

There is pleasure to be found in
obsessing over the details of an
inexhaustibly interesting job.

A TALE OF TWO COMPLEMENTARY STANDARDS

I. Correct

II. Clear

FACTORS AFFECTING ACHIEVEMENT OF STANDARDS

- ❖ What is in your heart?
- ❖ Who is your audience?
- ❖ What is your mission?
- ❖ Who cares about you, the writer?
- ❖ What about power?

I. CORRECT

I. CORRECT: COMMAS

Use a comma to separate two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction



The lobbyist was paying so the Senator ordered three glasses of scotch a huge steak and a platter of Cheetos.



Use a comma to separate items in a list of three or more

I. CORRECT: COMMAS

Use a comma after an introductory word, phrase (sometimes), or clause



Since the lobbyist was paying the Senator ordered three glasses of scotch[,] a huge steak and a platter of Cheetos.

I. CORRECT: COMMAS

The witness testified regarding the unintended consequences of House Bill 37[,] and urged the committee to quickly table it.



Use a comma to separate two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction

I. CORRECT: COMMAS

Use a comma to separate two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction



The committee listened attentively to the testimony[,]
however[,]
most of the members remained skeptical regarding
the proposed amendment.

I. CORRECT: COMMAS

Use commas to set off parenthetical (nonessential) information

The ranking minority member of the committee who is a cosponsor of the legislation suggested that her vote against the bill should not be interpreted as opposition to it.

Use commas to set off parenthetical (nonessential) information

I. CORRECT: COMMAS

The legislation that Representative Theriot introduced is entitled An Act to improve graduation rates.

The legislation[,] which Representative Theriot introduced[,] is entitled An Act to improve graduation rates.

When in doubt...

I. CORRECT: COMMAS

However, do not...

Any motion[,] the effect of which is to suspend
Subparagraph (1) is a debatable motion.

I. CORRECT: COMMAS

A student[,] as defined in Section 31 of this Chapter[,] shall be familiar with the finer points of grammar before she graduates.

A student as defined in Section 31 of this Chapter shall be familiar with the finer points of grammar before she graduates.

I. CORRECT: COMMAS

And the earthen shelter weighs down the mind which has many concerns.

And the earthen shelter weighs down the mind[,] which has many concerns.

I. CORRECT: AGREEMENT

A motion to table and a motion to call from the table requires a vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting.



Conjoined subjects require a plural verb

I. CORRECT: AGREEMENT

If the subjects are disjunctive, the proximate subject determines the number of the verb



Members of the committee or the speaker are eligible to make such a motion.

I. CORRECT: AGREEMENT



A bill with too many cross references or circular definitions is nearly impossible to make sense of.



An object of a preposition *cannot* be the subject of the sentence even though an object of a preposition might be the proximate noun

I. CORRECT: AGREEMENT

A pronoun must agree with its antecedent
in number, case, and gender



The agency's findings regarding their analysis of the cost of the program are attached as an addendum to this report.

I. CORRECT: AGREEMENT

Right pronoun; Wrong “its”

But it has been thirty years since the Save our Lakes legislation was enacted, and its impact on gamefish populations is undeniable.

I. CORRECT: SENTENCES

The lobbyist was paying[,] so the Senator ordered three glasses of scotch, a huge steak and a platter of Cheetos, which were the extra crispy variety, and the steak was served very rare, so when the Senator began smashing his Cheetos over his steak, the “cheese” from the Cheetos combined with the juice from the steak, producing a peculiar color. A strange shade of puce. Nausea ensued.

↑
Run-on

↑
Fragment

I-A. GOOD HYGIENIC PRACTICES

I-A. GOOD HYGIENIC PRACTICES

Use the serial (or formula) comma

snap, crackle, and pop



I-A. GOOD HYGIENIC PRACTICES

Use the serial (Oxford) comma

Since the lobbyist was paying[,] the Senator ordered three glasses of scotch[,] a huge steak[,] and a platter of Cheetos.



I-A. GOOD HYGIENIC PRACTICES

Avoid the pointless passive

Whoever commmits the crime of gambling shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars or imprisoned for not more than six months, or both.

I-A. GOOD HYGIENIC PRACTICES

Avoid the pointless passive




All fees shall be deposited by the secretary into the state treasury.

The secretary shall deposit all fees into the state treasury.

I-A. GOOD HYGIENIC PRACTICES

Avoid the pointless passive

One member of the board shall be appointed by the governor. 

The governor shall appoint one member of the board.

I-A. GOOD HYGIENIC PRACTICES

Do not omit subordinating conjunctions

that are

Tax credits administered by the department include the industrial expansion credit and the good corporate citizen credit.

I-A. GOOD HYGIENIC PRACTICES

Do not omit subordinating conjunctions

that are

and

Tax credits administered by the department *that may be abolished in the next legislative session* include the industrial expansion credit and the good corporate citizen credit.

II. CLEAR

II. CLEAR

Be very careful with pronouns

An object of a preposition cannot be the subject of the sentence even if it is the proximate noun.



An object of a preposition cannot be the subject of the sentence even if *an object of a preposition* is the proximate noun.

II. CLEAR

Reduce the number of prepositional phrases if possible

This bill establishes a fee **for** processing the payments **in** an amount that is equal **to** the cost incurred **by** the tax collector **in** processing the payment.

This bill establishes a payment processing fee that is equal to the tax collector's payment processing cost.

II. CLEAR

Be wary of omitted prepositions

Zoning regulations adopted *by a county or a municipality* are subject to voter approval in the respective jurisdiction.

II. CLEAR

Be wary of omitted prepositions

The state constitution imposes the “duty to report” on officers *of state agencies and the legislature*.


of

on

II. CLEAR

Be wary of omitted prepositions

A driver licensed *by this state or a neighboring state* may pursue legal action against the manufacturer of the defective material.



II. CLEAR

Do not dilute the verbs

make a decision

decide

offer a rebuttal

rebut

provide an
indemnification to

indemnify

reach a resolution

resolve

submit an application

apply

II. CLEAR

Do not dilute the verbs

make a statement

state

offered testimony

testified

take into consideration

consider

made a motion

moved

offer a complaint

whine

II. CLEAR

Do not hide the ball or yourself in passive voice

It has been decided that legislative staff in the great state of {insert name} are no longer eligible for compensation.

II. CLEAR

Do not hide the ball or yourself in passive voice

The perpetrators shall be held responsible for damages and the disruption of the committee meeting.

II. CLEAR

Do not hide the ball or yourself in passive voice

Any person in this office who violates lunch policy will be recommended for termination.