

imperatively demands an understanding of sentences, and we must therefore consider them.

**Q. Make a precis of the following passage and suggest a suitable title.**

We lawyers cannot write plain English. We use eight words to say what could be said in two. We use old, arcane phrases to express commonplace ideas. Seeking to be precise, we become redundant. Seeking to be cautious, we become verbose. Our sentences twist on, phrase within clause within clause, glazing the eyes and numbing the minds of our readers. The result is a writing style that has, according to one critic, four outstanding characteristics. It is: "(1) wordy, (2) unclear, (3) pompous, and (4) dull."

Criticism of lawyers' writing is nothing new. In 1596 an English chancellor decided to make an example of a particularly prolix document filed in his court. The chancellor first ordered a hole cut through the center of the document, all 120 pages of it. Then he ordered that the person who wrote it should have his head stuffed through the hole, and the unfortunate fellow was led around to be exhibited to all those attending court at Westminster Hall.

When the common law was transplanted to America, the writing style of the old English lawyers came with it. In 1817 Thomas Jefferson lamented that in drafting statutes his fellow lawyers were accustomed to "making every other word a 'said' or 'aforesaid,' and saying everything over two or three times, so that nobody but we of the craft can untwist the diction, and find out what it means."

In recent times criticism of lawyers' writing has taken on a new intensity. The popular press castigates lawyers for the "frustration, outrage, or despair" a consumer feels when trying to puzzle through an insurance policy or installment loan agreement. President Carter has ordered that new regulations of the federal executive agencies must be "written in plain English" that is "understandable to those who must comply" with them.' A recently enacted New York State statute requires consumer contracts to be written "in a clear and cogent manner using words with common and everyday meanings." Within the legal profession itself, the criticism has mounted. Attorney Ronald Goldfarb charges that, by writing as we do, we "unnecessarily mystify our work, baffle our clients, and alienate the public. We could change this, and we should."

## Title: The Lawyers' Writing

The criticism to lawyers' writing is an ongoing concern existing since a long time. As it is considered to be wordy, unclear, pompous and dull. For example, In ~~129~~ 1596 an English chancellor had ordered a person's head to be stuffed through the hole of a 120 pages lengthy document and to be exhibited around the Westminster Hall. ~~The~~ Thomas Jefferson, In 1817, had also quoted that the drafting of statutes mainly consists of 'said' or 'aforesaid' and it is unable for a person to understand the diction of it, apart from ones making it. Even in recent times, the concern persists, as the consumers get tangled in language of the insurance policy or loan agreement etc. ~~Pres~~ Due to which, President Carter ordered new regulations <sup>and statute</sup> to be written in plain English consisting of words with common and every everyday meanings. Even Attorney Ronald Goldfarb admitted it saying that the lawyers unnecessarily mystify the work and, it could and it should be changed. 160 Words