(Approx. 605 words)

Freshly Squeezed Reviews: Write Right

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I have been reviewing software and hardware for about two decades. Sometimes the words just flow, other times I need to pry them from my skull. In college, I had a professor who always said, ‘writing is rewriting.’ Too true.

He died long ago but his guideline has revisited me in the form of an incredible app, ProWritingAid. <https://prowritingaid.com/>

Good writing is about more than just grammar.

ProWritingAid is the best free writing app out there. It includes a fantastic grammar checker but also goes way beyond grammar checking to help you improve the style and clarity of your writing.

The editing tool analyzes your text and highlights a variety of key writing issues, such as overused words, sentence structure, punctuation issues, repeated phrases, consistency, dialogue, pacing and readability. It helps you learn as you edit, making you a stronger writer.

I admit to at least 70% of the infractions above (but I WILL argue over the Oxford Comma until the day I die!). Ironically, one sentence and a paragraph in the block quote above was flagged by the app.

This app in incredible. You can check your work in a multitude of ways, covering every conceivable metric. You can check it with a comprehensive summary. But you can also granularly check your grammar, your diction, look for redundancies, and clichés. There are roughly two dozen checks you can perform. For an extra fee, you can purchase different numbers of plagiarism checks (great for schoolwork).

Mercifully, it includes my dear friend the Thesaurus and even occasionally encourages me to use it (HUZZAH!).

You can also set your own filters or ignore ones that they suggest.

ProWritingAid’s Desktop App allows you to open, edit and save your Scrivener projects without losing formatting. It also works with other formats such as Microsoft Word, Open Office, Rich Text, HTML and Markdown.

If you’re writing a short story, your blog or the great American novel, there is room for disagreement with their suggestions which is allotted. I’m a musician and composer. In the same manner as a musical composition flows, your words should have a rhythm. This is your ‘voice.’

In my opinion, if you’re writing a scholarly piece or business presentation, ProWritingAid is a valuable tool. Not to say your great American novel doesn’t have its share of incorrect grammar, punctuation, or other literary offenses but I believe ProWritingAid is better suited for business and academia.

It is to writing what the Pomodoro method is to productivity. It enables you to focus because you feel like your boss is standing next to you making sure you get the job done. ProWritingAid took me back to middle school, writing an essay as my teacher hovered over my shoulder.

There is one function that I found absolutely fascinating: Word Explorer. Pick any word and it will present you with an endless list of options.

This app pointed out why my English grades were so pitiful. But it was a great help in improving my writing. I could still use my ‘voice’ but now had to justify my wording. After writing reviews for all these centuries, it was somewhat humbling.

ProWritingAid is available as part of your Setapp subscription or can be subscribed to in three plans: the Free subscription (which has limitations), the Premium Plan for US $60 annually (fewer limitations), and the Premium+ Plan for US $70 annually (there’s 50 plagiarism checks included per year).

APIs are also available for developers. That also comes at a premium, however.

And there’s a trial version available. Give it a bash.