

The Confident Writer

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Introduction – Is writing a confidence game?

For more than 35 years, students have nervously reported to me similar symptoms: a tremendous insecurity about writing, often accompanied by dread or panic, resulting in a painful lack of productivity, endless procrastination, and even a permanent writer's block.

Even more students have complained of a milder ailment, a lack of confidence that has them doubting their ability, hesitating on every phrase, and editing for hours with no feeling of satisfaction.

The reasons otherwise intelligent and competent professionals should be so full of doubt when it comes to writing include:

- Having been shamed when learning to write.
- Having critical superiors who offer no path to improvement.
- Having no knowledge of grammar or style.
- Having no sense of how to read an audience.
- Fearing the permanence of what is written.
- Having to write after years of not doing so.
- Being a non-native speaker.

I have also witnessed, both as an instructor and editor, many overconfident writers who:

- Assume that whatever flows onto the page is automatically brilliant.
- Assume that all readers think exactly as they do.
- Never consider their readers at all.
- Do not care about using inappropriate words, following antiquated rules (or no rules at all), and failing to string words together in any meaningful way.

In this course we will do exercises designed to get you thinking about the writing process and writing situations in a way that can help you overcome many of these challenges and become a confident – but not overconfident – writer. We will also discuss establishing realistic expectations about what you can accomplish over the next few weeks and how to ensure you continue to advance over time.

My goal for this course is that it will help you develop:

- An approach to the writing process that gives you greater confidence that you will provide the right information for your intended readers in a way that is appropriate for them.
- A better understanding of the practical application of sentence structure and grammar so you have the confidence to write, edit, and move on – developing the flexibility over time to adapt your strategy, structure, style and even grammar for your particular writing situation..

Understanding Your Readers

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”

George Bernard Shaw

Places to Publish – It's who you know

Here are a few places to publish. The people who read the following texts form groups that can be analyzed for unity, background, and attitude.

Email

known colleague, unknown business contact, small company, large company

Business Letter, Newsletter, Memo, Proposal

businesses, government agencies, associations, and organizations

Any section of any newspaper

San Francisco Chronicle: world, national, state, or local news; opinion; business; sports; travel; arts; food; lifestyle

Any magazine

New Yorker, Forbes, Money, Saturday Review, Time, San Francisco, Sports Illustrated, National Geographic, Cricket

Any journal from any field

Business, humanities, science, engineering, medicine, government, education, advertising

A book on any subject

Chapter, preface, introduction

Advertising Copy

Television, radio, newspaper, magazine, trade journal, billboard, flyer, press release

Speech

Organization; judge (legal defense); boss (a speech in the voice of)

Legal brief

Judge, attorney, client

Instructions

Newspaper, package, product description

Analyzing Readers: Say it ain't so, Joe.

I. Analyzing the Readers

- A. What is the composition of the group?
 1. What unifies the group?
 - a. Background
 - b. Goals
 - c. Age
 - d. Education
 - e. Sex
 - f. Interests
 - g. Needs
 - h. Race
 - i. Field
 - j. Politics
 - k. Other
 2. Is there but one reader: self, client, friend?
- B. How much do the readers know about the subject?
 1. How familiar are the readers with the terminology?
 2. Are there points about which all readers agree?
- C. How do the readers feel about the subject?
 1. What do the readers expect?
 2. Will the readers agree or disagree?
 3. Will the subject be confusing?
 4. Will the subject excite the readers for or against?
- D. How do the readers feel about the writer?
 1. Is the writer unknown?
 - a. Will the readers trust the writer?
 - b. How can credibility be established?
 2. Is the writer known?
 - a. Is the writer accepted, trusted?
 - b. Will the readers be skeptical?

II. Responding to the Readers

- A. Determine the purpose of the writing.
 1. Entertain
 2. Argue
 3. Review
 4. Criticize
 5. Publicize
 6. Persuade
 7. Summarize
 8. Question
 9. Inform
 10. Advise
 11. Explain
 12. Manipulate
 13. Describe
 14. Narrate
 15. Other
- B. Determine the writer's attitude toward the subject.
 1. Emotional
 2. Interested
 3. Scientific
 4. Disdainful
 5. Balanced
 6. Afraid
 7. Ignorant
 8. Overwhelmed
- C. Determine the writer's attitude toward the readers.
 1. Indifferent
 2. Inferior
 3. Equal
 4. Dislike
 5. Superior
 6. Adore
- D. Determine the structure.
 1. What needs to be known first?
 2. What rhetorical strategies should be employed?
- E. Determine the diction.
 1. Will the words be understood?
 2. Is jargon appropriate?
 3. Are there negative connotations for the readers?
- F. Determine the content.
 1. How many details or examples are needed?
 2. Which details or examples will be most easily understood?
 3. Are the details or examples appropriate?

Digital Considerations – Your words everlasting

Assume everything digital is public. Once it's out there, you lose all control of it.

Digital communication is fast, so some sloppiness tends to be forgiven, but this makes clarity even more essential. When you communicate any of import, slow down!

Email

Know your audience – all reader analysis rules apply.

Use less formality – but this is still relative.

- If you don't know the reader, don't assume you do.
- If it is a business situation, don't write with the carelessness and emotion you use with friends.
- Always consider what the reader needs to know and what the emotional content is.

Never email in anger.

Never cc: more people than necessary.

Text Messaging and Social Networking

No matter the channel:

- Recognize that you have no control over who will eventually read what you write.
- Recognize that nonsense is still nonsense.
- Be clear and get to the point.
- Use shortcuts only if you know your audience well.
- If you're angry, take several long, deep breaths before sending.

Form Is Content: Speeding through the intersection...

Sentence structure, rhythm and word order are part of the *content* of writing; they contribute to *meaning*.

Samples

The trail, smudged, slightly torn in two or three directions, hangs in the sky. (Thomas Pynchon)

Men emerge pale from the little printing plant at four sharp, ghosts for an instant, blinking (John Updike)

So the great jeweller, the greatest jeweller in the world, swung down Piccadilly, perfectly dressed, with his gloves, with his cane. (Virginia Woolf)

Then the wife who had been so charming and ready to smile changed into a silent shadow that played infrequently along the walls. (Maya Angelou)

The solar system spins, bobs, and blinks at the speed of 43,200 miles an hour, like a merry go round unhinged. (Annie Dillard)

The idea was that the narrator's voice should be like the off white or putty colored walls, popular in interior decoration, as a "neutral background" against which bits of color would stand out. (Tom Wolfe)

Exercises

- a. He sped through the intersection at fifty miles per hour and collided with a police car.
 - b. Speeding through the intersection at fifty miles per hour, he collided with a police car.
 - c. At fifty miles per hour, he sped through the intersection, colliding with a police car.
-
- a. It was a dark night, and the sea was turbulent. The sea and darkness sent fear shooting through me.
 - b. The dark night and turbulent sea sent fear shooting through me.
 - c. A dark night. A turbulent sea. Fear shot through me.

Just the Facts, Ma'am

Use the following facts to write two paragraphs, one intended for *a local newspaper* and one intended for *a children's magazine*. You don't need to use all of the information. Feel free to add some additional relevant facts and "color" such as bystander names, more details about the scene, more description of the sidewalk, etc.

The Facts

- Denny Jackson, 12-year-old boy
- 5 ft. 5 in. tall, lanky
- Pale skin and long, light brown hair
- Injured while skateboarding
- Rode over a large crack in the sidewalk
- Lost balance and fell backward
- Head hit the pavement
- Not wearing a helmet
- A lot of bleeding
- Wearing cut-off denim jeans and a rainbow-colored tank-top
- Not wearing shoes

- Ground was level
- Clear day, 73 degrees
- Was not going very fast
- Had been skateboarding for years
- Skateboard had decals of favorite skateboarders

- Friends called 911
- Ambulance arrived in six minutes
- Transported to hospital
- Status unknown
- Bystander comments:
 - Home owner at scene:* "I have complained to the city for years to fix the sidewalks."
 - Adult Neighbor:* "His eyes were open but he seemed paralyzed."
 - Adult Neighbor:* "I feel so bad for his parents."
 - Fellow skateboarders:* "It was gruesome." "The sound of his head hitting the concrete made me sick." "I told him he should wear a helmet."
- When ambulance left, homeowner tried washing blood from sidewalk, stain remained
- Police went into parents' house a few doors up the street

A Letter from a Bank President – Or is it?

This letter was written by the Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB) President. The situation was as follows. The FHLB invited “member institutions,” (private banks that belong to the FHLB “system”) to send representatives to a seminar on a specific topic of banking. At the last minute, the FHLB had decided to change the focus of the seminar, and this letter was written as an explanation. It was given to the attendees after they had arrived at the seminar. What tone did the author adopt? Keep in mind that the author is the president of a very conservative organization writing to representatives of other conservative organizations.

Dear Seminar Participant:

Welcome to the Bank’s seminar on “Financial Management and Federal Home Loan Bank Credit Opportunities.”

Originally, we scheduled these seminars solely for the purpose of explaining recent changes in the Bank’s Credit Program. As we began to develop the program in more detail, however, it became apparent that our members would be better served if we expanded its scope to include a strong emphasis upon asset and liability management. In today’s deregulated and higher, volatile interest rate environment, thrift institutions are exposed to asset/liability mismatches to an even greater extent than they have been in the past. The difference now, though, is that savings institutions can do something about it, given the new tools and techniques placed at their disposal by recent legislative and regulatory actions.

The Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco is an excellent resource for member institutions in the new environment. We hope to show you in our seminar presentations some important ways each member can take advantage of this resource. We are designing new services and reformatting traditional ones to be of as much value to you as possible. As you leave this meeting, I hope you will have gained new insight into how your institutions can take advantage of the resources we have available for you.

Sincerely,

Assignment 1

Do *one* of the following:

Choice 1: Read up a bit on “pheromones.” The Wikipedia article (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pheromone>) is more than enough. Now write *two introductory paragraphs*, one for an article in a children’s magazine, the other for an article in the human interest section of a regional newspaper such as the San Francisco Chronicle. Take time to consider what you know about the intended readers. *The goal is to see how you would change your strategy, style and content.* Remember, turn in just two paragraphs. Format your document with double-spacing, an 11-point font, and 1-inch margins.

Choice 2: If you would like me to provide a general assessment of your grammar usage and style, submit one page of your own writing (double-spaced, 11-point font, 1-inch margins). *Let me know if you have specific questions or areas of concern.*

NOTES:

- Make sure you proofread your assignments carefully. It does not help you if I am correcting errors you could have corrected yourself.
- Feel free to ask questions in your emails to me or add comments in the document.
- When I email back an assignment to you, keep the email and use it to “reply” back to me when sending in your next assignment. This will let me see my previous comments and will encourage a dialogue about your progress.
- Use the following filename format for your MS Word file: YourFirstNameLastName A#.doc(x), where # is the assignment number. For example: JohnSmith A1.doc for Assignment 1 and SueJohnson A2.docx for Assignment 2.
- My email address is sfroman@berkeley.edu

Controlling Your Style

“There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion.”

Sir Francis Bacon

Sentence Types: In search of the grammatically simple sentence

Simple Sentence

A **simple sentence**, or independent clause, contains one subject and verb relationship.

Tim sneezed.

The tired, old man with the gray beard walked to the store.

Variations

Democrats and Republicans conferred.

The Democrats argued passionately but failed to convince the opposition.

The Democrats and Republicans tried but failed to agree.

The Democrats and Republicans, their great debate lasting well into the night, finally agreed on everything.

Compound Sentence

A **compound sentence** contains at least two independent clauses with a coordinating conjunction.

Something unusual happened, so I investigated.

Dr. Mann and I tried and failed, but Dr. Stanton and her colleagues succeeded.

Coordinating Conjunctions Requiring a Comma

for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so (f.a.n.b.o.y.s.)

Variations: The Semicolon

Sarah enjoyed the movie; however, Tim hated it.

I demanded justice; I found only corruption.

Connecting Words and Phrases Requiring a Semicolon

also, anyway, besides, consequently, finally, furthermore, hence, however, incidentally, indeed, instead, likewise, meanwhile, moreover, nevertheless, next, nonetheless, otherwise, still, then, therefore, thus, after all, as a result, at any rate, at the same time, by the way, even so, for example, in addition, in fact, in other words, in the second place, on the contrary, on the other hand.

Complex Sentence

A **complex sentence** contains an independent clause and at least one dependent clause.

A dependent clause contains a subordinating conjunction (SC) or a relative pronoun (RP) that makes the clause depend on another clause for sense.

SC
because it was necessary

RP
that he found at the store

RP
who applied for a federal grant

Subordinating Conjunctions

after, although, as, as . . . as, as if, as soon as, as though, because, before, even though, if, in order, in that, no matter how (what), once, since, so that, that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, where, wherever, while

Relative Pronouns

that, what, whatever, which, whichever, who, whoever, whom, whomever, whose

Norman, who lives next door, is my landlord.

Although his later paintings rarely showed it, Picasso was a master at realistic detail. Jenny and I studied and imitated Monet's "Water Lilies" because Monet was a painter whom we admired.

The Function of Clauses

The man who painted that painting died unknown.

He lived in Mendocino, which is a small town on the California coast.

While she paints, Jenny feels close to God.

She paints whatever strikes her as interesting.

That she can express herself artistically is her greatest joy.

[she can express]

Compound-Complex Sentence

A **compound-complex sentence** contains at least two independent clauses and one dependent clause.

Great writers write because they must [write], but they write better if they enjoy it.

Though it hurts, I will continue, and I will succeed.

Writers who write well practice endlessly, and they never give up.

Subject-Verb Identification: The who or what and what's being done

Identify the subject-verb relationships and describe the function of the other words or groups of words.

1. My favorite section of the store is the salad bar, with the craft beer and specialty cheese aisle following closely behind.
2. When the Egyptian Internet went down, Sharif's tweets were among the first to gain a worldwide following.
3. The research, which was led by Patricia Anderson, used avian museum specimens from two science institutes to figure out if the appearance and spread of Avipoxvirus on the islands was connected with human settlement.
4. Through grants from the foundation, workers' rights, human rights and environmental rights have become top priorities at the factories where our products are made.
5. Before it was closed, it had been the favored garbage dump of the metropolis, and after it was bulldozed, there still remained half of the landfill mountain with a perfect cone and thin gray smoke of trapped methane and slopes littered with household waste.
6. Thank you for submitting your project application to the Bay Area Program.
7. In front of the sofa, there is a wooden oval table, with lotus shaped legs that match the rolled armrest of the sofa and curved accents on the support beams of the table.

Sentence Combining: Building grammar agility

Directions: Combine the following into one sentence. Don't use subordinated clauses (with conjunctions such as "because," "when," or "if") or coordinated clauses (with a comma/conjunction or semicolon). For this exercise, don't worry about creating business-like sentences.

Example

1. The sperm whale moves through a world of its own.
2. The world is dim.
3. The world is dark.
4. The world is cool.
5. The world is watery.
6. The sperm whale is ancient.
7. The sperm whale is timeless.
8. The sperm whale is part of our heritage.
9. The heritage is common.
10. The sperm whale is remote.
11. The sperm whale is awful.
12. The sperm whale prowls the ocean floor.
13. The prowling is a half-mile down.
14. The prowling is under the guidance of powers.
15. The prowling is under the guidance of senses.
16. The powers are only now being understood.
17. The senses are only now being understood.

Remote, awful, moving through a dim, dark, cool, watery world of its own, the sperm whale, ancient and timeless, part of our common heritage, prowls the ocean floor a half-mile down under the guidance of powers and senses only now being understood.

Number 1

1. The woman was slender.
2. The woman was strong.
3. The woman was frightened.
4. The woman was determined.
5. The woman was running.
6. The woman was crossing the field.
7. The woman reached protection.
8. The barn was protection.
9. The barn was old.

Number 2

1. The trumpeter played a note.
2. The trumpeter rose for his solo.
3. He rose from the midst of the orchestra.
4. The note was single.
5. The note was sad.
6. The note floated over the audience.
7. The hall was filled with beauty.
8. The hall was for concerts.
9. The beauty was melancholy.
10. The note conjured up images of landscapes.
11. The images were in the minds of the listeners.
12. The landscapes were pastoral.

Number 3

1. John was weak.
2. John had a craving.
3. The craving was for a drink.
4. The weakness came from hunger.
5. John had been lost in the desert.
6. John had been lost for weeks.
7. John staggered.
8. John stumbled.
9. The sun was hot.
10. John finally wandered into an oasis.
11. The oasis was a small island. (a metaphor, not a real island!)
12. The oasis contained palm trees.
13. The oasis contained cool springs.

Number 4

1. Linda was a college student.
2. Linda was a part-time waitress.
3. Linda was full of idealism.
4. Linda was eager to help.
5. Linda was determined to solve problems.
6. The problems were of the world.
7. Linda volunteered her time.
8. The time was on weekends.
9. Linda taught immigrants to read.
10. Linda taught immigrants to write.
11. Linda counseled immigrants.
12. The counseling was on the bureaucracy.
13. The bureaucracy was of the government.

Number 5

1. Martin was frustrated.
2. Martin was a writer.
3. Martin was a comedian.
4. Martin spent several nights working.
5. The frustration was at not being able to afford a new Alfa Romeo.
6. Alfa Romeo was his favorite sports car.
7. The work was on material.
8. The material was new.
9. The material was for the Comedy Mall.
10. The Comedy Mall is popular.
11. The Comedy Mall is a club.
12. The club is a stepping stone.
13. The steps lead to appearances.
14. The appearances are on talk shows.
15. The shows are on television.
16. The shows are on late at night.

Active and Passive Voice: If active is always better, then why do we sleep?

The passive voice isn't evil. When used unnecessarily, it's stuffy, awkward, and often painful, but you can use it effectively to avoid assigning responsibility or when emphasis dictates.

Stuffy, Awkward, and Painful

The meeting was chaired by a teenager who was given the important function by his father

Please be advised that on occasion the documents will be reviewed as has been stated during previous discussions.

You indicated a payment was enclosed but in fact no payment was received, and foreclosure proceedings are being initiated immediately.

Avoiding Responsibility

The situation will be handled appropriately.

The information was revealed by mistake.

Emphasis

How were they rescued? A passing ship rescued them.

What happened to them? They were rescued by a passing ship.

Currently, one Support Clerk position is filled, and one will be filled by a permanent transfer from San Francisco on Tuesday.

In 1983 the Russian military shot down a Korean jetliner. Marshal Nicolai V. Olgarkov, the Commander in Chief of the Soviet Army described the event as follows:

The decision to terminate the flight of the Korean Airlines Boeing 747 was made as a result of the plane's bizarre behaviour over Soviet Far Eastern Territory during the predawn hours of September first and was carried out by a Sukhoi-15 supersonic interceptor firing two heat-seeking missiles. The Soviet High Command was informed at the appropriate time of the action.... The United States cynically dispatched this airliner on a spy mission, assuming the Soviet forces would not fire on it. The United States is therefore wholly responsible for the loss of the people on board.

Parallelism: Building language agility

By understanding parallelism, you can eliminate obvious grammar errors. By mastering parallelism, you can dramatically improve style.

Parallelism is the repetition of like grammatical structures.

Examples

He likes fruit and yogurt.

He likes fruit but hates yogurt.

He likes fruit and she likes yogurt.

He likes fruit, yogurt, and chocolate.

He likes fruit, hates yogurt, and loves chocolate.

He likes fruit, she hates yogurt, and they both love chocolate.

He likes eating at a table and with a fork.

The Whiskey Model

If when you say whiskey you mean the devil's brew, the poison scourge, the bloody monster that defiles innocence, dethrones reason, destroys the home, creates misery and poverty, yea, literally takes the bread from the mouths of little children; if you mean the evil drink that topples the Christian man and woman from the pinnacle of righteous, gracious living into the bottomless pit of degradation and despair, and shame, and helplessness, and hopelessness, then certainly I am against it.

But if when you say whiskey you mean the oil of conversation, the philosophic wine, the ale that puts a song in their hearts and laughter on their lips, and the warm glow of contentment in their eyes; if you mean Christmas cheer; if you mean the stimulating drink that puts the spring into the old gentleman's step on a frosty, crispy morning; if you mean the drink which enables a man to magnify his joy, and his happiness, and to forget, if only for a little while, life's great tragedies and heartaches and sorrows; if you mean that drink, the sale of which pours into our treasuries untold millions of dollars, which are used to provide tender care for our little crippled children, our blind, our deaf, our dumb, our pitiful aged and infirm; to build highways and hospitals, and schools, then certainly I am for it.

This is my stand, I will not retreat from it. I will not compromise.

(From a 1952 speech by Mississippi's Noah S. "Soggy" Sweat, Jr. on whether Mississippi should continue to prohibit or finally legalize alcoholic beverages.)

The Whiskey Form

If when you say (n)_____ you mean the (adj)_____ (n)_____, the (adj)_____ (n)_____, the (adj)_____ (n)_____, that (v)_____ (n)_____, (v)_____ (n)_____, (v)_____ the (n)_____, (v)_____ (n)_____ and (n)_____, yea, (adv)_____ (v)_____ the (n)_____ from the (n)_____ of (adj)_____ (n)_____; if you mean the (adj)_____ (n)_____ that (v)_____ the (adj)_____ (n)_____ and (n)_____ from the (n)_____ of (adj)_____ (adj)_____ (n)_____ into the (adj)_____ (n)_____ of (n)_____ and (n)_____, and (n)_____, and (n)_____, and (n)_____, then certainly I am against it.

But if when you say (n)_____ you mean the (n)_____ of (n)_____, the (adj)_____ (n)_____, the (n)_____ that (v)_____ a (n)_____ in their (n)_____ and (n)_____ on their (n)_____, and the (adj)_____ (n)_____ of (n)_____ in their (n)_____; if you mean (adj)_____ (n)_____; if you mean the (adj)_____ (n)_____ that (v)_____ the (n)_____ into the (adj)_____ (adj)_____ (n)_____ on a (adj)_____, (adj)_____ (n)_____; if you mean the (n)_____ which (v)_____ a (n)_____ to (v)_____ (adj)_____ (n)_____, and (adj)_____ (n)_____, and to (v)_____, if only for a (adj)_____ (n)_____, (adj)_____ (adj)_____ (n)_____ and (n)_____ and (n)_____; if you mean that (n)_____, the (n)_____ of which (v)_____ into our (n)_____ (adj)_____ (n)_____ of (n)_____, which are used to (v)_____ (adj)_____ (n)_____ for our (adj)_____ (adj)_____ (n)_____, our (n)_____, our (n)_____, our (n)_____, our (adj)_____ (n)_____ and (n)_____; to (v)_____ (n)_____ and (n)_____, and (n)_____, then certainly I am for it.

This is my stand, I will not retreat from it. I will not compromise.

Figures of Speech – Imagine that

Appropriately placed *metaphors* and *similes* add exciting, useful imagery to writing. They can make readers *feel* what is difficult to express in words; they turn abstract ideas into concrete images. But they are often inappropriate or overworked. Avoid metaphors and similes in formal business and technical writing except where they are both useful and appropriate. Study the writing in your area to determine if and how these figures of speech are used.

Similes

Similes are comparisons of unlike things using “like” or “as.”

1. The business is running like a finely tuned engine.
2. Success came to him slowly, like waking after a vivid, unsettling dream, the more pleasant reality accepted only after careful thought and testing.

Metaphors

Metaphors are direct comparisons between unlike things.

1. The company was strangled by the tight grip of its president.
2. He was too weak for the struggle up the endless corporate trellis.

Analogies

Analogies are very useful in all forms of writing. By using what your readers know, you can explain to them what they don't know.

1. Computers aren't difficult to understand. “RAM” is an electronic memory that works like your short-term memory, picking up and holding onto all the bits and pieces that you type. “Disk storage” is permanent storage, like your long-term memory—better, however, because you can choose what to save and what not to save. The “operating system” is the native intelligence of the computer, something like your basic learning capability. Finally, a “program” is a particular skill, the ability to perform calculations or organize and retrieve information.

Mixed Metaphors

Mixed metaphors confuse readers.

Mixed: The engine of society is running smoothly, but if we aren't careful, its feathers will get wet and it will crumble.

Better: The engine of society is running smoothly, but if we aren't careful, it will sputter and stall, bringing the whole machine to a halt.

Clichéd Metaphors

Clichéd metaphors make writing dull. They also provide little information. Readers tend not to read them carefully or think about them.

He was as thin as a rail.

She worked like a dog.

Clichés and Other Abominations

How to Succeed in Business: As Easy as A B C

Yes, succeeding in business can be as easy as taking candy from a baby and you'll soon be breezing along easy street if you sit up and take notice of these bottom line rules. Start close to home. You've got to have heart. Pluck up your courage, take the bull by the horns, and do a bang-up job of planning your goals and objectives. The time is always ripe for planning. If you seize the day and keep your nose to the grindstone, you'll climb the ladder of success and find pay dirt in the bag. Next, keep your eye on the ball and your ear to the ground. Don't miss a trick. You're in a hornet's nest of competition and every ounce of effort must be used to put you head and shoulders above others. Finally, wipe the slate clean every day. Stand by your guns, but don't carry a grudge. An employee who is a pain in the neck can make you climb the walls, but avoid a knock down drag out fight. Bide your time and grin and bear it, and you'll come up smelling like a rose. Going whole hog is the key to success. You must make business a labor of love. If you start the ball rolling and stay in there pitching, before you know it you'll rise in the world and have it made.

A Unique Day Nestles In

Resplendent Hyperion, ineffable in his diurnal effulgence, flicked his rippled shards passionately over the legions of dormant creatures who ignored its scintillating magic and reposed fitfully, tossed on the sea of impulses that bred the banal monotony of their existences. Suddenly the incrustation which ensconced the palpitating soul-driven tides of illimitability began to crumble. But these organisms of habitude, grasped wretchedly by the demeaning programmability of modern existence, arose only to mantle their decaying spirituality with raiment of respectability and responsibility. Like amputees of the staff of life in a four-slice toaster, these hapless entities interred themselves in their habiliment and popped out of their domiciles, and like an infinite funeral procession, slogged slowly on the inbound commute to their tear-drawing sense-quelling modes of employment. But the orb, oblivious to mankind's striving to thwart its beneficence, radiated its seething tentacles of fire into the remotest fastnesses of *terra firma*.

And Other Diversions

Tone

Cliche

He turned white as a ghost.

Colloquialism

The meeting went real good.

Mixed Metaphor

He mechanically barked out the orders.

Exaggeration

He's the smartest man in the world.

Melodrama

He poured his heart and soul into the business. (often a cliche)

Emotionally Charged Rhetoric

She's nothing but a godless Commie barbarian.

Hedging/Qualifying

It seems to me that it is possible that we will probably do better eventually.

Pomposity

Indeed, I profess that Macdonald's yields an incomparable gustatory experience.

Interjections

Of course it is obvious that without a doubt we shall indeed succeed.

Jargon/Technical Terms

The BIOS is a hardware-dependent module that defines the exact low level interface with a particular computer system that is necessary for peripheral device I/O. (Well, why didn't you just say so?)

Language

Lack of Specific Details

One friend of mine had serious family problems and had to seek help, which was finally given, and now the problems are gone.

Meaningless Phrases/Redundancy

Please make a conscious effort to improve your work.
Eating at the cafe is a very unique experience.
The discussion centered around employee satisfaction.
Like for instance, the other day I . . .

Weaseling

This miracle gets up to fifty miles to the gallon.
This desk was virtually handmade.

Fancy Words for Fancy Words' Sake

His diurnal peripatetic pilgrimages eventuated in quintessential salubriousness.

Sentencing

Pronouns

It had been mentioned by John to Sam that it would be particularly embarrassing if he were to announce his plans without giving him any advanced warning.

Convolution

His behavior, which, while not unflattering when his age, no older than his brother had been when he had engaged in similar adventures, is considered, is certainly less mature than those who had hoped for more from one with the seeds of such great intellect, perhaps an intellect the equal of two Einsteins, is in fact really not unusual for a child who has reached that at times charming and at times alarming age of ten.

Coherence

Unnecessary Repetition

He had made some incredible deals and some incredible profits, but what was most incredible was that he was incredibly poor when he died in an incredibly run down apartment in the worst section of town.

Unnecessary Synonyms

On Wednesday he brought home his new car. The sleek roadster was red and white. Since he depended on his automobile, he wanted a faultless coach. His machine was the best on the market.

Abrupt Transitions

It all started when I was nineteen and going to school in San Diego and working toward a B.A. in philosophy. My mother had had a very difficult pregnancy and was exhausted after the birth, so I probably had little in the way of real touch during those first critical days. I felt isolated in all of my classes and longed for real connection.

Assignment 2

Do one of the following:

Choice 1: Download [WhiskeyModel Template.docx](#). *Click on the download tab above the page name.* (Or go to <http://thatwrite.pbworks.com/>, click on the UC Extension Course link, and then click on the filename).

Fill in the Whiskey Form. DO NOT just put in words that seem to work. Study the original Whiskey Model in the reader and follow the same grammatical structures! You can change words that don't affect the grammatical structure, for example articles (i.e. "a" to "the") and prepositions (i.e. "in" to "on"). You can also change number. For example, even though the first sentence of the original is made up of singular nouns, you can use plural nouns (i.e. "devil's brew" to "society's scourges").

Choice 2: Submit one page of your own writing (double-spaced, 11-point font, 1-inch margins). Let me know if you have specific questions or areas of concern.

Choice 3: Select two Sentence Combining exercises that we did not do in class. For each, create one grammatically simple sentence. In each sentence there should be only one subject-verb relationship. Underline it!

REMINDERS:

- Make sure you proofread your assignments carefully. It does not help you if I am correcting errors you could have corrected yourself.
- Feel free to ask questions in your emails to me or add comments in the document.
- When I email back an assignment to you, keep the email and use it to "reply" back to me when sending in your next assignment. This will let me see my previous comments and will encourage a dialogue about your progress.
- Use the following filename format for your MS Word file: YourFirstNameLastName A#.doc(x), where # is the assignment number. For example: JohnSmith A1.doc for Assignment 1 and SueJohnson A2.docx for Assignment 2.
- My email address is sfroman@berkeley.edu

Exploring the Power of Grammar

*Grammar is a piano I play by ear. All I know
of grammar is its power.*

Joan Didion

Definitions - With great knowledge comes great power

These terms will help with our grammar discussions. You won't be tested, but master subject-verb relationships anyway. A clear subject-verb relationship is the key to clear writing and productive editing.

Subject

The WHO or WHAT doing something in a sentence—built around a noun. With linking verbs: The WHO or WHAT existing in some “state of being.”

Action Verb

The WHAT'S BEING DONE, the action in a sentence.

Linking Verb

Verbs that show a state of being.

“He is smart.”

“I feel sick.”

Completer

The necessary completion of some subject-verb relationships, answering the question “WHAT?”

Direct Object:	He thanked <i>her</i> .
Predicate Adjective:	She is <i>efficient</i> .
Predicate Nominative:	He is a <i>mechanic</i> .

Modifier

Word, phrase, or clause that provides additional information about a subject (nouns), verb, completer, or other modifier.

Phrase

A group of words without a subject-verb relationship.

Clause

A group of words with a subject-verb relationship.

Independent Clause:	A clause that can function as a sentence.
Dependent Clause:	A clause that cannot function as a sentence and must be joined to an independent clause.

Predication: Sentence hearts (or I ♥ sentences)

Predication is the way that verbs and completers are linked to a subject.

Exercises

Explain how the predication fails in the following sentence.

1. My first reaction to being in a large company frightened me.
2. The meaning of the book deals with happiness.
3. Those sadistic dog trainers have changed the qualities that made the dog man's best friend into a demon.
4. The Quality Teams Program is a system based on a philosophy which recognizes our employees as individuals who desire to participate in decisions which affect their work.
5. In fact, employees that I talked to said that the greatest single source of dissatisfaction working in the branch, came from the need to explain our hold policy, and the negative reaction of customers.

Coordination: The power of addition

Coordination is the combining of ideas in such a way that they receive equal weight.

Methods

1) Coordinating Conjunctions

The manager entered his office and placed his briefcase on the desk.

2) Semicolons

The manager rushed into the office; he threw the briefcase onto the desk.

3) Transitional expressions

The manager rushed into the office; however, the briefcase wasn't there.

4) Dashes and colons

The manager had to find the briefcase—he was desperate: the contract negotiations began in fifteen minutes.

Exercises

1. We needed milk and went to the store.
2. Most people think most corporate executives are dishonest, white-collar crime is frequent and that executives who are caught receive light punishment, a CBS-New York Times poll found.
S.F. Chronicle
3. It was brought to my attention by another employee that John was displaying a negative attitude and remarks regarding Bob.

Subordination: Pick me! Pick me!

Subordination is the combining of ideas in a way that emphasizes the logical relationship between ideas and the relative importance of each.

Methods

1. Subordinating Conjunctions

Although he was young, he was very mature because he had accompanied his mother on her European junkets whenever she had to go without her husband.

2. Relative Pronouns

Sam, who had known that he could not succeed at the job that his boss had given him, decided to take an innovative approach, whatever was necessary, to make his boss, whose arrogance and defensiveness were destroying the company, appear foolish for having made the assignment.

Exercises

1. As a customer I know you expect to have all questions answered clearly and simply, hoping to make money in the process.
2. As well as hoping for online relationships with these brands, the research also highlights that 86% of respondents want B2B brands to share news on the company, with 79% hoping to hear about promotions and 70% looking to be kept up-to-date with insights.
3. Sandra and Paul are two examples of ambitious businesspeople who are unwilling to settle for the traditionally slow pace of advancement for businesspeople.
4. Because they believe propaganda, people are often insecure.
Although they believe propaganda, people are often insecure.
When they believe propaganda, people are often insecure.
Because they are insecure, people often believe propaganda.
Although they are insecure, people often believe propaganda.

Modification: Things aren't always what they seem

Modification adds information about a word or group of words.

Exercises

1. Coming late to work for the last time, my boss fired me.
2. To escape the burning building, a door was forced open.
3. It was a former bedroom filled with old magazines, a few books, and tabloid newspapers on tables and chairs opened to the bloodiest sections, with red crayon marks circling articles and pictures.

Converse paid the taxi and climbed the short white steps of the entrance, carrying his suitcase and attaché case, grateful that the door was opened by a uniformed guard whose appearance brought to mind a long-forgotten photograph of a mad sultan who whipped his harem's women in a courtyard when they failed to arouse him.

Robert Ludlum

4. We therefore oppose any attempts to increase taxes which would harm the recovery and reverse the trend to restoring control of the economy to individual Americans.

We therefore oppose any attempts to increase taxes, which would harm the recovery and reverse the trend to restoring control of the economy to individual Americans.

Republican National Committee

Punctuation: Street signs, stop signs, and billboards

Punctuation works to establish both meaning and style.

1. We walked into a grim room, where several grim hats were hanging on grim pegs, and the time was grimly told by a grim clock, which uttered every tick with a kind of struggle, as if it broke the grim silence reluctantly, and under protest.... Presently, there stalked into this apartment, a grim old Shaker, with eyes as hard, and dull, and cold, as the great round metal buttons on his coat and waistcoat: a sort of calm goblin.

Charles Dickens—*American Notes*

2. Laura's other classmates have no idea of the burden she bears: her adored brother, Klaus, a Luftwaffe pilot, has betrayed their anti-Nazi father, a physicist, a move that hastens their departure from Germany.

Judy Stone—*San Francisco Chronicle*

3. For many years, admittedly, *Esquire's* vision of the American didn't change much—men were men, period. They smoked manly cigarettes like Camels, they drank manly beverages like Jim Beam, and they pursued various manly endeavors at work and at play—all the while decked out in appropriately manly togs, *Esquire* after all being first and foremost a fashion magazine.

Ed Zotti—*East Bay Express*

4. The new prime minister made three demands: a complete revision of an outdated, unprogressive tax program; the initiation of a study on the long-range effects of acid rain, a priority issue during his campaign; and the immediate suspension of development of all nerve gases, nuclear weapons, and nuclear power plants.

The Music of Grammar: From easy listening to jazz

In many ways writing is the act of saying *I*, of imposing oneself upon other people, of saying *listen to me, see it my way, change your mind*. It's an aggressive, even hostile act. You can disguise its aggressiveness all you want with the veils of subordinate clauses and qualifiers and tentative subjunctives, with ellipses and evasions—with the whole manner of intimating rather than claiming, of alluding rather than stating—but there's no getting around the fact that setting words on paper is the tactic of a secret bully, an invasion, an imposition of the writer's sensibility on the reader's most private space.

Joan Didion, *Why I Write* (essay)

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow;--vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow--sorrow for the lost Lenore--
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore--
Nameless here for evermore.

Edgar Allan Poe – The Raven

“She was a magazine of feelings, & they were of all kinds & of all shades of force; & she was so volatile, as a little child, that sometimes the whole battery came into play in the short compass of a day. She was full of life, full of activity, full of fire, her waking hours were a crowding & hurrying procession of enthusiasms... Joy, sorrow, anger, remorse, storm, sunshine, rain, darkness - they were all there: They came in a moment, & they were gone as quickly.

“In all things she was intense: in her this characteristic was not a mere glow, dispensing warmth, but a consuming fire.”

Mark Twain, *In Memory of Olivia Susan Clemens*

“These memories of bad-driver school ran through me in eastern Oregon after Don Ainsworth, at the wheel of his sixty-five-foot chemical tanker, gave some air horn to a step van that was coming fast up an on-ramp on a vector primed for a crash. A step van is a walk-in vehicle of the UPS variety, and, like other four-wheelers, from Jettas to Jaguars, in Ainsworth's perspective is not a truck. FedEx, Wonder Bread, Soprano Sand-and-Gravel—they're not trucks, they're four-wheelers, even if they have six wheels.”

John McPhee, *Uncommon Carriers*

“Abstracting stylistic qualities from the respondent's definition was not difficult if the qualities were mentioned outright, for example: Orderliness, clarity, elegance/grace, fluency, precision/control, establishment of a consistent personal voice, wit, spareness, tone appropriate for subject matter. Often, however, I had to invent new, and rather subjective categories, such as, creation of intimacy with the reader, audience awareness, integration of form and content, richness of allusions, subtlety, and significance of subject matter.”

Lynne Spigelmire, *The Best Stylists: A Survey of Editors and Implications for the Teaching of Style*, JAC Volume 1, Issue 2

The Function of Grammar

Think function, not rule. Think reader and clarity, not correctness. Enjoy, have fun, and the rules and correctness will follow.

1. Which is correct?

- a. Bacon and eggs are on the menu.
- b. Bacon and eggs is on the menu.

2. Why is this puzzling the first time through?

I crept back to my cave and the pain, which had been waiting at a distance, engulfed me. *The Lost Books of the Odyssey*

3. Punctuate this sentence.

The woods are lovely dark and deep.

4. What is the meaning of the third sentence?

- a. Only John talks about sex.
- b. John talks only about sex.
- c. John only talks about sex.

5. Is it wrong to split an infinitive?

To boldly go where no one has gone before.

6. Why is this incorrect?

A member can choose their own personal physician.

7. What is the difference between these sentences?

- a. All subscribers who have complaints should contact Member Services.
- b. All subscribers, who have complaints, should contact Member Services.

8. Clarity often comes from context.

I saw her duck.
The zookeeper poked the gorilla with a banana.

Grammar and Meaning

1. Underline the correct usages:

He gave John and [I / me] the presents.

Sarah arrived before [he and I / him and me] had the party set up.

Mike learned several new grammar rules while studying with Sarah and [I / me].

Between you and [I / me], you and [I / me] know more than they do.

2. Punctuate this paragraph:

Four men who had guns surrounded the campsite. The men who obviously had nothing to lose demanded that campers who had cell phones hand them over. Sam who had practiced various forms of martial arts with a master who specialized in them all moved so quickly that the gunman who was closest to Sam was shocked when Sam snatched the gun away. The other three gunmen who turned in disbelief at the commotion raised their guns but the only target was their companion who raised his hands in disbelief and surrender. The hesitation caused by the commotion gave the hero who was already targeting the gunman who was the next closest time to reach his target. As the remaining gunmen who were now more frightened than the campers turned toward the second gunman to be disarmed the campers who were not afraid of a fight attacked all four of the now confused and terrified band.

Grammar: A love/hate relationship

Here are several grammar issues about which authorities disagree.

1. Who and whom

“She’s the one who I adore.”

2. The singular they

“Everyone loves to take their vacation.”

3. Ending a sentence with a preposition

“I know you want to have the new printer in your office, but it’s already spoken for.”

4. Splitting an infinitive

“...to boldly go where no one has gone before.”

5. None

Meaning “not one”: “The three men look dangerous but none has a weapon.”

But: “None of the people in attendance were applauding.”

6. Possessive antecedent of a pronoun

“Upon the Red Queen’s arrival, all looked at her with fear and awe.”

7. I couldn’t care more...

“He could care less if he passed the course or not.”

Grammar and Gender

Many believe that using a singular male pronoun (he, his, him) to refer to both men and women reflects and reinforces an inequality in our society. From Gender-Sensitive Language at <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/gender.html>:

“There is a relationship between our language use and our social reality. If we ‘erase’ women from language, that makes it easier to maintain gender inequality.”

And: “Words matter, and our language choices have consequences. If we believe that women and men deserve social equality, then we should think seriously about how to reflect that belief in our language use.”

Here are options for eliminating the use of the male pronoun:

1. When possible, construct sentences so the use of the plural pronoun (they, them) is appropriate.

“An attendee should bring his badge to every conference.”
“Attendees should bring their badges to every conference.”

2. When possible, construct sentences to eliminate the need for any pronoun.

“Badges are required at all conferences.”

3. Break the number rule and use the plural pronoun as a singular pronoun. This will depend on your situation, readers, and preference.

“An attendee should bring their badge to every conference.”

4. Write “he or she” or “he/she” (and “him or her” or “him/her”) when a pronoun is required. This works if it occurs rarely. Frequent usage creates unreadable copy.

“An attendee should bring his or her badge to every conference.”

5. Alternate the use of the singular male and female pronoun by paragraph, section, or chapter. This is often effective in business and government writing.

See the above website for a discussion of additional gender-sensitive language issues.

A Simple Sentence Worksheet: Or is it?

Directions: Simplify these sentences as much as possible.

1. When confronted by a problem that he has never seen before, Joe talks with some of his coworkers concerning the details of it.
2. The administrators stressed career education and not only did they require back-to-basics courses, but they also kept employees informed about job opportunities.
3. Interest rates are rising and people are borrowing less money, which means that they will be buying fewer consumer items, which can gradually lead to a recession.
4. She talked on the phone and at the same time she did this she took copious notes and she would use these notes to write reports that were always due at inconvenient times.

Directions: Combine these sentences into as few simple sentences as possible.

1. My boss, the audit manager, is a hardworking woman who cares about the people she has working for her. She is always giving me new assignments to complete, so I will have a better working knowledge of what other auditors are doing. She also compliments me to others about the fine work I do.

2. I was taking the elevator to the ninth floor. It stopped on the seventh floor. Mr. Fred walked on. He is the head of the finance department. He has been the head of the department for the past five years. He reminded me of my deadline.

3. I sat down at my mahogany desk to begin my work on the quarterly report on finances. It is due at the end of the month. I spread my fact sheets out and sharpened all my number two pencils. Just then I received an urgent call from John Smith. He works out of the Oakland Branch in the Accounts Department. He was calling about the meeting we had last week in the conference room on the ninth floor. He wanted to relay missing information about current interest rates to me. He thought this information would be helpful for completing my report.

Short Descriptions: Putting grammar to work

Exercise

Choose one of the following and write two- or three-sentence descriptions. Make your grammar contribute to the effect.

a neatly trimmed Victorian home *or* person
a business meeting at work
a placid lake
a man or woman asleep at the beach
a man or woman drinking that first cup of coffee

a crowded happy hour at your favorite happy hour spot
a baseball stadium during game (but no baseball stats)
a crowded beach
a roaring waterfall
an airplane landing or taking off
a powerful storm
a car darting in and out of traffic at high speed

Example:

A Messy Bedroom

When he opened the door, the room tumbled at him, bedding mounded in the center of the mattress, clothes dropped carelessly onto the floor or draped over chairs or the bed or across open drawers. From the dresser top leapt a cracked make-up mirror, open cases of rouge and lipstick and eyeliner, color-stained crumpled tissues, dust and dirt and piles of metal and plastic necklaces, a bra, a cap, two pairs of nylons, a book by Barbara Cartland, a shopping list, an address book, a passé leather purse of a shade not quite purple but not quite any other color.

Assignment 3

Do one of the following.

Choice 1: Describe a place (e.g. your office, place of business, backyard) or an event (e.g. working out at the gym, a meeting at the office, shopping at a store). Limit the length to one page (double-spaced, 11-point font, 1-inch margins). Underline the subject-verb relationships. Strive for grammatical simplicity.

Choice 2: Submit one page of your own writing (double-spaced, 11-point font, 1-inch margins). Let me know if you have specific questions or areas of concern.

Choice 3: Select two Sentence Combining exercises that we did not do in class. For each, create one grammatically simple sentence. In each sentence there should be only one subject-verb relationship. Underline it!

Identify the subject-verb relationships in the following document: [Assignment 3 Choice 4](#). Click on the **download tab** above the page name.

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- My email address is sfroman@berkeley.edu

Improving Your Writing Edit by Edit

Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, and the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature. For anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

A Personal Revision List – I am therefore I think

Analyzing a first draft and proofreading a final draft are difficult tasks. If we simply reread the piece looking for “whatever might be wrong,” we are likely to find very little. Instead, develop a list of goals you want to reach and tendencies or problems you want to eliminate.

The items on the list can come from your own analysis, from discussions with editors and reviewers, or from feedback generated during writing workshops.

When revising or proofreading, be sure to read the entire piece for only one item at a time. This prevents being distracted by other problems or by the sound (or silence) of your own voice. It often helps to start at the end of a piece of writing and read backwards a sentence at a time.

Revision List

Structure

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Style

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Sentencing

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Sentence Editing: What a tangled web we weave

The sentences on the following pages, taken from the writings of business people and college students, contain errors in *punctuation, grammar, style, and logic*. Unlike a structured lesson—first punctuation, then grammar, then logic...by which time you've forgotten punctuation—any kind of error may be in any sentence—which is what real editing is like.

Because these sentences originally appeared in the context of a larger piece, certain references may be unclear. Ignore these and search for a fundamental error. Be sure to articulate the problem. Don't merely rewrite the sentence. If you haven't articulated the problem, your revision may still contain it. Play the detective: seek, analyze, question.

For the purposes of this exercise, always distinguish between what the writer *meant* and what the writer actually *said*. We have become very good interpreters of bad writing. In real reading situations, some interpreting will always be necessary, but for this exercise, we want to keep noticing the difference.

Keep in mind that when your purpose in reading is to look for flaws— instead of information—you see more errors. The purpose of sentence editing is to gain an understanding of the types of problems writers encounter and to develop a vocabulary for talking about those problems. While it's important to apply the knowledge and vocabulary to your own writing, you don't want to become hypercritical. Remember, there's no such thing as perfection. Usually, your goal is to produce effective writing for readers looking for information. Rarely will you have to satisfy the critical eyes of readers merely trying to find flaws.

Errors of Punctuation and Grammar

The rules of punctuation and grammar are sometimes arbitrary, sometimes essential for sense. In either case, your readers' ability to understand your writing and their level of confidence in you as a writer depend upon correct usage. If your grammar and punctuation skills are weak, get a grammar handbook or workbook to keep at your writing desk.

Errors of Style

Errors of style include such unkindnesses to your readers as wordiness, unnecessary repetition, passive voice, jargon, and gobbledygook. Use your eye and ear when editing for style. Listen to the way the writing sounds. Read it aloud. Remember, your readers are human. They are not likely to be stupid—they are certainly not omniscient. If you don't write clearly and directly, they will look for something more interesting to do.

Errors of Logic

You should establish the logical structure of a piece of writing during the note-taking stage of the writing process. When editing, however, you must still examine each sentence to make sure the words do what you want them to do, that you “say what you mean.” Go slowly. Look at each sentence independently—you can even start at the end of the piece and work backwards.

The Sentences

1. He is usually courteous the majority of the time.
2. The reason for this is because the below average smoker is conscious of the smoking activity (thinks about smoking while he is smoking).
3. Pick a direction in which to travel and a trail can take you there.
4. Although further from the city, suburban living, concerning utilities such as water and electricity, is slightly lower.
5. There will continue to be breakthroughs in math which will inevitably keep the human race advancing further into the future.
6. The two involved cannot always be blamed, because they neglected to inform their child of the different types of birth control. This would prevent a lot of misconception, and probably prevent quite a few pregnancies.
7. My memory of Halloween was one of the most pleasant aspects of childhood.
8. I remember about September my mother would start preparing her research for my costume.
9. To those employees who contributed to the United Way Drive last year I would like to thank-you for your generosity. As a result of the high percentage of contributions we exceeded our goal of \$100,000. Again I would like to thank-you for your charitable contributions.

Sentence Logic: A one, and a two, and a three...

Parts of sentences must connect logically. By tracking these connections, you can write tighter sentences—and untangle confusing ones.

1. He was sitting in the pond, shivering.
2. He was sitting in the pond, shivering, his nose running.
3. Shivering, his nose running, he was sitting in the pond, a small oasis in the woods.
4. In 1918, F. Wood Jones, a distinguished English anatomist, had expressed the heretical view, which he has maintained and developed since, that man arose from a tarsoid rather than from an anthropoid ancestry.
Loren Eiseley
5. In his December memorandum recommending initiation of the cover 34 A raids, Mr. McNamara painted a “gloomy picture” of South Vietnam, with the Vietcong controlling most of the rice and population heartland of the Mekong Delta, south and west of Saigon.
The Pentagon Papers
6. The idea that germs are all around us, trying to get at us, to devour and destroy us, is so firmly rooted in modern consciousness that it made sense to think that strange germs, from the moon, would be even scarier and harder to handle.
Lewis Thomas

Wordiness and Logic

1. There is a large crowd watching the parade.
2. Currently, there are numerous laws promoting the use and development of nuclear power plants.
3. Jogging is a good example of an activity whose benefits and detriments are clouded with controversy.
4. Of those who are chronic consumers of drugs many have these reasons for excessive chemical indulgence: to feel better, to forget problems, or to be part of a group or community.
5. They held a meeting to discuss the issues.
6. It was the butler who was suspected of being the murderer.
7. The departure of the fleet is thought to be necessarily conditional on the weather.

M.R. 16: But which way is correct?

The instructions for this exercise are intentionally vague. The value is in the discussion that results from all the different responses editors have to the instructions.

M.R. was 16 years old when she wrote this about her 17-year-old sister.

Today is 3,-5-81 and I really mis my sister she is in the army and she had to go to Alahbama. She is only seventeen years old and she was my closes sister me and her got along very well. We only had one fight in are whole life we argue but thats all. I use to tell her secrets and stuff like that. Sometime we would sit up til about one oclock in the morning talking about all the people that goes to our school. We use to go shopping together and out to Discos. We spent a whole lot of time together I really mis her. before she got ready to go she kept on saying she was not going to cry. She left on Feburary 13, 1981. The lady from the army came and picked her up at six oclock in the morning and when she was walking out the door she turned and hugged and kissed my mother and they both started crying and then I start crying. My mother cryed the whole day and days after that but now she's okay. I never knew I would mis her so much but you never know until some one you love is gone.

The Vending Memo

June 7, 20__

To: Operations
From: Office Services
Subject: Refreshment and Vending Service for 400 San Francisco St.

During the past several months, I have investigated alternate vending companies to compare with our present refreshment vendor, Foodco. Although Foodco has provided adequate service during the past eight years, it's equipment is outdated and the food selections that it can provide is limited. I believe that in selecting a vendor we wish to furnish a high quality service that is cost effective; recognized by the employees as a valued fringe benefit; and one that provides modern, attractive vending equipment, which is maintained and serviced efficiently. I also feel that a wider range of food items should be available to the Bank staff. This would include salads, seasonal fruits, sandwiches, and soups.

The alternate vendors investigated are East Side Vending, who currently services the Oakland and Los Angeles Service Centers and Cafe Corporation, a nationally known firm. I compared the costs submitted with Foodco's current costs. A comparison sheet is attached.

I recommend awarding the refreshment service to East Side Vending for the following reasons:

Its prices are very competitive;

The food selection is very varied;

It is very eager to provide service to all three Bank locations;

Its products and services have proven to be exceptional at the Service Centers;
and,

It will service us on a daily basis and maintain refreshment supplies on the various floors of the building.

I feel the service change should take place the first week of July. We are now in the process of tabulating employee recommendations for food selections.

Appendix

*Help! I need somebody.
Help! Not just anybody.*

The Beatles

A Short Bibliography

Whenever we consider proper English we need to remember that what is “proper” or “acceptable” is the result of tradition, vernacular, and editorial idiosyncrasy. English is continually evolving.

HANDBOOKS

Handbooks contain the rules (such as they are) of proper grammar, punctuation, and diction; they often include chapters on organization, manuscript form, and style. Most college bookstores stock one of these. Look them over. Are answers easy to find? Are the explanations clear?

Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*, Macmillan, 1959. This is still the best, shortest, and cheapest book on writing.

Karen Elizabeth Gordon, *The Transitive Vampire: A Handbook of Grammar for the Innocent, the Eager and the Doomed*, 1993. Fun!

Karen Elizabeth Gordon, *The New Well-Tempered Sentence: A Punctuation Handbook for the Innocent, the Eager, and the Doomed*, 2003. More fun.

STYLE MANUALS

Style manuals are developed as guides for writers, editors, and proofreaders. They contain rules of grammar, punctuation, and diction, and they dictate manuscript form and some elements of style. Many disciplines and publishers have specific style guides.

The University of Chicago Press, *A Manual of Style*, 15th Edition, 2003. A standard work that contains chapters on bookmaking and on printing and production.

Webster's Standard American Style Manual, Merriam-Webster, 1994. Comprehensive and authoritative. Very useful for manuscript form.

Stylebook, Associated Press. The AP *Stylebook* is the bible of journalists. Available online at www.apstylebook.com. Also available as an online service.

Gerald J. Alred, Charles T. Brusaw, Walter E. Oliu, *Handbook of Technical Writing*, 10th Edition, 2011.

WORKBOOKS AND HOW-TO

Grammar workbooks contain many of the rules of grammar and punctuation and include exercises.

Waldhorn and Zeiger, *English Made Simple*, Made Simple Books, Doubleday, 1981. Don't believe for a moment that this book really makes English simple, but it does provide decent explanations and it does have answers.

SAT and ACT study guides, while not comprehensive, have diagnostic tests—you can find out where you are weak—and follow-up exercises with answers. Strong, *Sentence Combining, A Composing Book*, McGraw Hill, 1994. A great workbook for improving sentence variety. No answers but a great process.

FOR LANGUAGE LOVERS

Commentary on style and usage. Remember, no single authority on American usage exists.

Bernstein, *Miss Thistlebottom's Hobgoblins: The Careful Writer's Guide to the Taboos, Bugbears, and Outmoded Rules of English Usage*, Centro Books, 2006. Title says it all.

Follett, *Modern American Usage*, Hill and Wang (paperback), 1966. More than most people need. Fun if you're a fanatic, but dangerous if you're gullible.

Graves (Robert of *I Claudius*) and Hodge, *The Reader Over Your Shoulder*, Random House, 1979. British and very dated, but I love the title.

Nunberg, *The Years of Talking Dangerously*, PublicAffairs, 2009. Commentaries by Nunberg on language and politics. Should be required reading.

O'Conner, *Origins of the Specious: Myths and Misconceptions of the English Language*, Random House, 2009. Surprising and entertaining look at the origins of words and how we come to use and abuse them.

Safire, *On Language*, Times Books, 1980 (Avon paperback, 1981). Wonderful. Safire includes letters written by readers of his column. The letters contain different opinions, reflecting the unsettled nature of American English. Lots of fun.

Simon, *Paradigms Lost: Reflections on Literacy and Its Decline*, Penguin Books (paperback), 1980. A very conservative approach to English.

Truss, *Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*, Gotham Books, 2003. British, but many great examples. Fun.

GENERAL REFERENCE

Avoid paperback dictionaries and old dictionaries, except as spelling checkers. The limited and dated definitions are inadequate for writers.

Avoid a “dictionary style” thesaurus. Use a thesaurus to track down the conceptually *right* word, not as a mere synonym finder.

200? Writer's Market, Writer's Digest Books. A comprehensive look at how and where to sell your writing.