

## Fall 2019 Writing Skills Workshops

### Workshop No. 1: Parallel Constructions and Passive Voice

Wednesday, September 18, 2019, 3:15-4:15 p.m., room 202

Friday, September 20, 2019, 3:15-4:15 p.m., room 303

Also a participle of a present tense, either presentens of active verbs, either passive: may be resolved into a verb of the same tense, and a conjunction copulative, as thus. *Dicens. that is saying may be resolved thus, and sayth, eyther that sayth.*

The image at left is a protest opposing the *passive* voice from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and in fact, prohibitions against its use pre-date the King James Version of the Bible. The passive voice obscures the true actor in a sentence and is disfavored in almost all academic disciplines, including legal writing. This workshop will help readers learn to identify and eliminate the passive voice and preserve or create parallel sentence constructions. The latter are particularly important for lawyers to master because of the significant role analogies play in legal analysis.

### Workshop No. 2: Comma Use

Wednesday, September 25, 2019, 3:15-4:15 p.m., room 202

Friday, September 27, 2019, 3:15-4:15 p.m., room 303

True or false: A comma should be placed wherever a reader pauses. Answer: false. Emphatically false, in fact. All punctuation is more than just a breathing exercise, and effective legal writing is almost impossible without using commas correctly. This workshop will review the rules for comma use that are the most fundamental to clear writing as well as touch on skills that can help writers improve their sentence structure.

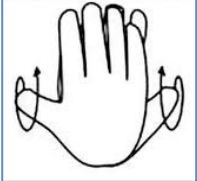


### Workshop No. 3: Word Choice & Correct Usage

Wednesday, October 2, 2019, 3:15-4:15 p.m., room 202

Friday, October 4, 2019, 3:15-4:15 p.m., room 303

awkward turtle



You have probably gotten back a paper, at least once in your life, with “awkward” written somewhere in the margins (and usually in red ink). Though poor grammar often plays a role in creating awkward sentences, a writer’s word choice can be equally to blame. Missives and letters are the same thing, but which is the better choice when drafting discovery requests? This workshop will help writers think about how to gauge the appropriateness of a word choice and spot easily mixed-up or confused words.

**Workshops will generally meet at 3:15 p.m. on Wednesday and Friday throughout September and October. No workshop will be held during the week of October 11<sup>th</sup>. All workshops will be facilitated by our Writing Specialist, Steven Schultz. His office is in room 322; students can contact him at [schultz@law.villanova.edu](mailto:schultz@law.villanova.edu) or at 610-519-6243. He has office hours throughout the day on Wednesdays and Fridays and after 2 p.m. on Thursdays. Students may meet with him individually for additional feedback on their writing or to make up missed workshops.**

#### Workshop No. 4: Colons and Semicolons

Wednesday, October 16, 2019, 3:15-4:15 p.m., room 202

Friday, October 18, 2019, 3:15-4:15 p.m., room 303



Fun fact: Aldus Manutius the Elder, a Venetian printer who lived during the Italian Renaissance, invented the semicolon. (He also invented italic print; citation would not be the same without him.) Legal writers rely on colons and semicolons more often than other writers because both marks are common in statutory language. Both can also help organize the complex sentence structures all lawyers must master. This workshop will focus on the most common uses of the colon and semicolon in legal writing.

#### Workshop No. 5: Quotes, Apostrophes, and Series

Wednesday, October 23, 2019, 3:15-4:15 p.m., room 202

Friday, October 25, 2019, 3:15-4:15 p.m., room 303

Vampire Weekend cares about the Oxford comma, and so should you. Quotations, apostrophes, and items in a series are all small points of grammar that can create large gaps in meaning. Consider the differences between these possible openings: “The defendant’s claim...,” “The defendants’ claim...,” and “The defendants claim...” This workshop will cover the basic rules for punctuating quotations, using apostrophes correctly, and properly setting out items in a series.



#### Workshop No. 6: Agreement: Noun, Pronoun, and Verb

Wednesday, October 30, 2019, 3:15-4:15 p.m., room 202

Friday, November 1, 2019, 3:15-4:15 p.m., room 303



Most writers know intuitively that nouns and pronouns need to agree in count and kind and that verbs need to agree in count and tense. Spotting these issues, however, gets increasingly tricky as sentences become increasingly complex. This workshop will review the basic rules for noun, pronoun, and verb agreement.

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