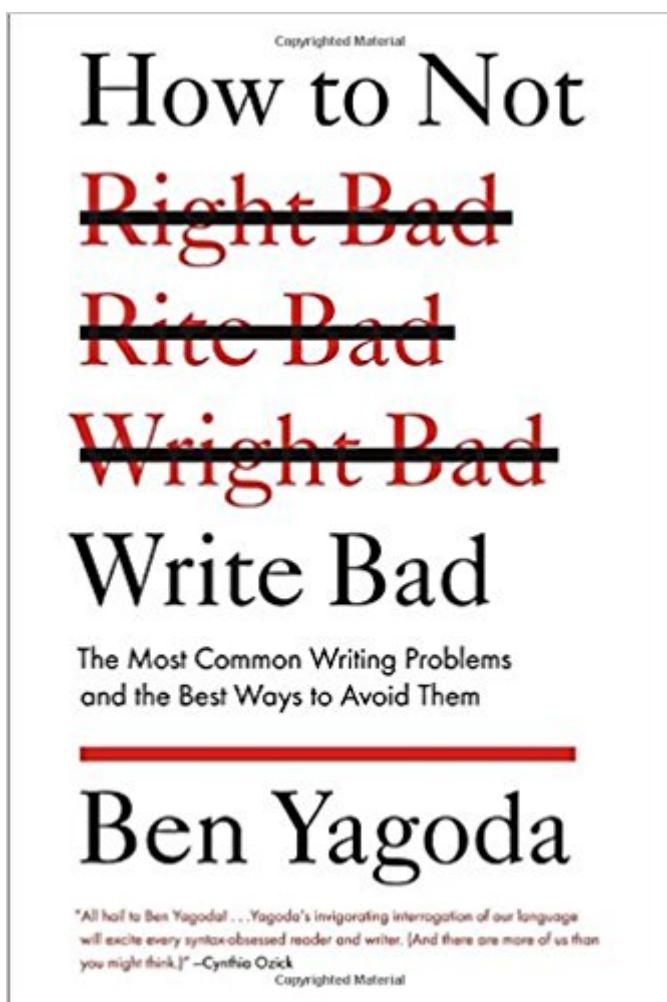


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# How To Not Write Bad: The Most Common Writing Problems And The Best Ways To Avoid Them



## Synopsis

Ben Yagoda's *How to Not Write Bad* illustrates how we can all write better, more clearly, and for a wider readership. He offers advice on what he calls "not-writing-badly," which consists of the ability, first, to craft sentences that are correct in terms of spelling, diction (word choice), punctuation, and grammar, and that also display clarity, precision, and grace. Then he focuses on crafting whole paragraphs—•with attention to—cadence, consistency of tone, sentence transitions, and paragraph length. In a fun, comprehensive guide, Yagoda lays out the simple steps we can all—take to make our writing more effective, more interesting—•and just plain better.

## Book Information

Paperback: 192 pages

Publisher: Riverhead Books (February 5, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1594488487

ISBN-13: 978-1594488481

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.5 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 53 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #22,067 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #32 in Books > Reference > Words, Language & Grammar > Vocabulary, Slang & Word Lists > Vocabulary #68 in Books > Reference > Words, Language & Grammar > Grammar #91 in Books > Textbooks > Reference > Writing Skills

## Customer Reviews

Praise for *Memoir: A History*"Spirited... Yagoda's incisive exploration is a worthy study of a genre that even now cannot completely be defined."—Los Angeles Times—“Perceptive, thorough, and amusing.”—New York Magazine—“This idea-driven cultural criticism leads to all kinds of interesting places.”—Christian Science Monitor—“Ben Yagoda is one of the most subtle—and entertaining—writers about writing one can find. His history of the memoir reads between the lines—and the lies—with illuminating precision.”—Ron Rosenbaum, author of *Explaining Hitler* and *The Shakespeare Wars*—“We owe Ben Yagoda such a huge debt of thanks: his witty, comprehensive, and insightful biography—of the form reminds us why the memoir matters—and will continue to matter as long as humans think, read, and write. This is literary criticism at its

lively best. • David Friedman, author of *A Mind of Its Own: A Cultural History of the Penis and The Immortalists: Charles Lindbergh, Dr. Alexis Carrel, and Their Daring Quest to Live Forever* “A shrewd and witty history of memoir sweeps us from Julius Caesar to James Frey. Our guide, Ben Yagoda, is always fine company, with just the right word, kindly good judgment, and another great story coming up on the next page. It’s a splendid journey.” • Richard Ben Cramer, author of *Joe DiMaggio: The Hero’s Life and How Israel Lost: The Four Questions* “Fascinating! With its mixture of literary criticism, cultural history and just enough trivia, Yagoda’s survey is sure to appeal to scholars and bibliophiles alike.” — Publishers Weekly (starred review)

Ben Yagoda is a journalism professor at the University of Delaware. He is the author, coauthor, or editor of ten books, including *Memoir: A History*, *Will Rogers: A Biography*, and *When You Catch an Adjective, Kill It*, and has written for *Slate*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and publications that start with every letter of the alphabet except J, K, Q, X, and Z. He lives in Pennsylvania with his wife.

Yagoda entertains where the others anesthetize, clarifies where the other grammarians obfuscate, gives workable advice where others are unwieldy. The best of its kind. Highly recommended.

A practical guide to improving your writing. The author strikes a sensible balance between descriptivism and prescriptivism. If I taught a writing class, or any kind of class requiring formal writing (or informal writing), I'd recommend this book to my students. I'd recommend it to anyone interested in writing or language in general. It's right up there with *Strunk & White*, and I'm not sure there's higher praise than that.

This is an odd way to write an instruction book. Instead of telling what you should do, it describes what you should not do. There is a section on the elements of style that includes useful stuff about punctuation, words, and grammar. My favorite part deals with sentences. It gives you many handy rules to follow when you editing and revising sentences. This book will help you if you are trying to improve your writing skills.

Entertaining, relevant, succinct, yet complete. I never thought I'd laugh out loud while reading a book on grammar and punctuation, but not only is this now an indispensable reference, it's funnier

than hell. Which isn't really saying much, what with all of those people burning and screaming and such, but you get the point.

This is my new go-to for the majority of writing problems that I face each day. (I think Mr. Yagoda would call "go-to" a cliche, but never mind, it still carries the meaning.) I am on my third reading, and my intent is to completely internalize it as an integral component of my writing brain.

This book has more detail than Strunk and White Elements of Style. Amusing in places with lots of examples of how NOT to write as well as the same example shown with how TO write. Also not so long to be daunting. I've already dog eared my favorite pages.

This super little fun book covers most all the common mistakes people make in writing. Like sentence fragments. It helps; you put; semicolons, commas: colons all in the right places.

Easy to read, and not filled with the fluff of most self-help books, this book is comprised of dozens of tips with examples. If you are willing to pay even a little attention to your writing, this book will help you make an instant improvement.

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