



11 Rules of Writing – Common Mistakes [& Fixes]

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Last updated on: May 2, 2017



Getting your message across may seem a bit harder online than in real life. Not that there's less means to do so. A whole lot of methods including audio tracks, videos, animations and other visuals are available for you at any second.

And let's not forget about good ol' text. But it's the short attention span of those who browse the web that makes it harder for you.

So, what do you do to win this game?

You need to learn some rules. Writing rules, in our case. Because writing is one of the most accessible methods of sharing your thoughts and ideas, am I right?

What's the bottom line?

Follow the basic rules of writing listed below and you'll be able to deliver perfect messages loud and clear. Make sure to check provided examples so it's easier to understand the rules we're talking about.



KEEP YOUR SENTENCES SHORT AND SIMPLE

1. Keep your sentences short and simple.

In order to leave your readers satisfied and give them what they came for, you need to act fast. You don't have time to ramble about random things, so your sentences should be short and straightforward. You need to be able to fit up to 35 words in it. The main focus should be on verbs and nouns.

You need to be able to fit up to 35 words in it. The main focus should be on verbs and nouns.

Also, there's no need to search for fancy adjectives and adverbs when simpler alternatives are available (we'll talk about it later). Once again, with short and simple sentences, you'll be able to beat the reader's short attention span and deliver your message before they decide to walk away.

Examples:

Wrong	Right
There are some people who can't take things seriously.	Some people can't take things seriously.
There's nothing better than holidays.	Nothing's better than holidays.
Here are some rules that can help you:	Some helpful rules are:



USE ACTIVE VOICE IN YOUR WRITING

2. Use active voice in your writing.

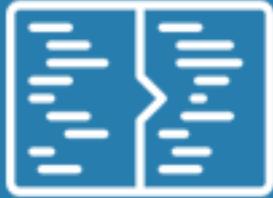
Your writing needs to be more friendly to your readers. They'll feel more comfortable when you speak directly to them (later, we'll talk about addressing your reader to make them feel even more comfortable).

Let me help you.

This rule of writing is simple. Just use active voice instead of passive. You'll see that the text becomes more engaging right away.

Examples:

Wrong	Right
The package was received by Mike.	Mike received the package.
Great results were achieved by the students.	The students achieved great results.
The price was set by the distributor.	The distributor set the price.



INCLUDE SIMPLE WORDS AND WORD COMBINATIONS

3. Include simple words and word combinations.

As mentioned earlier, short and simple sentences help to deliver your messages quicker and more effectively.

But what's the point of having short sentences when they're filled with words that a regular person would rarely use in everyday life?

No one will ever want to look up the meaning of a certain word in the dictionary. Especially when quickly scanning through an article.

When struggling to make strong points, try making your writing easier to digest. With simpler words and word combinations, the message itself becomes clearer.

Examples:

Wrong	Right
Utilize.	Use.
Commence.	Begin.
Tranquil.	Calm.
Transparent.	Clear.



INSERT QUOTES PROPERLY

4. Insert quotes properly.

Sometimes, there's no better way to strengthen your writing or to make a point than to share other people's ideas or words. But the infamous short attention span gets in the way here, too. So, you need to make the quotes as efficient as possible.

Here's the deal:

Include the amount of text that's just enough to make your point. There's no need to insert huge pieces of text just for the sake of context. Instead, you can make a short introduction to make the point of a quote clearer.

As long as you don't alter the meaning, you can edit a quote if it helps to clarify the message.

It's also important to use proper punctuation:

- Add a colon before the quotation if you introduce it with an independent clause.
- Use a comma before the quotation if you introduce it with a verb that indicates expression.
- If there's a quotation within a quotation, then use single quotation marks for the quotation within the quotation, such as in the third example below.

Examples:

Wrong	Right
His message was quite rude, "I don't want to talk to you again."	His message was quite rude: "I don't want to talk to you again."
After a short pause, he said: "We'll redo everything."	After a short pause, he said, "We'll redo everything."
They said, "Add the word "that" for clarity."	They said, "Add the word 'that' for clarity."



5. Avoid weak writing (use action verbs and strong adjectives).

So here's the question:

How can you make strong points with weak writing?

Every word you use has to show that you know what you're talking about. Your writing needs to express confidence. If it does, your reader won't have any doubts that they will get exactly what they want.

Include visceral verbs that can help with expressing action. While focusing on such verbs, don't forget that adjectives can strengthen your writing too. Just make sure not to use ones that require the words *very* or *really* before them. Those aren't strong adjectives and will weaken your writing.

Examples:

Wrong	Right
He is writing.	He writes.
Make it clear.	Clarify.
Really tasty.	Delicious.
Very small.	Tiny.

6. Use proper punctuation to keep the right meaning of your sentence.

Let me clarify this rule for you:

This writing rule doesn't mean that you have to use the proper rules of punctuation. Rather, it's about ditching some of those rules in order to deliver the right meaning.

A clear message is what makes people keep reading. And you want your visitors to stay on the page as long as possible. This will never happen if your writing is confusing and ambiguous.

So, if a sentence needs an extra comma, add it, even if punctuation rules tell you not to.

If you can separate two thoughts with a period instead of a comma, do so. This way, the meaning of both sentences will be clear and easier to understand.

Examples:

Wrong	Right
This armchair as old as it is still makes you want to sit in it.	This armchair, as old as it is, still makes you want to sit in it.
You can forget about proofreading and your coworkers won't say a thing, but they'll have to correct the mistakes later.	You can forget about proofreading, and your coworkers won't say a thing, but they'll have to correct the mistakes later.
You can prepare this meal whenever you want, take it with you to work and you'll have a nice lunch.	You can prepare this meal whenever you want. Take it with you to work and you'll have a nice lunch.

7. Make your writing specific.

While keeping your sentences short and to the point, you also need to provide your reader with enough details. It may seem that this writing rule goes into controversy with the first one.

But here's the thing:

It will help to make your writing more balanced. You just need to stay focused and make sure that the details you describe are on point. Being specific in your writing will help make it easier for you to share your ideas with readers.

Examples:



Wrong**Right**

I like many different fruits.

I like many different fruits, such as oranges, apples, plums and pears.

The weather was quite unusual on the East Coast.

New Jersey had extremely cold weather yesterday.

8. Address your reader.

Nothing's more comforting for the reader than when you address them personally. And it doesn't mean that you have to call them by their name.

Simply use the word "you" whenever it's possible.

This single word will make your reader feel that you're both in the same room, having a friendly conversation. This is the basic rule of writing and one of the easiest to follow.

Examples:

Wrong	Right
It's possible to avoid this problem.	You can avoid this problem.
This rule is easy to learn.	You'll learn this rule easily.

9. Avoid confusing terms and jargon.

Not everyone is an expert in a certain sphere. Even if someone is trying to find the information on a specific

topic, this doesn't mean that this person knows something about it.

Therefore, you need to keep your writing free of niche jargon and terminology as much as possible. And if it's impossible to avoid it, provide your reader with more information so that they can understand what you're talking about.

If your article is easy to understand, it will attract a wider audience and will keep them reading.

Examples:

Wrong	Right
Hypertension.	High blood pressure.
Pyrexia.	A fever.
Getting a soapbox.	Making a speech in public.

10. Be consistent when writing.

Delivering your message is important.

But you also want your readers to believe in what you're saying.

You need to build trust. This basic rule of writing goes together with addressing your reader and making your writing specific. It also has to be consistent.

After stating your main point, you need to strengthen it by putting forward additional proof and facts. Describe your idea from different perspectives and points of view.

Even more, you also want to have consistency in the way you build your sentences. Which brings us to the

next writing rule.

Examples:

Wrong	Right
I respect people who are focused, hardworking, and have motivation.	I respect people who are focused, hardworking, and motivated.
The software helps to manage tasks like communicating, writing logs and formulas calculations.	The software helps to manage tasks like communicating, writing logs and calculating formulas.

11. Use properly constructed sentences to make strong points.

Some might say that you can emphasize certain thoughts and ideas with an exclamation mark.

Here's the kicker:

This method is quite poor and won't add the strength that your writing needs.

Build your sentences properly. This way, you won't need any help from exclamation marks to make a strong point and show readers that it's worth paying attention to what you talk about.

One of the great ways for your sentences to make strong points is to use parallel structure. This means offering multiple ideas and using consistent grammatical form for smoother delivery.

Examples:

Wrong	Right
I was happy to be going back home but I was worried when I left the building.	I was happy to be going back home but worried to be leaving the building.
Forgotten by everybody, his contribution was meaningless.	He was forgotten by everybody, and his contribution was meaningless.
We will show you what our best writing strategies are and different ways to use them.	We will show you what our best writing strategies are and how exactly to use them.

In conclusion, it's fair to mention that you can find a lot more writing rules to pay attention to than just the ones that we've listed here. We, however, listed the ones that are easier to follow. Even though, these are quite basic writing rules, they often get ignored, which leads to poor results in writing.

We're not telling you that you need to follow them all. Following even a single rule of writing can bring you desired results. So feel free to experiment and find ones that are the most suitable for you.



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