

# A Little Seminar on Style

for Harrellland 7<sup>th</sup> grade

We invite you to join in the battle against poor English by reading the following rules:

1. Each pronoun agrees with their antecedent.
2. Just between you and I, case is important.
3. Verbs has to agree with their subjects.
4. Watch out for irregular verbs which has crept into our language.
5. Don't use no double negatives.
6. A writer must not shift your point of view.
7. When dangling, don't use participles.
8. Join clauses good, like a conjunction should.
9. Don't write a run-on sentence you got to punctuate it.
10. About sentence fragments.
11. In letters themes reports articles and stuff like that we use commas to keep a string of items apart.
12. Don' use commas, which aren't necessary.
13. Its important to use apostrophe's right.
14. Don't abbrev.
15. Check to see if you any words out.

And speaking of proofreading, try this exercise:

How many of the letter "f" do you see in this sentence?

FINISHED FILES ARE THE RE-  
SULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTIF-  
IC STUDY COMBINED WITH THE  
EXPERIENCE OF MANY YEARS

What do you learn from this?

As you continue to write, be sure you pay attention to the **reverse** of these rules and the ones from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, *How to Rite Good*. Be sure to use **specific and concrete details**, **strong verbs**, and **connotation** effectively as you write. This will assure a writing style that will engage your readers and make you proud. Always edit your own writing with your **Having a Writing Conference with Yourself** and **Editing Poetry** handouts. Those are the things I'm looking at.

Another important writing skill is **varying your sentences in length and syntax**.

During the Renaissance, Erasmus challenged students in his writing classes to try their hands at turning out as many variations of a sentence as they could. He himself tossed of 150! Here are a few of his:

*Your epistle cheered me greatly.*

*On reading your letter, I was filled with joy.*

*When your letter came, I was seized with extraordinary pleasure.*

Here is the sentence he used in his challenge:

**Your letter delighted me very much.**

Here it is in Latin, his language, just so you can see it:

*Tyre litterae me magnopere delectarunt.*

How many variations can you write?

## How to Improve Your Writing

Here, for your edification, is a summary of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade guidelines. Enjoy, and think opposite!

1. Don't use a big word where a diminutive one will suffice.
2. Proofread carefully to see if you any words out.
3. Don't use no double negatives, and don't never use no triple negatives.
4. No sentence fragments. Corollary: Complete sentences: Important.
5. Stamp out and eliminate redundancy
6. Avoid clichés like the plague.
7. Never listen to advice.
8. Take care that your verb and subject is in agreement.
9. A preposition is sometimes a bad thing to end a sentence with.
10. Avoid those run-on sentences that just go on and on and on and on they never stop they just keep rambling and you really wish the person would just shut up but no they just keep going they're worse than the Energizer Bunny they babble incessantly and these sentences never stop they go on forever if you get my drift.
11. You should try not to use second person in writing; it sounds didactic.
12. The passive voice should be avoided as much as possible.
13. When dangling, watch your participles.
14. Never go off on tangents, which are lines that intersect a curve at only one point and were discovered by Euclid who lived in the sixth century which was an era dominated by the Goths who lived in what is now Poland and I know some Goth students at school...
15. Excessive use of exclamation points can be disastrous!!!!!!!!
16. Remember to end sentences with end punctuation
17. Don't use commas, which aren't necessary.
18. Don't obfuscate your theses with extraneous verbiage.
19. Don't use that totally cool, radically groovy, often out-of-date slang.
20. Avoid tumbling off the cliff or triteness into the black abyss of overused metaphors.
21. Keep your ear to the grindstone, your nose to the ground, take the bull by the horns of a dilemma, and stop mixing your metaphors.
22. Avoid those abysmally horrible, outrageously repellent exaggerations.
23. This sentence no verb.
24. Repeating the same idea several times to fill space is boring because it's already been said and saying it over and over makes the reader bored and the idea has already been said and it's not exactly the same thing as Martin Luther King did in his *I Have a Dream* Speech which wasn't boring at all.
25. There is no better way to begin a sentence than with there and no better way to end an essay than with The End, and putting by in front of your name, especially if followed by a comma or a colon, shows you still can write like a second grader.

The End

By: Mrs. Harrell