

# Characteristics of Effective Writing

Writing skills questions focus on common problems associated with four characteristics of effective writing. Examples are below.

Writing Characteristic	Sentence Illustrating the Problem	Should Be ...
<b>1. Being Consistent</b>		
Sequence of tenses	After he broke his arm, he is home for two weeks.	After he broke his arm, he was home for two weeks.
Avoiding pronoun shift	If one is tense, they should try to relax.	If one is tense, one should try to relax.
Parallelism	She likes to ski, plays tennis, and flying hang gliders.	She likes to ski, play tennis, and fly hang gliders.
Noun agreement	Carmen and Sarah want to be a pilot.	Carmen and Sarah want to be pilots.
Pronoun reference	Several people wanted the job, and he or she filled out the required applications.	Several people wanted the job, and they filled out the required applications.
Subject-verb agreement	There is eight people on the shore.	There are eight people on the shore.
<b>2. Expressing Ideas Logically</b>		
Coordination and subordination	Tawanda has a rash, and she is probably allergic to something.	Tawanda has a rash; she is probably allergic to something.
Logical comparison	Nathan grew more vegetables than his neighbor's garden.	Nathan grew more vegetables than his neighbor grew.
Modification and word order	Barking loudly, the tree had the dog's leash wrapped around it.	Barking loudly, the dog wrapped its leash around the tree.
<b>3. Being Clear and Precise</b>		
Avoiding ambiguous and vague pronouns	In the newspaper they say that few people voted.	The newspaper reported that few people voted.
Diction	He circumvented the globe on his trip.	He circumnavigated the globe on his trip.
Avoiding wordiness	There are many problems in the contemporary world in which we live.	There are many problems in the contemporary world.
Avoiding improper modification	If your car is parked here while not eating in the restaurant, it will be towed away.	If you park here and do not eat in the restaurant, your car will be towed away.
<b>4. Following Conventions</b>		
Pronoun case	He sat between you and I at the stadium.	He sat between you and me at the stadium.
Idiom	Natalie had a different opinion towards her.	Natalie had a different opinion about her.
Comparison of modifiers	Of the sixteen executives, Naomi makes more money.	Of the sixteen executives, Naomi makes the most money.
Sentence fragment	Fred having to go home early.	Fred has to go home early.

Some questions contain no errors, requiring you to recognize effective writing.