

**Clear Writing
Style Do Nots**

**Practice Exercises And
Answer Key**

by

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Lesson 1: Vague Writing

Vague writing is the exact opposite of your ultimate goal: clear writing.

State the kind of details or examples that would make the sentences clearer. Then write a possible revision.

Example: His plane lands sometime tomorrow.

I'd want to know the exact time.

Example: His plane lands at 10:00 A.M.

1. There are several ways to learn new vocabulary.

2. My computer has been acting strange recently.

3. Could you call me? I'd like to talk to you about something.

4. My recommendation is to not hire her.

5. We should model ourselves after one of the successful social media start-ups.

6. Hey, lots of problems with this order. Could I get a refund?

7. The dinner went great last year. Everyone really enjoyed the food and entertainment.

8. Take your time and hire good people. I learned my lesson the hard way.

9. I'm a detail-oriented person.

10. I have a strong network that I can draw on to solve even unexpected problems.

Lesson 2: Wishy-washy Writing

Wishy-washy writing lacks confidence. The writer's conviction is unclear.

Put the confidence back in these sentences.

Example: I may not be able to get that done today.

I won't be able to get that done today.

1. I don't know. We should put some serious thought into a different approach.

2. You might not like this, but I'm pretty sure it's just what the client wants.

3. Don't you think we should use the template instead of re-doing everything?

4. I don't think it'd be terrible if we looked at the options for new suppliers.

5. Don't you think we need to talk to Tuomas?

6. Oh, man, are we working with Jasmine? She wasn't so great last time.

7. It won't not work, but there may be points at issue that prove to be obstacles to the desired progress.

8. It seems you've forgotten the question of the box count.

9. You're not seriously considering the office on Main St. are you?

10. If we found took some time to make this process more efficient wouldn't you mind or it's OK?

Lesson 3: Subjects Far From Verbs

Put verbs next to their subjects.

Revise these sentences to get the verbs next to their subjects.

Example: Marit, though I only heard her once, sings lovely songs.

Marit sings lovely songs, though I only heard her once.

1. Michael, despite the fact that I specifically told him to stay quiet about the case, called Jerry.

2. Red Rover Real Estate, founded in 1985, now dominates most of the city.

3. In addition, after the Russian representative purchased sauerkraut (fermented cabbage), sausages, and cheeses for the chain of stores in Moscow while she was accompanied by the company president on their visit to Berlin, those German foods became more well known in Russia.

4. What's more, the team employs an aggressive strategy, which, given enough time, produces great gains.

5. The managers there have many accomplishments to boast about.

6. We have a wide range of services including accounting for small businesses, search engine optimization, and leadership training that we offer our customers.

7. The prison officials institution of relaxed rules that included freer movement around the prison and allowing prisoners to participate in working condition decisions allowed the prisoners to escape into the wilderness surrounding the prison.

8. There are certainly people in the space working to make a comprehensive guide—but it's going to take years to finish, maybe decades.

9. As for seeing the paintings, she's at home or at work or with friends often talking about her art, but I've never seen one.

10. The latest textbook, originally published five years ago, is much improved.

Lesson 4: Modifiers Far From Heads

Modifiers are words (or phrases) that affect the meaning of another word (or phrase). The “head” is the word (or phrase) that gets affected.

Two rules: (1) Put modifiers next to their heads. (2) Make sure only one head is possible.

Revise these sentences to ensure clear modification.

Example: Proper members must have identification to enter.

Members must have proper identification to enter.

1. Balls that have been tested only by the contracted manufacturer will be used in games.

2. Balls that have been tested by the contracted manufacturer will only be used in games.

3. The lawyers argued with a DNA sample that they can prove his innocence.

4. Back at the office without a job, I felt bad about leaving him.

5. The emphasis on design persists as an element of the DNA in the culture of the company that means it's unheard of for ugly to slip by.

6. She went to the office with the papers.

7. Please describe the Chinese culture elements at the meeting.

8. The reports on improving morale as a team were studied.

9. We used all our cash for party supplies.

10. Nika uses her tablet instead of a desktop to computer to organize her files to avoid confusion.

Lesson 5: Dense Sentences

Don't put too much information into one sentence.

Split these dense sentences into multiple sentences. Also take other chances to add clarity.

Example: Being an introvert means you get your emotions or receive your energy to make decisions from within your own self, when you encounter people in the world in comparison to an extrovert who takes energy and emotions from them, you recoil or are uninterested.

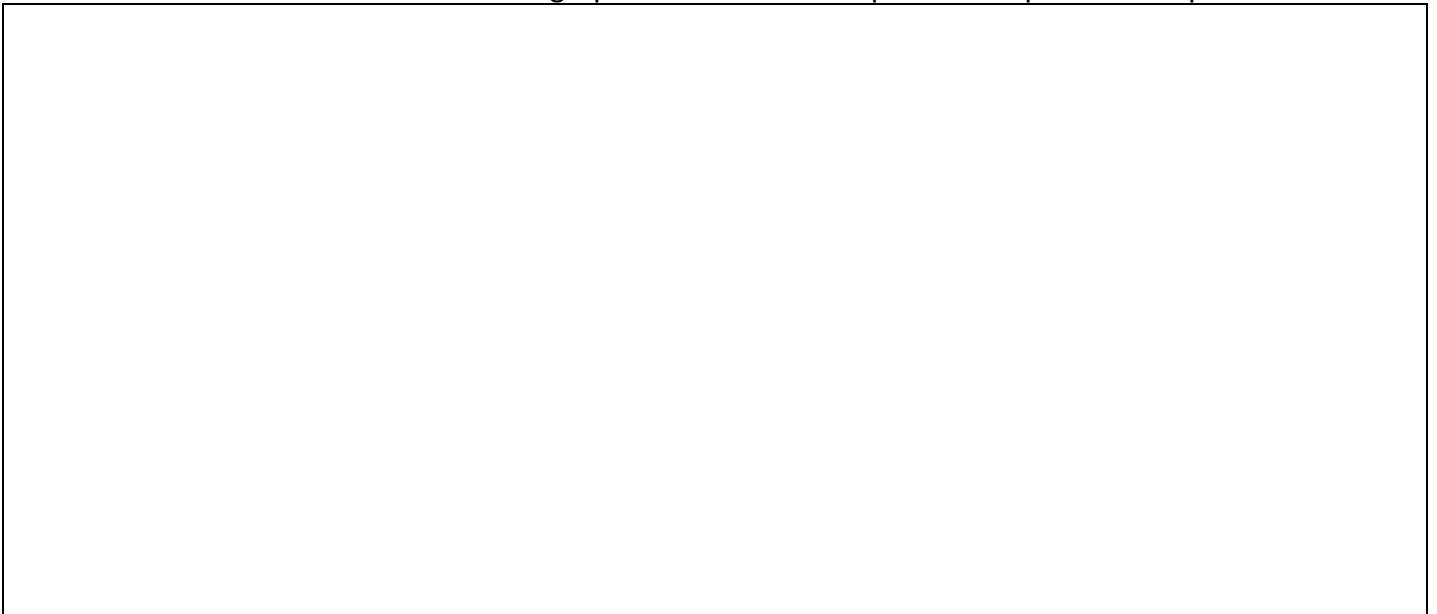
Being an introvert means you get your emotions or receive your energy to make decisions from within your own self. When introverts encounter people in the world they recoil or are uninterested. We can contrast introverts with extroverts who take energy and emotions from people.

1. In the textbook, Kelly introduces typical principles of democracy that are generally sought to be created by international aid organizations (NGOs) as well as government backed bodies (such as the IMF) that include (1) free and fair elections, (2) a stable judiciary, (3) a free press, (4) citizen control of the military, and (5) significant protections for minority rights.

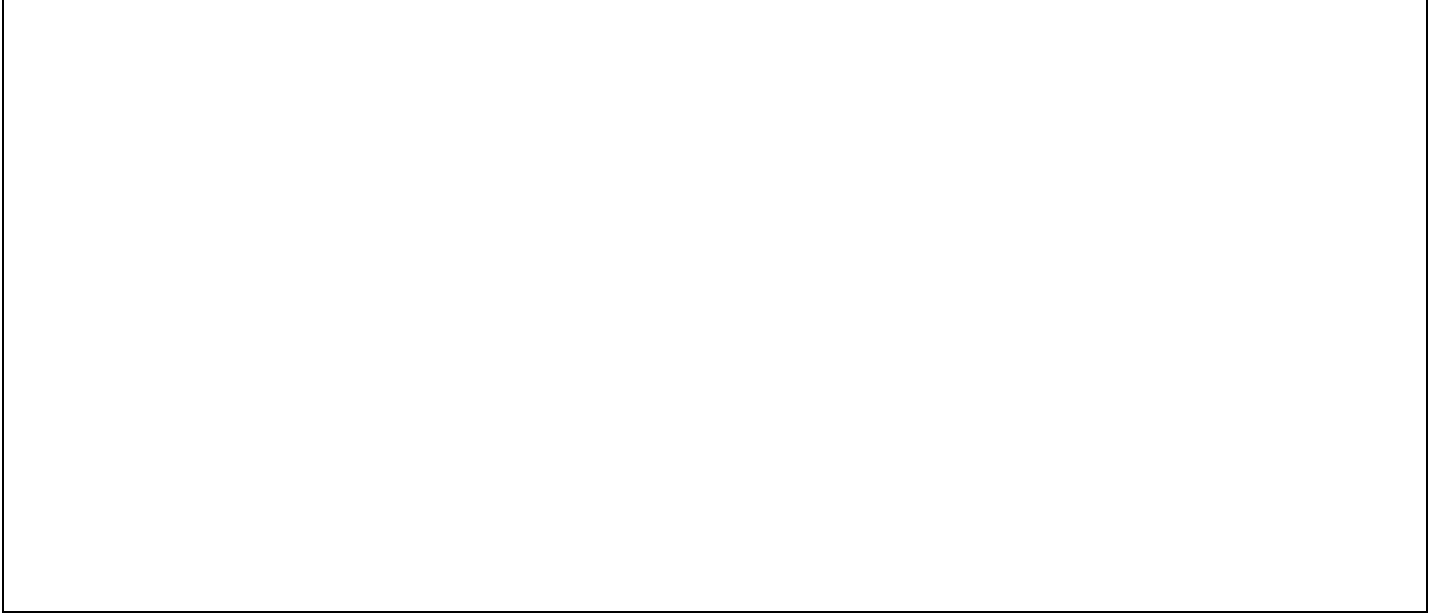
2. The Caliburger is one of our popular burgers created under a unique, healthy living concept with the name, Caliburger, bringing together California—a state known for many things including fresh, healthy foods in addition to a progressive culture—and of course the burgers we're famous for.



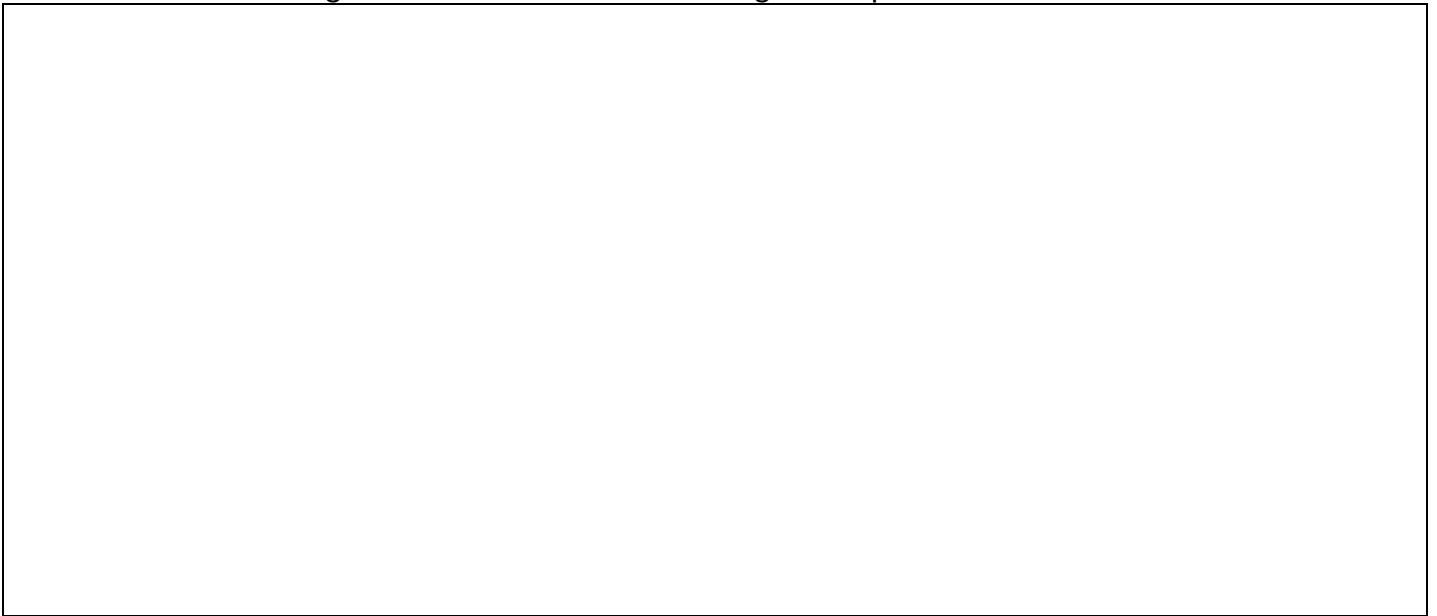
3. In Chicago through his research and development efforts and the administrative leadership Michael Yim, the director in United QRT between 1935 and 1951, enabled the cosmetics industry to reproduce for customers any and all famous looks seen on the silver screen and to make cosmetics that allowed for smaller studios and stage performances to expand their production possibilities.



4. Different with old corrupted and perhaps what's worse stale regime, the new board is pro-expansion, those who prefer to explore markets in other states though the president refuses to sign off, so his days may be numbered.



5. Malik decided to expand Avery's territory in order to both put pressure on competing scrap metal collectors nearby borderland between the South and North, and to show faith in Avery after his successful effort to bring the loss rate down to the target of 6 percent.



Sample Answers

Lesson 1

1. *Needs an example of a way to learn vocabulary.*

There are several ways to learn new vocabulary such as flashcards or writing practice sentences.

2. *Needs description of how it's been acting strange.*

My computer has been freezing whenever I watch videos online.

3. *Needs explanation of what the something is.*

Could you call me? I'd like to talk to you about our Facebook page.

4. *Needs a reason not to hire her.*

I don't think we should hire someone without more experience.

5. *Needs an example of which start-up.*

We should model ourselves after a successful social media start-up like Instagram.

6. *Needs information on the problems.*

Hey, the order arrived late, had a missing piece, and had a broken piece. Could I get a refund?

7. *Needs details on the food and entertainment from last year.*

The dinner went great last year. Everyone really enjoy the fried fish fillets and karaoke.

8. *Needs details on what went wrong.*

Take your time and hire good people. I hired someone who was a bad fit. She did bad work, I had to train her a lot, and eventually had to buy her out of her contract.

9. *Needs an example to prove you're detail-oriented.*

I'm a detail-oriented person. At my office, everyone sends me documents to check before we send them out to the press. One time we almost announced guests at the conference could swim in the *poo* instead of *pool*.

10. *Needs a description of the network and an example of drawing on it.*

My M.B.A. and years of volunteer work have given me a strong network that I can draw on to solve even unexpected problems. For example, when my previous company wanted to explore manufacturing in China, I reached out to an old classmate from Guangzhou.

Lesson 2

1. We need a different approach.

2. This is what the client wants.

3. No need to re-do everything. Let's use a template.

4. We should look at the options for new suppliers.

5. We need to talk to Tuomas.

6. Jasmine was terrible last time. Let's work with someone new.

7. That will work to a degree, but it will also cause problems.

8. You forgot about the box count.

9. The office on Main St. isn't a good idea.

10. Is it OK if we devote time to making the process more efficient?

Lesson 3

1. Michael called Jerry despite the fact that I specifically told him to stay quiet about the case.
2. Founded in 1985, Red Rover Real Estate now dominates much of the city.
3. In addition, sauerkraut (fermented cabbage), sausages, and cheeses became more well known in Russia after the Russian representative purchased them for the chain of stores in Moscow while she was accompanied by the company president on their visit to Berlin.
4. What's more, the team employs an aggressive strategy that produces great gains when given enough time.
5. The managers there can boast about many accomplishments.
6. We offer our customers a wide range of services including accounting for small businesses, search engine optimization, and leadership training.
7. The prison officials allowed the prisoners to escape into the wilderness surrounding the prison after their institution of relaxed rules that included freer movement around the prison and allowing prisoners to participate in working condition decisions.
8. There are certainly people working in the space to make a comprehensive guide—but it's going to take years to finish, maybe decades.
9. As for seeing the paintings, she's often talking about her art at home or at work or with friends, but I've never seen one.
10. Originally published five years ago, the latest textbook is much improved.

Lesson 4

1. Only balls that have been tested by the contracted manufacturer will be used in games.
2. Only balls that have been tested by the contracted manufacturer will be used in games.
3. The lawyers argued that they can prove his innocence with a DNA sample.
4. Back at the office, I felt bad about leaving him without a job.
5. The emphasis on design persists in the culture of the company as an element of the DNA that means it's unheard of for ugly to slip by.
6. The office that she went to had the papers. /// She took the papers to the office
7. At the meeting, please describe the Chinese culture elements. /// Please describe how the Chinese culture elements affected the meeting.
8. As a team, we studied the reports on improving morale. /// Regarding improving team as a team, we studied the reports.
9. We used all our party supply cash. /// We used all our cash to buy party supplies.
10. To avoid confusion, Nika uses her tablet instead of a desktop to computer to organize her files.

Lesson 5

1. In the textbook, Kelly introduces typical principles of democracy. These principles are sought by international aid organizations (NGOs) as well as government backed bodies (such as the IMF). They include (1) free and fair elections, (2) a stable judiciary, (3) a free press, (4) citizen control of the military, and (5) significant protections for minority rights.
2. The Caliburger is one of our popular burgers. We created it under a unique, healthy living concept. The name, Caliburger, brings together California and burger. Consumers associate this burger with California—a state known for many things including fresh, healthy foods in addition to a progressive culture—and of course the burgers we're famous for.
3. Michael Yim was the director of United QRT in Chicago between 1935 and 1951. His leadership as well as research and development efforts enabled the cosmetics industry to reproduce for customers any of the famous looks seen on the silver screen. His work also expanded the possibilities for smaller studios and stage performers.
4. In contrast to the old, corrupt—and what's worse stale—regime, the new regime is pro-expansion. They prefer to explore markets in other states. The president, however, refuses to sign off on the plan, so his days may be numbered.
5. Malik decided to expand Avery's territory in order to, first, pressure competing scrap metal collectors between the South and North border. Second, he wanted to show faith in Avery after Avery successfully reduced the loss rate to the target of 6 percent.