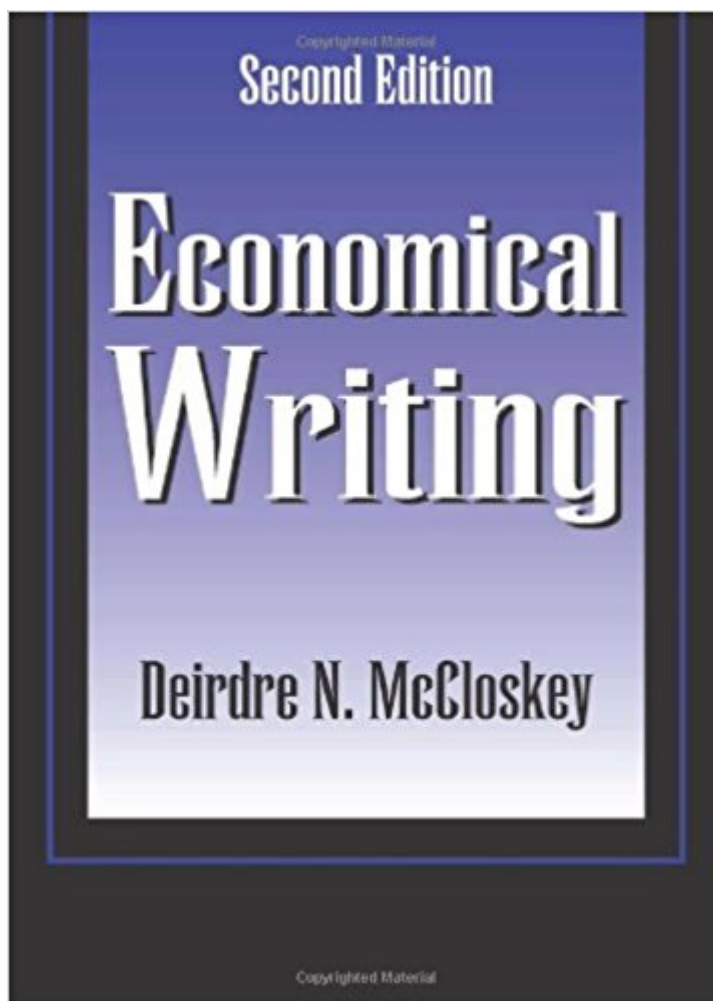


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# Economical Writing



## Synopsis

Anyone who cares about direct, clear expression should read this lucid, delightful gem by an author who practices what she advises. Titles of related interest also available from Waveland Press: Brooks-Quigley, *Words' Worth: Write Well and Prosper*, Second Edition (ISBN 978-1577666776) and Gerard, *Creative Nonfiction: Researching and Crafting Stories of Real Life* (ISBN 9781577663393).

## Book Information

Paperback: 112 pages

Publisher: Waveland Pr Inc; 2 edition (May 1, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1577660633

ISBN-13: 978-1577660637

Product Dimensions: 0.5 x 5 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 65 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #43,679 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #64 in [Books > Reference >](#)

[Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Publishing & Books > Authorship](#) #101 in [Books >](#)

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## Customer Reviews

"Deirdre McCloskey's *Economical Writing*, originally aimed to help economists write better, is in this second edition clearly a book that should be read by scholars in every field. Her thirty-one rules, offered with wit and delightful brevity, include the essential warning that though rules can help, bad rules hurt. McCloskey's are all of the helpful kind." -- Wayne Booth, University of Chicago  
"If you want to be read [and who doesn't] and be remembered [better yet], *Economical Writing* is for you. This entertaining volume will teach you how to write meaningful and joyful economics. A dose of McCloskey banishes the dismal from the 'dismal science.' McCloskey is the Strunk and White of economics, and *Economic Writing* should be required reading for all economists." -- Claudia Goldin, Harvard University  
"McCloskey tells economists to say what they have to say clearly and economically, and then shows them how. Students can learn to write so that the professor will know what they mean and, more important, professors can learn to write so that the rest of the world will know what they mean." -- Howard S. Becker, University of Washington  
"Professor McCloskey has

written the best short guide to academic prose in the language. Is this language English and not the Academic Official Style? Does McCloskey write with a sense that is also a sense of humor? All true. Buy and believe." -- Richard Lanham, University of California, Los Angeles

McCloskey delivers a thoughtful, fun, and very slim volume, focused on economics writing but also applicable to most non-fiction writing. The chapters in this book address everything from the fundamental ("Write in Complete Sentences") to the nuanced ("Make Your Writing Cohere," with clear tips on how to do so). I hadn't encountered many of the ideas previously, such as putting the importance material at the end of the sentence and only elaborate one of the three parts of a sentence (i.e. the subject, the verb, or the object). Two strengths of the book are that it's funny (my friends couldn't believe I was laughing aloud at a style manual) and that it gives a host of references to other books on writing. On McCloskey's recommendation, one of my next books will be Tufte's *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*. Her main list of writing books is on pages 8 and 9, but she peppers recommendations throughout. She also gives a list of good economics writers (p. 15). I didn't agree with everything in the book because, after all, "good style is...a matter of taste" (p. 88). If you want axioms, go to Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* (which is also wittier than you might expect). But McCloskey takes us beyond axioms to think hard about style and the process is well worth our while. ("Process" is one of her no-no words (p. 73), but I'll leave it, just this once.)

Transitioning from undergraduate to graduate writing techniques is very difficult for me. I've gotten several papers back with red marks all over them. After reading this, I understood why I was receiving so many red marks. The author lays out several rules and details that help the reader understand more efficient ways to write exactly what you are meaning to say. I wouldn't say it is a "how-to" book, but this book has definitely helped me already in my writing.

Awesome book. I learned a lot from it. yet, It is not what you are expecting. During the first chapters you don't really know where the author is going or how her explanatory way is, but once you get it, the book flows smoothly.

This book should be required reading for any doctoral students - not just in economics. It works for any social science discipline. I mandate it for my health policy doctoral students. It's a quick, concise read with a wonderful sense of humor. The book provides doctoral students (not to mention faculty) excellent rules of thumb such as: avoid "this", "these", and "those

Although most of the "tips" and rules in the book are those that we all have heard about, read extensively, and taught by our relentless army of over zealous writing teachers and professors; they work because of the functionality and straight forwardness of the book. The only negative criticism that I have is in regard to the use of the 'feminine pronoun' to address the reader in the third person, creating noise and disruption. Albeit I understand the purpose and intentionality, as a linguist, I see it as a distraction to the reader. If the only readers of the book are native English speakers the distraction may not be a big burden on the reader as gender is not as fundamental in the English language as it is in Romance languages, Hebrew, Arabic, etc. Thus, I would greatly recommend the book to people whose only language is English. The book loses its otherwise great value when read by bilingual or multilingual women and men to whom 'gender' in languages is a big deal and does not constitute 'gender inequality' and those who have a greater appreciation for linguistics. There is a time and place to be an activist and there is a time and space to be professional. I think that the author missed the opportunity to exercise the latter (I know I was told not to use the "latter" word), but since I am a 'feminist male reader' I love that she took that risk. Having said all that: buy the book; read it and you will go from a C to an A.

In less than 100 pages, McCloskey breaks down years of misinformation on writing. This book is not just for those of the economics profession, but also for anyone faced with the daunting task of writing. Her rules are laid out clearly and with plenty of examples. Chapters are short, sweet, and filled to the brim with good advice. McCloskey has done in one book more than my teachers in high school did in four years! If you ever have to write an essay/report/dissertation (which most of us have to every so often), spend the 12.04 and get "Economical Writing" for your library. You cannot afford to pass this book up.

As the social sciences, especially economics, become more and more mathematical the ability to write clearly and persuasively has become less important in the development of young scholars. If you want to improve your writing--and get your research read more widely--this book is a must. It is full of tips and tools for improving your ability to communicate via the written word. McCloskey is one of the best writers in economics, and she shares her best tools in this book.

Economical WritingÂ This is a great accompaniment for non-business writers. I used this during my MBA Econ course and it was a great supplement in order to adjust my writing styles for Finance. I

highly recommend this for use during your Finance case studies.

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