



Pearson New International Edition

The Elements of Style

Strunk White Angell

Fourth Edition

# *The Elements of Style*

# Elements of Style, The

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COVER

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FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION

### I. ELEMENTARY RULES OF USAGE

1. Form the possessive singular of nouns by adding 's.
2. In a series of three or more terms with a single conjunction, use a comma after each term except the last.
3. Enclose parenthetical expressions between commas.
4. Place a comma before a conjunction introducing an independent clause.

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5. Do not join independent clauses with a comma.
6. Do not break sentences in two.
7. Use a colon after an independent clause to introduce a list of particulars, an appositive, an amplification, or an illustrative quotation.
8. Use a dash to set off an abrupt break or interruption and to announce a long appositive summary.
9. The number of the subject determines the number of the verb.
10. Use the proper case of pronoun.
11. A participial phrase at the beginning of a sentence must refer to the grammatical subject.

## **II. ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION**

12. Choose a suitable design and hold to it.
13. Make the paragraph the unit of composition.
14. Use the active voice.
15. Put statements in positive form.
16. Use definite, specific, concrete language.

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17. Omit needless words.
18. Avoid a succession of loose sentences.
19. Express coordinate ideas in similar form.
20. Keep related words together.
21. In summaries, keep to one tense.
22. Place the emphatic words of a sentence at the end.

## **III. A FEW MATTERS OF FORM**

## **IV. WORDS AND**

## **EXPRESSIONS COMMONLY MISUSED**

## **V. AN APPROACH TO STYLE (With a List of Reminders)**

1. Place yourself in the background.
2. Write in a way that comes naturally.
3. Work from a suitable design.
4. Write with nouns and verbs.
5. Revise and rewrite.
6. Do not overwrite.
7. Do not overstate.
8. Avoid the use of qualifiers.

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9. Do not affect a breezy manner.
10. Use orthodox spelling.
11. Do not explain too much.
12. Do not construct awkward adverbs.
13. Make sure the reader knows who  
is speaking.
14. Avoid fancy words.
15. Do not use dialect unless your ear is good.
16. Be clear.
17. Do not inject opinion.
18. Use figures of speech sparingly.
19. Do not take shortcuts at the cost of clarity.
20. Avoid foreign languages.
21. Prefer the standard to the offbeat.

**AFTERWORD**

**GLOSSARY**

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