

Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

—George Orwell, *Politics and the English Language*, 1946

Dedicated to Eric Corbin, who challenged accepted wisdom.

Acknowledgements

No book happens on its own. I'd like to thank Geoff Hart and Michael Lewis for their helpful advice on an early version of this book, which saved me from many of the same errors that I criticise (except where I felt pigheaded); Rick Weisburd for sending me his improvements; Maeve O'Connor for her gracious permission to reproduce her checklist; the Canberra Society of Editors for permission to reproduce their checklist; Roger Jones for his kind permission to reproduce the ASCII character chart shown at the end of the book; Paddy and Deryck Schreuder for ideas; Dean Morris for an earlier collaboration from which I've borrowed; Flory Nye-Clement for corrections; and Linda for her encouragement.

About the author

Matthew Stevens holds a bachelor's degree in agriculture and a master's degree in extension. He became an editor by mistake when the New South Wales Department of Agriculture, flush with other people's money, offered him a job, thinking he was called Jeremy. He trained on the job under some rather clever editors, and went on to edit such classics as *Hydroponic Sheep Raising* (Agdex 430/516) and *History of Antarctic Agriculture*. After ten years there, he gave up the security of the Public Service for the uncertainties of self-employment after a well-known computer journalist advised him that e-mail-based editing would never work. He has been in business now for over 12 years, originally in partnership with his cat, and works in his home office. He is the first scientific editor outside North America to be awarded the ELS(D), the highest accreditation offered by the US-based Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (<http://www.bels.org/>).