

KEN CARPENTER'S "RULES OF THUMB"

1. "Accuracy, accuracy, accuracy" — Joseph Pulitzer
2. "Names, names, names." — Hoover Adams
3. Writers: "When in doubt, leave it out." — Anonymous
Editors: "When in doubt, take it out." — Anonymous
4. "I would have written shorter, but I didn't have time."
— George Bernard Shaw
5. "Leave out the stuff that people skip." Also, "Leave out the boring stuff."
— Elmore Leonard
6. "Write tight and bright." — Anonymous
7. "Never start a sentence with the 'when.'" — Ken Carpenter
Bad: "On Saturday, the team will play."
Good: "The team will play Saturday."
(Never use the "once upon a time" lede)
8. "Never start a sentence with a number." — Ken Carpenter
9. "Write it. Read it. Edit it. Then write it again. Read it again. Edit it again. Then write it again. Then let somebody else read it. Then write it again." — Ken Carpenter
10. "Avoid value judgments; let the facts speak for you." — Ken Carpenter
Example: "It was a beautiful day" makes a value judgment.
"It was a sunny day" states a fact.
11. Do not generalize; do not humanize. — Ken Carpenter
12. Pet peeve No. 1: "The man suffered an untimely death."
ALL deaths are untimely, especially for the deceased.
13. Pet peeve No. 2: BRING and TAKE are not synonymous.
Use bring when something is there, and is coming here.
Use take when something is here, and is going there.
14. Pet peeve No. 3: Avoid the word HOWEVER; it's clumsy.
15. Pet peeve No. 4: "I will try TO call my mother." It's not "try AND call ..."