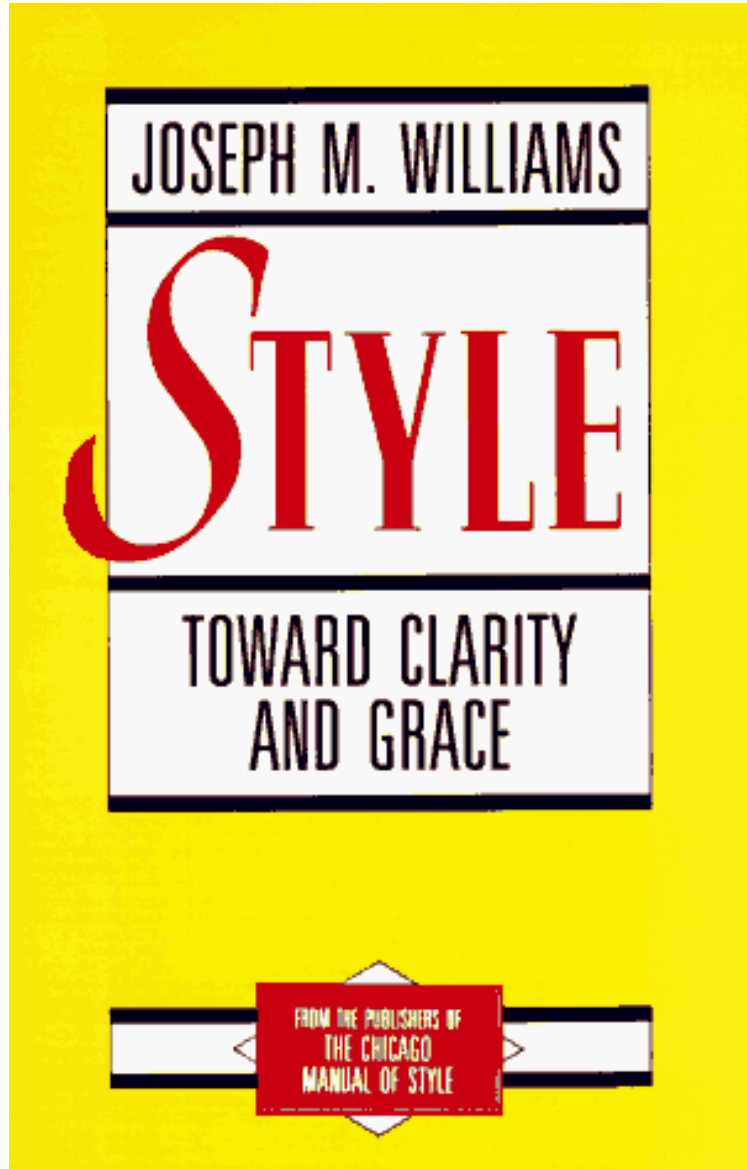


[FREE] Style: Toward Clarity and Grace (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing)

Style: Toward Clarity and Grace (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing)

Joseph M. Williams

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Joseph M. Williams : Style: Toward Clarity and Grace (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Style: Toward Clarity and Grace (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. For even the best writers, writing clear and elegant prose can be ...By MTN11For even the best writers, writing clear and elegant prose can be a challenging and arduous undertaking. For many non-native English speakers, it's a challenge that can seem insurmountable and so painful that the mind searches for any reprieve. Fortunately, Joseph Williams' latest edition of *Style, Toward Clarity and Grace* illuminates a path for the lost in search of becoming a better writer. Williams attempts to transform the content of the book from its root as a college textbook so that it may function for a broader demographic. This book guides the reader through most of the subject matter with great clarity, providing grammatical devices and diagnosing a myriad of examples of good and bad writing. However, the book is not without obstacles for readers who are still trying to grasp the protocols of grammar. The primary area where this book falls short is the lack of development or elaboration of some of the technical rules and terminology. Even with these challenges, there are more than enough redeeming factors that make the book a resourceful companion on your path to becoming a better writer. Williams delivers his principles of *Style* in ten concise chapters. Each chapter focuses on its respective element: Causes, Clarity, Cohesion, Emphasis, Coherence I, Coherence II, Concision, Length, Elegance, and Usage. The first chapter serves as a brief history lesson of the English language and how that history affected our literature. He does a great job providing examples of good and bad writing and, more importantly, elaborates on why people might characterize this writing as such. This approach of diagnosing writing examples is repeated as one of Williams' tools for teaching throughout the chapters. He makes a valiant effort in integrating these elements into a coherent writing system. Chapters 2 and 3 offered techniques and approaches to identifying and correcting bloated, abstract and incoherent writing. I found these methods to be extremely useful and was able to immediately apply them in my writing. For instance, a simple but effective way to produce a clear sentence is to have the subject of the sentence near the beginning of your sentence and its action verb close by. Even with these great takeaways, I have mixed feelings about these two chapters because I had to reread, Google and consult a tutor to understand some of the technical terminology used to explain some of these concepts. For example, the way Williams delivers concepts like psychological subjects and grammatical subjects was very confusing. There appeared to be an assumption that the reader understood grammatical subjects. Williams then started to use topic strings to characterize both psychological and grammatical subjects without proper transition. For advanced writers, these issues are trivial and might even be considered concise writing. However, non-native writers need new terminology to be clearly delineated and clearly defined. These issues notwithstanding, the two chapters provide many useful guidelines and reinforce those guidelines with matrix diagrams and summaries of key points at the end of the chapters. In aggregate, these tools will teach you how to identify and correct vague and incoherent writing. Therefore, whatever additional efforts are needed to comprehend the technical jargon in these two chapters, the return is well worth the effort. While the last two chapters teach the fundamental elements of constructing a sentence and conjoining them into a cohesive paragraph, Chapter 4 teaches you where to place key information in your writing. For example, by placing new and important information towards the end of a sentence you naturally signal that information as your stress points. Additionally, Williams ties in all the elements from previous chapters into one complete system illustrated with the matrix table. However, if you were casually reading and not taking notes, expecting a summary at the end of the chapter, you would be disappointed because it's not there! The synopsis at the end of the previous chapters does (do) such a great job reinforcing pertinent concepts, which makes it perplexing why Williams discontinues its use. If the early chapters provided concepts and guidelines to write grammatically correct sentences and paragraphs, Coherence I and Coherence II provide the tools to diagnose your writing. Williams prefaces in the opening paragraph that he'll be introducing new jargon to teach the principles of coherence. However, he does a poor job defining, developing and placing these new concepts. Similar to the problems in chapters 2-3, Williams introduces vocabulary like topic and thematic strings without clearly defining each concept and how they are used together to establish a cohesive prose. This ambiguity left me unsure of the difference between these two concepts. With topic strings, Williams only provides one example instead of his customary breakdown of multiple writing examples to make sure the subject is fully explained. Interestingly enough, Williams espouses the importance of proper development and placement of new technical terms and concepts in previous chapters. In a way, it's refreshing to know that even advanced writers can be off their game sometimes. Now, if you have a problem, like I do, with rambling on and being redundant, Concision will be an extremely impactful chapter for you. This chapter will provide you with the tools to diagnose your writing so that each word earns its place. Chapter 8 on Length simplified the various devices that are used to extend a sentence. Devices such as Resumptive, Summative and Free modifiers are just a few of the subjects this chapter will teach to inject sophistication into your writing. I have used some of these tools in my writing before, but now I understand the rules behind them. Understanding the various usage rules, I use these devices with confidence to produce long and complex sentences. The guidance in the last two chapters may be too subjective and anecdotal to be valuable for ESL readers. Just like the rest of the book, there is a myriad of great examples and he breaks down the information gracefully. However, for a non-native speaker there needs to be consistency in what is proper and improper use, not subjectivity. For example, Williams notes a rule that you should not begin a sentence with coordinating conjunctions but goes on to provide writings where it's acceptable in certain circumstances. Additionally, Williams repeats the theme of using your intuition and discretion when it comes to breaking grammatical

rules to produce writing that suits your purpose. While this may sound reasonable, this subjectivity for the novice writer can be very confusing. Beginning writers want facts and rules they can adhere to. Imagine if you're just learning basic arithmetic to then suddenly be told to use those principles to work out the solution for a linear algebra equation. I bet you would get many blank stares. The same applies here. Overall, Mr. Williams delivers on his main objective for this book, which is to clearly explain how writers can improve their style and flow. Additionally, he provides the tools for writers to navigate through the web of English rules, so they can communicate effectively in their own style. However, don't expect this book to be a panacea for all your struggles with writing. No single book, class or resource will accomplish that feat. Only continuous practice and the iterative process of writing will ease the hopelessness of producing a prose you can live with.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Replaces Strunk and White on my reference bookshelf
By K. C. King
This is a guide to tight precise expressive writing for writers at all levels. The best I know of today.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A Must-Have for Academic Writers
By Jeff DeSurra
For students, scholars, or everyday writers, this is a must-have book. This is a great book for learning how to hone your writing skills to get thoughts on the paper in a way that is still understandable to the reader. He goes over how to effectively construct sentences, link those sentences into paragraphs, and then shape those units so that they are concise, elegant, and coherent. Williams provides multiple examples of what good and bad writing looks like and the keys on how to transform bad writing into good writing. The best part of the book is the connection that Williams makes between thinking and writing. Bad writing often masks incomplete thinking, so this book is also a guide indirectly of how to read more effectively and deeply. For any student who wants to take their writing to the next level and beyond the strong Strunk and White foundational grammar, this is a book for you.

This acclaimed book is a master teacher's tested program for turning clumsy prose into clear, powerful, and effective writing. A logical, expert, easy-to-use plan for achieving excellence in expression, *Style* offers neither simplistic rules nor endless lists of dos and don'ts. Rather, Joseph Williams explains how to be concise, how to be focused, how to be organized. Filled with realistic examples of good, bad, and better writing, and step-by-step strategies for crafting a sentence or organizing a paragraph, *Style* does much more than teach mechanics: it helps anyone who must write clearly and persuasively transform even the roughest of drafts into a polished work of clarity, coherence, impact, and personality.

"Buy Williams's book. And dig out from storage your dog-eared old copy of *The Elements of Style*. Set them side by side on your reference shelf."
Barbara Walraff, *Atlantic*

"Let newcoming writers discover this, and let their teachers and readers rejoice. It is a practical, disciplined text that is also a pleasure to read."
Christian Century

"An excellent book....It provides a sensible, well-balanced approach, featuring prescriptions that work."
Donald Karzenski, *Journal of Business Communication*

"Intensive fitness training for the expressive mind."
Booklist

(The college textbook version, *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, 9th edition, is available from Longman. ISBN 9780321479358.)