WRITING WELL

[OR...WHY YOUR WRITING SUCKS AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO MAKE IT A WHOLE LOT BETTER]
10 LESSONS IN CLARITY AND GRACE
Joseph M. Williams
10 PRINCIPLES FOR WRITING CLEARLY
01 - DISTINGUISH REAL GRAMMATICAL RULES FROM FOLKLORE
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“Architectural history is complex, in that in our present age, we cannot know for certain whether people in the past had knowledge of certain aspects, whether they were consciously thought or not. An everlasting debate that has continued for quite some time now is the assumption of whether people back during the renaissance and in Alberti’s time, had specific knowledge of the relationships between homogeneity and heterogeneity of space.”
HUH?
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HOW DO YOU BRIDGE THE STATEMENT WITH THE QUESTION? WHAT IS THE QUESTION LEADING INTO?
02 - USE SUBJECTS TO NAME CHARACTERS...
02 - USE SUBJECTS TO NAME CHARACTERS...
03 - AND USE VERBS TO NAME THEIR ACTIONS.
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“Homogeneity was brought up by Ernust Cassirer and how they frequently introduced into architectural an art history by Erwin Panofsky; with a book called ”Perspective as Symbolic Form. The book mostly draws attention to establishing and describing, through the history of the visual arts, the process whereby the understanding of space as homogeneous came about.”
“Homogeneity was brought up [AV1] by Ernust Cassirer [S1] and how they frequently introduced [AV2] into architectural an art history by Erwin Panofsky [S2]; with a book called ”Perspective as Symbolic Form. The book [S3] mostly draws attention to establishing and describing [AV3], through the history of the visual arts, the process whereby the understanding of space as homogeneous came about.”
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“Ernst Cassirer brought up homogeneity. Erwin Panofsky introduced it into architectural and art history in his book “Perspective as Symbolic Form.” This book draws attention to establishing and describing, through the history of the visual arts, the process whereby the understanding of space as homogeneous came about.”
GET RID OF VAGUE TERMS. MAKE STRONGER CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THOUGHTS. EDIT FOR CLARITY.
“While Ernst Cassirer philosophized homogeneity, Erwin Panofsky was the first to introduce it into architectural history in “Perspective as Symbolic Form.” In this book, he describes how space came to be understood as homogeneous.”
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GOT IT!
"Looking into the article "Leon Battista Alberti and the Homogeneity of Space" to types of space are discussed, with in the article heterogeneous space and homogeneous space. Heterogeneous space is thought to be the perception of spaces before the renaissance period and homogeneous space is the way in which space was perceived after the renaissance."
¿COMO?
“Looking into [AV1] the article "Leon Battista Alberti and the Homogeneity of Space" [C1] to types of space are discussed [AV2], with in the article [C2] heterogeneous space and homogeneous space. Heterogeneous space [C3] is thought [AV3] to be the perception of spaces before the renaissance period and homogeneous space [C4] is the way in which space was perceived after the renaissance.”
CLARIFY THE VERBS...BE SPECIFIC! DO NOT SWAP CHARACTERS FOR ACTIONS AND VICE VERSA. EDIT FOR CLARITY.
In the article ‘Leon Battista Alberti and the Homogeneity of Space,’ Branko Mitrovic discusses the differences between homogeneous and heterogeneous space. He argues that while pre-Renaissance architects understood space as heterogeneous, Renaissance architects understood it as homogeneous.
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YES!
04 - OPEN SENTENCES WITH FAMILIAR UNITS OF INFORMATION
“A large part of studying architecture is knowing its past. Knowing how ideas came about, who they came from, and how they fit into history. Theories about architecture are not black and white. There is much discussion and arguments on how a lot of what we might see as a basic concept now came about.”
I THINK I GET IT?
"A large part of studying architecture is knowing its past. Knowing how ideas came about, who they came from, and how they fit into history. Theories about architecture are not black and white. There is much discussion and arguments on how a lot of what we might see as a basic concept now came about."
Architectural history and theory - the formulation of ideas and their historical contexts - is an important part of an architect’s education, however complex it might be. What might be considered a basic idea today has probably been discussed in the past.
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NOW I KNOW
I DO!
05 - BEGIN SENTENCES CONSTITUTING A PASSAGE WITH CONSISTENT TOPICS/SUBJECTS
06 - GET TO THE MAIN VERB QUICKLY
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“We need to look at the work and ideas these important men contributed to this time period to really understand how they were able to understand space.”
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SAY MORE WITH LESS BY TRIMMING VAGUE "FILLER" WORDS AND PHRASES.
“We need to look at the work and ideas theses important men contributed to this time period to really understand how they were able to understand space.”
SAY MORE WITH LESS BY TRIMMING VAGUE “FILLER” WORDS AND PHRASES.

*look at* = *to analyze*

*the work and ideas* = *their theories and buildings / their architecture*

*important men* = *Renaissance architects*

*able to understand space* = *to design it or within it*
06 — GET TO THE **MAIN VERB** QUICKLY
SAY MORE WITH LESS BY TRIMMING VAGUE “FILLER” WORDS AND PHRASES.

“In order to **understand** how Renaissance architects understood space, we need to **analyze** their **theories and buildings**.”
“In order to understand how Renaissance architects understood space, we need to analyze their architecture.”
"In order to understand how Renaissance architects understood space, we need to analyze their work."
“In order to understand how Renaissance architects understood space, we need to analyze their work."
07 - PUSH COMPLEX INFORMATION TO THE END OF THE SENTENCE
“For Panofsky and Edgerton homogeneous space was understood at this time for the reasons that how could one produce work in perspective, produce a series of plans sections and elevations in a set, and reproduce the same shapes in different locations if they did not understand the homogeneity of space.”
WTF?
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TRIM / CLARIFY
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For Panofsky and Edgerton (IRRELEVANT)

at this time ( = DURING THE RENAISSANCE)

for the reasons that (WORDY + EXCESSIVE)

produce work in ( = DRAW)

produce a series of ( = DRAW)

in a set (WORDY + EXCESSIVE / COORDINATED)
“Homogeneous space must have been understood *during the Renaissance*. If not, how else could architects have *drawn coordinated* perspectives, plans, sections, and elevations? How else could they have reproduced identical shapes in different locations?”
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08 - BE CONCISE:
+ NO MEANINGLESS REDUNDANCY
+ PUT THE MEANING OF PHRASES INTO ONE OR TWO WORDS
+ CHOOSE AFFIRMATIVE OVER NEGATIVE SENTENCES
The ultimate goal of concinnitas is to compose parts that are different from each other by the nature so that they correspond to one another in appearance.
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“The ultimate goal of concinnitas is to compose parts that are different from each other by the nature so that they correspond to one another in apperance.”
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*The ultimate goal of* = ultimately

*compose parts that are different from each other by the nature so that they correspond to one another*

*in apperance* = organization / composition / visual
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“Ultimately, concinnitas is composition experienced visually.”
09 - DON'T SPRAWL
“Who, what, when, were, why, and how. These are all questions a true architect has flowing through his or her mind continuously. An architect must be well rounded in many different fields of study. The common belief that an architect is a person who sits behind a desk and simply sketches buildings and drafts layouts is ridiculous. As a student of architecture I follow the premise that one must learn from history and theory. Without the great philosophers and scholars from the past we would not have basis or foundation for architecture today.”
KILL ME NOW!
“Architectural history and theory is important. So are scholars and philosophers. These things ensure that architecture has a solid intellectual foundation.”
10 - ABOVE ALL, PLEASE WRITE TO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE OTHERS WRITE TO YOU