

LABYRINTHINE SENTENCE ASSIGNMENT  
ENGLISH 125.068

Though I am well aware that it will not be easy, I have a demand to make of you[] a demand which seems far easier on its face than it will prove to be, viz.: I want you to construct a single sentence of at least two hundred words in length, a very long and circuitous piece of language which remains, for all its complexity, eminently clear; which is mindful of your readers and deploys English with both aplomb and ease, meaning that it never becomes overly repetitious or wordy (avoiding words that are mere filler, and taking special care not to devolve into the overuse of adjectives and adverbs, which are all too often the bane of specificity); which is grammatically, mechanically, and syntactically correct; which is deliberate and carefully planned, with careful attention given to each word, clause, and phrase and how these individual elements combine, along with other parts of speech, to create meaning; which is correctly punctuated, taking full advantage of the array of options the language affords you (commas, dashes, parentheses, semicolons, and one instance of end punctuation, along with quotes for those who are feeling ambitious); which never abandons clarity and economy even under the strain of complexity, since the first job of each piece of language we create is to communicate[] and it is in the service of this job that you will employ your wits, your patience, your flexibility, and your creativity, demonstrating your hard-won mastery of writing.

In case you were wondering, the sentence above contains 244 words. It can be done.

[Adapted from *The St. Martin's Guide to Teaching Writing, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed.* by Glenn, Goldthwaite, and Connors.]