

## **Chapter 5: An Approach to Style**

### **11. Do not explain too much.**

It is seldom advisable to tell all. Be sparing, for instance, in the use of adverbs after "he said," "she replied," and the like: "he said consolingly"; "she replied grumblingly." Let the conversation itself disclose the speaker's manner or condition. Dialogue heavy weighted with adverbs after the attributive verb is cluttered and annoying. Inexperienced writers not only overwork their adverbs but load their attributives with explanatory verbs: "he consoled," "she congratulated." They do this, apparently, in the belief that the word said is always in need of support, or because they have been told to do it by experts in the art of bad writing.

### **12. Do not construct awkward adverbs.**

Adverbs are easy to build. Take an adjective or a participle, add -ly, and behold! you have an adverb. But you'd probably be better off without it. Do not write "tangledly". The word itself is a tangle. Do not even write "tiredly". Nobody says "tangledly" and not many people say "tiredly". Words that are not used orally are seldom the ones to put on paper.

Incorrect: He climbed tiredly to bed.

Correct: He climbed wearily to bed.

Incorrect: The lamp cord lay tangledly beneath her chair.

Correct: The lamp cord lay in tangles beneath her chair.

Do not dress words up by adding -ly to them, as though putting a hat on a horse.