Timmons’s Advice on Writing: Writing "no no's"

1. Never start a sentence with "to", e.g., To determine the market potential, we did such and such.
2. Never start a sentence with:
   1. Figure or Table, e.g., Figure 1 demonstrates that we succeeded. Figures and graphs should not be the subject of sentence. Instead, they should be referred to.
   2. A numerical number, e.g., 46 percent of our customers prefer us. (If they do start with a number, it must be written out, yes? Or do we just avoid starting with numbers entirely? <I just did one of my writing no-no’s. Oops>)
3. If you have a figure/table, be sure to discuss it in the text and make a reference to it at least once.
4. Figures and tables should be placed in the area of the text where they are discussed (you don’t need to wait until the end of a paragraph to insert a figure).
5. Avoid use of:
   1. Long sentences
   2. Starting a sentence with “Because”; simply, reorder your sentence structure putting the "because" content at the end of the sentence.
   3. It (what are your referring to?)
   4. Demonstrative pronouns. The family of demonstratives (**this/that/these/those/such**) can behave either as pronouns or as determiners. If you must use these words, e.g., “this” and “these”, make sure it is clear what you are referring to. Demonstrative pronouns identify or point to nouns.
      1. That is incredible! (referring to something you just saw)
      2. I will never forget this. (referring to a recent experience)
      3. Such is my belief. (referring to an explanation just made)
6. Be careful when using a semicolon ";". Generally, two sentences are better.
7. Always use two spaces after a sentence ending period.
8. For e.g. and i.e., proper comma usage is: I have two big problems, e.g., a and b.
9. Avoid jargon qualifiers, e.g., superior, large, enormous, best.
10. Always define an acronym the first time you use it, e.g., CAV (Cayuga Aqua Ventures).
11. Non-parallel construction in a series, e.g., noun, noun, clause. Similarly, when listing items, make sure you have parallelism (e.g., all verbs end in –ing).
12. Periods go inside of quotes, outside parentheses.
13. When listing three things, it’s: a, b, and c. Not: a, b and c (for 3 or more things that you’re listing, the number of commas should be n-1).
14. Keep writing simple: avoid flowery language and those filler words (i.e., essentially, "it goes without saying", "lawyer type" lingo, etc.).
15. Do not confuse the use of “that” or “which.” If using “which,” it must be preceded by a comma, i.e., The horse, which trots quickly, as opposed to: The horse that trots quickly. Note also that using "which" is for a non-distinctive descriptor (think of it as an example of the thing you are qualifying) while using that is used to uniquely describe the object, e.g., the dog that I own versus, the dog, which you see over there, is a chow-wow.
16. Try not to start a sentence with “and” or “but” or any other connecting word.
17. Conditional clauses!!! If there *were* a blackout, I would light a candle. Use “were” in conditional clauses, even if there is a singular subject (i.e., if you’re inclined to use “was” in a conditional clause, it should probably be “were.”)
18. Avoid contractions. I don't understand. Preferred is => I do not understand.
19. Be careful in usage of “it’s and its”. Possessive form is "its". Examples, What is its color? It's green. It's been a long, long time. Remember, it's means it is or it has! Use its to show possession.