

NEW
EDITION

WILLIAM
STRUNK JR.
A N D
E.B. **WHITE**

*"...still a little book, small enough and important enough
to carry in your pocket, as I carry mine."*

— Charles Osgood

The
ELEMENTS
Of
STYLE

FOURTH EDITION

FOREWORD BY ROGER ANGELL

The Elements of Style

THE
ELEMENTS
OF
Style

BY
WILLIAM STRUNK JR.

*With Revisions, an Introduction,
and a Chapter on Writing*

BY
E. B. WHITE

FOURTH EDITION

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1. Form the possessive singular of nouns by adding s.	1
2. In a series of three or more terms with a single conjunction, use a comma after each term except the last.	2
3. Enclose parenthetical expressions between commas.	2
4. Place a comma before a conjunction introducing an independent clause.	5
5. Do not join independent clauses with a comma.	5
6. Do not break sentences in two.	7
7. Use a colon after an independent clause to introduce a list of particulars, an appositive, an amplification, or an illustrative quotation.	7
8. Use a dash to set off an abrupt break or interruption and to announce a long appositive or summary.	9
9. The number of the subject determines the number of the verb.	9
10. Use the proper case of pronoun.	11

principal verb The predicating verb in a main clause or sentence.

pronominal possessive Possessive pronouns such as *hers, its, and theirs*.

proper noun The name of a particular person (*Frank Sinatra*), place (*Boston*), or thing (*Moby Dick*). Proper nouns are capitalized. Common nouns name classes of people (*singers*), places (*cities*), or things (*books*) and are not capitalized.

relative clause A clause introduced by a relative pronoun, such as *who, which, that*, or by a relative adverb, such as *where, when, why*.

relative pronoun A pronoun that connects a dependent clause to a main clause in a sentence: *who, whom, whose, which, that, what, whoever, whomever, whichever, and whatever*.

restrictive term, element, clause A phrase or clause that limits the essential meaning of the sentence element it modifies or identifies. Professional athletes *who perform exceptionally* should earn stratospheric salaries. Since there are no commas before and after the italicized clause, the italicized clause is restrictive and suggests that only those athletes who perform exceptionally are entitled to such salaries. If commas were added before *who* and after *exceptionally*, the clause would be nonrestrictive and would suggest that *all* professional athletes should receive stratospheric salaries.

sentence fragment A group of words that is not grammatically a complete sentence but is punctuated as one: *Because it mattered greatly.*

subject The noun or pronoun that indicates what a sentence is about, and which the principal verb of a sentence elaborates. *The new Steven Spielberg movie* is a box office hit.

subordinate clause A clause dependent on the main clause in a sentence. *After we finish our work, we will go out for dinner.*

syntax The order or arrangement of words in a sentence. Syntax may exhibit parallelism (*I came, I saw, I conquered*), inversion (*Whose woods these are I think I know*), or other formal characteristics.

tense The time of a verb's action or state of being, such as past, present, or future. *Saw, see, will see.*

transition A word or group of words that aids coherence in writing by showing the connections between ideas. William Carlos Williams was influenced by the poetry of Walt Whitman. *Moreover*, Williams's emphasis on the present and the immediacy of the ordinary represented a rejection of the poetic stance and style of his contemporary T. S. Eliot. *In addition*, Williams's poetry . . .

transitive verb A verb that requires a direct object to complete its meaning. They *washed* their new car. An *intransitive verb* does not require an object to complete its meaning: The audience *laughed*. Many verbs can be both: The wind *blew* furiously. My car *blew* a gasket.

verb A word or group of words that expresses the action or indicates the state of being of the subject. Verbs *actuate* sentences.

verbal A verb form that functions in a sentence as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb rather than as a principal verb. *Thinking* can be fun. An *embroidered* handkerchief. (See also *gerund, infinitive, and participle*.)

voice The attribute of a verb that indicates whether its subject is active (Janet *played* the guitar) or passive (The guitar *was played* by Janet).

Glossary prepared by Robert DIXAMMI.