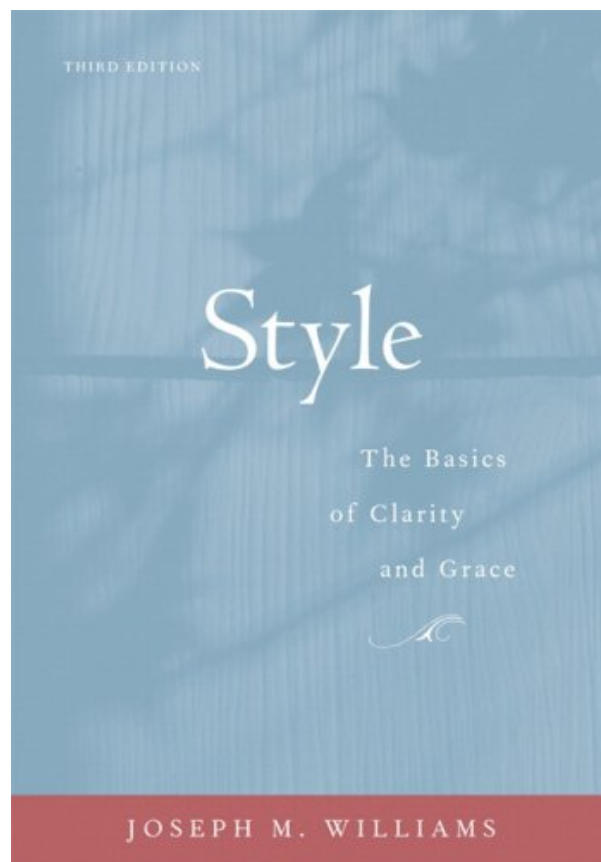


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Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace reflects the wisdom and clear authorial voice of Williams' best-selling book, Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace, while streamlining every chapter to create a very brief, yet powerfully direct guide to writing with style.

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- Published on: 2008-01-20
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 6.99" h x .34" w x 5.07" l, .30 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 160 pages

Features

- Great product!

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It's like a favorite teacher

By Joseph Judge

I am an independent corporate trainer who teaches people to write better at work. When my students ask me for good books to learn even more, this is the first book I mention. I tell them, "If you are a good writer and you want to be a very good writer, get this book."

I also tell them several other things about the book. First, it is not a book of lists like the excellent resource, The Elements of Style. Instead, it's a challenging textbook that is informative and compelling from beginning to end. Second, it teaches a novel way to keep readers interested in what you are writing. Basically it's narrative, or story telling, within each sentence. Third, it provides guidance on advanced topics such as emphasis, elegance, and ethics. Topics like these might seem esoteric or irrelevant, but the author makes them easy to understand and shows why they are useful, and he does it in a way that is fun to read.

This book is one of those few textbooks that you will remember the same way you remember that favorite teacher. Like that teacher, it brought you to a new level of knowledge, and it did it with humor and style.

I rated this book 5 stars because I think it is superior in all categories for a textbook: useful content, insightful author, clear exposition, skillful publishing, and reasonable price.

34 of 36 people found the following review helpful.

Best of the Best

By Amazon Customer

It is difficult to know where to begin. I am writing a brief review of this book to counter the negative reviews I read. I was stunned: I expected to read rave reviews of Professor Williams' book. Without wanting to

offend anyone, they are for the most part so far off the mark I would think they were talking about another book.

One author mentioned Strunk and White's book as the ideal. As much as I loved this book when I was young, it seems slightly old-fashioned, even quaint now, and encourages an attention to rules that seems superficial. On the other hand, Williams' book takes advantage of the more systematic, deep approach to language, rhetoric and communication that was developed by the best linguists of the 20th century. There is a good reason that this book has had so many editions for such a long period of time (now in the 8th edition). It is because it is based on an insight that touches a deep truth about communicating in writing: that subjects and verbs, or characters and their actions as Williams helpfully calls them at times, form the basic elements of the English sentence. It is Williams' ability to draw out the implications of this simple truth that gives his book its genius. Emerson once said that rhythm is the deep structure of the universe (he said it better but I can't remember his words); I feel that Emerson would smile in agreement at Williams thesis: that it is an understanding of the significance of the basic character/action relationship between the subject and verb that gives a sentence its strength and, on a "higher" level, the same systole/diastole relationship between theme and discussion that gives a paragraph its strength.

I am by no means doing Professor Williams' book justice, and I would not have written this review if the others had not been so, well, wrong. His writing bad? On the contrary, good writing, as Williams points out in a useful addition to one of the later editions of his book on controlling longer sentences, does not mean Dick and Jane type sentences, and he does not allow himself to fall into Strunk and White's tendency to oversimplify in explaining his ideas. I am now directing an English language program at a major university in Thailand after teaching English at Indiana University for 20 years, and I was recently asked to teach a graduate course on writing. What book did I first reach for in looking for the most substantial, concrete, practical and useful lessons on writing so that my students would not be exposed to the usual platitudes on omitting needless words and relying on your taste to be your guide? Professor Williams' book of course. It is the best of the best and will reward you endlessly as you apply his basic insights in your own writing.

23 of 23 people found the following review helpful.

Great resource for writers and editors

By Paralogue

I wish I had this book five years ago when I was starting out as a copy editor at my college newspaper. In this abridged version of the text, Williams provides guidelines and techniques as to how to revise problematic sentences. He dissects the problems in a clear fashion and leads the reader through the process of editing through the problems. It takes only a few hours to read, but sessions of careful re-reading will prove rewarding for your writing and editing skills.

Although the focus is on nonfiction writing, insofar as I can tell, the advice and methods Williams presents can be applied beyond nonfiction. Williams does use a lot of grammar terminology and does diagram some sentences, almost a lost skill nowadays, but he explains himself clearly, concisely, and with examples.

I highly recommend this book for anyone who seeks to improve their writing and editing skills, especially at the college level. Added bonus: this is more inexpensive compared to the unabridged version of the book.

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