

Writing fitness



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Writing Fitness With the abundance of food supplements, health bars, and gyms almost everywhere, it is undeniable that health and fitness are among the world's top concerns today. And the same goes in the world of writing. But just how does one get into good writing shape? Below are some sure-fire ways to keep your writing fit for any occasion.

Spelling Rules to Live by

An article on About. com by Richard Nordquist tells us of four simple spelling rules to live by:

“ Use i before e except after c, or when sounded as a as in neighbor and weigh.” (2009) A few examples are: (i before e) relieve, achieve, (except after c or when sounded as a) receive, reins, and heir.

“ Drop the final e before a suffix beginning with a vowel (a, e, i, o, u) but not before a suffix beginning with a consonant.” (2009) Examples are: hiding (hide + ing), firing (fire + ing), actively (active + ly), and retirement (retire + ment).

“ Change a final y to i before a suffix, unless the suffix begins with i.” (2009)

“ Flies” (fly + ies), flying (fly + ing), and stupefying (stupefy + ing).

“ Double a final single consonant before a suffix beginning with a vowel when both of these conditions exist: (a) a single vowel precedes the consonant (b) the consonant ends an accented syllable or a one-syllable word.” (2009) Examples are: cropping (crop + ing), scooping (scoop + ing), and fitted (fit + ed).

The Apostrophe

One of the roles of this punctuation is possession. Put an ' s for nouns not ending in s and just an apostrophe for nouns ending in s (e. g. Tom's cabin, the Philippines' pride, women's lib, the major general's decision etc.) Words

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ending in ce, x, and z, however, can end either with ' s or just an apostrophe; special expressions for example do not end with an ' s (e. g. for goodness' sake, for appearance' sake, etc.) Another role of the apostrophe is for contractions of pronouns (e. g. he's, you're, they're, etc.) The apostrophe can also be used for omitted letters and figures (e. g. o'er, rock ' n' roll, '84, etc.)

The Comma

In a simple series, use commas to separate items, but not before the conjunction (e. g. Nancy bought an apple, two oranges and three bananas.) For sentences with a complex series of phrases, on the other hand, do use a comma, before the conjunction.

Capitalization

Proper nouns are always capitalized (e. g. North America, John Doe, Nike, etc.) However, common nouns get uppercased too when they are part of proper names (e. g. the Gulf of Mexico, the Pacific Ocean, the Great Barrier Reef, etc.) Popular names also get capitalized (e. g. the South Side, the Street, the Badlands, etc.)

Writing Well

In writing, choose the active voice over the passive. As Bonnie Trenga said in her book, *The Curious Case of the Misplaced Modifier: How to Solve the Mysteries of Weak Writing*, the active voice is “ the clearest and most direct way to present your ideas.” “ In an active sentence,” she adds, “ the subject performs the action, the object receives it.” Passive voice or writing on the other hand is “ vague, wordy writing that confuses or bores readers. “ It confuses them because they encounter verbs such as was and were over and over.” (Trenga, 2006)

Simplicity is the key

Writing is, above all, a form of communication. So use simple words. Do not use utilize when you can use use or say masticate when you can say chew. Also, look for redundancies like ATM machine or HIV virus; the shorter the sentence the more easily understandable it is. Take this for example: “ What is incredible about the new processor is its speed.” This sentence has a lot of unnecessary words in it and is in the passive voice. Whereas, “ The new processor’s speed is incredible,” delivers the same information as the first, but more directly and clearly.

The Complexity in Simplicity

Writing is not easy. If you believe otherwise, then chances are you use a lot of clichés, which nobody would like to read or say anymore. The higher the creativity of your paper, the better the chance it will get the attention you want for it.

Writing Better for Business: Memos

While rules in effectively writing memos do not differ from other nonfiction writing’s, here are a few more things to consider: a) Two short sentences are better than a long one. b) Use bullets — easier to see and read. c) A superior deserves the proper tone of voice even in written communication. d) Memos to client, copy your supervisor — never the other way around. e) Initiate follow-ups. Include the details of your follow-up in the memo. (Cohen, 1987)

Business Letters

Business people have a lot less time to read than normal folk, so remember to: a) State your purpose at the very start of the letter. b) Be concise but strike the proper tone — courteous and diplomatic. c) It sells your company. So be sure to follow your company’s presentation style and that the paper is

error-free.

Business Reports

A report is effective when the person for whom it is intended, reads and understands it without undue effort, accepts the data presented, and is able to make decisions from it. To achieve this, make sure you do the following:

a) Check fact accuracy. b) Focus on facts and not on personal opinions and emotions. Cover all angles as possible before stating your conclusion. c)

Reports should be concise not brief. Yes, keep it short and simple, but it must be substantial as well.

References

Nordquist, Richard. 2009. Top Four Spelling Rules. Retrieved from <http://grammar.about.com/od/words/tp/spellrules.htm>

Trenga, Bonnie. 2006. The Curious Case of the Misplaced Modifier: How to Solve the Mysteries of Weak Writing. Cincinnati, Ohio: Writer's Digest Books