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Purge Your Prose of Problems: A Book Doctor's Desk Reference

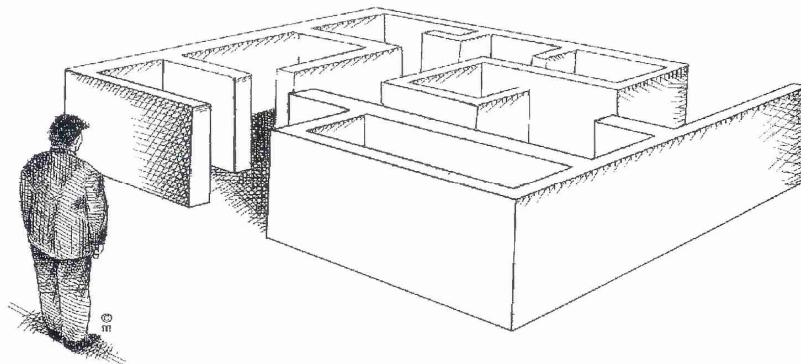
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Purge Your Prose of Problems

A Book Doctor's Desk Reference



One Book Takes You through the Maze
of the Editing Phase

Fourth Edition
More than 550 subjects!



Bobbie Christmas
Author of *Write In Style*

Purge Your Prose of Problems

A Book Doctor's Desk Reference

Fourth Edition

Bobbie Christmas

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Reference / Writing

Table of Contents

Introduction	20
'cause	22
'tis.....	22
AD and BC or BCE	22
a.m./p.m.....	22
Abbreviations - general	22
Abbreviations in Addresses.....	23
Abbreviations in State Names	23
Accept/Except	23
Acknowledgment/Acknowledgement.....	23
Acronyms.....	24
Action Must Have Logic.....	24
Action Scenes should be Tight.....	24
Acute/Chronic	24
Adjectives	24
Adjectives Overused (Less is More).....	24
Adjectives and Adverbs.....	25
Adrenalin/adrenaline.....	25
Adverbs (-ly words).....	25
Adverbs (-ly words) in Attributions	25
Affect/Effect	25
Aggravate/ Irritate	25
Agonize/Antagonize.....	26
AIDS.....	26
Aisle/Isle.....	26
All Caps	26
Allude/Elude	26
A Lot.....	26
Alright/All right.....	26
Alter/Altar.....	26
Alternate/Alternative	26
Although/Though.....	27
Altogether/All Together	27
Always Be Clear! (The ABCs of good writing).....	27
Ambiguous terminology	27
Amid/Amidst	27
Among/Amongst	27
Among/Between	27
Amount/Number	27

Ampersand (&)	27
And, But, So, Yet.....	27
Anecdotes and Examples.....	28
Angry/Mad	28
Anthropomorphizing is Best Avoided	28
Anyway/Any Way	29
Anxious/Eager.....	29
Anymore/Any More	29
Anyplace/Any place	29
Anytime/any time.....	29
Apostrophes Turned Wrong	29
Appraise/Apprise	30
Approximately/About.....	30
Apt/Likely/Liable	30
Are/Is/Was/Were (Supposed) To	31
Around /Round.....	31
Artwork.....	31
As (Repetitious).....	31
As I Said/Like I Said	32
As to/So as to.....	32
Assume Nothing.....	32
As/Because.....	32
Assure/Ensure	32
At That Moment, Just Then, All of a Sudden.....	32
Attributions/Saidisms.....	32
Attributions - Inverted.....	33
Author Intrusion.....	33
Awhile.....	34
Awkward Sentences.....	34
Back Yard/Backyard	35
Bad/Badly	35
Bate/Bait.....	35
Bath/Bathe	35
Bawl /Brawl	35
Be Consistent	35
Be the Authority!	35
Beat Readers Over the Head? Don't Do It.....	36
Because/Comma.....	36
Because/Due To/Since.....	36
Began/Started	36
Begin/Commence/Start	36
Beside/Besides	36
Bible Verses.....	37
Body Language	37

Bolder/Boulder.....	37
Blacks/Whites.....	37
Blatant/Flagrant	37
Blond, Blonde as a noun.....	38
Boldface/Bold-faced	38
Boldface Type	38
Book Titles.....	38
Bore the Reader? Never!	38
Bound Manuscripts	38
Brackets.....	38
Brand Names and Trademarks	39
Breach/Broach	39
Breathe/Breath.....	39
Bulleted Lists	39
Bus/Buss.....	40
Callous/Callus.....	40
Camaraderie	40
Can not/Cannot.....	40
Cancelled/Canceled.....	40
Canvas/Canvass	40
capital, Capitol, capitol	40
Capitalizing Titles.....	41
Capitals.....	41
Centered Around/Centered On	41
Chapter Titles.....	41
Characters – be sure they aren’t purely good or purely evil.....	41
Character Description—Build Characters, Rather Than Describing Them	42
Chicago Style	44
Cities that stand alone.....	44
Choose/Chose.....	44
Choppy Sentences	44
Circa.....	45
Civil War.....	45
Clichés.....	45
Coincidence.....	45
Coke/coke	46
Collective Nouns	46
Colon	46
Comma	46
Comma Splice	47
Compliment/Complement	47
Compound Names.....	47
Compound Sentences	47

Comprise/Compose	48
Concrete Descriptions are Better Than Abstract Ones	48
Confidant/Confidante	48
Conflict	48
Contemporary References	48
Contemporary Style versus Literary Style	49
Continuous/Continual	49
Contractions	49
Convenient Items	49
Convince/Persuade	50
Copyrights	50
Could	50
Could Care Less	51
Could not help but	51
Council/Counsel/Consul	51
Course/Coarse	51
Courtesy Titles	51
Cousin/Coz/Cuz	51
Cover Letter/Query Letter	52
Cover Page	52
Crescendo	52
Crevasse/Crevice	52
Currently	53
Damn/Dam	53
Dampening words	53
Dangling Modifiers (DM)	53
Darkened/Dark	53
Dashes	53
Dates	54
Decent/Descent	54
Decimate/Destroy	54
Descriptions	54
Despite/In Spite Of	54
Dessert/Desert	54
Dialect	55
Dialogue - Break dialogue at natural places	55
Dialogue - Contractions	55
Dialogue - Format	55
Dialogue - Internal	55
Dialogue - Interrupted or Faltering	56
Dialogue - Inverted Attributions and Tags	57
Dialogue - Laughing	57
Dialogue - Meaningless	57
Dialogue - Name-calling	57

Dialogue - Natural.....	57
Dialogue - Numerals.....	58
Dialogue - Phone.....	58
Dialogue - Practice Writing It.....	58
Dialogue - Punctuation.....	58
Dialogue - Responses, Reactions Should Be Close To Stimuli.....	59
Dialogue in a Vacuum.....	59
Different Than/Different From.....	60
Dilemma.....	60
Directions.....	60
Discrete/Discreet.....	60
Do.....	60
Done.....	60
Double and Single Quotation Marks.....	61
Down/Up.....	61
Drag/Drug.....	61
Drink, Drank, Drunk.....	61
Due to the Fact That.....	61
Due To/Because.....	61
Dumpster.....	61
Earth/earth.....	61
Essential Versus Nonessential Phrases – How Commas Work.....	62
Ellipsis (singular) / Ellipses (plural).....	62
'em.....	62
Email/e-mail/e-zine.....	63
Entitled/Titled.....	63
Estimates Cannot Be Exact.....	63
Et cetera/Etc.....	63
Every day/Everyday.....	63
Every/Everybody/Anybody/Everyone.....	63
Exclamation Marks.....	64
Exposition.....	64
Exposition Through Dialogue (Be natural).....	64
Eyes.....	65
Fact Checking.....	65
Faculty.....	65
Farther/Further.....	65
Fast/Quickly.....	65
Feel/Think/Believe.....	65
Feet/Foot.....	66
Fiancée, Fiancé.....	66
Fifty-Cent Words.....	66
Find and Refine Method™.....	66
First Person.....	67

First Sentence, First Paragraph, First Page, First Chapter	67
Flashback	67
Fonts	68
Footnotes in Fiction	68
Foreign words	68
Foreword/Forward	68
Forlorn	68
Format	68
Format – Binding	69
Format - Cover Page	69
Format - Passage of Time	70
Format – Poetry	70
Format - Short Story	70
Free Gift	71
From whence	71
Fun	71
Gamut	71
Gerunds and Participles	71
Gerunds (-ing words) in attributions	72
Gerunds Take Possessive Modifiers	72
God/god	72
Good-bye, Goodbye, Good-by	72
Got	72
Grey/Gray	72
Had	73
Had had/that that	73
Hanged/Hung	73
Hanger/Hangar	73
He Did Not Notice/She Did Not See	73
He or She (politically correct)	73
Hear/Here	73
Help	74
Homonyms	74
Honorarium/Stipend	74
Hopefully	74
However	74
Human	75
Hyphens	75
Hyphens (Hard)	75
Hypothetical Statements/Use of Subjunctive	75
I Believe/Think/Remember	75
I, Me, Us, We	76
i.e./e.g.	76
Iced Tea/Ice Tea	76

ID for Identification.....	76
ID the Speaker	76
Identify characters in a new scene	77
If/Whether	77
Imagine/Assumed.....	77
Impact/Impacted.....	77
Imply/Infer	78
In a ____ Tone/Manner	78
In order to.....	78
In/Into	78
Inanimate Possessive	78
Inc., Incorporated, Ltd., Limited.....	78
Indeed	79
Individuals	79
Infamous/notorious.....	79
Infinitives	79
Informal references	79
Initials and Acronyms.....	79
Insure/Ensure	80
Introduction and/or Preface	80
Introductory Phrases	80
Intuit.....	80
Inverted Attributions.....	80
Irregardless.....	80
It's/Its.....	81
Italics and Underlines.....	81
Italics for Emphasis.....	81
Jargon	82
Jeep/jeep	82
Jell-O	82
Job Perqs.....	82
Journal Entries vs. Memoir	82
Jr., Sr., II, III.....	83
Just Avoid Using Just.....	83
Justified Type.....	83
Juxtaposition of Elements	83
Kill Your Babies.....	83
Keep it Super Simple (K.I.S.S.)	84
Kinship Names, Pet Names, Terms of Endearment.....	84
Lady/Woman	84
Lay/Lie.....	84
Lead/Led	84
Leftward/Rightward.....	85
Length-novels	85

Length—Nonfiction Books	85
Length—Children’s Books	85
Less/Fewer	85
Lets/Let’s	85
Letters Used As Letters	86
Light Year	86
Lightening/Lightning	86
Like/As If/As Though	86
Likely/Liable	86
Linking Verbs	87
Lists—Items in a List Must Be Parallel.....	87
Lists Share Common Modifiers.....	87
Lists—vertical lists with subdivided items—format	88
Literally/Virtually.....	88
Little Did He Know	88
Located	88
Logic	89
Long quotations	89
Long Sentences	89
Long Year, Long Day, Long Hour.....	89
Looked to be.....	89
Looking	89
Lookism	89
Loose/Lose	90
Ma’am.....	90
Maddening Crowd	90
Make.....	90
Make-up/makeup	90
Manned/Staffed	90
Mantel/Mantle	90
Marshal/Martial	91
May/Can/Might.....	91
Me and	91
Meanwhile, At This Point, At That Moment.....	91
Meteoric Rise	91
Mind’s Eye.....	91
Minutes/Moments	91
Mirror—Looking Into a Mirror.....	92
Misplaced Modifiers.....	92
Missing Words.....	92
Mixed Metaphors	92
Moot	92
Moral/Morale	93
Movie: Make your novel read like one.....	93

MPH	95
Multiple Points of View	95
Multiple Punctuation Marks.....	95
Must Of/Must Have/Should Of/Should Have/Could Of/Could Have.....	95
Myself and Other Reflexive Pronouns	95
Name Brands/Trademarks.....	95
Names.....	96
Names--Unusual Spellings of Names.....	96
Nauseate/Nauseous	97
Neither/Nor, Either/Or.....	97
New Year's Eve	97
Nice.....	97
Nod in Agreement.....	98
Nonprofit.....	98
Nonsexist Language	98
Nor.....	98
Not only--but also.....	98
Now, Ago, Today, Tomorrow, Yesterday, Here, This, These.....	98
Number the pages	99
Numbers—Don't Begin Sentences with Numbers	99
Numerals	99
Numerals - Punctuation.....	100
Numeral strings	100
Of/Have.....	100
Often/Oftentimes	100
OK, O.K., or okay	100
Ol'/Ole.....	100
On A Daily Basis/On a Weekly Basis	100
On/Upon	100
One (1) in typography.....	101
One for First or Second Person	101
One Space after Periods—and an Easy Fix.....	101
One Word or Two?.....	101
Online/On-line.....	102
Only.....	102
Only/Except.....	102
Oriental/Asian.....	102
Over/More Than	102
Overwriting.....	102
Oxymoron.....	102
Pace.....	102
Pail/Pale	103
Paper Quality	103
Paragraphs - Structure.....	103

Paragraphs—Long	103
Parallel Elements/Parallel Construction.....	103
Parallel Pronouns	104
Parentheses.....	104
Passive Voice.....	104
Past Perfect Tense.....	104
Past/Passed	105
Peak/pique/peek	105
Peal/Peel.....	106
Penultimate/Ultimate.....	106
Per	106
Percent.....	106
Performed/Preformed	106
Periodical Titles Used in Books.....	106
Personal Opinion Adjectives	106
Personal Style.....	107
Personnel	107
Peruse/Glimpse.....	107
Phase/Faze	107
Pickup, Pick up	107
Place/do/be	107
Plays, Movies, TV Shows	107
Pleonasms/redundancies	108
Plot - Nonfiction	108
Plurals	108
Podium/Lectern.....	108
Poetry in Prose	109
Point of View	109
Pore/Pour	110
Positive: Think, Write, Be Positive.....	110
Possessive	110
Possessives - Proper Nouns.....	110
Prepositional Phrases, Strings	110
Present Tense	111
Presently	111
Pretty	111
Preventative/Preventive.....	111
Principal/Principle.....	111
Proceed/Precede	111
Proceeded To.....	111
Prone/Prostrate /Supine	112
Pronouns.....	112
Pronouns for deities—Chicago Style.....	112
Prostrate/Prone.....	112

Proved/Proven.....	112
Punctuation - Use One mark.....	112
Purple Prose	113
Qualifiers.....	113
Quality	113
Question Marks	113
Quite/Quiet	113
Quotation Marks (When and how to punctuate with them)	113
Quotation Marks (Single).....	114
Quotation Marks—Typography	115
Quotation Marks and Apostrophes- Turned the Wrong Way.....	115
Quotations from other Sources.....	115
Raise/Rear.....	115
Real.....	116
Real-life or Other-character Intrusion	116
Realized	116
Really	116
Real Estate Agent/Realtor.....	117
Recur/Recurring/Recurred.....	117
Redundancies.....	117
Renown/Renowned.....	117
Repetition	117
Ridged/Rigid.....	118
Role/Roll.....	118
Run-on Sentences.....	118
Saccharin/Saccharine	118
Said as He/Said as She.....	118
Said in a (adjective) Voice or Said (adverb).....	118
Sat there/Stood there	119
Scenarios Elevate Interest Level	119
Scene Changes	119
Scenes.....	119
Scenes on a Telephone.....	120
Schoolgirl Writing.....	120
Scotch	121
Second Person.....	121
Segue	121
Segues or Transitions.....	121
Semicolons	121
Sentence Fragments.....	122
Sentence Length.....	122
Separate one person's action from another's dialogue.....	122
Set-up/Setup.....	122
Sex Scenes.....	123

Sexist Language	123
Sheer/Shear	123
Sheetrock	123
Shine/Shone/Shined	123
Shinny/Shiny	123
Ships, Aircraft, Spacecraft	124
Show, Rather Than Tell	124
Show, Rather Than Tell, and Do Not Do Both	124
Similes and Metaphors	124
Single Quotation Marks—Type Style	124
Sir	125
Sleight/Slight	125
Sloppy Copy	125
Sneak /Snuck	125
So/Such	125
Social Titles	126
Some time/sometime	126
Song Lyrics	126
Song Titles	126
Spacing	126
Special	126
Spell Check	126
Split Infinitives	127
Staff (noun)	127
Standard Manuscript Page	127
Start in the middle of things	127
States	127
Stationary/Stationery	127
Steel/Steal	127
Stereotyped Characters	128
Stream-of-consciousness writing	128
Strunk & White	128
Subjects and Verbs—Never Separate by a Comma	128
Subjunctive Mood	128
Suddenly	128
Summer, fall, winter, spring	129
Suppose/Supposed	129
Synopsis	129
T-Shirt	129
Table of Contents	129
Tact/Tack	129
Telling the Obvious	130
Tense Shifts (T.S.)	130
Than/Then	130

That.....	130
<i>That, This</i> , to mean a Concept.....	130
That/Which.....	131
That/Who.....	131
The.....	131
The Beginning.....	131
The End.....	132
The Writers Network and <i>The Writers Network News</i>	132
Their/There/They're.....	132
Then.....	132
There's/There're.....	132
Thermos.....	132
This/These.....	133
Throe/throes/throw/throws.....	133
Thoughts.....	133
Through/Threw.....	134
Till/til/until.....	134
Time-telling Modifiers.....	134
Times of Day.....	134
Titles of Works of Art.....	134
Title of Manuscript.....	135
Titles that Start with The.....	135
To be.....	135
To/too.....	135
Toward/Towards.....	136
Transition.....	136
Transitions.....	137
Troop/Troupe.....	137
Try and/Try to.....	137
TV.....	137
U.S. for United States.....	137
Unawares/Unaware.....	137
Unbeknown/Unbeknownst.....	137
Undefined Pronouns.....	137
Underway/under way.....	138
Unexplainable/Inexplicable.....	138
Unimportant Details.....	138
Unique.....	139
Unusual spellings of names.....	139
Upward/Backward.....	139
Use/used.....	139
Utilize/Use.....	139
Vantage Point.....	140
Variant Spelling.....	140

Verbs—Use Strong Ones.....	140
Very	140
Via	140
Vice Versa.....	140
Virgules (Slashes).....	141
Viscous/Vicious	141
Visual (Be Visual).....	141
Voice—Creative Writing Tip	141
Vulgar Terminology.....	142
Wait On/Wait For.....	142
Waive/Wave.....	142
Waking Up.....	142
The Wall Street Journal Style of Reporting	142
Wars.....	143
Was To/Were To.....	143
Web site/ /Internet/World Wide Web	144
Wet/Whet.....	144
What . . . was.....	144
When: The Weakest Opener	144
Whether/Weather.....	144
Who/Whom	144
Whose/Who's	144
With That.....	145
Without Warning.....	145
Wonder Usually Constitutes a Statement	145
Word Choice.....	145
Word Count.....	145
Words used as Words.....	145
Would.....	146
Write Tight	146
Yea/Yeah	146
Your/You're	146
Zebra Communications	146

'cause

When a sentence begins with an abbreviated word that uses an apostrophe to represent a missing first letter (often in dialogue), most editors believe the word no longer should be capitalized, because the apostrophe replaces the first letter, and an apostrophe cannot be capitalized. For that reason, you may often see sentences such as this: "'cause I ain't going, that's why."

'tis

The abbreviation 'tis stands for *it is*, and because the apostrophe replaces the first letter, the second letter should not be capitalized, if it is used at the beginning of a sentence. Correct: "'tis I." Incorrect: "'Tis I."

AD and BC or BCE

Do not use periods when referring to AD, BC, or BCE, or CE.

Chicago Style also dictates that the abbreviation AD should precede the year, as in this example: *The Magna Carta was signed in AD 1215*. Other designations should follow the year, as in this example: *The jewelry came from about 100 BC*. To help you remember these differences, remember what the abbreviations mean. If you wrote the sentences out without abbreviations, you would naturally say, "*The Magna Carta was signed in the year of our Lord 1215.*" (*anno Domini*) "*The jewelry came from about 100 before Christ.*"

a.m./p.m.

Chicago Manual of Style says: Figures are used in designations of time with A.M. or P.M. Never use A.M. with *morning* or P.M. with *evening*, and never use *o'clock* with either A.M. or P.M. or figures:

at 4:00 P.M.	12:00 m. (noon)
at 10:45 in the morning	12:00 P.M. (midnight)
11:30 A.M.	eight o'clock

Note that the abbreviations A.M. and P.M. (*ante* and *post meridiem*) are set preferably in small caps (A.M. / P.M.), but can be lowercase (a.m. / p.m.). The abbreviations should not be in uppercase (A.M. / P.M.) and should not have spaces. They should have periods.

Creative Writing Hint: Avoid using A.M. and P.M. whenever possible. *We awoke with the sun at six o'clock* is better than *We awoke at 6:04 A.M.*

Avoid using A.M. or P.M. in dialogue, especially. People usually know the time of day, anyway. Relate it in more relative terms. *I'll meet you for lunch at twelve-thirty. What are you doing calling me at four in the morning?*

Abbreviations - general

In general avoid abbreviations or symbols for abbreviations in fiction. For example, avoid MPH, or lb., or #. Examples of what to avoid: *Melissa drove sixty MPH to get the two lbs. of candy so she could finish # four in the contest*. Correct:

Melissa drove sixty miles an hour to get two pounds of candy so she could finish number four in the contest.

Some technical terms can be abbreviated, especially in nonfiction and promotional literature, but rules still apply. The first time a word for which there is a common abbreviation is used, spell it out and show the abbreviation in parentheses immediately after it. *Thereafter*, use the abbreviation except when it begins a sentence. Then spell it out. Don't switch back and forth between the word and the abbreviation inside sentences. For example, *The radio frequency (rf) emitted by the device was off target. After recalibrating it, the rf was normal.*

Abbreviations in Addresses

In text, addresses should be spelled out, including the following words: *Avenue, Boulevard, Building, Court, Drive, Lane, Parkway, Place, Road, Square, Street, Terrace; North, South, East, West* (exceptions: NW, NE, SE, and SW are okay when used in some city addresses after street names).

Abbreviations in State Names

The names of states, territories, and possessions of the United States should always be spelled in full when standing alone. Example: *John has never been to Alaska.* In Chicago Style, when a state name follows the name of a city or any other geographical term, it is still preferable to spell it out, with the exception of the District of Columbia. Example: *Mary drove from Dallas, Texas, to Washington, D.C.*

Accept/Except

Be sure to choose the correct word.

Accept: verb

1. To receive (something offered), especially with gladness.
2. To admit to a group, an organization, or a place: *accepted me as a new member of the club.*
- 3.a. To regard as proper, usual, or right: *Such customs are widely accepted.* b. To regard as true; believe in: *Scientists have accepted the new theory.* c. To understand as having a specific meaning.

Except: prep.

With the exclusion of; other than; but: *everyone except me.*

Acknowledgment/Acknowledgement

Although both spellings are correct, the first spelling is correct in the United States, and the second one, with three e's, is correct in Great Britain.

I can often tell if a book is self-published simply by checking to see how the author spelled the word in the front or back of the book, because even if authors hire editors to edit their manuscripts, they usually fail to send the acknowledgments page(s), and therefore add that section last and misspell it for American audiences.

Takes you through the maze of the book editing phase.

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