



**KEEP
CALM
AND
Edit Your
Writing**

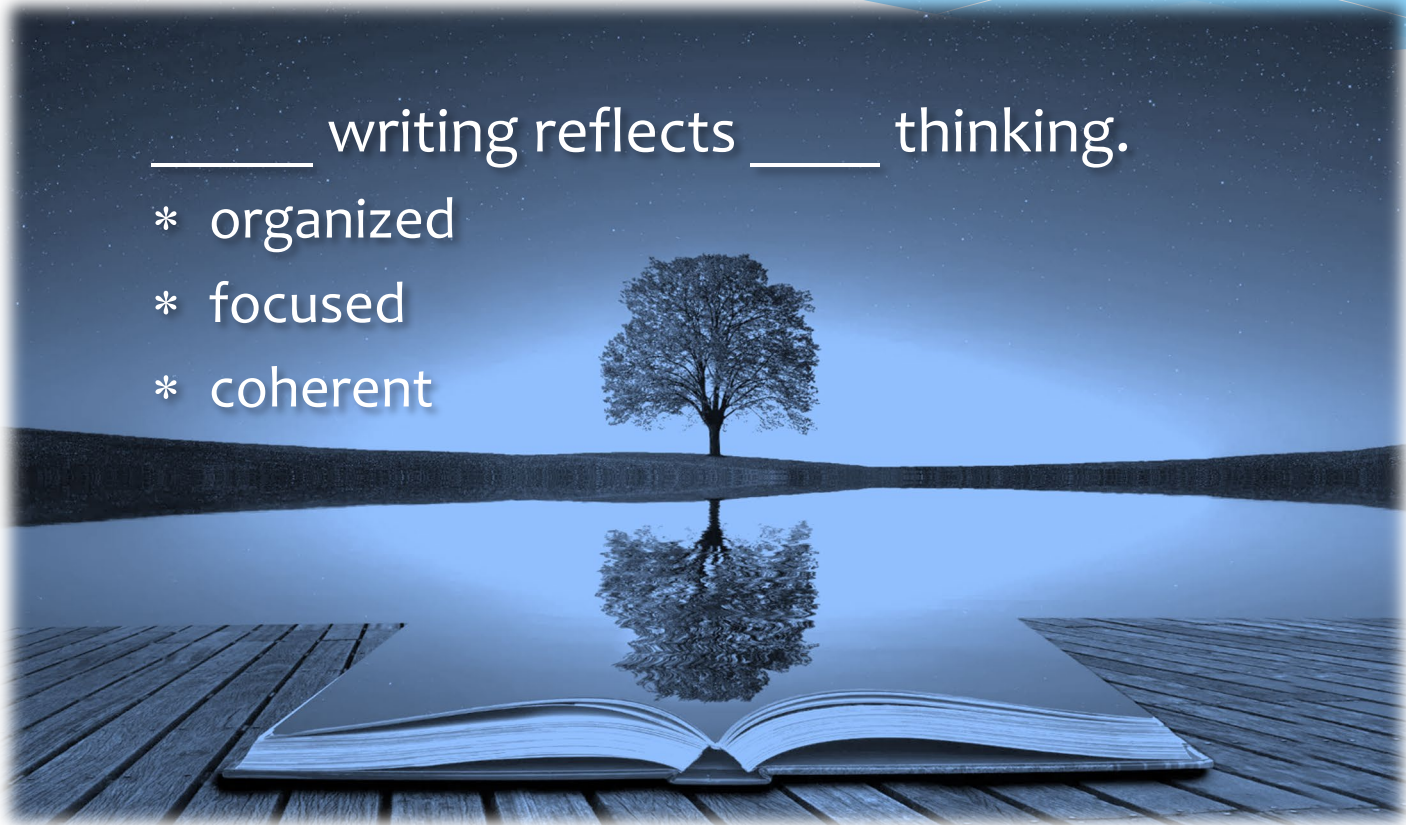
Become Your Own Editor

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writing reflects thinking

_____ writing reflects _____ thinking.

- * organized
- * focused
- * coherent



write, revise, edit...repeat

You write to
communicate to the
hearts and minds of
others what's burning
inside you. And we edit
to let the fire show
through the smoke.

Arthur Plotnik

- www.writerswrite.co.za



revising, editing, proofreading... oh, my!

- * **revising:** significant global changes in content or organization
- * **editing:** significant word- and sentence-level changes
- * **proofreading (line editing):** superficial changes in punctuation and grammar

errors versus mistakes versus rhetorical choices

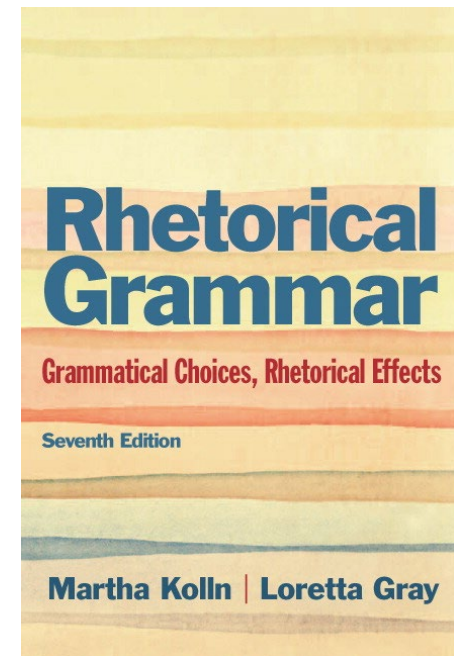
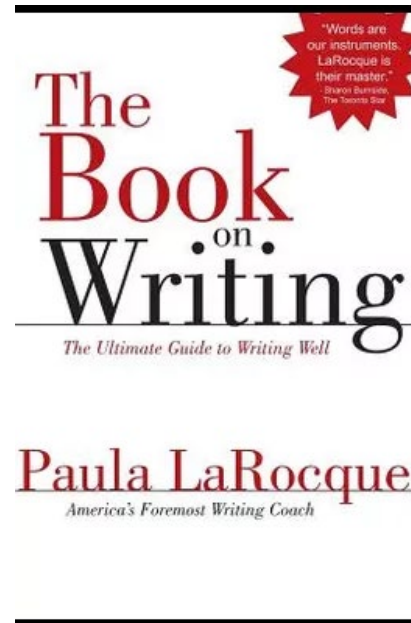
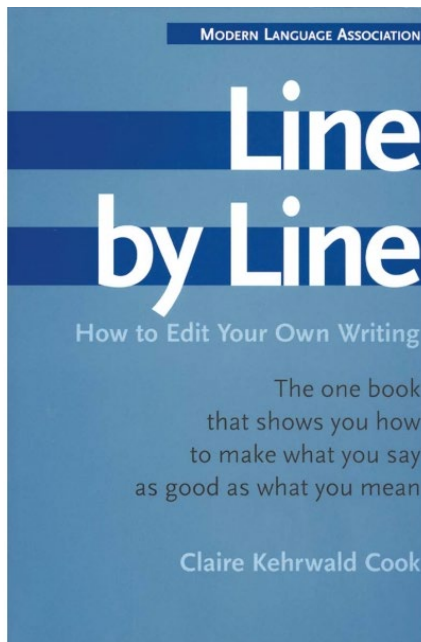
- * **error:** systematic, recurrent
 - * reflects lack of punctuation/grammar proficiency
- * **mistake:** human fallibility, haste
 - * reflects lack of editing
- * **rhetorical choice:** intentional choice
 - * may be viewed as an error

common example: sentence fragment

tips to reduce errors

- * read aloud slowly
- * edit paper copy
- * stretch every 10 minutes
- * take short breaks every 20-30 minutes and longer ones every 1-1/2 to 2 hours.
- * don't edit impaired (angry and tired count too)
- * avoid last-minute revisions

lifelong learning starts here...



common errors

- * subjects:
 - * subject-verb agreement
 - * grammatical/actual subject
- * vague pronoun
- * parallel structure
- * misplaced/dangling modifier
- * missing comma(s)

subject-verb agreement

Convention: The subject must “perform” the verb, and the verb must be conjugated to match the subject.

- * The **article talks about how** one can succumb to odd behavior, like listening to published articles that talk.
- * Neither of them [is/are] willing to go.

grammatical/actual subject

Clarity/succinctness tip: Look for sentences that start with “There is/are [was/were]...” and “It is [was]...”

- * It was apparent that the grammatical subject of the sentence was not the actual subject.
- * There was agreement among all who attended.

vague pronoun

Convention: Pronouns must have a clear antecedent [the noun that the pronoun replaces, which *should be* the noun syntactically preceding the pronoun].

Mr. Frank reported that John is not attending class, and he is worried. [Who is “he”?]

Tips about pronoun precision

- * Beware of pronouns as subjects (usually, “this,” “that,” “it,” and “there”), as these are often vague.
- * Avoid using hypothetical second person (“you”), particularly in formal writing, as this literally places the reader (sometimes unfairly or inaccurately) into a generalized group.
- * Singular “they, them, their” is now dictionary official.

parallel structure

Convention: All elements in a series should be the same word form (noun, verb, adjective...), and verbs must be conjugated in the same tense.

- * I went to two job interviews, washed my car, and Jerry came over to watch a movie.
- * I am dependable, punctual, and manage people well.

misplaced/dangling modifier

Convention: Modifiers must be placed directly next to (either before or after) that which it is modifying.

- * The patient was seen in the emergency room by the doctor with a broken arm.
- * While waiting for the bus, time went by slowly.

missing comma

Convention: Use a comma after an introductory clause (especially a long one).

- * To clearly delineate an introductory phrase skilled writers use a comma.
- * During the pandemic cutting one's own hair became a norm.

missing comma(s)

Convention: Use a set of commas for a nonessential clause, clause that interrupts syntax/flow, or an appositive (restatement).

- * My brother, who is an attorney, lives in Nevada.
- * My brother, who lives in Nevada, is an attorney.
- * My brother is an attorney who lives in Nevada.