

## Strunk Chapter 2

12. Chose a suitable design and hold to it

- **A Basic structural design underlies every kind of writing.** Writers sometimes follow it, sometimes deviate from it depending on their needs and skills. If the deviation is needed, the writing still works. If it's a skill problem, the writing may be flawed.
- **Sometimes the best design is no design.** Love letters, stream of consciousness, friendly informal messages sometimes work best as an outpouring
- **Formal essays, research, analysis reports often have clear, concise, logical sequence that requires much mapping and brainstorming.** Specific forms exist, like comparison contrast, cause and effect, narrative, descriptive, expository depending on the message and audience.
- **The first principal of writing is to foresee the design and then strive to follow it.** Some shapes are rigid, like sonnets. Others are more flexible, but all writing has some sort of underlying design.

13. Make the paragraph the unit of composition: one paragraph to each topic

- **Address one main idea per paragraph.** A simple story or statement can often be written in one paragraph. When multiple paragraphs are used, there must be logical sequence, clear transition, progression of thought; paragraphs need to build on each other.
- **Change paragraphs to introduce new topics or to move your story to its next level.** Begin with words, sentences that either show transition or introduce the topic ahead
- **In dialogue each new speaker gets a new paragraph.** In animated narrative paragraphs often break frequently to increase the pace. Sometimes packing multiple voices into one paragraph creates a desired effect
- **In formal essays paragraphs must be fully developed and in proper sequence.** Avoid short paragraphs in formal analysis papers as the goal is often to convey two to four thorough supporting arguments to support your thesis

14. Use the active voice. In active voice the subject does the action. Active voice is vigorous. In passive voice the subject receives the action. Passive voice reverses the action and slows the pace. Active voice is direct, concise, forward-moving, and results in brevity, which is the by-product of vigor.

Passive voice

The dog was bitten by the man.

There were many people at the party.

Happiness caused him to leave.  
The building was rocked by an explosion.  
The horse was ridden into town by the farmer.  
The book was written by me.

Active

The man bit the dog.  
Many people attended the party.  
The explosion rocked the building.  
The farmer rode the horse into town.  
I wrote the book.

15. Put statements in positive form. Say what it is, not what it is not. Avoid tame, colorless, hesitating, noncommittal language. Use the word not to express denial, never as a means of avoiding a bold statement.

Negative voice

He was not on time.  
He was not hungry.  
The girl was not there.  
The tires are not inflated.  
This is not a good day for a quiz.

Positive voice

He was late.  
He was full.  
The girl was gone.  
The tires are flat.  
This is a bad day for a quiz.

16. Use definite, specific, concrete language. "Prefer the specific to the general, the definite to the vague, the concrete to the abstract."

Vague, abstract

A few people went on a quick walk down a road in a hurry to arrive at their destination before too much time went by. They were sort of feeling a sense of unease because a threat was in the air and drove them to move quickly to avoid a bad experience that might occur if they were to move in a slower fashion.

Specific, concrete

Four boys raced down Elm Street desperate to reach the safety of the Lake Dugan before the raging forest fire overtook them and burned them alive.

17. Omit needless words. Pictures do not have extra lines. Machines do not have extra parts. Sentences and paragraphs must not have extra words. It doesn't mean to always be brief, but that every word tell.

Wordy

She is a girl who

In a nervous manner

Owing to the fact that

The message was a confusing one

In a way that was not direct

She

Nervously

Because

The message was strange

Indirectly

18. Avoid a succession of loose sentences. Avoid a long string of sentences with multiple clauses and conjunctions.

Loose:

The students at the school and the teachers who work there are going to the gym and attending an assembly, and they're going to listen to a guest speaker and engage in some motivational activities. The principal and the two vice principals asked everyone one to be quiet and then they brought out the guest speaker and turned down the lights and the audience got quiet and the speaker began his speech and after the speech the audience did some activities that he suggested to help motivate them to study harder.

Better:

Benicia High people heard a motivational speaker in a gym assembly. He was introduced by the administrators. Afterword, the audience engaged in follow-up activities.

19. Express co-ordinate ideas in similar form. When introducing a series of similar information, use a design that is also similar.

Mary liked to swim in cold lakes, hike steep mountains, and was fond of difficult challenges.  
The goal is to study hard, to complete all your work, pass, and graduate.  
It is easier to tell the truth than lying to people.  
For her birthday Susan got a watch, a bracelet, and she got a new iPod.

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20. Keep related words together. Keep words related in thought together in a sentence.

He encountered a large bear out in the forest that was angry.  
She could stand on one foot without falling off her surfboard for two minutes.  
Rick stood there in the rain at the bus stop all night long crying.  
If you eat potato seeds they will kill you out of season.  
The mud slide swept through the Johnson's ranch last Tuesday and left the furniture of the  
unfortunate family buried under ten feet of sludge.

He encountered a large, angry bear out in the forest.  
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21. In summaries, keep to one tense. When analyzing a work of literature keep to one tense,  
preferably the present tense. Because the action in a novel occurs constantly simply by reading it,  
the present tense is most accurate.

When Brutus is speaking to Caesar before he killed him, Caesar was acting friendly and is not  
suspicious of Brutus's actions.

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suspicious of Brutus's actions.

22. Place the emphatic words of a sentence at the end. The second best place is the beginning.  
Put old or secondary information in the middle.

If you stare directly at the solar eclipse you will go blind next Tuesday.  
If you lift the clutch too soon the car will stall when climbing a steep hill.  
Boaters must wear life jackets to be safe when they are out on a lake.  
If you play your best you will win the championship at the big game with Acalanes tonight.

If you stare directly into Tuesday's solar eclipse you will go blind.  
When climbing a steep hill, if you lift the clutch too soon the car will stall.  
Boaters must wear life jackets when out on a lake to be safe.  
If you play your best against Acalanes tonight you will win the championship.