

One Judge's Ten Random Writing Tips

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1. Adjectives and adverbs—do you *really* need them?
2. The em dash is your friend—but never use more than one pair of em dashes in a sentence.
3. And it is fine to begin a sentence with a conjunction.
4. Use Google for grammar.
5. Read Supreme Court opinions. Justices Roberts and Kagan are considered to be excellent writers. So too was Justice Scalia. And most Supreme Court opinions are well organized, logical, and convincing (of course, having the last word helps).
6. Avoid acronyms for defined terms and short-form names of parties. And I like it when defined terms are bolded when defined.
7. Avoid legalese and current jargon. It's fine with me if you never use “fulsome” in any pleading or brief that you file in my court.
8. Edit, edit, edit—and *always* let someone else of at least average intelligence review what you have written.
9. Follow writing experts on social media, e.g., @BryanAGarner (Bryan Garner), @legalwritingpro (Ross Guberman). You will learn *something* almost daily.
10. Outline *after* you write (and before is fine too). A no-more-than five-word summary of each paragraph will reveal problems with organization, gaps in logic, and flow.