J. H. Toner  (Ten “Thou Shalt Nots”—indexed to *AU Style Guide (AUSG)* [Jan 2001])

1. Do not use an apostrophe to make plurals (e.g., table's for the correct word *tables* or "The Smith's" for the correct rendering of "The Smiths"—*AUSG, 6-7*).

2. Do not place periods and commas outside quotation marks (e.g., "hammer", "nails", and "wrench"). Do not place colons and semi-colons inside quotation marks—*AUSG, 78*. Where you place exclamation marks and question marks will depend on the sentence: “She said, ‘Will I see you tomorrow?’”  “Didn’t she say, ‘I’ll see you tomorrow’”?

3. Do not misuse the semicolon (*AUSG, 81-82*) by confusing it with a comma or by using it after salutations (Dear John:). (Formal: Dear John:) (Informal: Dear John, ). Do not use commas incorrectly (e.g., “John went to the market, he bought a loaf of bread.”) That is called a comma splice. See *AUSG, 20-21*.

4. Do not fail to quote properly. See *AUSG, 11, 27, 60, 72, 78, 107-137*. Also understand ellipses (*AUSG, 31*).

5. Do not divide words somewhere; divide them at the syllable (*AUSG, 102*). Do not use a hyphen to join two or more words serving as a single adjective if it follows the verb (e.g., “a well-known speaker” but “The speaker was well known”). See *AUSG, 39-40*. Do not hyphenate such expressions as “slowly curving ball.” Very common error! See *AUSG, 40*).

6. Do not fail to use the past perfect tense (e.g., saying, "If George would have been there . . .," instead of the correct "If George had been there . . ."). Very common error!

7. Do not misplace modifiers. A test: Harry only borrowed a dollar. Did he only borrow it? Was it only Harry who borrowed it? Or was it only a dollar? The sentence probably should be: *Harry borrowed only a dollar*. The misplaced modifier changes the whole meaning. Do not use “dangling modifiers” (*AUSG, 25*).

8. Formal English requires use of singular pronouns to refer to indefinite antecedents. (Does everyone have his [not *their*] lunch? Did someone forget his keys?)

9. Use italics properly (*AUSG, 44-46, 59, and 78*).

10. Do not misspell words! Watch out for homonyms (*principle* and *principal, effect* and *affect, its* and *it’s), all right is right, supersede, privilege, necessary, disastrous, exaggerate, irresistible, seize, siege, fiery, quizzes, omitted, accommodate. *Neither sheik dared leisurely seize either weird, foreign species of financier—all exceptions to the old 6th-grade rule. Do not misuse words—(e.g., using the word *quote* when one means *quotation*; using *impact* [say *affect*] as a verb; writing *I could care less* when one means exactly the opposite; saying things like “Hopefully, it will rain” when rain can’t be hopeful [you mean, *I hope it will rain*]). Finally, if you outline, you must have two or more divisions, not just one. If, for example, you divide one dollar, “division” implies at least two parts (99 cents and one cent).