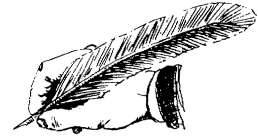


## Strive for Reader-Friendly Writing

Words are the vehicle that conveys a writer's thoughts to the readers. If the writer has written well, the reader is more aware of the thoughts than of the words. Such writing is reader-friendly. On the other hand, written material is not reader-friendly if the flow of thoughts is disrupted because the writing is wordy, vague, ambiguous, or sluggish.



A helpful analogy might be made to a person on a sight-seeing trip by car on a warm summer day. The car is the vehicle whereby the traveler can enjoy the beauties of the landscape. If the car is comfortable, quiet, and smooth-riding, the traveler pays little attention to the car; his attention is focused on the countryside. On the other hand, if the air conditioner doesn't work, the shock absorbers are worn, the muffler is broken, or engine fumes seep into the car, the traveler is aware that the car is warm, rough-riding, noisy, or smelly, and these things detract from his enjoyment of the scenery.

The engine and drive line of the uncomfortable car may be in excellent condition, so the traveler can cover his planned route in a safe and timely manner. The trip just isn't as comfortable as it should be. In like manner, written material may be free of grammatical errors and may contain all the information intended to be presented. The reader may be able to find all the author's thoughts among the words. Getting the information just isn't as easy or comfortable as it should be, because the writing is not reader-friendly.

Most rules of grammar are very definite. Writers usually know and apply these rules as they write. Any mistakes in grammar are easy for editors to find and correct. Whether writing is reader-friendly or not is more a matter of style than of grammar. Unlike grammar, style is not controlled by absolute rules of correct or incorrect. Instead, many factors that are hard to define govern style. These factors can make the reader-friendliness of an author's writing range from poor to excellent. With awareness, study, and commitment, a writer can develop a writing style that becomes more and more reader-friendly.

Remember:

If what we write  
can be read with ease,  
It will be reader-friendly,  
and will our readers please.

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