

Writing Do's

1. DO write with descriptive nouns and verbs.

Please do not annoy, torment, pester, plague, molest, worry, badger, harry, harass, heckle, persecute, irk, bully, rag, vex, disquiet, grate, beset, bother, tease, nettle, tantalize, or ruffle the animals.

—THE SAN DIEGO ZOO

2. DO use strong action verbs instead of relying on forms of the verb "to be," such as "is," "are," "was," or "were".

BAD: Bill was swimming across the river when the shark attacked.

GOOD: Bill swam across the river. The shark attacked before he reached the other side.

3. DO use ACTIVE voice, not passive. Have your subject do the action.

Remember: SUBJECT-VERB-OBJECT.

BAD: The ball was hit by Jack.

GOOD: Jack hit the ball.



From Strunk and White:

Write with nouns and verbs, not with adjectives and adverbs.

The adjective hasn't been built that can pull a weak or inaccurate noun out of a tight place ... it is nouns and verbs, not their assistants, that give to good writing its toughness and color.

—pages 71-72, Third Edition, *The Elements of Style*

Note: If the subject of your story is a long name and/or title, don't start with the name or the title. Start with the action. (See "WRITING DON'TS.")