

BOOK *Smart*

The Elements of Style

—William Strunk, Jr. & E.B. White

BY RAE CHUNGLO

Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style* is a fairly good resource for learning the basics of English grammar. It covers usage, composition and form, how to approach style, and a list of the

most misused words and phrases.

For each section it gives reasoning for why things are done a certain way and it gives examples of correct and incorrect uses of grammar.

The Elements of Style is a helpful book for copy editing but it is fairly

In a world full of resource books, how does a person seeking editing & grammar advice know which to buy?

limited in its resources and examples in today's media.

The book itself pertains more towards writing papers and has no focus toward journalism or news writing.

The Elements of Style is less organized than the *AP Stylebook* and, while it gives more information, it's harder to find exactly what you're looking for.

I was required to read this book in high school and had to take quizzes on it much like the AP Style quizzes that are given in the news writing classes at Cronkite.

The chapter covering misused expressions and words was really helpful.

I was surprised to see how many phrases I had been using that were considered grammatically incorrect.

Strunk and White was definitely helpful in high school but I'm not sure how applicable it is to copy editing. It's not very large and only covers so much material.

I don't think I would recommend Strunk and White as a copy editing resource.

However, it is still a good book to help develop a good understanding of English grammar and to strengthen one's writing abilities.

However, it should still be considered a secondary source to the *AP Stylebook* when it comes to copy editing and news writing.



Strategic Copy Editing

John Russial

BY ADAM SNEED

In my course, I used the textbook *Strategic Copy Editing* by John Russial. The information in the book was easy to understand, especially for a beginner, and presented interesting situations that one might not think of right away.

One of the most useful features of this book, in my opinion, was its explanation of the use of sidebars and graphics. Many stories easily lend themselves to sidebars, but this book had examples of unorthodox sidebars and

helped the reader always think of new ways to present information outside of a traditional story.

The most helpful information was to use sidebars as a way to include important information that might not work well in a story, like a history of events or extra details that could lose a reader by breaking up a story's flow.

The class exercises that went along with the book were usually helpful, but often longer than they needed to be. Fill-in-the-blank exercises helped drive home

points in the reading about various issues, like style and grammar issues, journalism lingo and other important lessons, but sometimes the point was made well before the end of the exercise.

A particularly helpful lesson, however, was about trademark names and copyright issues.

Common commercial brands that have become synonymous with their products are often difficult to identify.

Strategic Copy Editing helped me learn that things like Dumpster, Styrofoam

and Band-Aid are all trademarked names.

More importantly, it has me double checking to make sure names that come up are not trademarked brand names.

The book offered a sound explanation for the necessity of copy editors.

In a time when copy desks are being cut, this book tells students and professionals alike that a group dedicated to checking facts and organizing information will always add more value to a product and is well worth the investment.

The Basics: A Rhetoric & Handbook

Buscemi, Nicolai & Strugala

BY MEGAN PANTAK

The Basics is an exemplary introductory guide to the fundamental concepts and rules of English grammar and writing technique.

The first half of the book (or Book One) discusses the writing process: drafting, rewriting, editing, designing, developing paragraphs and special stylistic techniques regarding persuasive and research-based writing.

The book's latter half (or Book Two) consists of tools for revision and editing: sentence sense; correct usage; punctuation, spelling, and mechanics; and a glossary of basic writing terms.

Each section of the book is conveniently labeled by a dog-eared tab so that the reader may easily flip to the section regarding their writing or editing query.

The Basics incorporates specific examples and sample readings to deliberate certain stylistic or grammatical points and rules.

It helps the reader understand how the rules are used in common speech and writing.

The two-part handbook illustrates the importance of both style and grammar, with a chapter about writing focused, unified, and coherent paragraphs; as well as a chapter about all

“The Basics has helped me with my writing process in that it outlines what is necessary to compose a well-written piece and not just a grammatically correct one.”

forms of grammatical agreement.

In my experience, copy editors all too often focus almost entirely on the grammatical aspect of a piece of writing, sometimes completely ignoring whether the structure of the sentences is strong or the piece flows well.

It is important for me, as a writer,

to know both what to do and what not to do stylistically and grammatically, which is why the examples in the has book of both correct and incorrect usage have helped me as a copy-editor and a writer.

However, as a book titled *The Basics* must entail, the information and concepts discussed are basic and unelaborated (with the exception of brief examples and sample readings).

For more experienced writers with more complex stylistic and/or grammatical queries, this book simply may not answer some of them.

The Basics has more of an on-the-go format, with its tabbed sections and brief summaries of concepts and rules.

It is a thorough introduction to the fundamentals of grammar and writing technique, yet it is not necessarily a thorough guide to the complexities of the English language.

Nonetheless, this handbook has helped with some of my grammatical questions and stylistic conundrums.