The book was found

The Sense Of Style: The Thinking Person's Guide To Writing In The 21st Century

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

THE

Sense

OF

Style

the THINKING PERSON'S GUIDE
to WRITING in the 21st CENTURY

STEVEN PINKER

author of THE BETTER ANGELS OF OUR NATURE
and THE LANGUAGE INSTINCT
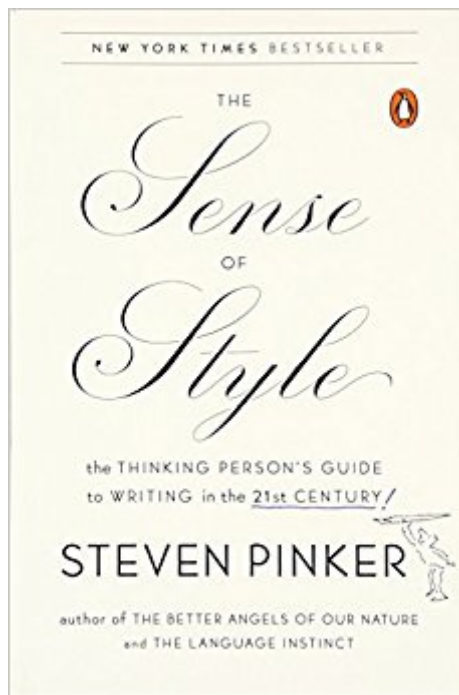
Synopsis

Ã¢â ¬Å"Charming and erudite . . . The wit and insight and clarity he brings . . . is what makes this book such a gem.Ã¢â ¬Å• Ã¢â ¬â •Time.comÃ Â Why is so much writing so bad, and how can we make it better? Is the English language being corrupted by texting and social media? Do the kids today even care about good writingÃ¢â ¬â •and why should we care? From the author of The Better Angels of Our Nature and the forthcoming Enlightenment NowIn this entertaining and eminently practical book, the cognitive scientist, dictionary consultant, and New York TimesÃ¢â ¬â œbestselling author Steven Pinker rethinks the usage guide for the twenty-first century. Using examples of great and gruesome modern prose while avoiding the scolding tone and Spartan tastes of the classic manuals, he shows how the art of writing can be a form of pleasurable mastery and a fascinating intellectual topic in its own right. The Sense of Style is for writers of all kinds, and for readers who are interested in letters and literature and are curious about the ways in which the sciences of mind can illuminate how language works at its best.

Book Information

Paperback: 368 pages

Publisher: Penguin Books; Reprint edition (September 22, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0143127799

ISBN-13: 978-0143127796

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars   310 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #5,761 in Books (See Top 100 in Books)   #13 inÃ Â Books > Reference > Words, Language & Grammar > Grammar   #20 inÃ Â Books > Reference > Words, Language & Grammar > Reference   #22 inÃ Â Books > Textbooks > Reference > Dictionaries

Customer Reviews

Praise for The Sense of StyleÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å"[The Sense of Style] is more contemporary and comprehensive than Ã¢â ¬Å"The Elements of Style,Ã¢â ¬Å• illustrated with comic strips and cartoons and lots of examples of comically bad writing. [PinkerÃ¢â ¬â„¢s] voice is calm, reasonable, benign, and you can easily see why heÃ¢â ¬â„¢s one of HarvardÃ¢â ¬â„¢s most popular lecturers.Ã¢â ¬Å•Ã¢â ¬â •The New York TimesÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å"Pinker's linguistical learningÃ¢â ¬Â¦is considerable. His knowledge of grammar is extensive and runs deep. He also

takes a scarcely hidden delight in exploding tradition. He describes his own temperament as "both logical and rebellious." Few things give him more pleasure than popping the buttons off what he takes to be stuffed shirts.Ã¢â ¬Å•Ã¢â ¬â •The Wall Street JournalÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å"[W]hileÃ Â The Sense of StyleÃ Â is very much a practical guide to clear and compelling writing, itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s also far moreÃ¢â ¬Â¦. In the end, PinkerÃ¢â ¬â„¢s formula for good writing is pretty basic: write clearly, try to follow the rules most of the timeÃ¢â ¬â •but only the when they make sense. ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s neither rocket science nor brain surgery. But the wit and insight and clarity he brings to that simple formula is what makes this book such a gem.Ã¢â ¬Å•Ã¢â ¬â •Time.comÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å"Erudite and wittyÃ¢â ¬Â¦ With its wealth of helpful information and its accessible approach, The Sense of Style is a worthy addition to even the most overburdened shelf of style manuals.Ã¢â ¬Å•Ã¢â ¬â •Shelf AwarenessÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å"Forget Strunk and WhiteÃ¢â ¬â„¢s rulesÃ¢â ¬â •cognitive science is a surer basis for clear and cogent writing, according to this iconoclastic guide from bestselling Harvard psycholinguist Pinker... Every writer can profit fromÃ¢â ¬â •and every writer can enjoyÃ¢â ¬â •PinkerÃ¢â ¬â„¢s analysis of the ways in which skillfully chosen words engage the mind.Ã¢â ¬Å•Ã¢â ¬â •Publishers Weekly (starred)Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"Yet another how-to book on writing? Indeed, but this is one of the best to come along in many years, a model of intelligent signposting and syntactical comportmentÃ¢â ¬Â¦PinkerÃ¢â ¬â„¢s vade mecum is a worthy addition to any writerÃ¢â ¬â„¢s library.Ã¢â ¬Å•Ã¢â ¬â •Kirkus ReviewsÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å"In this witty and practical book on the art of writing, Pinker applies insights from the sciences of language and mind to the crafting of clear, elegant prose: #requiredreading.Ã¢â ¬Å•Ã¢â ¬â •Publishers Weekly, PW pick Fall 2014 AnnouncementsÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å"Who better than a best-selling linguist and cognitive scientist to craft a style guide showing us how to use language more effectively?Ã¢â ¬Å•Ã¢â ¬â •Library JournalÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å"[A] dense, fascinating analysis of the many ways communication can be stymied by word choice, placement, stress, and the like. [PinkerÃ¢â ¬â„¢s] explanations run rich and deep, complemented by lists, cartoons, charts on diagramming sentences, and more.Ã¢â ¬Å•Ã¢â ¬â •Booklist Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"This book is a graceful and clear smackdown to the notion that English is going to the proverbial dogs. Pinker has written the Strunk & White for a new century while continuing to discourage baseless notions such as that the old slogan should have been Ã¢â ¬ËœWinston tastes good AS a cigarette should.Ã¢â ¬â„¢Ã¢â ¬Å•Ã¢â ¬â •John McWhorter, author of Our Magnificent Bastard Tongue and The Power of BabelÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å"Great stuff! Only Steven Pinker could have written this marvelous book, and thank heaven he has. Ã¢â ¬ËœGood writing can flip the way the world is perceived,Ã¢â ¬â„¢ he writes, and The Sense of Style will flip the way you think about good writing. PinkerÃ¢â ¬â„¢s curiosity and delight

illuminate every page, and when he says style can make the world a better place, we believe him.â€•Patricia T. Oâ€™Conner, author of Woe Is I and, with Stewart Kellerman, Origins of the Specious

Steven Pinker is the Johnstone Professor of Psychology at Harvard University. He has been listed among Foreign Policy magazineâ€™s â€œTop 100 Public Intellectualsâ€• and Timeâ€™s â€œThe 100 Most Influential People in the World.â€• He is currently chair of the Usage Panel of The American Heritage Dictionary.

The Sense of Style: The Thinking Personâ€™s Guide to Writing in the 21st Century by Steven PinkerThe Sense of Style is a scholarly and witty book on the art of writing well. Bestselling author, linguist and cognitive scientist Steven Pinker provides readers with a new writing-guide for the twenty-first century. He breaks down grammar rules and challenges purists on the best use of language. This challenging 368-page book includes the following six chapters: 1. Good Writing, 2. A Window onto the World, 3. The Curse of Knowledge, 4. The Web, the Tree, and the String, 5. Arcs of Coherence, and 6. Telling Right from Wrong.Positives:1. Dr. Pinker consistently produces quality work.2. A "very" unique topic, the art of writing well from a scientific perspective. You donâ€™t have to read the book to get my joke.3. Good use of wit that adds panache to a book about writing style.4. Good advice throughout the book. "By replacing dogma about usage with reason and evidence, I hope not just to avoid giving ham-fisted advice but to make the advice that I do give easier to remember than a list of dos and donâ€™ts."5. Explains the three main reasons why style matters.6. Provides insights on how to become a good writer. "Writers acquire their technique by spotting, savoring, and reverse-engineering examples of good prose."7. Supports good style over writing dogma. "The key to good style, far more than obeying any list of commandments, is to have a clear conception of the make-believe world in which youâ€™re pretending to communicate." "The purpose of writing is presentation, and its motive is disinterested truth. It succeeds when it aligns language with the truth, the proof of success being clarity and simplicity."8. The characteristics of classic style. "A writer of classic prose must simulate two experiences: showing the reader something in the world, and engaging her in conversation."9. Provides many examples of what constitutes poor prose: "Metadiscourse, signposting, hedging, apologizing, professional narcissism, clichÃƒÂ©s, mixed metaphors, metaconcepts, zombie nouns, and unnecessary passives."10. Hanlonâ€™s Razor, "Never attribute to malice that which is adequately explained by stupidity." Excellent explanation on how the curse of knowledge may lead to poor prose. "The curse of knowledge is the single best explanation

I know of why good people write bad prose."11. Ways on how to improve your prose. "Good prose is never written by a committee." Think about that.12. The importance of understanding syntax. "Finally, an awareness of syntax can help you avoid ambiguous, confusing, and convoluted sentences. All of this awareness depends on a basic grasp of what grammatical categories are, how they differ from functions and meanings, and how they fit into trees."13. Interesting insights on how our minds work and how that knowledge benefits good writing. "English syntax demands subject before object. Human memory demands light before heavy. Human comprehension demands topic before comment and given before new."14. How to construct coherent passages longer than a sentence. "In fact, it's the hunger for coherence that drives the entire process of understanding language."15. Discusses principles of composition. "An important principle in composition is that the amount of verbiage one devotes to a point should not be too far out of line with how central it is to the argument. "16. Discusses good use of grammar, word choice, and punctuation. Starts off by debunking the myth that all traditional rules must be followed for dogma's sake. "That's right: when it comes to correct English, there's no one in charge; the lunatics are running the asylum. The editors of a dictionary read a lot, keeping their eyes open for new words and senses that are used by many writers in many contexts, and the editors add or change the definitions accordingly. Purists are often offended when they learn that this is how dictionaries are written."17. Presents a list of common usage issues. "These are the ones that repeatedly turn up in style guides, pet-peeve lists, newspaper language columns, irate letters to the editor, and inventories of common errors in student papers." Great stuff.18. Includes notes, glossary and a formal bibliography.Negatives:1. This book is intended for writers, not for laypersons. You must possess good command of the English language and grammar in order for this book to make sense. The grammar jargon will overwhelm the average reader.2. The book's formatting leads to confusion. For a book predicated on clarity, many times I was lost.3. The writing may come across as pretentious.4. I wanted more neuroscience.In summary, there is a direct correlation between the number of stars this book deserves and your expertise on the subject. English majors and writers will give this book either four or five stars. On the other hand, laypersons will struggle with it to say the least. I'm giving this book four stars because even though my engineering brethren balks at reading such a book the avid reader in me recognizes its value. Writers will enjoy this book while the rest will struggle with it.Further recommendations: "The Elements of Style, Fourth Edition" by William Strunk Junior, "On Writing Well, 30th Anniversary Edition: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction" by William Zinsser, "A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, Seventh Edition: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing)" by Kate L.

Turabian, "The Only Grammar Book You'll Ever Need: A One-Stop Source for Every Writing Assignment" by Susan Thurman and Larry Shea, "Book Writing Mistakes (How To Avoid The Top 12 Mistakes New Business Book Authors Make)" by Jim Edwards, "How to Write Great Blog Posts that Engage Readers (Better Blog Booklets Book 1)" by Steve Scott, "English Grammar For Dummies" by Geraldine Woods, and "Grammar Girl's Punctuation 911: Your Guide to Writing it Right (Quick & Dirty Tips)" by Mignon Fogarty.

Brilliant. From the author of books on popular Linguistics on the one hand and vast sweeps of intellectual argument on the other, this combines deep linguistic authority with practical necessities. There are five major sections, which get progressively longer. (i) Windows on the World argues for a basic descriptive style as the foundation for all writing, at least non-fiction. If this seems obvious, contrast with so much academic and technical writing. (ii) The Curse of Knowledge is timely in the sense that IÃƒÂ¢ â ¬Ã â„¢ve seen this described from multiple sources recently. Why do people give such bad directions? Because they assume that the listener has the same worldview infrastructure. (iii) The Web, The Tree, and The String is the most technical. It has the greatest insight (to me) of the whole book. Ideas in our heads take the form of webs of connected ideas (semantic nets or webs). To communicate them we need to convert to a linear sequence of words (the string). The transformations are through trees (parsing). We can see whether our strings are coherent and properly match the webs by reverse engineering the transformation. No one but a linguist would actually go through this process, but it still is both insightful and helpful. (iv) Arcs of Coherence has perhaps the most useful info: While writing starts with outlines and ends with paragraphs, real writing requires a more complex structure. Themes appear and reappear. Conflicts as well. How should they best be structured? (v) Telling Right From Wrong has 120 pages of practical advice.

Heads-up, editors. In The Sense of Style, author Steven Pinker challenges every authoritarian grammarian and language purist who has held sway over the rules of the English language with their dogmatic style books.A psycholinguist by profession, Pinker is a scholar of the science of language. So it's no surprise that The Sense of Style feels like a modern alternative to the classic but tired guides of Strunk and White and others. In my days as an English undergrad, Strunk and White's The Elements of Style was the biblical tome of writing. But Pinker arrives with this iconoclastic book to show us that sometimes rules can be tone-deaf to what really makes for transparent and compelling prose.Purists often forget that the English language is rife with

idiosyncrasies that can't be fit so neatly into rule boxes. You'll see the best kind of rule-breaking among poets and novelists, who often have the better "ear" and feel for language than your clumsy grammarian. Language is chiefly a medium for expression, not just an embodiment of rules. Literature's most gifted writers have often 'broken' the rules using constructions that might have been edited into sterility by heavy-handed editors. The expressive possibilities of language often rely on the rules being bent.As you can see, this book isn't your typical manual on grammar and usage. You won't find a list of dos and don'ts in an effort to indoctrinate. Pinker shows us instead that unthinking adherence to manuals actually makes for bad, clunky writing. For example, one of the signature rules in writing is to avoid using the passive voice at all costs. But Pinker argues that if you change every passive sentence into an active one, you're not necessarily improving the prose. The main problem is that the passive construction exists for a purpose--but most people don't know when to use it effectively. Sure, both active and passive constructions convey the same information but they have cognitive differences because of the order of information given. Pinker's rule of thumb: Passive is the preferred construction when the affected entity (the item that receives the action) is the topic of the preceding discussion or when the agent of action is irrelevant to the discussion. In other words, good writing is about having a "sense," about letting your communication goals dictate the writing.This book isn't for beginners. Pinker is clear in the Introduction about this and writes that this book is for experienced writers. You will benefit the most from this book if you are a relatively experienced writer and reader, and are familiar with the basic rules of language and grammar. You have to know the rules in order to bend them with style and with compelling reason, to know when to take advantage of loopholes and irregularities.The "sense" in The Sense of Style is knowing how a masterful writer moves fluidly between logical rules and combinations, and knows those idiomatic usages and irregularities. The book is packed with examples and is wonderfully readable, which surprised me. Pinker is great at reverse engineering passages and illuminating what writers have done well (or not done well) to convey their ideas. Take lots of notes!For those who still crave the utility of a reference manual, the later chapters in the book include lists of words and rules that can be bent and those that can't (in Pinker's opinion). Or, for a bite-size taste of the grammar rules Pinker explores in this book, check out this article (http://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/aug/15/steven-pinker-10-grammar-rules-break) by Pinker in The Guardian.Overall, a great, informative read. I'll be keeping this on my reference shelf.[Disclaimer: I received an ARC copy of this book from the publisher through the Goodreads First Reads Program in exchange for an honest review.]

The Sense of Style: The Thinking Person's Guide to Writing in the 21st Century Positive Thinking: 50 Positive Habits to Transform you Life: Positive Thinking, Positive Thinking Techniques, Positive Energy, Positive Thinking,, Positive ... Positive Thinking Techniques Book 1) First Person Rural Second Person Rural Third Person Rural CRITICAL THINKING: A Beginner's Guide To Critical Thinking, Better Decision Making, And Problem Solving ! (critical thinking, problem solving, strategic thinking, decision making) The Elements of Style Workbook: Writing Strategies with Grammar Book (Writing Workbook Featuring New Lessons on Writing with Style) Belwin's 21st Century Guitar Method, Bk 1: The Most Complete Guitar Course Available, Book & Online Audio (Belwin's 21st Century Guitar Course) Belwin's 21st Century Guitar Ensemble 1: The Most Complete Guitar Course Available (Student Book) (Belwin's 21st Century Guitar Course) Belwin's 21st Century Guitar Method 1: Spanish Language Edition (Book & CD) (Belwin's 21st Century Guitar Course) (Spanish Edition) Belwin 21st Century Band Method, Level 2 flute (Belwin 21st Century Band Method) The Confessions: (Vol. I/1) Revised, (The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century) (The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, Vol. 1) Introduction to Cybercrime: Computer Crimes, Laws, and Policing in the 21st Century: Computer Crimes, Laws, and Policing in the 21st Century (Praeger Security International) Roget's 21st Century Thesaurus, Third Edition (21st Century Reference) Creating America: 1877 to the 21st Century: Student Edition Ã Â© 2005 1877 to the 21st Century 2005 EMS Workforce for the 21st Century: A National Assessment (Public Health in the 21st Century) Writing Mastery: How to Master the Art of Writing & Write 3,000 Words Per Day - Overcoming Writer's Block (Make Money Online, Copywriting, Erotica Writing, ... Writing Mastery, How to Write a Book) Thinking Historically: Educating Students for the 21st Century 21st Century Communication 3: Listening, Speaking and Critical Thinking: Student Book with Online Workbook Power plays: How to deal like a lawyer in person-to-person confrontations and get your rights Person-Centred Counselling for People with Dementia: Making Sense of Self The Armenian Table: More than 165 Treasured Recipes that Bring Together Ancient Flavors and 21st-Century Style