AP Language & Composition / Summer Reading

Questions on *On Writing Well* by William Zinsser

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Score\_\_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Use the following questions as a guide for what to glean from the text. It will help with any accountability measures for summer reading.

1. How do professional writers view rewriting?
2. What is the secret to good writing?
3. Does Zinsser consider writing easy or hard? Why?
4. Zinsser provides a ratio between making improvements in writing and eliminating unnecessary words. State this ratio in your own words.
5. What fundamental rule does Zinsser put forth when it comes to style?
6. Zinsser says, “Writing is an act of ego . . . .” Explain what he means.
7. For whom does a writer write?
8. Finish the phrase: Never say anything in writing that you wouldn’t \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .
9. What three books does Zinsser recommend in order to help writers find the right word? (3 pts.)
10. What rule of thumb does Zinsser use when determining which word to use for a particular meaning?
11. Does Zinsser recommend active or passive verbs? Why?
12. Describe how Zinsser feels about using adverbs.
13. What rules does Zinsser offer for adjectives?
14. Does Zinsser favor short or long paragraphs? Why?
15. How does Zinsser say we should handle peoples’ words?
16. What are the twin pillars upon which nonfiction is built? (2 pts.)
17. When writing about science and technology, what must the writer assume the reader knows?
18. Name three of Zinsser’s articles of faith. (3 pts.)
19. What does Zinsser say about using idioms in sports writing?
20. What type of humorist never runs out of material?
21. How does a writer maintain his ability to write interestingly?