

# Observations in Writing English

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# Background of English

- English is the most popular second language
- English is influencing many cultures
- English is a dominate language
- Dialects
  - British, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, Indian, Hong Kong, American, Caribbean, Irish, Scottish
- In the writing world American English is the standard
  - Books are translated from American English, but rarely to American English
    - Even translation agencies prefer translating from American English

# Background of English (cont.)

- American English = North American English (Canada)
  - There are many dialects, North East, North West, Southern, Red Neck/Hill Billy, Ebonics, New York, Boston, Atlantic Coast, etc

## Ebonics:

She BIN had dat han'-made dress. (She's had that hand-made dress for a long time, and still does)

Befo' you know it, he be done aced de tesses. (Before you know it, he will have already aced the tests)

I ast Ruf could she bring it ovah to Tom crib. (I asked Ruth if/whether she could bring it over to Tom's place.)

# Background of English (cont.)

Red Neck / Hill Billy:

Put your shoes on Lucy, don't you know you is in the city? (Its time to go)

Ah'm a gonna havta open up a can a' whoopass on ya. (I am going to fight you)

Tighter than bark on a tree. (Not Generous)

She's got tongue enough for ten rows of teeth. (She talks too much)

Time to paint your butt white and run with the antelope (Stop arguing and do as you are told)

# Dynamics Of North American English

- The example of Ebonics and Red Neck / Hill Billy is to illustrate the diversity of North American English
  - In North American English the rules change as the moods change
- When writing English texts focus on the market
  - Do not write partial British English and partial American English
    - Stick to one or the other
- For example backup in the past is backupper or backed-up?
  - Answer backed-up!

# Rule 1: Skim Read Document

- English people are notorious skim readers
  - Read in Z, U, or I patterns
- You must structure your document to have an abstract, introduction, body and conclusion
  - The different sections do not have to be identified
- White space due to paragraphs, commas, semi-colons, bullets, lists, tables makes a document easier to skim read

# Rule 2: Watch the Expressions

- Don't use expressions if you do not know them properly
  - Imagine trying to talk Red-Neck or Ebonics without knowing the exact expressions
- Good example of getting it wrong...
  - DSDS Alexander - Take Me Tonight
    - This song has lyrics that might be more appropriate for a female singer
    - Compare the lyrics to Enrique Iglesias (Hero, Just wanna be with you)

# Rule 3: Be Politically Correct

- Political correctness (PC) is here to stay whether you like it or not
  - Removes the stereotypes of society
    - For example Dickmann's

The NIS Client had to be installed because Microsoft does not now, nor will distribute a client in the future.

(NO! NO! NO!)



# Rule 4: Don't Use Passive Voice

- Avoid the passive voice if possible
  - Passive voice makes you sound weak
- Don't use words; like, might, would, could, and was. Use words; can, will do.
  - Be active say what you want to say and be forceful
  - Think of an Army Sergeant when writing texts
- One quick tip is to put the subject at the beginning of the sentence

weak, passive:

The skater was slammed into the wall by Maria.

strong, active:

Maria slammed the skater into the wall.

# Rule 5: Don't Be Chatty and Over Bearing

- Chatty texts and over bearing texts were created in the mid-nineties and at that time it was an interesting writing style.
  - NOT ANYMORE!
  - Only those writers that can explain themselves well can write chatty text's
    - For example Scott Meyers has a firm grasp of the English language
- It is still possible to use the words “You”, “We”, but not “I”

To be fair again, some tasks are outside Python's scope.

Like all dynamic languages, Python (as currently implemented)...

Now, here's the first big concept to notice about Python...

How Shall I Code Thee? Let Me Count the Ways!”

(NO! NO! NO!)

# Rule 6: Chain Your Sentences

- When explaining things use words or expressions that chain together multiple sentences
  - Do not be afraid to repeat yourself
  - A paragraph is a long sentence with periods.

The CLR executes only native machine code. If a method body consists of CIL, it must be translated to native machine code prior to invocation. As discussed briefly in Chapter 1, there are two options for converting CIL to native machine code.

Essential .NET - Don Box & Chris Sells

# Rule 7: Stay Focused!

- Often when people write documents they will raise an topic that is not mentioned anywhere else.
  - If you are going to mention something make sure it is mentioned elsewhere
  - A single mention is noise and distracts the reader

The car was driving down the road and hit the tree, while John was sitting on his porch. People heard a loud bang and came running out to see if everyone in the car was ok. Then as the driver opened the door and said, “I am ok” everyone was relieved and went back home.

NO NO NO

# Rule 8: Be Action Packed!

- North American readers like to be guided along an adventure
  - Think Hollywood movies and you will get the idea
- Technical content need not reference Indiana Jones, but should be explain topics in a brisk pace with very few detours
  - The content is meant to benefit the reader not the writer
  - Sometimes people write for the benefit of mental masturbation

# Rule 9: Use Good Formatting Style

- Know the use of semi colons, commas, and other punctuation marks
  - Best read a grammar book for this information
- When using abbreviations the first reference is always fully explained, and thereafter the abbreviation is used.
- Use section headings and properly assign capital letters
- Don't repeat yourself and use words that imply the same thing
  - Spoken english has a habit of adding words for the heck of it, which is not tolerated in written English

# Rule 10: Use Technology

- All word processors have Spell Checkers
  - USE THEM!
  - Spelling errors are not tolerated
  - If your word processor does not have a spell checker, then switch!

# Have Fun!

- English is a language to have fun with!
- Don't become too pre-occupied with the rules!