

# Good Measures

*A Practice Book  
to Accompany  
Rules of Thumb  
Third Edition*

Jay Silverman  
Elaine Hughes  
Diana Roberts Wienbroer

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RULES OF THUMB**

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**GOOD MEASURES: A Practice Book to Accompany *Rules of Thumb***

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*This book was set in Palatino by Ann Eisner.*

*The editors were Tim Julet and Tom Holton;*

*the production supervisor was Elizabeth J. Strange.*

*The cover was designed by Joan Greenfield.*

*R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company was printer and binder.*

## About the Authors

A graduate of Amherst College and the University of Virginia, **Jay Silverman** has received fellowships from the Fulbright-Hayes Foundation, the Andrew Mellon Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. He has taught at Virginia Highlands Community College and at Nassau Community College where he received the Honors Program award for Excellence in Teaching.

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As Chair of the English Department of Nassau Community College for six years, **Diana Roberts Wienbroer** coordinated a department of 150 faculty members and served on the Executive Council of The Association of Departments of English. Besides teaching writing for over thirty years, both in Texas and New York, she has studied and taught film criticism. She is also the co-author of *An Easy Guide to Writing on the Computer*.

The authors have also written *Rules of Thumb* and *Finding Answers: A Guide to Conducting and Reporting Research*.

# To the Student

We have written *Good Measures* to give you practice in applying the concepts presented in *Rules of Thumb: A Guide for Writers*. At the top of each page, we've put the corresponding page numbers from *Rules of Thumb* so that you can look up the relevant rule.

*Good Measures* presents two kinds of exercises. Some are drills that offer a quick way to test your understanding. But drills can take you only so far; the real proof of your knowledge comes in actual writing. Therefore, we've also included writing activities which require you to apply your knowledge. In some cases, the required writing is very brief—making up single sentences. But often we've given longer assignments that we hope will be enjoyable as well as instructive. The drills in *Good Measures* give you ways to “measure” your learning by testing yourself. The writing activities present “measures” you can take to practice new skills and to grow as a writer.

Jay Silverman  
Elaine Hughes  
Diana Roberts Wienbroer

# To the Instructor

We are eager for your reactions to *Good Measures*. We would like to know if it meets your needs in the classroom; we also welcome your suggestions for improvements.

Please send any comments on *Good Measures*—or on *Rules of Thumb*—to us directly:

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Jay Silverman  
Elaine Hughes  
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# P A R T I

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# Correctness



# Confusing Words

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## AFFECT / EFFECT, ITS / IT'S

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In the following sentences, cross out any incorrect words and write corrections above them.

*Example:* The trade deficit continues to <sup>affect</sup>~~effect~~ the economy.

### Affect / Effect

1. The special <sup>Effects</sup>~~affects~~ made the whole production magical.
2. A hot toddy can affect how you feel when you have a bad cold.
3. After an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging), the magnets have no lasting effect on the patient.
4. The tall man in the second row <sup>Affected</sup>~~effected~~ the view of the entire audience.
5. A household fire effects the whole family, and the effects last for years.

**Its / It's**

1. Even if <sup>it's</sup>~~is~~ July, <sup>it's</sup>~~is~~ still best to pack a sweater for a trip to Maine.
2. Ingrid Bergman had only a minute to return the key to <sup>its</sup>~~its~~ proper place before the villain would notice its absence.
3. The snake vibrates <sup>its</sup>~~its~~ rattle when it senses that it's in danger.
4. <sup>It's</sup>~~Its~~ a miracle that no one was hurt when the car rolled over on <sup>its</sup>~~its~~ side.
5. When <sup>it's</sup>~~is~~ noon in New York, <sup>it's</sup>~~is~~ six o'clock in Paris.

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**LAY / LIE, PASSED / PAST**

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In the following sentences, cross out any incorrect words and write corrections above them.

*Example:* The clue to the corpse's identity was <sup>lying</sup>~~laying~~ in the bushes.

**Lay / Lie**

1. Cleopatra <sup>lay</sup>~~laid~~ on the divan, eating grapes; as she got up, she laid the grape stems on the cushion.
2. Once the foundation was in place, they began laying the floors, but the manager continued lying about the date of occupancy.
3. Every night while I was <sup>lying</sup>~~laying~~ in bed trying to sleep, the smell from the paper factory kept me awake.
4. The archivist laid each picture flat in the drawer, but the last one was <sup>lying</sup>~~laying~~ off-center.
5. The patient lay comatose while the nurses quickly prepared the instruments for surgery.

**Passed / Past**

1. The train sped <sup>past</sup>~~passed~~ the platform of waiting passengers.
2. The cat has never eaten tuna in the past because we had always bought the kind that was packed in oil.
3. Kip <sup>passed</sup>~~past~~ the ball behind his back to set up Nancy, who made a slam dunk.
4. Several years ago, the total of the human population <sup>passed</sup>~~past~~ five billion.
5. In crossbreeding tulips, growers hope that the most attractive traits from the past can be genetically <sup>passed</sup>~~past~~ on.

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THAN / THEN, THEIR / THERE / THEY'RE

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In the following sentences, cross out any incorrect words and write corrections above them.

*Example:* Chop all the ingredients; <sup>then</sup> ~~than~~ heat the wok.

**Than / Then**

1. Beethoven's late quartets are more extraordinary <sup>than</sup> ~~then~~ his earlier, more popular music.
2. Advertisements urge you to buy whatever you want and then pay later.
3. The shares in L.A.Gear are worth 25 percent less today <sup>than</sup> ~~then~~ they were last week.
4. In the dry season, this canal clogs up now and <sup>then</sup> ~~that~~, diminishing the water supply.
5. The chiefs in the southern part of Cameroon exercise much <sup>than</sup> ~~then~~ less power ~~then~~ the chiefs in the west.