

Language on a Leash

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Abstract

A book review of *Language on a Leash*, by Bruce O. Boston.

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Reviews

***Language on a Leash* by Bruce O. Boston. 1988. Editorial Experts, Inc. 85 S. Bragg St., Suite 400, Alexandria, VA 22312. 123 pp. (\$11.50 plus \$2 shipping.)**

I think I won't recommend *Language on a Leash* to my physician. The last time I was in for a physical he asked me what I do for fun. When I replied that I read and write about words, his expression was one of genuine incomprehension. Tennis or mountain climbing, maybe. Not words.

But, readers who understand that words can be fun will find this an apt addition to their book collection. Most of the 44 essays first appeared in *The Editorial Eye*, a monthly newsletter produced by Editorial Experts, Inc. for publications professionals. With these essays in one place, you can easily refer to those with special meaning for you—or lend them to a friend, if you're one of those bibliophiles who delights in sharing "finds" with others.

Among the reasons that Boston suggests for using "good" English—and for reading his book—is that doing so can prompt invitations to lots of nice places.

ACE members who work with unskilled writers will find the essays titled "Close Enough Is Not Good Enough," and "Developing a Writer's Voice" not only useful but delightful.

In the essay on the need for cadence in effective speechwriting, the author reminds us to put the big idea at the end when using doubles and triples to establish cadence. Who would remember Patrick Henry, Boston asks, if he had said "Give me death or give me liberty"? In one essay, the author questions why editors commonly work alone. He argues for team editing, especially on large-scale projects. A bonus to the reader of this slim book is that nearly every essay points the reader to other books: some which, surely, you have read; some that you've intended to read and are grateful for the reminder; and some new ones that you can't wait to track down. Two chapters are devoted solely to reference books on writing.