

Duffin's writing allergies

Things to which I am more or less "allergic":

- long paragraphs
- long sentences
- wordiness
- "so" to mean "therefore"
- "for" to mean "because"
- "However" to begin a sentence
- "But although" to begin a sentence or join two sentences
- "And although" to begin a sentence
- "So although" to begin a sentence
- "Yet while" to begin a sentence
- "It is/was xxx that" to begin a sentence (or "it" without antecedent as subject)
- "There is/are/was/were" to begin or "there" as subject of a sentence
- "therefore," "thus"
- "This" as a noun, especially as a subject of a sentence
- "Although" to begin a paragraph
- use of subordinate clauses following "It is .." or "There is "
- use of present tense to describe events in the past
- avoid passive voice. (unlike the rest of the world, science & medicine are comfortable with passives--it can be economic, but in history and philosophy it is stiff, dull, and bloodless)
- "to try and [verb]" (prefer--only if necessary--"to try to..")
- "The" used to begin several sentences in a row
- unnecessary articles
- "for instance"
- "many/some/several of xxxxx/them/it..."
- "which" without a comma preceding it

- "shall"
- "in fact"
- repetition of words
- repeated use of gerunds "-ing"
- repeated use of past continuous "author(s) has/have shown" for events that are over
- prepositions dangling at the end of sentences
- "and" joining two sentences when a semi-colon will do.
- M-dash for introduction of evidence when a colon will do.

- Also I dislike and use as little as possible the following words: "which," "actually" "such" "should" "must" "ought" "nowadays" "afterwards" "towards" "meanwhile" "in the meantime" "likewise" "certainly" "of course" "largely" "no doubt" "always" "never" (in medicine there's an expression: never say "never," never say "always")
- and ... parenthetical remarks, especially in middle of sentences, as I just did above.