

There is only one logical, only one sensible, only one practical, only one easy way in which a beginner can learn punctuation: and that is, progressively. (ix)

Commonsense can and often does produce a humdrum, barely adequate, wholly unimaginative punctuation: good sense (another name for wisdom) can and sometimes does produce a punctuation that is much superior to the barely adequate. (7)

Punctuation too often ranks as an adjunct. In fact, it should rank as a component. It is not something that one applies as an ornament, for it is part of the structure; so much a part that, without it, the structure would be meaningless – except after an exhausting examination. (8)

[Having read the examples of spot-plague paragraphs.] The educated will say, But nobody writes like that. The trouble is that a vast number of people write exactly like that: and some of them, if not well-educated and cultured, are certainly not illiterate; a few pass for (and, in the sobering fact, are) averagely educated persons. If anyone objects, But that is a matter of style, not a matter of education, some such reply as the following could be made: (11)

*Partridge Samples*

*Elliptical, Clipped, or Imperfect Sentences*

She did not dislike him. Far from it.

He acted as though he were an all-powerful dictator. Not that he ever would be one.

You could hardly have been there. Of course not.

He said that he intended to commit suicide. As if he would.

The Angry man protested. Vehemently.

The Angry man protested. Protested vehemently.

It is better to avoid difficulties syntactically than to have to resolve them by subtle punctuation; if they are syntactically unavoidable, punctuation has to be especially good. (17)