent* – In a properly written sentence:

A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in person, number and gender. **EXAMPLE:** *My uncle said that he would change his mind.*

Two or more antecedents joined by *and* require a plural pronoun. **EXAMPLE:** *The horse and pony were in their corral.*

When trimming down the size of you ad copy, cut by removing wordiness and secondary detail, not by bleeding out the lively touches.
SUPERTIP

Indefinite singular antecedents require a singular pronoun such as *each, every, everyone, everybody, any, anybody, either, neither*. **EXAMPLE:** *Every child will bring his lunch.*

Masculine pronouns are used when both sexes are antecedents. **EXAMPLE:** *Every man and woman will submit his application.*

Singular antecedents joined by *or* or *nor* require a singular pronoun. **EXAMPLE:** *Either Frank or Bill will bring his music.*

- *Lack of Agreement Between Subject and Verb* – In a properly written sentence:

A verb must agree with its subject in

number and person. **EXAMPLES:** I, we, you, they work; he, she, it works.

WRONG: The number of workstation users have increased ten-fold.

CORRECT: The number of workstation users has increased ten-fold.

Singular Pronouns or Nouns joined by *or* or *nor* require singular verbs. **EXAMPLE:** She or her mother is coming with us.

A singular Pronoun requires a singular verb. **EXAMPLES:** Each, every, anybody, anyone, nobody, no one, someone's.

A plural subject requires a plural verb. **EXAMPLE:** Several were selected.

When the verb cannot agree with both subjects joined by "or" or "nor," the verb should agree with the subject closer to it. EXAMPLE: Neither John nor I am going.

A verb must agree with its subject regardless of modifiers. **EXAMPLE 1:** The *leader* as well as his follower *was* arrested. **EXAMPLE 2:** The *woman* with all the children *is* my aunt.

When the verb cannot agree with both subjects joined by *or* or *nor*, the verb should agree with the subject closer to it. **EXAMPLE:** *Neither John nor I am going.*

A verb must agree with its subject regardless of the predicate nominative (grammatical case). **EXAMPLE 1:** A major problem is the thousands of cars on the roads. **EXAMPLE 2:** Too many cars are the cause of traffic congestion.

- *Omission of than or as in a double comparison* – **WRONG:** She was as

pretty, if not prettier than her sister.

CORRECT: She was as pretty as, if not prettier than, her sister. **CORRECT:** She was as pretty as her sister, if not prettier.

- *Omission of "other" after "than" or "as" when comparing one person or thing to all other persons or things in the same class* – **WRONG:** Susan was bigger than all the girls in the club. **CORRECT:** Susan was bigger than all the other girls in the club.

C) *Syntactic Shifts From One Part of Another:*

- *Faulty Parallelism* – Coordinate elements in a sentence should have the same grammatical form. If they differ

from each other grammatically, the sentence will lack parallelism and will become awkward. **WRONG:** Mario is wealthy, handsome and a bachelor (bachelor is a noun and should be changed to the adjective unmarried).

WRONG: Mario is wealthy, handsome and a bachelor (bachelor is a noun and should be changed to the adjective unmarried).

- *Mixed Constructions* – A writer may occasionally begin a sentence with one construction and then absent-mindedly shift to a different construction (i.e., change horses in mid-stream). **WRONG:** Since Spain was a devout Catholic country, therefore most of its art was on religious themes.
- *Shifts or Changes in Point of View* – Be consistent in your point of view within a

sentence – and usually from one sentence to the next, as well. Avoid awkward or illogical shifts in the mood and in the person and number of pronouns. **WRONG:** She walked over to him, and then I pulled out a gun.

- *Shifts or Changes in Verb Tense*

– Avoid awkward or illogical shifts in verb tense. **WRONG:** The professor told us what he expected of us and then he leans against the desk and smirks. **CORRECT:** The professor told us what he expected of us and then leaned against the desk and smirked. **WRONG:** The writer deposits the bound text and departed. **CORRECT:** The writer deposits the bound text and departs.

If you customers can't figure it out in three sentences, they will throw it away.
POWERPOINT

D) General Sentence Weakness: An incoherent sentence may be the result of something that can only be labeled as *awkward* or *unclear*.

Editing Paragraphs



24

Edit awkward slow moving paragraph structures. Move sentences within paragraphs to improve flow or for better emphasis. Experiment with different sentence structuring (this is particular easy to do on a word processor).



25

Edit copy that has too many paragraphs. Look down your copy to the sec-

ond, third and fourth paragraphs. If they can be removed without great loss, then do so.

26

Edit overloaded sentences.

Lighten an overloaded sentence by putting some of its facts into another sentence.

27

Edit paragraphs that are too long. Make sure each paragraph contains one developed thought, not a whole bunch of undeveloped thoughts. Consumers are lazy readers and expect you to make it easy for them to understand you.

Make sure each paragraph contains one developed thought, not a whole bunch of undeveloped thoughts.

Editing Body Copy

28

Edit copy that is not capitalized

properly. Do not capitalize words unless they are proper nouns (names, titles, business names, etc. – even when spelling out acronyms). All caps is only appropriate for acronyms (e.g., SCSI, IBM, DOS).

NOTE Avoid using CAPS for emphasis in formal writing. Use *Italics* instead.

29

Edit for accuracy. Fix all errors, factual, grammatical, stylistic or structural. Don't

guess, check reference works.

30

Edit for interest. Prefer one interesting angle fully developed to a dull, bare bones account that touches all bases regardless of significance.

31

Edit generalizations. Edit sweeping statements unsupported by specific evidence. Generalizing about a subject is something anyone can do, getting to the meat of the matter is a different story. Over generalizations, suggest to the reader that you aren't thinking clearly and you don't have the answers. This leaves them confused and wondering whether they should really take

Prefer one interesting angle fully developed to a dull, bare-bones account that touches all bases regardless of significance.

what you say seriously.

32

Edit improper use of Italics. Italics are properly used to highlight publication or book names, editorial comments, foreign language quotation or occasional words of emphases. You should also use Italics when a product name is used in a headline. **EXAMPLE:** “Will the New Version of *GrammarMaster Work?*”

33

Edit improper use of “e.g.,” and “i.e.” “E.g.,” is correctly used in place of the words *for example*; “i.e.,” is used for *in other words*. In both cases, be sure to follow the second period with a comma.



34

Edit length. To determine the right length for your advertising copy, know your audience, medium of expression, and purpose of writing. To help do this, ask yourself the following questions: Are your readers already knowledgeable about your product or service, or will you have to explain yourself in detail? Do you only have a certain amount of space or do you pay per word? Do you want to sell your product or service directly, or do you want to create sales leads? Furthermore, to determine the right length for your advertising copy realize that:

Copy should contain only enough information to convince the greatest number of

To determine the right length for your advertising copy, know your audience, medium of expression, and purpose of writing.

qualified prospects to take the next step in the buying process. Write as much copy as you need to tell your story: no more, no less.

If you're unsure of how long to make the copy, you're better off including too much information rather than not enough. Ads with twice as many merchandise facts, all other things equal, generate a fifty percent greater response. However, even though bigness is a sure sign of success, at least it looks like success, BIG copy costs BIG money.

NOTE Longer copy does not mean looser copy. Copy no matter what the length should always remain compact and well integrated.

What To Do, If After Extensive Editing Your Writing Still Remains Weak?

IF AFTER SEVERAL editing sessions your writing still seems weak, use the following 3 strategies to improve it:

- Don't look at it for a good week and then come back to it. Space between editing sessions can give life to new ideas, and solutions to nagging problems.
- Don't worry about it too much. Go with what you know. And learn from your mistakes. Bad writing has made some people extremely successful. Where is there a rule that all writers must win a Pulitzer.
- Have others read and criticize your work; they may spot errors you missed. By showing others, what you've created, you may find out that they don't comprehend what you thought was obvious. You will have to rewrite these passages.

NOTE Pick your critics carefully. There is nothing worse than getting positive and negative criticism from someone who doesn't really know what they're talking about. And considering that human nature dictates that most critics are either too conservative, harsh or overly praise worthy, take all comments with a grain of salt.

 35

Edit unsupported statements. Qualify whenever and wherever possible, and do so with as much precision as possible. Clear and detailed logical thinking is essential to clear and effective writing.

 36

Eliminate incorrect spelling. A good dictionary and a computerized spellcheck program can greatly ease the task of editing (Word 7.0 for Windows 95 automatically underlines words that are misspelled). However, nothing can replace a good editor. Bear in mind that:

Rewrite after taking a long walk. Many great ideas will come to you after you stop writing.

- 1) Spellcheck programs do not take into account sentence meaning and context.
- 2) Spell checkers can't check for correctly spelt words of incorrect meaning. It will view the following sentence as correct even though there are numerous errors:

The boy **want two** the **sore** to **by sum milky**

The boy went to the store to buy some milk.

- 3) Spellcheck programs can't verify the spelling of names, tradenames, associations and abbreviations.

NOTE It only takes one error in your grammar or spelling, to sabotage all the effort you put into your copywriting.

✂ 37

Rewrite after taking a long walk.

Many great ideas will come to you after you stop writing. While your walking to the grocery store, or mowing the lawn, any time the mind has a chance to relax.

✂ 38

Rewrite copy when you have a good, explainable reason, not just because you feel like it.

Don't reduce good writing to mediocrity by over-editing. Don't shorten a story by cutting out human interest, significant detail, moments of inspiration, and meaty quotations.

✂ 39

Rewrite copy you don't quite understand or have difficulty understanding.

If you have doubts about parts of your ad, and you don't quite understand what it is you were trying to say, cut it out or rework it. People hate writing that is vague, evasive, subtle, full of irrelevant and inappropriate themes, full of jargon, weakly written, and deliberately omissive of information the advertiser is unsure of.

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ULTIMATE WRITING STRATEGIES

THE FOLLOWING strategies are the 8 most important writing strategies every writer should memorize.

Use simple and short words, sentences and paragraphs. If you need to use more complicated words, sentences and paragraphs you must have a good reason for doing so.

Use a variety of words, sentences and paragraphs to keep your writing creative. Originality and creativity in writing is highly desirable. This is what keeps people reading. In a novel, you need something original or creative every page. In a song, you need an inter-

*... I have made
this letter longer
because I lack
the time to make
it shorter.*

**BLAISE
PASCAL**

esting line every verse. In advertising, you need something interesting in every sentence.

Show don't tell. Don't describe. Make people feel they can touch what you are selling.

Write like you talk or sing. Musical rhythm is critical in keeping sentences alive.

When you run out of ideas copy someone else's style. Can you imagine if someone came along and decided to copyright the English Language? That would be absurd. No one can claim a right to a language because language is an expression of ideas and all ideas are closely interwoven with previous ideas. Therefore, if after hours of working

and you have nothing to show but a few scribbles on a blank piece of paper (writer's block), don't give up. Go out and find something similar to what you want to sound like and want to say. Better yet find the work of a *master*. Then after careful study and modeling, build on their ideas and technique. You will be surprised at how easily someone else's style can quickly become your own.

If you can't come up with a good reason for keeping a word, sentence, paragraph, or entire section in your ad, cut it out. If you don't understand what you have just written, cut it out. If you're not sure a sentence structure quite says what you want and you can see no other way of arranging it, cut it out. Don't expect your reader to miraculously solve a problem you can't.

More than logic, emotion and commitment are the tools of communication.

Don't misuse words or make obvious grammar mistakes. There is no quicker way to lose someone's faith in your credibility than to misuse a word or write a run-on sentence.

Write with emotion and commitment.

More than logic, emotion and commitment are the tools of communication. Writing without heart is reading that's not worth doing. Nevertheless, if you can't find it within yourself to be committed, learn how to fake it, and if you can't fake it, find someone who can.

NOTE For more strategies on *what* and *how* to write, see Guidebook #62 "Using ODaC – The Advertiser's Soulmate."

