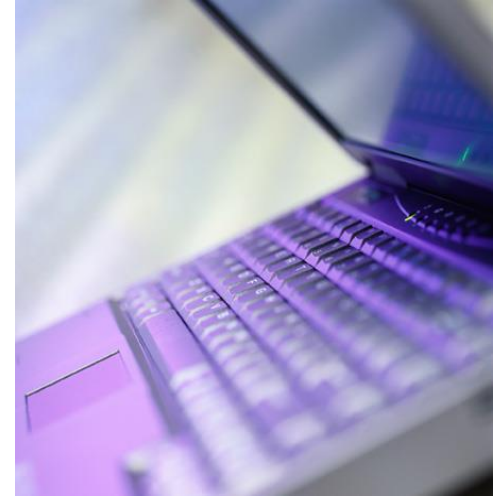


Techniques for Excellent Writing



Dr. Stephen Wilbers

Three Keys to Effective Communication

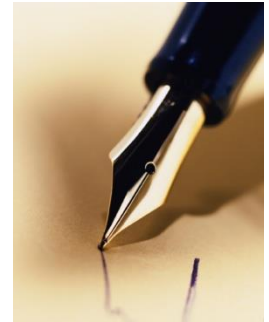
Know your purpose.

Know your audience.

Know your subject / material.

Elements of Effective Writing

- 1. Central Idea**
- 2. Organization**
- 3. Supporting Material**
- 4. Expression & Point of View**
- 5. Spelling, Grammar, & Punctuation**



**What is a good technique
for checking organization?**

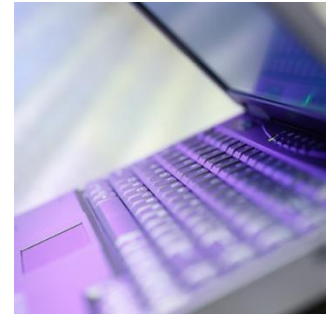
Make a topic sentence outline.

Paragraphs

Topic

Development

Resolution



Paragraphs

Write in sentences,

but think in paragraphs.

From Strunk & White

Rule #17:

“ needless words.”

From Strunk & White

Rule #17:

Omit needless words.

**What is the strongest part of
speech?**

The verb

Joseph Williams

“If you want to control your emphasis, trim .”

Joseph Williams

“If you want to control your emphasis, trim your sentence endings.”

Where are the natural stress points?

In a sentence?

a paragraph?

a document?

Where are the natural stress points?

At the beginning.

And the end.

**Beginnings and endings
count more than middles.**

Editing for Emphasis: Five Techniques

- 1. “Omit needless words.”**
- 2. Prefer action verbs.**
- 3. Don’t trust modifiers.**
- 4. Trim sentence endings.**
- 5. Use sentence beginnings
for prominence.**

Four Levels of Correctness

Grammar

Usage

Idiom

Style

Three types of Editing

Mechanics

Style

Content

“Spellbound”

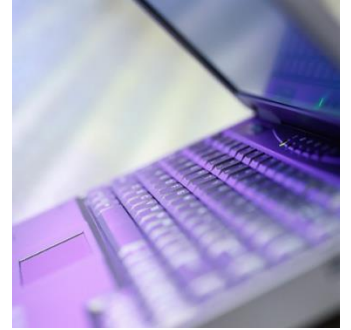
by Penny Harper



I have a spelling checker;
It came with my PC.
It plainly marks four my revue
Mistakes I cannot sea.

“Spellbound”

by Penny Harper



I've run this poem threw it;
I'm sure your pleased too no.
Its letter-perfect in it's weigh;
My checker tolled me sew.

Three Common Errors

Comma splices



Subject-verb agreement

Nonparallel structure

What are two easy ways to determine if a phrase or clause is nonrestrictive?

If you can place parentheses around it

If you can insert the phrase *by the way* after the *which*

The 3-Step Message

DATE:
TO:
FROM:
SUBJECT:



- 1. I am writing to you because . . .**
- 2. The important points are . . .**
- 3. I propose that you . . .**

The 3-Step Message

DATE:
TO:
FROM:
SUBJECT:



1. Purpose

2. Background

3. Proposed action

PR Letter Ingredients

- 1. Goodwill Greeting**
- 2. Empathy or Apology**
- 3. Problem's Cause**
- 4. Good News / Bad News**
- 5. Goodwill Closing**

Get-Tough Letter

- 1. Opening purpose statement**
- 2. Explanation of the problem**
- 3. Refutation of reader's position**
- 4. Proposed action**
- 5. Ultimatum or respectful closing**

The Thank-You Letter

- 1. Thanks the first time**
- 2. Specific reference**
- 3. General reference**
- 4. Goodwill message, and thanks again**

E-mail: Three Rules

- 1. Read over your text.**
- 2. Include a goodwill statement.**
- 3. Never write anything you don't want the entire world to see.**

To be an effective critic

Think of yourself not as a judge,

but as a _____.

To be an effective critic

**Think of yourself not as a judge,
but as a coach.**

Causes of writer's block?

Perfectionism

**Problems with purpose,
audience,
and material**

Four Stages of Writing

Prewriting

Drafting

Four Stages of Writing

Prewriting

Re-vising

Drafting

Four Stages of Writing

Presenting

Prewriting

Re-vising

Drafting

Four Stages of Writing

Presenting

Prewriting

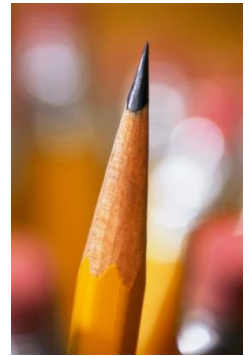
Re-vising



Drafting

Proofreading Checklist

- 1. Does it look right?**
- 2. Is it effective?**
- 3. Does it sound right?**
- 4. Is it correct?**



Making sentences tell stories

Character

Action

Style Check

Goal:

Use variety in sentence structure.

Check:

Note your commas.

Style Check

Compounding:

Linking sentences with
and, or, and but.

Style Check

Subordinating:

**Introducing elements
with *if, when, although,*
*because, etc.***

Sentence Types: **Functional**

Sentence Types: Functional

- 1. Statement**
- 2. Question**
- 3. Command**
- 4. Exclamation**

Sentence Types: Functional

- 1. Declarative**
- 2. Interrogatory**
- 3. Imperative**
- 4. Exclamatory**

Sentence Types: Grammatical

Sentence Types: Grammatical

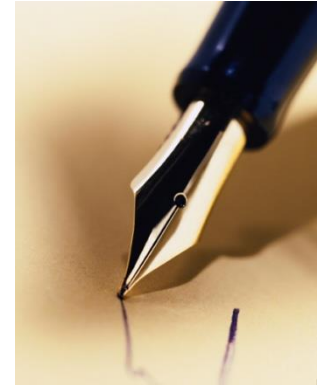
- 1. Simple**
- 2. Compound**
- 3. Complex**
- 4. Compound-complex**

Sentence Types: Rhetorical

- 1. Periodic**
- 2. Loose**
- 3. Balanced (parallel)**
- 4. Antithetical**

Five Elements of Style

- 1. Economy of language**
- 2. Precise word choice**
- 3. Specific, vivid detail**
- 4. Pleasing sound and variety**
- 5. Discernable voice**



Workshop Themes

- 1. Look; don't guess.**
- 2. Always be working on some aspect of your writing.**



The Golden Rule of Business Writing



**Write unto others
as you would have them
write unto you.**

Writing Plan



- 1. Set reasonable goals.**
- 2. Take the first step right away.**

Good luck!