



# How to Not Write Bad: The Most Common Writing Problems and the Best Ways to Avoid Them

By Ben Yagoda

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**Ben Yagoda's *How to Not Write Bad* illustrates how we can all write better, more clearly, and for a wider readership.**

He offers advice on what he calls "not-writing-badly," which consists of the ability, first, to craft sentences that are correct in terms of spelling, diction (word choice), punctuation, and grammar, and that also display clarity, precision, and grace. Then he focuses on crafting whole paragraphs—with attention to cadence, consistency of tone, sentence transitions, and paragraph length.

In a fun, comprehensive guide, Yagoda lays out the simple steps we can all take to make our writing more effective, more interesting—and just plain better.

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Review

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"Spirited... Yagoda's incisive exploration is a worthy study of a genre that even now cannot completely be defined." -- *Los Angeles Times*

"Perceptive, thorough, and amusing."-- *New York Magazine*

"This idea-driven cultural criticism leads to all kinds of interesting places." -- *Christian Science Monitor*

"Ben Yagoda is one of the most subtle—and entertaining—writers about writing one can find. His history of the memoir reads between the lines—and the lies—with illuminating precision." —Ron Rosenbaum, author of *Explaining Hitler* and *The Shakespeare Wars*

"We owe Ben Yagoda such a huge debt of thanks: his witty, comprehensive, and insightful 'biography' of the form reminds us why the memoir matters – and will continue to matter as long as humans think, read, and write. This is literary criticism at its lively best." —David Friedman, author of *A Mind of Its Own: A Cultural History of the Penis* and *The Immortalists: Charles Lindbergh, Dr. Alexis Carrel, and Their Daring Quest to Live Forever*

"A shrewd and witty history of memoir sweeps us from Julius Caesar to James Frey. Our guide, Ben Yagoda, is always fine company, with just the right word, kindly good judgment, and another great story coming up on the next page. It's a splendid journey." —Richard Ben Cramer, author of *Joe DiMaggio: The Hero's Life* and *How Israel Lost: The Four Questions*

"Fascinating... With its mixture of literary criticism, cultural history and just enough trivia, Yagoda's survey is sure to appeal to scholars and bibliophiles alike." – *Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

#### About the Author

Ben Yagoda is a journalism professor at the University of Delaware. He is the author, coauthor, or editor of ten books, including *Memoir: A History*, *Will Rogers: A Biography*, and *When You Catch an Adjective, Kill It*, and has written for *Slate*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and publications that start with every letter of the alphabet except J, K, Q, X, and Z. He lives in Pennsylvania with his wife.

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