

### The Historian's Commandments

1. Thou shalt not use the present tense, nor the passive voice.
2. Thou shalt not split thy infinitives nor dangle thy participles, nor end thy sentences with prepositions.
3. Thou shalt not use slang, except as it be contemporary with thy subject and clearly explained, and then only when it adds seasoning to thy work. Above all, thou shalt avoid and abhor all modern jargon, even though it be the words of thy professors. Trite statements and dead metaphors are an abomination to the true believer.
4. Thou shalt not use the personal pronoun either implicitly or explicitly.
5. Thou shalt not use this for the nor the for a.
6. Thou shalt place thy time clauses first.
7. Thou shalt not use a rhetorical question to avoid an intelligent beginning--Thou shalt strike thy reader hard with thy first sentence.
8. Thou shalt set down things as they happened--Thou shalt have no reference later in time than the subject thou'rt treating.
9. Thou shalt beware of quotations. A secondary source or the author thereof speaketh not from his own knowledge. He is no better than thou--use him but quote him not, nor mention his name in thy text. Neither shalt thou quote anything thou canst say better thyself, nor shalt thou quote to carry thy story nor to establish a fact except when the word itself is the fact. In short, thou shalt quote only to "season" thy story and then no "blocks," never more than four lines.
10. Thy footnotes shall be the field of all thy battles, and thou shalt combine footnotes whenever possible. In thy footnotes thou shalt cite material to the standard source, for verily the greatest scholar is not he who can cite the most obscure document but he who alloweth the reader to check for himself in the most convenient source available.
11. Thy methodology is not the theme of thy story, therefore

Sentences Taken From Actual Letters  
Received By The Welfare Department  
Of A Nearby State  
OR EXAMPLES OF INCOHERENT WRITING

1. I am forwarding my marriage certificate and six children. I have 7, one died which was baptized on a half sheet of paper.
2. I am writing the Welfare Department to say that my baby was born two years old. When do I get my money?
3. Mrs. Jones has not had any clothes for a year and has been visited regularly by the Clergy.
4. I cannot get sick pay. I have six children, can you tell me why?
5. I am glad to report that my husband who is missing is dead.
6. This is my eighth child. What you going to do about it?
7. Please find for certain if my husband is dead. The man I am now living with can't eat or do anything till he knows.
8. I am very much annoyed to find that you have branded my son illiterate. This is a lie as I was married a week before he was born.
9. In answer to your letter, I have given birth to a boy weighing ten pounds. I hope this is satisfactory.
10. I am forwarding my marriage certificate and three children, one of which is a mistake as you can see.
11. Unless I get my husband's money soon, I will be forced to live an immortal life.
12. You have changed my little boy to a girl. Will this make any difference?
13. I have no children yet as my husband is a truck driver and works day and night.
14. In accordance with your instructions I have given birth to twins in the enclosed envelope.
15. I want my money as quick as I can get it. I've been in bed with the doctor two weeks and he doesn't do me any good. If things don't improve, I will have to send for another doctor.

shalt thou discuss thy subject and not the documents concerning thy subject nor thy methods in selecting and arranging them.

12. Thou shalt clearly identify in relation to thy subject any personality or incident mentioned in the text, be it Abraham Lincoln, the Battle of Gettysburg, or Jesus of Nazareth. Only after thou has performed this ceremony of purification mayest thou use familiar terms such as Lee, Sheridan, Shiloh, Mud March, or Monitor.
13. Thou shalt not write the history of a tobacco patch regardless of how "naturally" it develops, for history is the story of people and everyday natural processes do not have to do with history.
14. Thou shalt not pass judgments on mankind in general, yet thou shalt not pardon any man for anything. If a man is in error thou shalt see the reasons for his error but not the excuse.
15. Thou shalt avoid negations, as these revelations, alas, have failed to do. Thou shalt be neither a "no-er" nor a "not-er."

### Hints To Make Your English More Better

1. Don't use no double negative.
2. Make sure each pronoun agrees with their antecedent.
3. Join clauses good, like a conjunction should.
4. About those sentence fragments.
5. When dangling, watch your participles.
6. Verbs has to agree with their subjects.
7. Just between you and I, case is important too.
8. Don't write run-on sentences they are hard to read.
9. Don't use commas, which aren't necessary.
- 10 Try not to ever split infinitives.
11. It is important to use your apostrophe's correctly.
12. Proofread your writing to see if you any words out.
13. Correct spelling is essentiall.
14. Don't use a preposition to end a sentence with.
15. Don't repeat unnecessarily and be repetitious.