Editor’s Report

April 15, 2023

Submitted by Sally Hook

Thanks to our faithful advertisers, the *Missouri School Music* magazine continues to be printed in spite of rising paper and distribution costs. Our advertisers, contributors and writers are key to making the magazine a useful part of MMEA. Thank you for your prompt submissions and patient help.

As you continue to write for *MSM,* here are some tips from Ella Wilcox, Editor of the *MEJ.*

**Ten Tips for Better Writing from Ella Wilcox, editor, *Music Educator Journal***

1. **Make your writing conversational.** The more your language is **like a good conversation,** the more your readers will enjoy/retain your material. For online work, sentences should be no more than 13 words long.
2. **Ditch the weasel lawyer words.** Knock out of your vocabulary words like those on the right below. Simpler language makes your ideas more accessible.

***Avoid : Use: Example:***

as per in In your last e-mail…

in order to to To get finished, you need to get started.

regardless anyway Anyway, he’ll have to get an okay for the project.

regarding about Look at the material about fundraising.

1. **Give folks a hand when you write.** Let readers grasp your ideas quickly and easily. Don’t be pompous pedantic, or complicated. What’s the shortest distance to a reader’s mind? How can you get there? **Break up a gray page** with bold subheads, bullet points, and the occasional illustration or photo. Keep it fun!
2. **Get to the point.** Don’t make your readers work hard to absorb your main idea.
3. **Use humor when appropriate.** If a joke insults any group take it out. (Don’t be afraid, however, to use yourself as an example if a story is funny.)
4. **If in doubt, check it out.** People can forgive almost anything except a misspelling of their names. **Verify ideas and stories before printing them.**
5. **Two independent sources can save your behind.** When you hear something that seems suspect, get a confirmation from a second source before publishing.
6. **Crack a dictionary** or a grammar book [or online resource] occasionally. Discover that “time-consuming” is always hyphenated.
7. **Take frequent breaks.** Get up from the computer or desk at least once an hour. A little exercise fires up the brain. If you write it, take a 24-hour vacation before you proof it. You’ll make fewer mistakes if your mind is fresh.
8. **Be a voracious reader.** All great writers absorb a lot of ideas from everywhere. As Leonardo da Vinci said, **“I have never met a man so ignorant that I couldn’t learn something from him.”**

***Bonus tip:*** Now is the best time in the universe. Take advantage of every minute!