

A Few Myths About Sentences Or Things you might want to unlearn to help you edit

"Never start a sentence with *and* or *but*."

There's no such grammatical rule. And it is done all the time. In some situations, starting a sentence with *and* or *but* is inappropriate, and by all means use the technique sparingly. But a full sentence starting with *and* or *but* is still a legitimate sentence.

"Keep your sentences short and simple."

Often complex thoughts demand complex sentences. And you're writing for readers who can handle complex sentences - if they are writing a

often to take the focus of the sentence off the do-er and put it on what was done to what.
Compare:

I measured the flexibility of the spring by applying 100 gms of pressure laterally using a Bork-Stephens torque device.

with

The flexibility of the spring was measured by applying 100 gms of pressure laterally using a Bork-Stephens torque device.

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and each choice influences other choices. We make many of these choices unconsciously or by habit - remembering a spelling, for instance - which lightens the mental load. But we still make choices, consider implications, posit alternatives, and try to decide what choice to make all along the line. Writing is not like following a well-worn track, it's more like cutting the brush to create the track as you go. That's work. And there's no guarantee that you'll discover something at the end of the path you cut.

Still, if you don't start, you'll never get there.

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