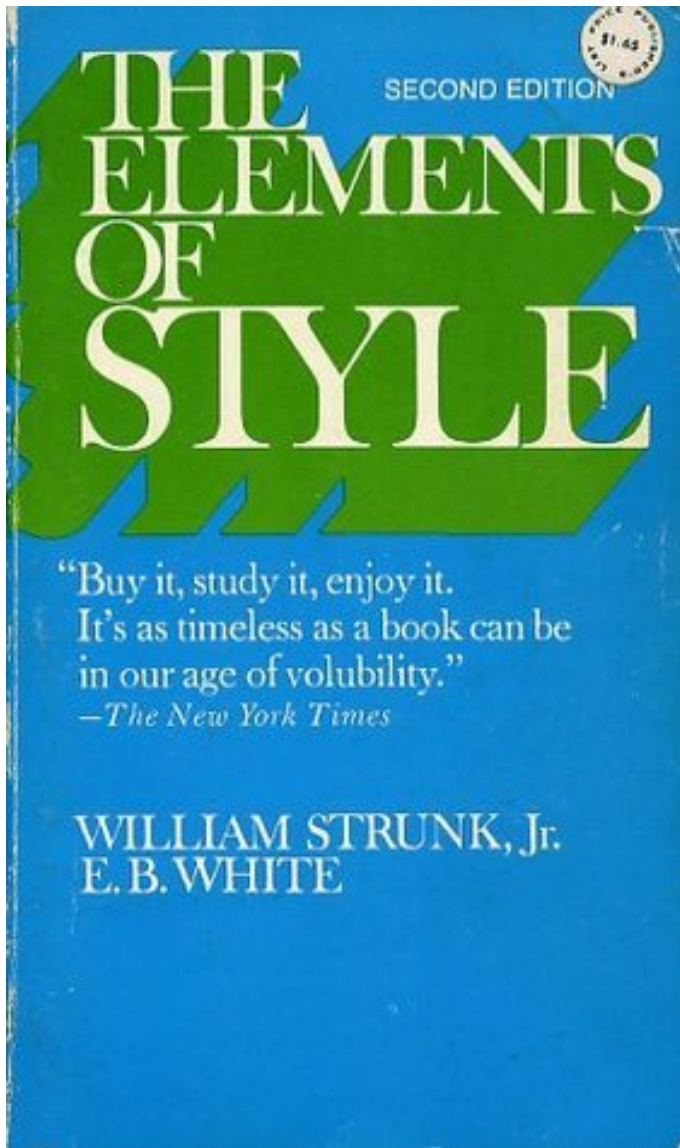


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**William Strunk Jr.**

**The Elements of Style (Elements of Composition Series)**



Title: The Elements of Style (Elements of Composition Series)

Author: William Strunk Jr.

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## Description

This classic reference is a must-have for any student or writer. In this brief handbook, Strunk identifies the principal requirements of proper American English style and concentrates on the most often violated rules of composition. Authoritative and engagingly written, this is simply the greatest book of its kind.

## Insightful reviews

Mansoor: This is the oft-cited classic. If you haven't read it, read it. I know that seems an overly strong recommendation, but the value of this book's guidelines can't be understated.

*Elements of Style* contains the most valuable advice for any writer: "Omit needless words. Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences."

Also, the chapter "Words and Expressions Commonly Misused" is not only helpful, but funny.

Karima: What a beautiful, slim volume of wisdom and written elegance.

I highly recommend this edition with illustrations by Maira Kalman. It has been, according to Roger Angell who writes the forward, "modestly" updated from the original, published in the WW 1 era.

Get this book. Give this book. Refer to this book over and over again.

Beth: I hated, hated, HATED this book! Talk about literary elitism at its worst. This book annoyed me to no end because the entire tone of this book was, "If you write like this or if you say this, then it's wrong." So much of what was written in the "Improperly used words" section could be completely argued that language has evolved to the point where many of these rules don't apply anymore. I also didn't like the imperative manner in which it was written. Don't order me to do these things; give me encouragement, tell me what's good about writing, don't just tell me what not to do.

The last chapter of the book was much more positive, and I think that's because it was written by E.B. White. I could totally tell where one voice began and the other ended.

I guess what really upsets me most about this book is how discouraging it can be for beginning writers to see so many nit-picky "rules" of writing and find themselves saying, "Why bother?" For people who enjoy writing, maybe this book might be of some use as a way to give you "friendly reminders," but I fear beginning writers getting a hold of this book, saying, "Writing has way too many rules," and then giving up before they even try.

I have many other writing books in my collection that are written with voice and flow, and are inspirational rather than enraging. (e.g. [In the Middle](#) by Nancie Atwell, [Clearing the Way](#) and [Crafting Authentic Voice](#) by Tom Romano, [The Craft of Revision](#) by Donald M. Murray, [Style: Toward Clarity and Grace](#) by Joseph M. Williams, etc.) I think I will continue to refer to those

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books rather than this one.

Jim: all people thinks of this as a publication for writers, yet today, so much folks are. We write to speak via email, memos & letters. every body can profit by way of studying this book. It appears fairly brief & slim, yet that's deceiving, like Kern & Ritchie's booklet on C. They healthy much right into a small package deal & it takes perform & referral to get the fundamentals down.

David: In her captivating essay, "Insert a Carrot", Anne Fadiman describes a trait shared by way of all people in her relations - a heightened sensitivity to the failings in different people's writing. The Fadimans all belong to that tribe whose individuals can't learn with out concurrently copy-editing. whilst eating out, they amuse one another by means of mentioning typos at the menu. it may well appear obnoxious, yet relatively they simply can not help it. in case you are blessed with the copy-editing gene you cannot simply swap it off. i've got a similar problem. while I read, typographical and grammatical blunders bounce off the page, assailing my eyeballs, hard to be noticed. A distraction that i'm incapable of ignoring, they hijack my cognizance and cut down my admire for the author. i would like my very own writing to be freed from such distractions; it's going to be forceful and persuasive. I welcome optimistic suggestion that is helping me reach that goal. My replica of "Modern American Usage" is grubby and well-thumbed. i believe its author, Bryan A. Garner, has comprehensive anything particularly remarkable. He has written a utilization consultant that provides writers clear, concrete, reasoned advice, with no being overly dogmatic or erring at the facet of sloppiness. I hate sloppy writing. I additionally hate Strunk and White. Its reputation is inexplicable to me. listed here are quite a few of my objections:1. Their well-known motto, "Omit unnecessary words", is fatuous and has completely no useful value. (If I knew the right way to do this, i might already be a few form of nice verbal exchange guru.) Repeating this basically vapid recommendation in equally empty formulations like "Be clear" and "Don't clarify too much" is of no sensible aid to anybody, and means that even the authors have trouble in decoding their very own admonitions.2. The stylistic information that aren't easily platitudinous are usually simply silly, hopelessly vague, or reflective of the lengthy superseded prejudices of a few previous white dudes. for instance - don't inject opinion.Prefer the traditional to the offbeat.Do no longer use dialect except your ear is good. Write with nouns and verbs.Don't build awkward adverbs.Avoid fancy words.Use figures of speech sparingly.Do now not overwrite.Having hassle understanding even if your ear is "good", your adverb is "awkward", or your writing is "over"? stable good fortune with that. S & W should be of no support whatsoever. Why not?3. The examples used to demonstrate "bad" sort within the ebook are ordinarily ludicrously bad. the necessity for correction is so obviously visible that the examples have little instructive value. The authors are good in a position to demolish straw men, but when you will have suggestion on a refined point, they're not going to be of any sensible help.4. The fetishistic obsession with keeping off the passive voice is (a) baffling (b) profoundly frustrating whilst a few freaking paperclip starts off to lecture you approximately it (c) so evidently idiotic that the authors themselves forget about it in the course of the book. different questionable decrees comprise the ukase that "none" must always take a unique verb, the prohibition on beginning a sentence with "however", and the unnecessary "which/that" discussion.These exemplify one of many book's greatest problems, which - to be reasonable - isn't unavoidably the authors' fault. It has completed the prestige of a type of sacred text, with the entire difficulties that result. humans turn into unaware of the interior inconsistencies in the text, it will get quoted with the type of self-righteous zeal attribute to "true believers" and to related ends.

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rather than stimulating considerate discussion, S & W is wielded as a weapon to finish it. which would no longer be so negative if the recommendation it includes weren't so vague, idiosyncratic and regularly inconsistent. essentially the most infuriating element of writing our booklet used to be my co-author's continuous invocation of Strunk and White because the ultimate arbiter. you could basically ask yourself by way of whose authority those gents have been anointed God. In a crafty advertising gimmick, the newest version of Strunk and White has been jazzed up via together with illustrations through Maira Kalman. Ms Kalman is a pleasant artist, whose paintings in different places I drastically admire. yet she rather must have acknowledged no to this actual project. Her illustrations are sometimes pretty, occasionally baffling, yet regularly pointless. They upload no specific insight, notwithstanding a few readers could locate them a welcome distraction from the barked eccentricities of the book's major authors.

David: it's very sturdy for what it does, that's recommend on find out how to write basically and concisely. yet generations of writers have thoroughly misunderstood its objective and used it as a Bible of excellent Writing. it is not. Linguist Geoffrey Pullum has famously long gone on whatever of a campaign opposed to the weather of Style, and whereas he makes strong points, it can be a bit unfair accountable S&W for the truth that writers do not understand the unique authors have been addressing an viewers of barely-literate collage students. while you are a fiction writer, S&W's suggestion might be inquisitive about a really huge grain of salt — in the event you try and write novels utilizing the weather of fashion as your guide, you will likely write very cleanly and properly yet very badly.

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