Here is a list of the seven elementary rules of English usage and 11 elementary principles of composition from William Strunk, Jr.'s classic work, The Elements of Style. In addition, we list the "reminders" for writers added by E. B. White in his edition of Strunk. The complete text of the original Strunk edition is available on the Web site at Columbia University.

**Strunk's Seven Elementary Rules of English Usage**

1. Form the possessive singular of nouns by adding 's.
2. In a series of three or more terms with a single conjunction, use a comma after each term except the last.
3. Enclose parenthetic expressions between commas.
4. Place a comma before a conjunction introducing an independent clause.
5. Do not join independent clauses by a comma.
6. Do not break sentences in two.
7. A participial phrase at the beginning of a sentence must refer to the grammatical subject.

**Strunk's 11 Elementary Principles of Composition**

1. Choose a suitable design and hold to it.
2. Make the paragraph the unit of composition.
3. Use the active voice.
4. Put statements in positive form.
5. Use definite, specific, concrete language.
6. Omit needless words.
7. Avoid a succession of loose sentences.
8. Express coordinate ideas in similar form.
9. Keep related words together.
10. In summaries, keep to one tense.
11. Place the emphatic words of a sentence at the end.

**White's List of 21 Reminders to Writers**

1. Place yourself in the [background](http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/Strunks-rules).
2. Write in a way that comes naturally.
3. Work from a suitable design.
4. Write with nouns and verbs.
5. Revise and rewrite.
6. Do not overwrite.
7. Do not overstate.
8. Avoid the use of qualifiers.
9. Do not affect a breezy manner.
10. Use orthodox spelling.
11. Do not explain too much.
12. Do not construct awkward adverbs.
13. Make sure the reader knows who is speaking.
14. Avoid fancy words.
15. Do not use dialect unless your ear is good.
16. Be clear.
17. Do not inject opinion.
18. Use figures of speech sparingly.
19. Do not take shortcuts at the cost of clarity.
20. Avoid foreign languages.
21. Prefer the standard to the offbeat.

*This was last updated in*April 2005