



## The Write House

writehouse.org

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### Course Outline for

### *Uncommon Law of Learned Writing*

- Introduction
  1. Write to be read.
  2. HIV-AIDS: Legalese and verbosity ruin legal writing.
  3. Prefer the active voice. Don't hide the subject. Don't bury your verbs in abstract nouns and adjectives.
  4. Can you begin sentences with *and, because, but, nor, or, so, thus,* and *yet*? Oh, sure!
  5. Eschew intensifiers: A tiger does not proclaim his tigritude; he pounces.
  6. Learn transitive, intransitive, and linking verbs. What about phrasal verbs?
  7. Use mostly, not solely, short sentences and paragraphs.
  8. Embrace and implement parallel structure.
  9. Use possessives to introduce gerunds and solve fused-participle difficulties. Situate your modifiers to eliminate confusion. Avoid awkward separation.
  10. Use nominative and objective pronouns correctly.
  11. Let's go *which* hunting!
  12. Supplant redundant expressions with alternatives supplied. Spurn *elegant variation* and *inelegant fixation*.
  13. Strike 'fatuous lawyerisms' like *aforesaid* and similar antiquated expressions.
  14. Let's talk about sex.
  15. Dethrone expletives and metadiscourse. Moderate authorial self-reference.
  16. Use transition to boost prose readability.
  17. Learn proper use of abbreviations, acronyms, hybrids, and initialisms.



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18. PUNCTUATION: Master apostrophes, braces, brackets, commas, contractions, dashes, hyphens, parentheses, periods, and slashes.
  19. Lists and Tables
  20. Numbers
  21. Boldface, Capitalization, Italics, and Underlining
  22. Citations and Quotations.
  23. Think before you write.
  24. Law Reporting
  25. Learned Vocabulary and the Case for Sesquipedality
  26. Subtle Distinctions
  27. Nigerian English? Give That A Rest!
- Epilogue: Lawyers' language is pompous.