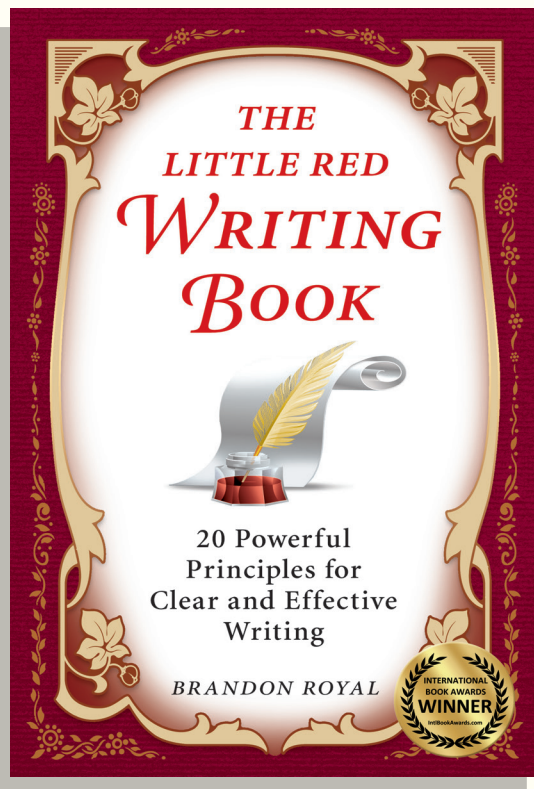


The Little Red Writing Book

20 Powerful Principles for Clear and Effective Writing



For Writing Aficionados from All Walks of Life!

Whether you're a high school or college student, test-prep candidate, or business professional, this guidebook offers a concise guide to penning strong and effective work for all occasions. A wealth of examples, charts, and engaging exercises makes *The Little Red Writing Book* an invaluable guide for anyone who wants to master those skills that will make a good writer even better.

Enjoy the benefits of your own self-paced writing course:

- **Structure** relates to organization and deciding in which order to present your ideas. Learn how to choose the best writing structure to develop your ideas, how to break your writing topic into two to four parts, and how to write with a top-down approach.
- **Style** describes how one writes, including how to use specific examples to support what is written. Learn how to make writing more simple, powerful, and vivid. Understand how to vary sentence beginnings, how to create formal and informal tones, and how to keep writing gender neutral.
- **Readability** focuses on presentation and how to make your document visually pleasing and easy to read. Learn how to make key words stand out, how to use headings and headlines to "frame" writing, and how to increase the use of white space to allow your document to "breathe."

"The mechanics of expository writing, which many of us take for granted, are presented in an organized, attractive package that will serve the basic writing needs of students and professionals alike. Royal provides not only numerous examples of the principles of written English but exercises as well, with answers for those wishing to master the basics. He includes tips on gender-neutral composition and on structuring written documents. Recommended for high school, college, and writing collections." —Ann Schade, Library Journal of America

WINNER, INTERNATIONAL BOOK AWARDS
GOLD MEDAL WINNER, PRESIDENT'S BOOK AWARDS

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This guidebook is especially suitable for high school students who want to master the basics of expository writing in the shortest possible time frame. Twenty classic writing principles are showcased within the book's three main sections and exercises are interwoven throughout the material.

About the Author: Brandon Royal (CPA, MBA) is an award-winning writer whose educational authorship includes *The Little Gold Grammar Book*, *The Little Red Writing Book Deluxe Edition*, *The Little Green Math Book*, and *The Little Blue Reasoning Book*. During his tenure working in Hong Kong for US-based Kaplan Educational Centers—a Washington Post subsidiary and the largest test-preparation organization in the world—he honed his theories of teaching and education and developed a set of key learning "principles" to help define the basics of writing, grammar, math, and reasoning. Brandon has been a winner at the International Book Awards, a gold medalist at the President's Book Awards, and a recipient of the "Educational Book of the Year" award as presented by the Book Publishers Association of Alberta. He continues to write and publish in the belief that there will always be a place for books that inspire, enlighten, and enrich.

Sample Pages from *The Little Red Writing Book*

THE LITTLE RED WRITING BOOK



20 Powerful Principles
for Clear and Effective
Writing

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Contents

Dedication, 7

Introduction, 9

Part I: Structure

1. Write With a Top-Down Approach, 13

2. Break Things Down, 19

3. Use Transition Words, 24

4. Review the Six Basic Writing Structures, 29

5. Keep Like Things Together, 35

Part II: Style

6. Support What You Say, 41

7. Personalize Your Examples, 53

8. Keep It Simple, 60

9. Cut Down Long Sentences, 63

10. Eliminate Needless Words, 66

11. Gain Active Power, 73

12. Favor Verbs, Not Nouns, 77

13. Use Parallel Forms, 80

14. Capitalize on Sentence Variety, 86

15. Choose an Appropriate Tone, 90

16. Keep Your Writing Gender Neutral, 95

Part III: Readability

17. Capitalize on Layout and Design, 101

18. Employ Readability Tools, 104

19. Use Headings and Headlines, 108

20. Go Back and Rework Your Writing, 111

Appendix 1: Summary of the 20 Writing Principles, 117

Appendix 2: Answers to Writing Exercises, 119

Selected Bibliography, 131

Index, 133

About the Author, 137

Introduction

This book is based on a simple but powerful observation: Students and young professionals who develop outstanding writing skills do so primarily by mastering a limited number of the most important writing principles, which they use over and over again. What are these recurring principles? The answer to this question is the basis of this material. Within these pages are twenty immutable principles of writing.

Writing has four pillars—structure, style, readability, and grammar—and each pillar is like the single leg of a sturdy chair. Structure is about organization and deciding in which order to present your ideas. Style describes how you write, including how to use specific examples to support what is written. Readability is about presentation and how to make a document visually pleasing and easy to read. Grammar, including diction, is about expressing language in a correct and acceptable form. This book addresses the four pillars: the first pillar, grammar, is given extensive coverage in *The Little Red Writing Book*. Because of the pervasive nature of writing, this book is suitable for a wide-ranging audience, including writing aficionados from all walks of life. High school and college students can use this material as a reference source. Individuals preparing for job placement tests and students preparing for college or graduate entrance exams will benefit from a time-tested review of basic writing principles and rules.

Let's get started.

• 9 •

Part I Structure



*If you try to have written
such a long letter, if I had
had more time, I could have
written a shorter one.*
—Elysean Enamel



Principle 8 Keep It Simple

8th Principle #8: Use simple words to express your ideas.

The most fundamental way to simplify writing is to use simpler words. Simpler words—verbs, nouns, and adjectives—have broader meanings in English, while more complicated words have more specific meanings. Thus, you have a higher “margin of safety” when using simpler words.

Some writers adhere to the idea that “big words” are bad. The belief is that anyone who uses big words is just trying to impress the reader. The point embodied by Principle 8 is that the everyday writer should err on the side of using simpler words. That is not to say that there is no occasion for “bigger” or more specific vocabulary in writing, but rather that the writer should always consider how appropriate the vocabulary is for a given audience.

• 60 •

Structure • 33

OUTLINES FOR THE SIX WRITING STRUCTURES

The following are sample outlines highlighting the six types of writing structures.



94 • The Little Red Writing Book

NOTE: Although the use of contractions is now widespread, there are two theories on the effect of their use. The first theory or majority view is to use contractions because they evidence a personal tone. The second or minority view is that although contractions are fine for use in writing e-mails and personal letters, it is preferable to avoid them in formal documents such as essays and reports.

EXAMPLES

Make this letter “warmer” by using a more positive and personal tone. This is a semi-formal document, and it is recommended that contractions not be used. A suggested revision is found on page 125.

Dear Mr. Jones:

Compromex Inc. deeply regrets the problems experienced with your notebook computer, Model 58RC. The company's engineers examined the unit and decided that the problems were so extensive that they were not able to make repairs. The two remaining options are either to take a refund on the unit, or to request replacement with a new model. Please inform the service department of a decision, and Compromex Inc. will quickly respond.

Sincerely,

Mr. De Good
Service Representative
Compromex Inc.

~~~~~  
Tone is attitude. A formal tone is like formal attire that keeps distance between the writer and reader. Most writing favors an informal tone.  
~~~~~

Style • 97

We must also watch for and replace words that represent the masculine generic. Here is a partial list:

MASCULINE GENERIC	BETTER
ad man	advertiser
anchorman	anchor
chairman	chair, chairperson
Englishman	the English
fireman	firefighter
man-hour	work-hour, person-hour
married man	husband, husbanded, husbandry
police man	police officer
postman, mailman	mail carrier, postal agent
salesman	salesperson, sales representative
self-made man	self-made person
businessman	businessperson
congressman	member of Congress, Senator, Representative
spokesman	spokesperson
landlord	land owner
layman	layperson
man-made	synthetic, artificial
worker	worker

It is sometimes necessary to replace the feminine generic:

FEMININE GENERIC	BETTER
housewife	homemaker
mail-clerking lady	domestic, housekeeper
maiden name	birth name, former name
secretary (office)	office assistant
stewardess	flight attendant



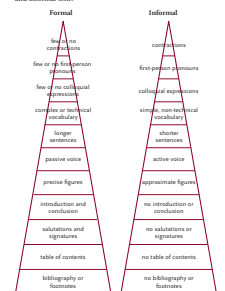
Principle 15 Choose an Appropriate Tone

15th Principle #15: Write with a positive, personal tone.

Tone is a difficult thing to describe; some define it as the writer's attitude. Tone occurs along two major dimensions: positive or negative and formal or informal. Today, a positive and personal tone is appropriate on most writing occasions. One way to control writing tone is through your choice of positive versus negative words. Use positive words whenever possible; readers intuitively dislike being told what is not true as opposed to what is true. Thus, even negative forms can be turned into positive expressions.

Style • 93

CHARITING THE FORMAL AND INFORMAL TONES
The two “pyramids” below highlight the characteristics of formal and informal tone.



• 90 •

EFFECTIVE USE OF HEADINGS

With the use of headings in the document below, the writer is able to direct the reader's attention without headings, the reader would have a harder job of accessing the information efficiently.

The Four Cs

Color
The most desirable diamonds are colorless. The color scale starts at D and descends through Z. Although the best color is D (colorless), diamonds also come in a range of natural fancy hues, such as blue, pink, green, and red. Believe it or not, these fancy diamonds are particularly rare, and like their colorless counterparts, can also fetch a high price tag.

Clarity
Gemologists refer to imperfections in diamond clarity as “inclusions”; the fewer inclusions, the more valuable the stone.

Cut
What makes a diamond stand out beyond any other precious gemstones? Certainly the way it sparkles. While nature determines the color and clarity of a stone, diamond cut is solely dependent upon the skill of the cutter.

Carat Weight
The word carat comes from the carob seeds that were used to balance scales in ancient times. Carat therefore refers to size. It is not necessarily true that the larger the carat, the more valuable the diamond. The value of a stone will always be a combination of the four Cs: color, clarity, cut, and carat size.



Principle 19 Use Headings and Headlines

19th Principle #19: Use headings and headlines to divide or summarize your writing.

Because organization is particularly important in academic writing, which tends to be longer, and because time and money are of critical importance in business, both headings and headlines help convey information efficiently. Headlines are similar to headings, the difference lies in their length and purpose. Headings are usually a couple of words in length; headlines are usually a line or two in length. The purpose of headings is to divide information under sections; the primary purpose of headlines is to summarize or paraphrase information that follows.

130 • The Little Red Writing Book

EFFECTIVE USE OF HEADLINES

Headlines are effective tools in communicating complete sections of a business report or personal essay. The headlines below appear in index.

The Land, Sea, and Sky Must Guide Me

The land, the sky, and the sea. These three environments and the experiences they have given me have influenced and helped shape who I am today.

When I go back to the land in the northern part of Denmark, I will across the fields and hear the birds singing.

The land has taught me to appreciate my home and family stability.

The smallest birds in bright colors can be poisonous, while the sharks may be friendly.

When scuba diving, I have learned to expect the unexpected.

The sky is a reminder that many things are possible even though they seem beyond our reach.

Sky diving has encouraged me to stretch and reach new heights.

One of the big challenges I am meeting in life is the challenge of being successful in both my personal and career life. In meeting these challenges, all of my influences must guide me—the land, the sea, and the sky.

*When there is an open mind
there will always be a frontier.*
—Charles F. Kettering