



## Self-Test and Writing Exercises

to accompany

*Writing to Clients and Referring Professionals About Psychological Assessment Results:  
A Handbook of Style and Grammar*

by J. B. Allyn

The following material takes you through a chapter-by-chapter review:

- Multiple-choice and true-false questions begin each chapter section, allowing you to test yourself on certain points from that chapter.
- Each section suggests a writing exercise that uses points covered in the book chapter. These exercises are primarily essay with some multiple choice.
- At the end, an answer key directs you to the correct page in the book to find 1) answers to the self-test questions and 2) guidance on the topics included in the writing exercises.

### The Fictional Case

My thanks to Dr. Diane Engelman for her help in creating a believable framework and details for the fictional case that follows.

As a context for the Writing Exercises, refer to the following case information. Assume you are writing report sections about this client:

- “Michael”: 13 years old; in seventh grade.
- Lives with both parents, June and Ward, and his nine-year-old sister.
- Family recently moved here - new area, new school.
- Michael does OK in school; parents and teachers think he could do better.
- No major behavior problem at home or school.
- Has made few friends (1 somewhat close one); often a bit of a loner, even before moving.
- Trouble attending in class and to homework; struggles to organize himself; difficulty following through on projects. (Parents, teachers, Michael all agree on these problems.)
- WISC-IV results are “Average”: Full Scale IQ scaled score 106 (66<sup>th</sup> percentile); Verbal Comprehension, 106 (66<sup>th</sup> percentile); Perceptual Reasoning, 102 (55<sup>th</sup> percentile); Working Memory, 104 (61<sup>st</sup> percentile); and Processing Speed, 103 (66<sup>th</sup> percentile).
- Several subtle indicators of attention problems: Symbol Search, “Low Average” in 25<sup>th</sup> percentile; Block Design (a timed test) “Low Average” in 26<sup>th</sup> percentile; Matrix Reasoning (untimed, similar test) “Above Average” in 84<sup>th</sup> percentile.
- Dysthymia shows up in overall personality assessment, including in Rorschach and history.

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- Meets DSM-IV-TR behavioral criteria for AD/HD, Predominantly Inattentive type
- You diagnosis Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder, Predominantly Inattentive type, complicated by dysthymia.
- Parents seek straightforward answers; prefer not to medicate son. Also very sensitive about history of depression that runs in both families.

*\*\*Note: Italicized words in the self-test and exercises are listed in the book's glossary.*

## Chapter 1: Attitude

### Self-Test:

- 1) *Attitude* in writing is a) conscious; b) subconscious; or c) may be either a or b.
- 2) Your attitude toward your own writing ability a) has no influence on your productivity; b) can determine how much mental effort you need to complete a writing project; or c) determines your ability to spell correctly.
- 3) *Knowledge transforming* writing differs from *knowledge telling* by a) requiring less planning; b) allowing goals and text to shift throughout the process; or c) needing complex words.
- 4) Extensive data and facts will keep attitude from intruding into your writing. T or F
- 5) Most readers expect a writer to show an attitude toward his or her subject. T or F
- 6) Sensitivity toward your reader plays no part in your writing choices. T or F

### Writing Exercise:

Read the following sentences as if they were describing yourself or your child. Revise them to neutralize negative attitude in the writer's chosen words.

- a. Eliminate or change any words that you find give it a judgmental quality or phrases/sentences that are not important in the discussion.
- b. Your revision should still clearly convey essential information and be well written.

(Hint: Look for *verbs* that overstate or "comment" on the topic and *adjectives* that pass value judgment.)

### Reason for Referral:

Michael's inability to attend has tormented him for several years; however, his recent forced move in the middle of a school year significantly inflamed this problem. His younger sister adjusted seamlessly to the move. His teachers are exasperated with his uncontrolled lack of focus, many assuming that he is lazy, obstinate, and lacking intelligence. Following the disconcerting and ill-timed move from one school to another, his behavior became more isolated and friendless. This disturbing response created a potentially substantial problem considering the severe and ongoing depression that is deeply rooted on both sides of his family. His parents are obstinately opposed to medicating him for any reason.

## Chapter 2: Tone

### Self-Test:

- 1) *Tone* is the way that attitude expresses itself in writing. T or F
- 2) Tone in writing uses all the same tools as are used to express tone in speech. T or F
- 3) A formal tone in your writing requires a) scientific terms; b) long, dense sentences; c) both a and b; or d) none of the above.
- 4) The right word to use in writing is a) the one most objectively accurate; b) the one that your reader will most understand; c) the longest; or d) the shortest.
- 5) Variety in word choice a) is never a consideration; b) means you should never repeat the same word in a sentence; c) cannot be achieved by revising a sentence; d) all of the above; or e) none of the above.
- 6) Nuance and *connotation* are not an issue when writing about difficult subject matter. T or F

### Writing Exercise:

Based on information about Finn's levels 1, 2, and 3 and juxtaposing difficult information, do the following:

- a. Write briefly about the findings in the fictional case;
- b. Write your recommendations for treatment;
- c. Place in order and write brief transitions, if necessary, so that client's ability to hear and absorb the information is bridged from easiest to most difficult.

## Chapter 3: Style

### Self-Test:

- 1) *Style* is a) an individual's way of expressing attitude and tone in writing; b) writing to a set of guidelines; c) both a and b; or d) neither a nor b.
- 2) Having a beginning, middle, and end to your assessment report is important. T or F
- 3) Clear sentences will unfold if you just "throw enough words" at the topic. T or F
- 4) Our brains process *abstract* words more easily than *concrete* ones. T or F
- 5) *Jargon* a) is easily understood by everyone; b) keeps information safe from those outside a profession; c) is a genuine tool for those inside a profession; d) only a and c; or e) only b and c.
- 6) A *linking verb* a) shows a state or condition; b) describes the subject of a sentence rather than the action he or she takes; c) both a and b; d) none of the above.

### Writing Exercise:

Assume you are writing a report on the fictional case for a non-psychologist school administrator. Use not just the data from testing but also the information gleaned through the entire assessment (as summarized in the bullet list preceding the writing exercises). Revise the following sentences to do one or more of the following:

- 1) Convert any *abstract* terms or phrases into *concrete* ones;
- 2) Eliminate a) *jargon* (terms that a layperson might not understand) and b) *clutter* (unnecessary words or dense phrases).
  - a. Michael's scores are Average.
  - b. It should be noted that Michael has made few friends at this point in time, his mother reported. In other words, she stated, "Michael tends to be a loner."
  - c. Michael's dysthymia is a complicating factor contributing to his problematic attentional issues.

## Chapter 4: Voice

### Self-Test:

- 1) Sentence structure using *passive voice* a) is easiest for the reader to follow; b) is never an effective writing choice; c) can give the writer a false sense of objectivity; d) all of the above; or e) none of the above.
- 2) *Stylistic voice* is easily defined and always considered a good thing. T or F
- 3) Stylistic voice grows out of attention to a) attitude; b) tone; c) style; d) all of the above; e) only b and c.
- 4) Emotional distance from your subject matter is not a consideration in *narrative stance*. T or F
- 5) A neutral voice requires awareness of choices in attitude, tone and style. T or F
- 6) *Voice* is a) uncovered, not fabricated; b) grows out of attitude, tone, and style; c) neither a nor b; or d) both a and b.

### Writing Exercise:

In *active voice*, write a sentence about each of the following areas from the fictional case:

- a) The finding of dysthymia.
- b) The finding of AD/HD, Predominantly Inattentive type.

Choose one of the sentences that you think might benefit from being a bit less direct and revise it into *passive voice*.

## Chapter 5: Format, Outline, Write, Edit. Proof

### Self-Test:

- 1) Planning your report format before writing a) helps you guide your reader through the material; b) is less important than the actual writing; or c) takes too much time.
- 2) Being clear about the intended audience a) is not important in writing a report; b) can help you decide how to set up sections and content; c) enables you to ignore potential secondary readers.
- 3) When you write a report for a referring professional, the person assessed will never read the report. T or F

- 4) Outlining your report before writing it helps you to a) focus your writing; b) notice anything you have omitted; c) neither a nor b; d) both a and b.
- 5) Creative and intuitive ways of presenting material apply only to fiction writing. T or F
- 6) Editing your draft reports lets you a) add or cut out material; b) replace material with something else; c) rearrange the order of material; d) all of the above; e) none of the above.

### Writing Exercise:

Create an outline for a report on Michael's assessment.

- a. Use either a standard outline format or a numbered list of points that you could "plump" later.
- b. Write it for the school as your primary audience, but know that Michael's parents are an important secondary audience.

## Chapter 6: Sentence and Paragraphs

### Self-Test:

- 1) Your underlying premise in writing a report will be the same for each client. T or F
- 2) The *subject* and *object* of a sentence can be obscured when the sentence is long or complicated. T or F
- 3) Knowing the difference between *independent* and *dependent clauses* a) enables you to punctuate them correctly; b) allows you to vary sentence structure; c) both a and b; or d) none of the above.
- 4) Sentences should always state the facts upfront and then add any *modifiers*. T or F
- 5) A *topic sentence* a) always comes at the beginning of a paragraph; b) plays no part in focusing the reader's attention; or c) establishes the main point of the paragraph.
- 6) When building a paragraph, expansion, summary, and transition sentences a) are always included; b) always come in the same order; c) can take the place of the topic sentence; d) are not necessarily black and white categories.

### Writing Exercise:

Build a short paragraph based on some aspect of the assessment information.

- a. Write topic sentence, expansion sentence(s), and summary/transition sentence(s).
- b. Avoid using filler phrases in these sentences.
- c. Run through at least 2 readability measures for comparison.

## Chapter 7: Agreement

### Self-Test:

- 1) *Agreement* in Standard English a) means that number and person in a sentence must match; b) has gotten progressively less complicated over time; c) is the same in all forms of spoken English dialects; d) none of the above; or e) only a and b.
- 2) *Mood* means the same in grammar as it does in psychology. T or F
- 3) A *collective noun* can be used with either singular or plural verbs. T or F
- 4) An *antecedent* helps determine whether a pronoun is singular or plural. T or F
- 5) Gender bias a) has been discussed in pronoun usage since the 1700s; b) has resulted in new, widely used gender-neutral pronouns; or c) is not a problem with nouns.
- 6) Ending a sentence with a *preposition* a) is never correct; b) is always correct; or c) may be decided on a case-by-case basis.

### Writing Exercise:

Look at Table 7.2.

- a) Choose a report section that lists its verb tense as “present” and one that lists it as “past.”
- b) Write a few sentences from the case information for each section to get a feel for why that tense is suited to that that section.

## Chapter 8: Modifiers

### Self-Test:

- 1) Strong *nouns* and *verbs* give power to writing. T or F
- 2) Some *adjectives* of quantity apply with both countable and uncountable nouns. T or F
- 3) Two adjectives in a row always require a comma between them. T or F
- 4) *Adverbs* may a) describe a verb; b) modify an adjective; c) end in *-ly*; d) none of the above; or e) all of the above.
- 5) *Linking verbs* are modified by a) adjectives; b) adverbs; or c) either adjectives or adverbs.
- 6) An *absolute* adjective a) may bring criticism, if used incorrectly; b) describes a quality that a thing or person does or does not have, with no gradations; c) both a and b.

### Writing Exercise:

- 1) Revise these sentences to eliminate the split *verb* (a 2-part verb divided by an *adverb*) or the split *infinitive* (“to” plus a *base verb*).
  - a) Michael’s parents *have long worried* about their son’s limited social interaction.
  - b) Michael wants *to extensively travel* around the United States.
  - c) Michael *will reluctantly meet* with his tutor *to intensively study* math.

Examine the changes when the verb or infinitive is no longer split. Does the meaning change - even subtly? Does it sound better unsplit - or does it now sound awkward and too unlike normal speech?

2) Complete these sentences with the correct *adjective* or *adverb*, depending on whether the verb used is a *linking verb* or an *active verb*.

- a) Michael said he felt (bad or badly) for missing school.
- b) His attitude was (well or good), considering his accident.
- c) He hurt his knee (bad or badly) when he fell off his skateboard.
- d) He moved a bit (slow or slowly) at first.
- e) He walked (well or good), even with a bandaged knee.
- f) His overall recovery felt (slow or slowly) to him.

## Chapter 9: Spelling

### Self-Test:

- 1) Computerized spell-check programs are 100% reliable. T or F
- 2) A *prefix* is added to the end of a word to change its meaning. T or F
- 3) Plural nouns a) are always formed by adding *-s* to the end of the word; b) have rules and exceptions governing irregular and compound nouns; c) must all be memorized; d) only a and c.
- 4) Words that sound alike but are spelled differently a) usually mean different things; b) can easily be misspelled; c) often are not corrected by computer spell-check programs; d) all of the above; or e) none of the above.
- 5) *Abbreviation* refers to a) a shortened form of a word or phrase; b) an actual word formed from the first letter(s) of a series of words; c) a form permitted by the APA Publication Manual under certain conditions; d) none of the above; e) all of the above.
- 6) Changes to spelling in the English language are readily accepted. T or F

### Writing Exercise:

English has a number of words that sound alike another but mean different things. Based on the case information, compose a sentence for each word given, being certain that the spelling you use fits its meaning.

Effect

Affect

Altogether

All together

There

Their

They're

## Chapter 10: Punctuation

### Self-Test:

- 1) A *conjunction* may tie together ideas that are equal, unequal, or paired. T or F
- 2) Punctuation marks on the written page provide subtle cues to accents and pauses in the flow of words. T or F
- 3) A *run-on sentence* a) joins two independent clauses with a comma instead of a semicolon; b) allows two or more separate ideas to run together with no punctuation or connecting word; c) is the same as a *sentence fragment*; d) all of the above; e) only a and b.
- 4) *Commas* a) are the most frequently used punctuation mark; b) visually separate written elements; c) are governed by consistent rules; d) all of the above; e) only a and b.
- 5) After two words become joined by a hyphen, the hyphen always remains. T or F
- 6) *Ellipses* show a) an omitted section of quoted source material; b) an incomplete thought; c) a missing reference; d) only a and b; or e) only b and c.

### Writing Exercise:

- 1) In the following sentences,
    - insert needed punctuation (period, comma, hyphen, semi-colon, or colon);
    - if the sentence is a *sentence fragment*, complete it;
    - if a *run-on sentence* (either *fused* or *comma splice*), change/correct punctuation and/or insert connecting words.
- a) Because Michael's teachers
  - b) His parents dropped him off for testing after school they picked him up later
  - c) Michael rushed through the measures, he was eager to leave
  - d) His teacher said that Michael has several challenges in the classroom often forgets to clean up after himself, he is easily distracted forgets to do or bring in homework assignments
  - e) He initially sat by a window that seemed to further distract him
  - f) He has made few friends at the new school which he says is "OK" with him

## Chapter 11: Writing Letters and Stories

### Self-Test:

- 1) A summary letter to the person assessed a) simply restates facts; b) takes the same tone and format as a formal report; or c) discusses meaning and personal impact of the data and process.
- 2) A client's ability to accept warmth in a summary letter may parallel Finn's levels 1, 2, 3 of ability to hear and accept information. T or F
- 3) *Conceptual metaphor* a) appears only in literature; b) refers to the way that we understand one idea in terms of another; c) primarily relates to human thought and action; d) is solely an artifact of language; e) only b and c.
- 4) When the brain recognizes metaphor, it appears to combine literal with figurative experiences. T or F

- 5) Therapeutic stories are a) never written for adults; b) integrate facts from the assessment with metaphor; c) speak equally to each recipient; d) all of the above.
- 6) In writing, narrative is a summary technique while dialogue places the reader in “real time.” T or F

### **Writing Exercise:**

Write a work plan (Bullet points, brief phrases) for a therapeutic story for Michael. It will include

- a) Images and characters in the story, including wise person/mentor;
- b) Mental health messages from the assessment;
- c) Story flow – how the characters, messages, images will interact.

Refer to the case information given at the beginning of the writing exercises. Also refer to the following personal information about Michael from a Personal Interests Questionnaire he filled out:

He likes skateboarding and watching most sports but doesn't play group sports. Likes history in school – not wild about English or math. Read all of the Harry Potter books and saw the movies. Also likes video games and watching TV but prefers being outdoors. Loves dogs – thinks cats are silly. Music is a take-it or leave-it thing for him. Doesn't think much about colors of clothes or surroundings but guesses he likes blue best. He likes the desert. He hasn't traveled overseas yet, but thinks he might like to see the South Pole. Person he admires most is his grandfather, who died 2 years ago. He has also developed a trusting bond with you, the assessor.

## **Chapter 12: Communicating Verbally**

### **Self-Test:**

- 1) Mark Twain found no difference in the form and content of written versus spoken versions of his stories. T or F
- 2) Less rich forms of communication a) provide fewer cues to the recipient; b) are best suited to clearly-defined uses; c) include the written form; d) all of the above; e) none of the above.
- 3) *Report-talk* is a manner of communicating that a) usually happens in private; b) establishes and negotiates relationships; c) creates community; d) all of the above; e) none of the above.
- 4) *Active listening* does not pay attention to what is not said in a conversation. T or F
- 5) Factors that people find “safe” or “risky” a) influence the content of information; b) help determine the most effective method of interaction; c) have no impact on the communication process; d) only a and b.
- 6) Written, spoken, and nonverbal forms of communication involve a link with another human being. T or F.

**Communication Exercise:**

- 1) Actively observe yourself in social conversation. Notice when you and the other person are using *active listening* and when you are not. Does it change the feeling or tone of the exchange?
- 2) In either social or work conversation, observe how often you or the other person use the various qualities of intonation listed in Table 12.1. Does the connection between you vary when those qualities are diminished?
- 3) Observe in which conversations you use *report-talk* and in which *rappor-talk*. Is one form of dialogue consistently more comfortable for you or is it situational?

**Answer Key**

**Refer to the following pages in the book for correct answers and more information:**

**Chapter 1: Attitude**

Self-test:

- 1) p. 6
- 2) p. 7
- 3) pp. 7-8
- 4) p. 11
- 5) p. 12
- 6) pp. 12-13

Writing exercise:

See Table 1.3 for examples of revising a paragraph to eliminate judgmental quality.

**Chapter 2: Tone**

Self-Test:

- 1) p. 17
- 2) p. 19
- 3) p. 20
- 4) p. 23
- 5) p.25
- 6) p. 26-27

Writing Exercise:

See pp. 28-30 and Table 2.6 for information on Finn's levels and on effectively juxtaposing material.

**Chapter 3: Style**

Self-Test:

- 1) p. 31
- 2) p. 33
- 3) p. 34

- 4) p. 37
- 5) p. 42
- 6) p. 45

Writing Exercise:

See pp. 37-38 and Table 3.3 for information on *concrete* versus *abstract* terms.

See pp. 42-44 and Table 3.6 for information on *jargon* and *clutter*.

#### **Chapter 4: Voice**

Self-Test

- 1) p.49-53
- 2) pp. 49 & 57
- 3) pp. 49; 57-58
- 4) p. 58
- 5) pp. 59-60
- 6) p. 60

Writing Exercise:

See pp. 49-52 and Table 4.1 about *active* versus *passive voice* in sentence structure.

See pp. 52-53 about when *passive voice* might be appropriate.

#### **Chapter 5: Format, Write, Edit, Proof**

Self-Test:

- 1) p. 68
- 2) p. 69
- 3) p. 69
- 4) p. 74
- 5) p. 77
- 6) pp. 78-79

Writing Exercise:

See pp. 74-77 on using outlines.

Refer to Table 5.5 for standard outlining and to p. 76, the numbered list, for the “plumping” approach.

#### **Chapter 6: Sentences and Paragraphs**

Self-Test:

- 1) p. 82
- 2) p. 84; Table 6.1
- 3) p. 85; Table 6.2; also p. 150
- 4) p. 86-87; Table 6.3
- 5) pp. 87-88; Table 6.4
- 6) p. 88; Table 6.4

Writing Exercise:

See pp. 87-89 and Tables 6.4 and 6.5 about building *sentences* into paragraphs.

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See pp. 92-93 and Table 6.7 on filler phrases.

See pp. 93-97 and Tables 6.8 & 6.9 for information on readability measures.

### **Chapter 7: Agreement**

Self-Test:

- 1) pp. 99-100
- 2) p. 101; Table 7.3
- 3) pp. 107-108; Table 7.6
- 4) p. 110; Table 7.8
- 5) pp. 111-113; Table 7.10
- 6) p. 117

Writing Exercise:

See p. 100 and Table 7.2 for information on verb *tenses* used in writing a report.

### **Chapter 8: Modifiers**

Self-Test:

- 1) p. 119
- 2) p. 122; Table 8.1
- 3) P. 123
- 4) p. 124
- 5) p. 125; Tables 8.3, 8.4
- 6) pp. 129-130

Writing Exercise:

See p. 124 for information on split *verbs* and p. 131 for split *infinitives*.

See Tables 8.3 and 8.4 for information on using *modifiers* with *linking verbs* versus active verbs.

See also Table 3.8 for more information on *linking verbs*.

- a) Michael said he felt (bad or badly) for missing school. (bad)
- b) His attitude was (well or good), considering his accident. (good)
- c) He hurt his knee (bad or badly) when he fell off his skateboard. (badly)
- d) He moved a bit (slow or slowly) at first. (slowly)
- e) He walked (well or good) even with a bandaged knee. (well)
- f) His overall recovery felt (slow or slowly) to him. (slow)

### **Chapter 9: Spelling**

Self-Test:

- 1) p. 134
- 2) p. 135; Tables 9.2, 9.3, 9.4
- 3) p. 136; Tables 9.5 and 9.6
- 4) pp. 138; 142; Table 9.8
- 5) p. 142; 144
- 6) pp. 147-148

Writing Exercise:

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See pp. 138-142 and Table 9.8 for information on using words that sound alike but mean different things.

### **Chapter 10: Punctuation**

Self-Test:

- 1) pp. 150-151; Table 10.1
- 2) pp. 151-152
- 3) pp. 154; 157; Table 10.5
- 4) pp. 153-154; Tables 10.3 and 10.4
- 5) pp. 159-161; Table 10.7
- 6) p. 165

Writing Exercise:

See pp. 151-159 for information on punctuation (period, comma, hyphen, semi-colon, or colon).  
See pp. 154; 157; Table 10.5 about run-on sentences and fragments.

### **Chapter 11: Writing Letters and Stories**

Self-Test:

- 1) pp. 174-175; Table 11.1
- 2) pp. 177-178; Table 11.3
- 3) pp. 180-182; Table 11.5
- 4) pp. 183-184
- 5) pp. 184-188; Tables 11.7, 11.8, 11.9
- 6) pp. 188-189

Writing Exercise:

See pp. 184-189.

Since the client is an adolescent, your story work plan can use a template for either a child (Table 11.8) or adult (Table 11.9), depending on your perspective of the overall case.

### **Chapter 12: Communicating Verbally**

Self-Test:

- 1) p. 193
- 2) p. 194-195
- 3) p. 198; Table 12.1
- 4) pp. 200-201; Table 12.2
- 5) pp. 202-203; Table 12.3
- 6) p. 203

Communication Exercise:

See pp. 200-201 for information on *active listening*.

See pp. 198-200; Table 12.1 about intonation and nonverbal cues.

See p. 198 for *report-talk* and *rapport-talk*.