

PRECISION WRITING

Presented by Dr. Chris Holmes

SESSION 2—THE MECHANICS OF WRITING

THE MECHANICS OF WRITING

Common problems with writing:

- Understanding grammar and punctuation
- Distinguishing between words or to spell correctly
- Grasping the importance of style issues
- Writing informally

THE MECHANICS OF WRITING

- Assignment:
"The Nature of the Pastoral Ministry of Charles Spurgeon"
- Asked pertinent questions
- Thesis Statement:
"Charles Spurgeon believed that pastoral ministry must center on the truth."
- Outline:
 - I. Introduction
 - II. Knowing the Truth
 - III. Loving the Truth
 - IV. Proclaiming the Truth
 - V. Conclusion

GRAMMAR

GRAMMAR

- Rules of a language; essential for clear communication
- Involves the parts of speech:
Nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs,
prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections
- Some of the most common errors are grammatical errors

GRAMMAR

Common grammatical problems:

- Run-on sentences
- Pronoun errors
- Subject/Verb agreement
- Misplaced Modifiers
- Subject/Object agreement
- Split infinitives
- Sentence fragments

PUNCTUATION

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- In written communication, punctuation is almost as important as grammar
- In preparing academic papers, punctuation is integral to footnotes, bibliographic citations, etc.
- Punctuation cannot be ignored or treated loosely

PUNCTUATION

Common punctuation problems:

- Apostrophes
Only for omitted letters or possession, never for plurals
- Ellipses
"For God so loved the world . . . everlasting life."
- Commas
- Quotation marks
"Jesus wept" (John 11:35).
"Who do you say that I am?" (Matt 16:15).

WORD SELECTION AND SPELLING

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- Correct spelling and word usage is another area that demands accuracy when writing
- Spelling errors usually stem from two primary problems: typographical errors and incorrect word usage
- Present-day culture prompts reductionistic approach
- Develop good proofreading skills
- Homonyms (words which sound the same) can be problematic

WORD SELECTION AND SPELLING

Notoriously troublesome words:

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Lay / lie | That / which / who |
| You're / your | They're / their / there |
| Site / Cite | It's / its |
| Fewer / Less | Peek / peak / pique |
| Affect / Effect | Than / then |
| Principle / principal | Me / myself / I |
| Loose / lose | Could of vs. could've |
| Bring / take | Compliment / complement |
| Anxious / eager | Two / to / too |

STYLISTIC ISSUES

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- Stylistic issues involve the way in which you write what you write.
- They pertain to the specific manner in which you use words to convey meaning
- Words—sentences—paragraphs

STYLISTIC ISSUES

Common stylistic issues:

- Write in active voice
- Eliminate unnecessary words
- Vary sentence structure
- Paragraphs concern a single unit of thought
- Do not use 2nd person; avoid the use of 1st person
- Word repetition
- Ending a sentence with a preposition

CITATIONS & FOOTNOTES

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- As you write your paper, whenever you include the data, research, conclusions, or ideas of others, you **MUST** give the proper credit to whom it is due
- Footnotes are the most common manner of providing in-paper citations. Endnotes are occasionally used, but they are usually not desirable.

CITATIONS & FOOTNOTES

- Quotation:
"To know truth as it should be known, to love it as it should be loved, and then to proclaim it in the right spirit, and in its proper proportions."¹
- Footnote:
¹ Charles H. Spurgeon, *An All-Round Ministry* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1960), 8.
- Subsequent:
⁵ Spurgeon, *An All-Round Ministry*, 15.

QUOTATIONS

QUOTATIONS

- It is usually appropriate to include brief quotations of authors or sources in the body of your paper
- Be sure to provide proper citations for quoted material
- Quotations that are more than a few lines or sentences in length should be inserted as a block quote, which requires that the quote be indented and that it have a smaller font size (see the style guide)

QUOTATIONS

Dr. Nathan Finn has recently written,

"This is a public service announcement for my fellow writers. Lengthy block quotations are too often just filler that take the place of a writer's interpretation and argumentation. Think of block quotes as literary atomic bombs. They should be dropped only once or twice per essay/paper/chapter--and always to great effect."

PLAGIARISM

PLAGIARISM

- Plagiarism is a serious problem
- It is the theft or unattributed use of the intellectual property of another; it is stealing
- If you plagiarize, you are declaring that the work or research that someone else has done is yours
- The temptation to plagiarize can be subtle, so guard against it carefully
- Document carefully and consistently

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BIBLIOGRAPHY
- The bibliography is the summary list of all of the source materials used in the preparation of the research paper
 - It is commonly included at the end of the paper
 - Be aware that the information for the bibliographic entries is arranged differently from footnotes
 - In particular, follow closely the punctuation rules for the bibliographic citations
 - Follow closely the instructions in your style guide

- BIBLIOGRAPHY
- Book
Nettles, Tom. *Living By Revealed Truth: The Life and Pastoral Theology of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*. Ross-Shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2013.
 - Journal
Ferguson, Duncan S. "The Bible and Protestant Orthodoxy: The Hermeneutics of Charles Spurgeon." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 25 (1982): 455-66.
 - Essay / Chapter
Drummond, Lewis A. "Charles Haddon Spurgeon." In *Baptist Theologians*, ed. Timothy George and David S. Dockery, 267-88. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990.

RESOURCES FOR WRITING

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Printed Resources

- *The Elements of Style* by Strunk & White (Longman Publishers)
- *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* by Kate Turabian (University of Chicago Press)

RESOURCES FOR WRITING

Online Resources

- *The Elements of Style* by Strunk & White www.bartleby.com/141/
- Jack Lynch's Guide to Grammar and Style andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Writing/
- Paul Briens' Common Errors in English Usage (PDF) hcot.ir/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Common_Errors_in_English_usage.pdf
- Dictionary.com Style Guide www.dictionary.com
