

# **210 Technical Writing**

**Central States Air Resource Agency**

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**RaPP Training & Consulting, LLC**

## *Two Main Objectives*

*Techniques for:*

- **Streamlined Technical Writing**

Specific actions to craft bold, clear,  
impressive text

- **Proper Usage, Grammar, & Spelling**

A poor command of language causes one to  
question the reliability of the data.

# *To Streamline Your Writing:*

*We will Discuss blueprints to powerful direct sentences:*

## **Active & Passive Voice** What creates passive voice?

- ✓ Why a problem
- ✓ How to prevent it
- ✓ How to locate & statistically count passive sentences

## **Nominalizations**

- ✓ Nouns created from verbs—extra words, words, words

## **Prepositions**

- ✓ Sure way to lengthen a sentence

## **Noun Stacks**

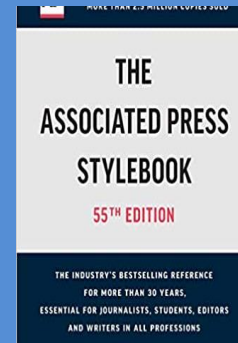
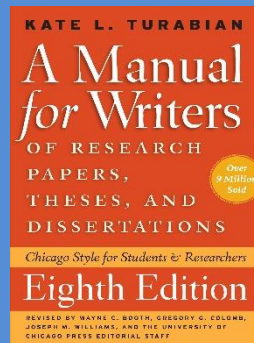
- ✓ Confusing word groups

## **Expletives**

- ✓ Wow! Adds zero information to a sentence

# Format Styles

## Determine Text Placement Usage



*The most valuable of talents is never using two words  
when one will do.* —T. Jefferson

# Active and Passive Voice

✓ Streamline Technical Writing

# Why Use Active Voice

**Active voice is less likely to lead to wordy or vague messages.**

Readers want to read the needed information, not sift through countless, confusing words.

## **Active Voice—Less Words**

***Even when the word count is nearly equal, the flow is stronger in active voice.***

# Active and Passive Voice

**In active voice sentences, the subject is the doer:**

The saltwater corroded the metal beams.

*Upstream dischargers impact reaches.*

**In passive voice sentences, the subject is not doer, but acted upon:**

*The metal beams were corroded by the saltwater.*

*Reaches are impacted by upstream dischargers.*



**The homes were destroyed by the tornados.**

This sentence tells what the tornados did. So, tornados should *begin* the sentence:

**Tornados destroyed the homes.**

Recognize and reposition the subject (doer).

**Begin** with the subject.

The reader recognizes immediately *who* oversees the action.

**Reaches *are impacted* by upstream dischargers.**

**Upstream dischargers impact reaches.**

# Creating Passive Voice

**What words foster passive sentences?**

**auxiliary verbs**

**+**

**past participles.**

# Passive Forms of the Verb “Enroll”

TENSE	SUBJECT	SINGLE PLURAL		PAST PARTICIPLE
		Auxiliaries “Helping Verbs”		“participates” as principal verb
Present	The student students	is	are	<b>enrolled</b>
Present Perfect	↓	has been	have been	↓
Past		was	were	
Past Perfect		had been	had been	
Future		will be	will be	
Future Perfect	↓	will have been	will have been	↓

**is are was were**  
**has, had**  
**be been**

**+**

**Past form of verb + ed**  
**or *irregular* past form**  
***beaten* chosen *broken***  
***begun, bent***

# In Passive Voice:

- The person or thing receiving the action is the subject.
- The doer is near the end of the sentence (often using “**by**”).
- Use passive voice when the receiver of the action needs emphasizing.

Receiving the action	+ auxiliary	+ past participle	+ by	+	action doer
↓	↓	↓	↓		↓
The instrument	is being	recalibrated	by		the engineer.

# Passive Voice in Small Doses

Politicians and institutions trying to escape fault use passive.

Avoid direct blame:

**Mistakes were made.**

*Dilute the blame:*

*The company's jeans have been provocatively presented **by the magazine** to target a more youthful audience.*

Use sparingly  
Textbook Rule [10-15%]



# Why Passive Voice?

- **Unknown author**
- **Performer is less important than the action**
- **Subject is emphasized as the receiver**

**The fewer—the better**

A new process for eliminating nitrogen oxides from the exhaust of diesel engines is being presented **by** the developers.

The developers present a new process to eliminate nitrogen oxides from diesel exhaust engines.

Flow tube experiments to test this process were discussed **by** the team.

The team discussed flow tube experiments to test this process.

A chemical reaction scheme to account for this process was proposed **by** the engineer.

The engineer proposed a chemical reaction scheme to explain this process.



# Who Owns the Spotlight

Passive voice is appropriate when the findings are more important than the investigator:

- **Active:** *This reporter interviewed the potential prize winner.*
- **Passive:** *The potential prize winner was interviewed (by this reporter).*

CMS p. 264    APA p. 77

# Be careful not to obscure the intended message.

Susan B. Anthony **was influenced** by the Quaker theology that both sexes were equal in the eyes of God.

**The Quaker theology teaching both sexes were equal in the eyes of God, influenced Susan B. Anthony.**

# Feeling Overwhelmed?

- How much passive do I have?
- Where are they?

**Microsoft can recognize, underline, and statistically count your passive sentences.**

**Set Proofing & Readability Statistics.**

*Do not open MS Word yet.*

***Instructions:***

**Enabling Readability Statistics**

1

Depending on your MS year, instructions vary.  
Turn to page that parallels with your MS year:

- **2016 or 365** Page 1
- **2013** Page 2
- **2010** Page 3
- **2007** Page 4

# **Open Microsoft Word**

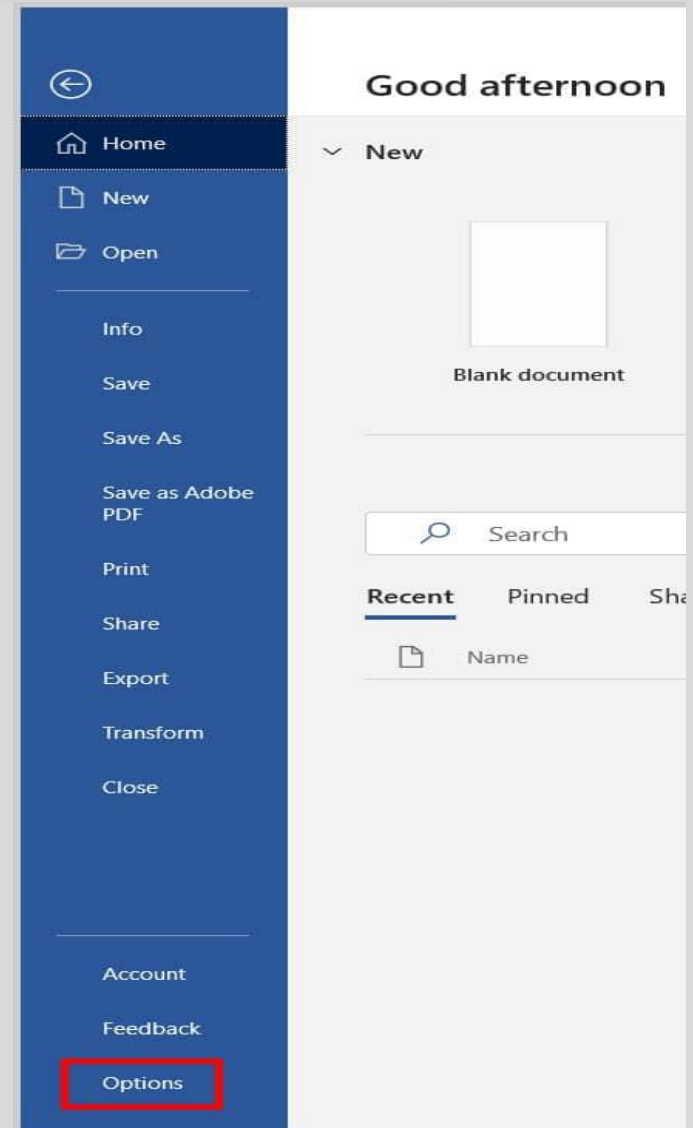
**Instructions for each year's design  
starting with 2016/365.**

# Enabling Readability Statistics

1

*2016 or 365*

1. Click on **Word**.
2. Click “**Word Options**”  
at the bottom.

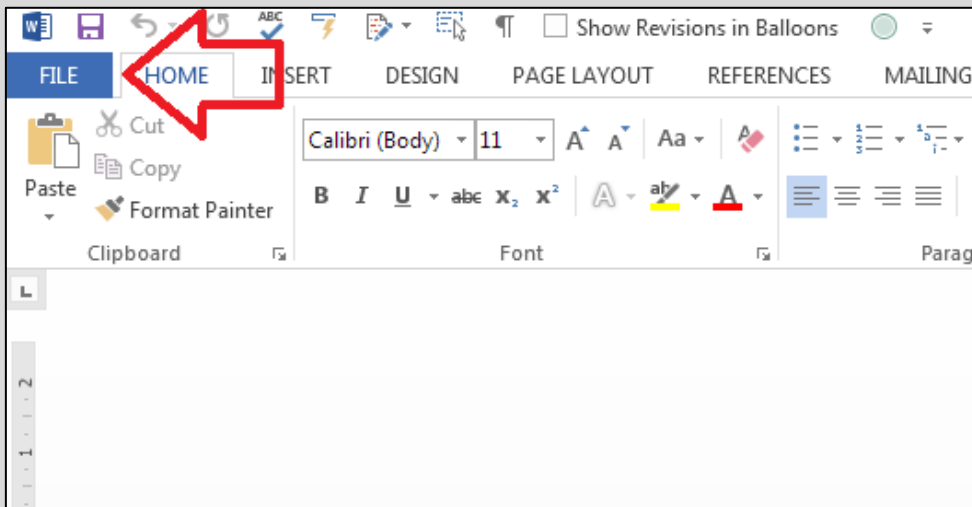


# 2013

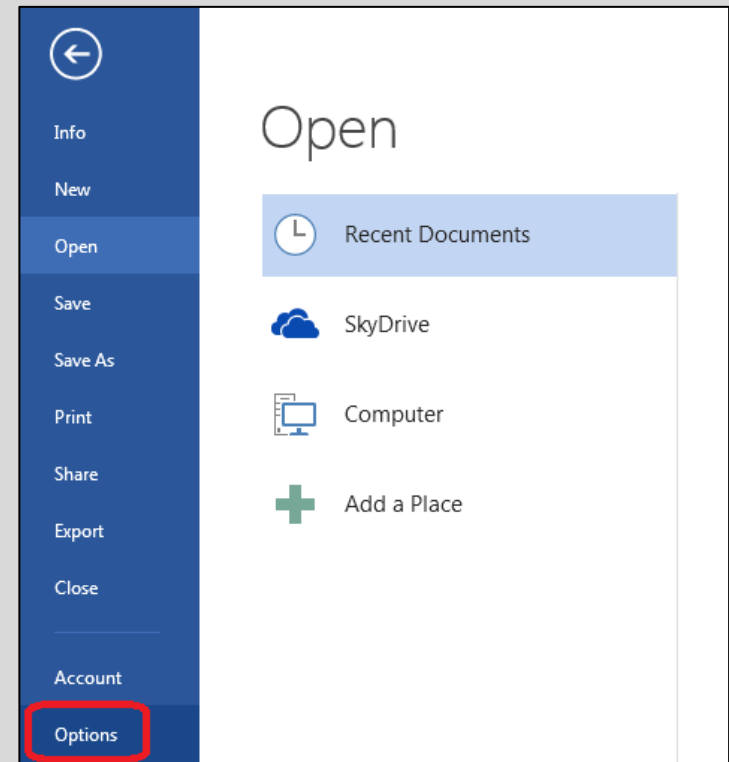
1. Open **Word**.

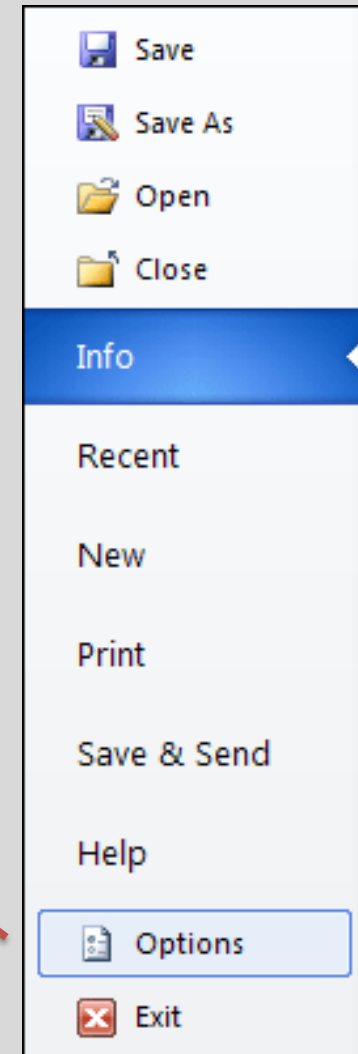
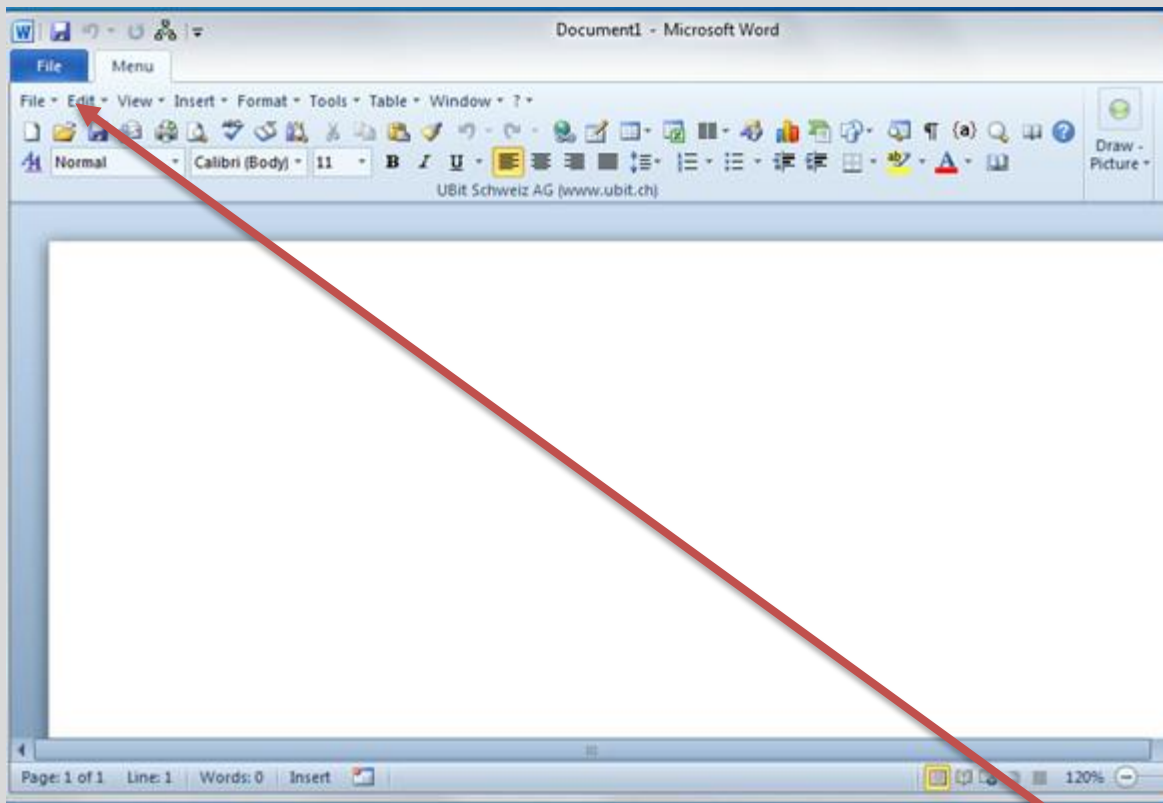
2. Click on **File**.

Typing screen disappears.



3. Select **Options**.





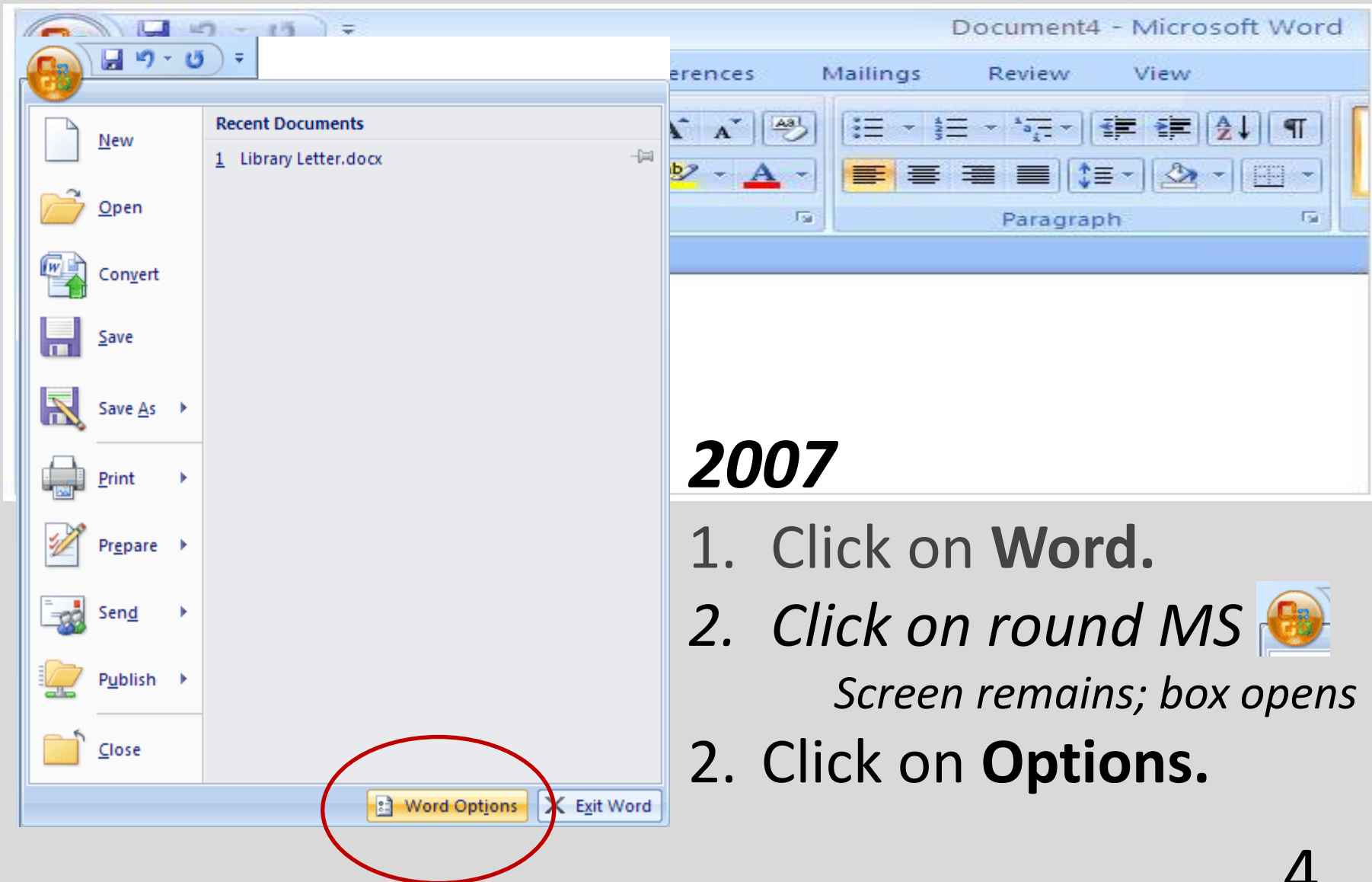
*2010*

1. Click on **Word**.
2. Click on **File**.

Word screen disappears.


Select **Options** near the bottom.





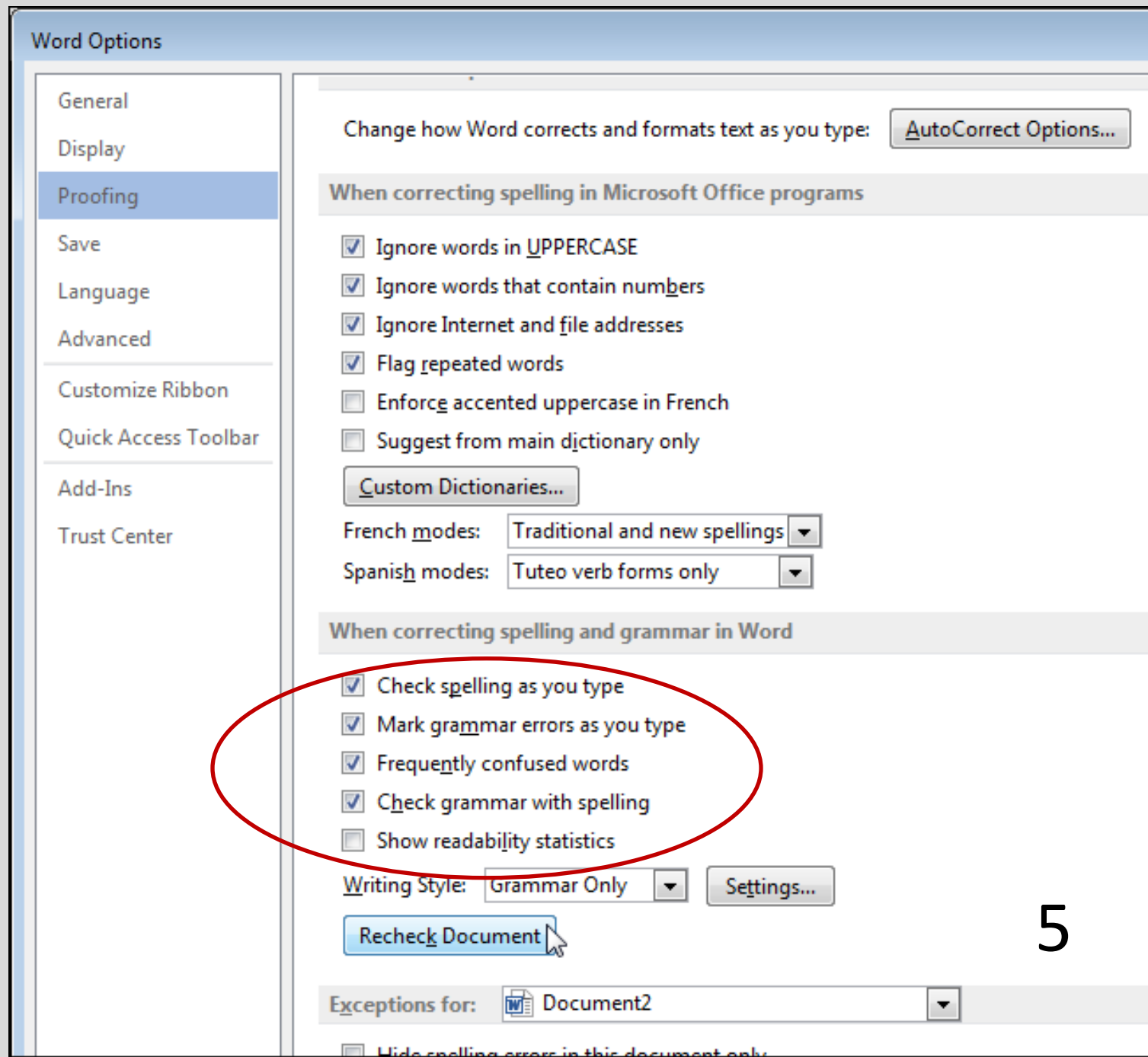
**2007**

1. Click on **Word**.

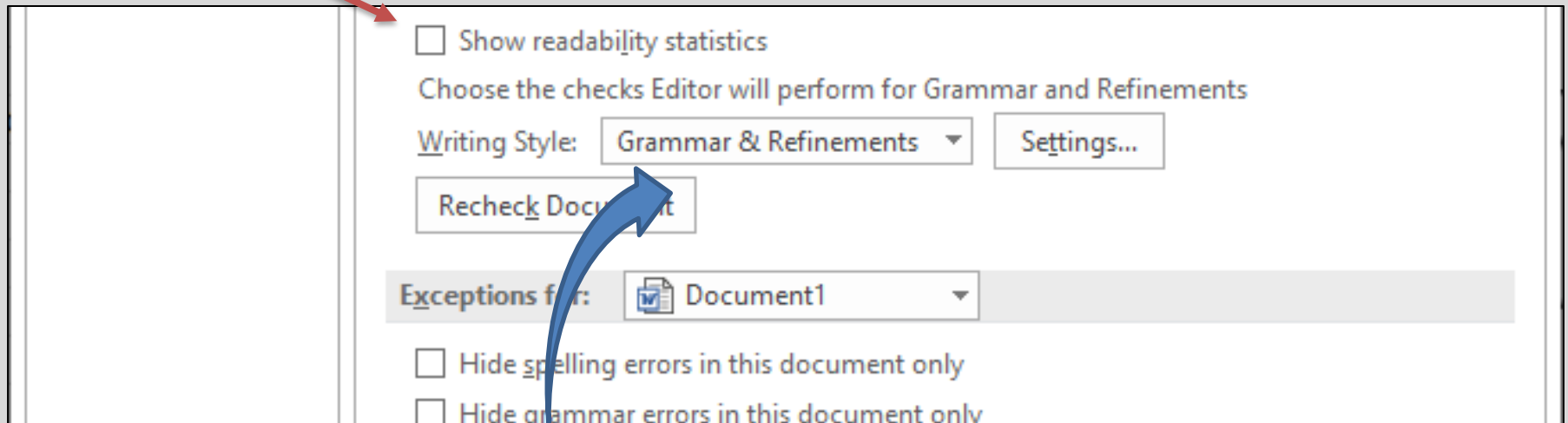
2. *Click on round MS*   
*Screen remains; box opens*

2. Click on **Options**.

**Select  
Proofing.  
Choices  
appear**



***Very Important***



☐ Show readability statistics

Choose the checks Editor will perform for Grammar and Refinements

Writing Style: Grammar & Refinements ▼ Settings...

Recheck Document

Exceptions for: Document1 ▼

☐ Hide spelling errors in this document only

☐ Hide grammar errors in this document only

**Grammar & Refinements**  
**Grammar & More**  
**Grammar & Style**

## Word Options

General

Display

Proofing

Save

Language

Advanced

Customize Ribbon

Quick Access Toolbar

Add-Ins

Trust Center



Change how Word corrects and formats your text.

### AutoCorrect options

Change how Word corrects and formats text as you type:

AutoCorrect Options...

### When correcting spelling in Microsoft Office programs

- ☒ Ignore words in UPPERCASE
- ☒ Ignore words that contain numbers
- ☒ Ignore Internet and file addresses
- ☒ Flag repeated words
- ☐ Enforce accented uppercase in French
- ☐ Suggest from main dictionary only

Custom Dictionaries...

French modes: Traditional and new spellings ▼

Spanish modes: Tuteo verb forms only ▼

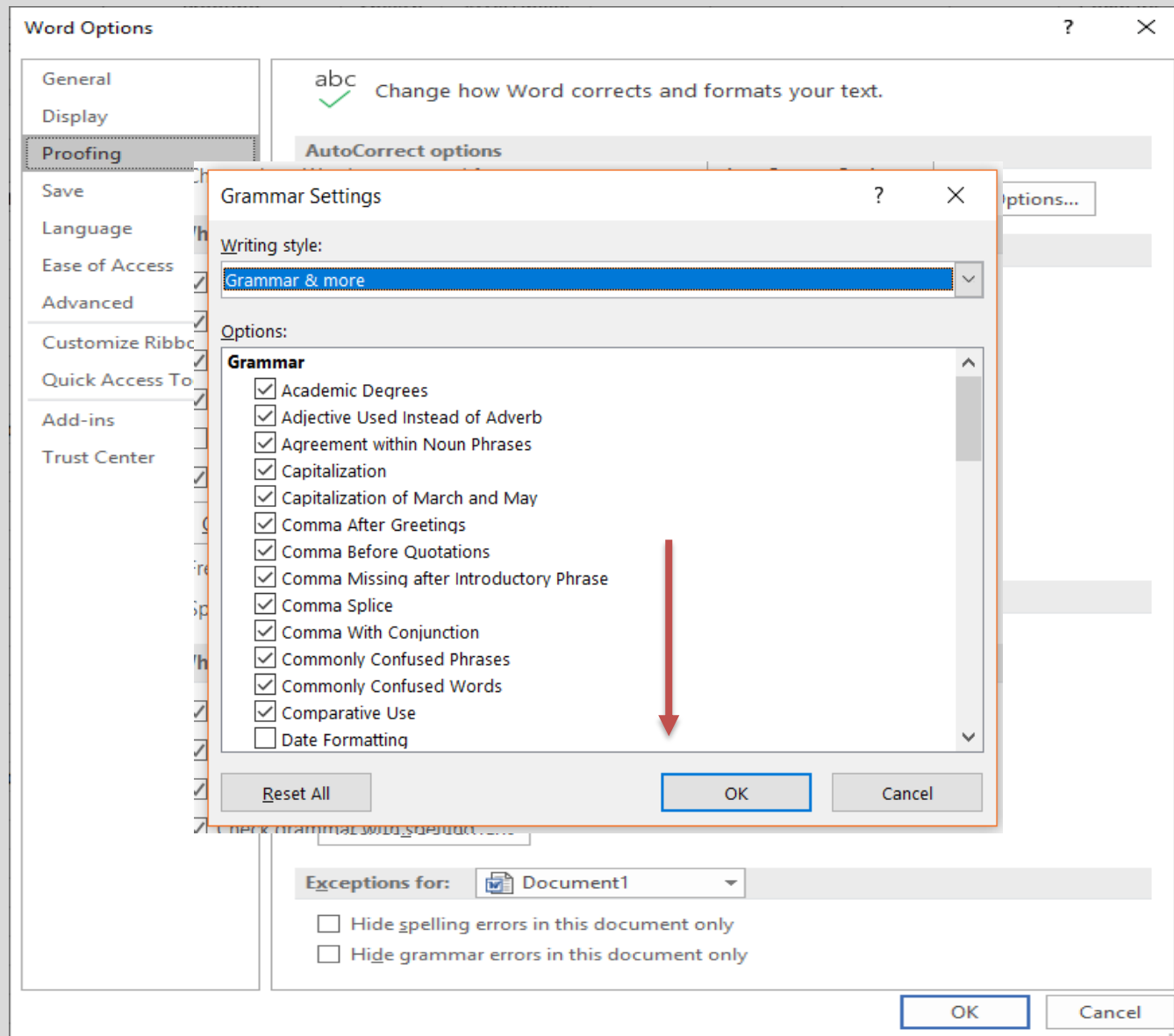
### When correcting spelling and grammar in Word

- ☒ Check spelling as you type
- ☒ Use contextual spelling
- ☒ Mark grammar errors as you type
- ☒ Check grammar with spelling
- ☒ Show readability statistics

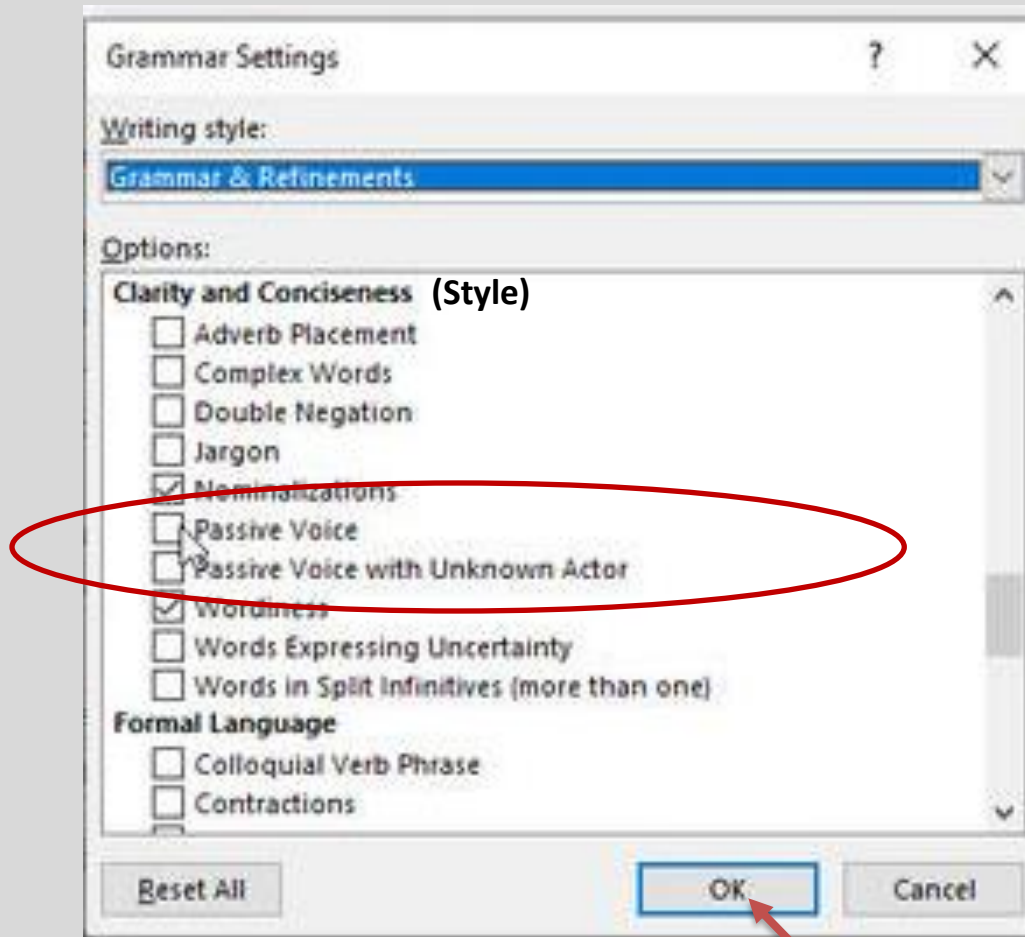
Writing Style: Grammar & Style ▼

Settings...

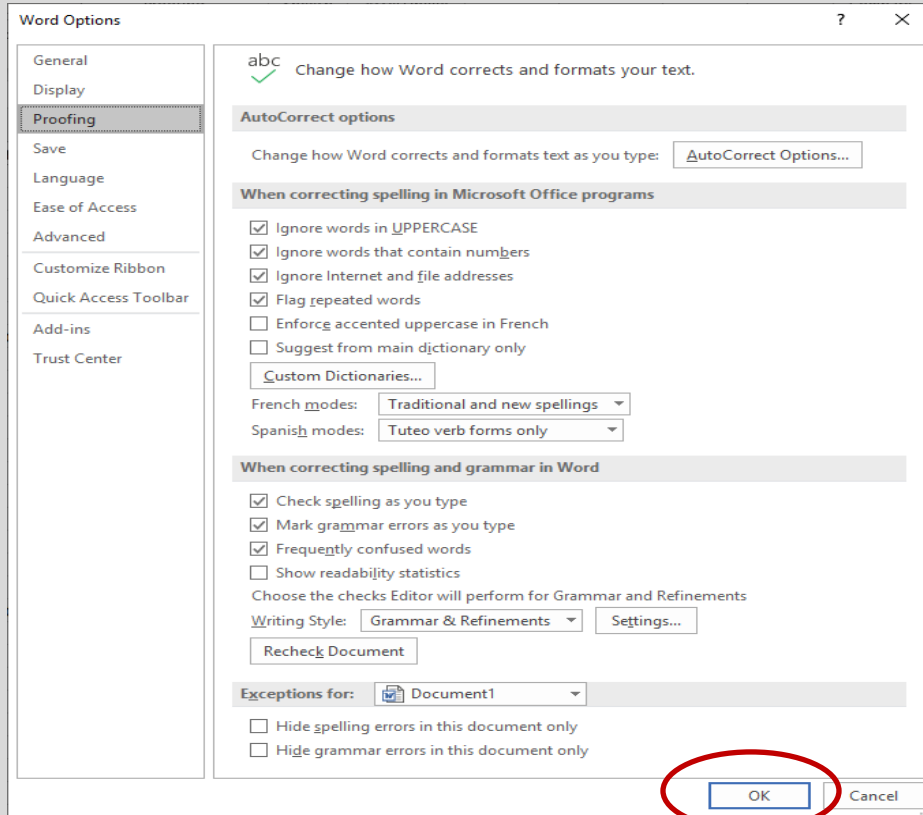
Check Document



**In Clarity & Conciseness (or Style) Check Passive Voice.**




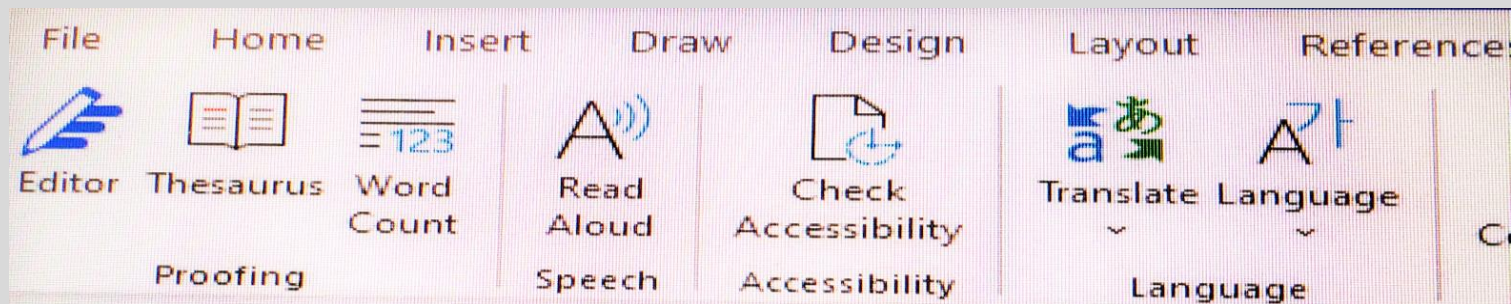
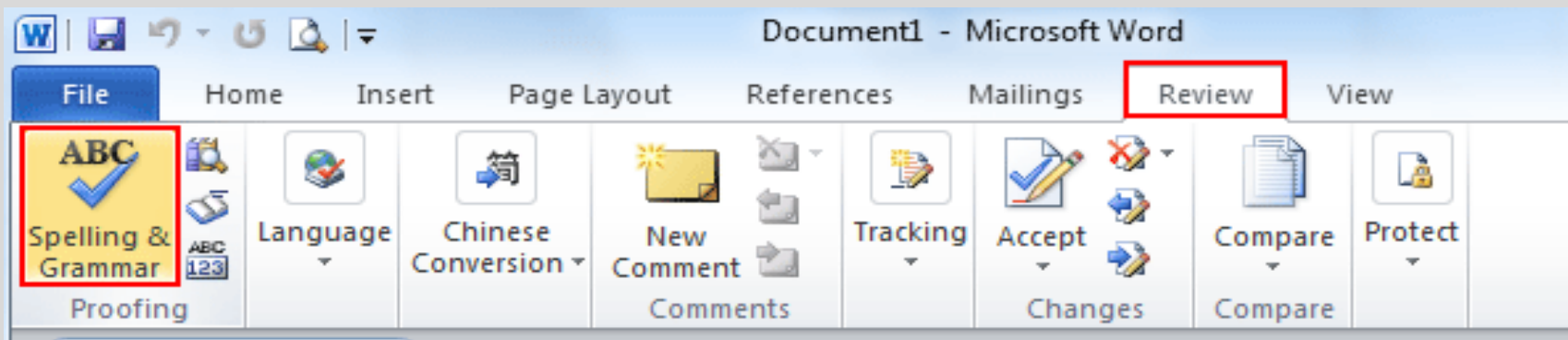
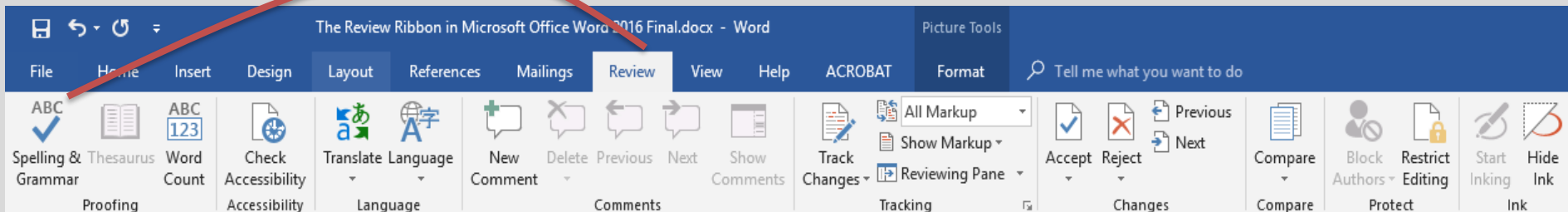
Click OK



Your Readability Statistics are set.  
As you type word will show the mistakes.

All the document can be checked,  
giving choices for corrections.

Remember to: **Review** +  or **Editor**  
Mistakes will appear one at a time.

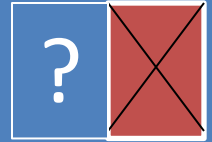




**As you type, Word will underline:**

- **Passive sentences with a Dotted line**  
**Green squiggly (2007)**  
**Blue for all (2010)**
- **Usage errors underlined in blue double**
- **Incorrect spelling with a red squiggly**

# Readability Statistics



## Counts

Words	60
Characters	335
Paragraphs	1
Sentences	4

## Averages

Sentences per Paragraph	4.0
Words per Sentence	15.0
Characters per Word	5.4

## Readability

Passive Sentences	25%
Flesch Reading Ease	35.1
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	12.0

**Flesch-Kincaid reading ease**, is based on a ranking scale of 0-100, and the **higher** the **score**, the better. Low **scores** indicate complicated, difficult to understand text.

OK

# Readability Statistics

Rudolph Flesch, author, writing consultant, and supporter of the Plain English Movement, developed this formula in 1948.

- The Flesch reading ease measures the readability of a text.

It uses two variables to determine the readability score:

- **Average length of sentences** (measured by the number of words)
- **Average number of syllables per word**

The reading ease of **60-70** (8-9<sup>th</sup> grade) is considered acceptable (understood by a 13-15-year-old).

**Before the 1940s, the majority of large-circulation newspapers could be understood only by college graduates.**

## **Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level:**

**New York Times. 14.5** — indicates the reader would have to be in college to understand their articles.

**BBC** is one of the best examples of good readability. They have a Flesch-Kincaid grade level of just **6.3**.

**The Times of India, grade level 15.**

# Flesch Reading Ease

50.6

- 90-100 Very Easy (5<sup>th</sup> Grade)
- 80-89 Easy
- 70-79 Fairly Easy
- 60-69 Standard (8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> Grade)
- 50-59 Fairly Difficult
- 30-49 Difficult
- 0-29 Very Difficult (College Graduate)

# Flesch Reading Ease & Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level

Consider the Audience.

- High Tech Peers

Equal education and experience, use acronyms or abbreviations.

- Low Tech Peers

Less experience/education, other fields, need explanations for specialized terminology.

- Lay Readers

Require parenthetical explanations for ***everything***. *Sixth grade is recommended but should never be written above 8<sup>th</sup> grade level.*

**American Literacy Rates:**

**14% are considered illiterate (32 million adults).**

**34% have low literacy levels (43 million adults).**

**Half of U.S. adults can't read a book written at the 8th-grade level.**

— Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

**36% have intermediate literacy levels.**

**12% have proficient literacy levels.**

This means it's important to write clearly, concisely, and without jargon or difficult words if you hope to reach people who do not read well.

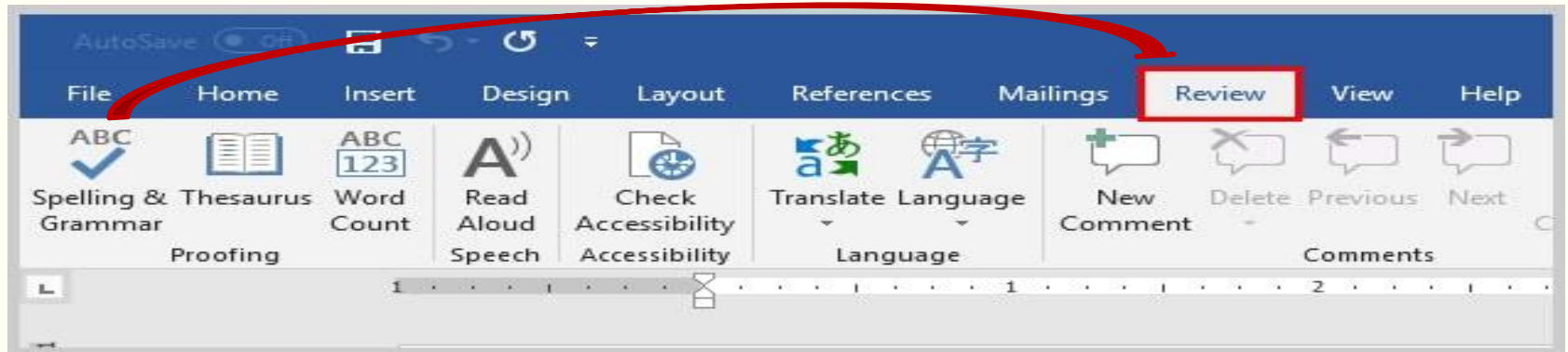
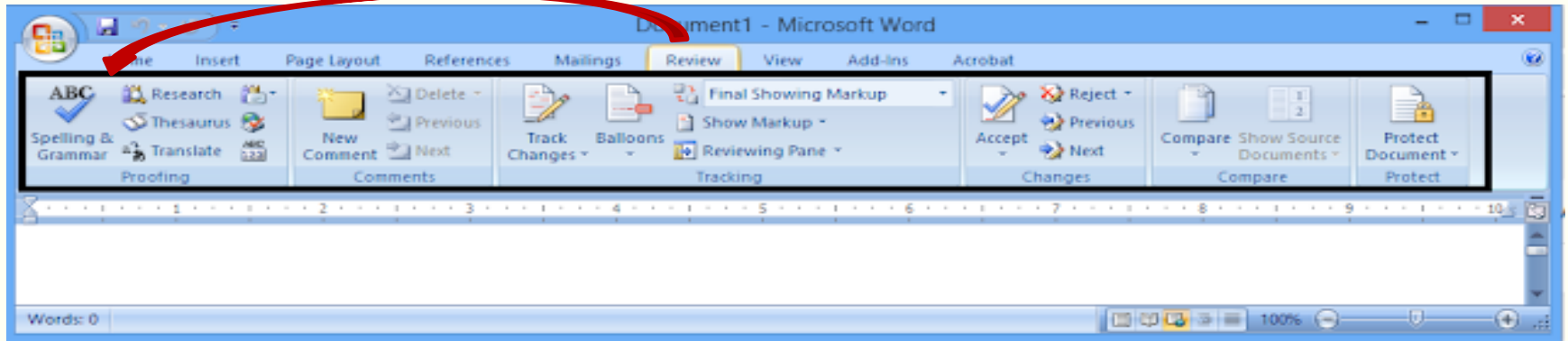
“Contact your physician if you experience...”  
versus “Call your doctor if you have...”

Highly skilled readers will not be offended.

Most people are pressed for time and appreciate **quick, concise material** written in **everyday language**.



# You can now locate passive, spelling, & grammar mistakes in your work.



If just correcting a word, put your cursor beside it and right click.

...of a male **dominant** society (Linder. 2001. 1-3).

Susan B. Anthony was influenced by the Quaker theology...



**The Quaker theology influenced Susan B. Anthony... Perhaps, better left passive!**

She was a serious temperance activist, author, abolitionist, and **suffrage** supporter. She never married saying she **did not** want to trade her service for a broom and a mop.

<sup>1</sup>In 1872, Anthony registered in a Rochester, New York election. <sup>2</sup>Four days later, she voted and was arrested for the illegal infraction.

Anthony registered in 1872 and voted in the Rochester, New York election, which resulted in her arrest.

<sup>1</sup>During the trial, she was never allowed to speak on her behalf and was found guilty.

<sup>2</sup>Anthony was fined \$100, which she never paid.

<sup>1-2</sup>**The court never allowed her to speak, rendered a guilty verdict, and imposed a \$100 fine, which she never paid.**

## Converting Passive to Active Voice

Twice a week, the child is tutored by Mrs. Fleming.

Mrs. Fleming tutored the child twice a week.

At this time, the automobile is being repaired by the dealership.

The dealership **is repairing** the car.

present participle

The **present participle** is always active.

The stolen car was identified by the owner.

The owner identified the stolen car.

The car's owner was being helped by the service manager.

The service manager helped the car's owner.

The island has been pillaged by many warring tribes.

Many warring tribes pillaged the island.

The dinner will be eaten by the ravenous workers.

The ravenous workers will eat the dinner.

## **Remember:**

**In active voice sentences, the subject is the thing doing or being.**

**In passive voice sentences, the subject is not doing or being, but acted upon.**

**is are was were be been +**

**Past form of verb + “ed” or irregular past form.**





*One morning I shot an elephant in my pajamas. How he got into my pajamas I will never know.*  
—Groucho Marx

# Misplaced, Dangling, and Squinting Modifiers

✓ Correct **Usage**, Grammar, & Spelling

***Misplaced modifiers*** are words, phrases, or clauses that do not clearly point to the word they were intended to modify (describe).

Mrs. Harris developed cancer shortly after she married and died.

The number of women with infants in the labor force has grown dramatically during the last decade, up from 31 percent.

# Misplaced Modifiers

- Two Sisters reunited after 18 Years at the checkout counter.
- STOLEN PAINTING FOUND BY TREE

**APA Manual p. 81 CMS 5.116**

- They found out that the walkways had collapsed on the late evening news.
- A coelacanth was found in the Indian Ocean that was considered extinct.



# Misplaced Modifiers

Basin ore is plentiful according to Smith, lying 90 meters below the surface.

**Smith reports the plentiful basin ore lies 90 meters below the surface.**

The howling of coyotes are often heard by field personnel, as they frequently stray into the area.

**The field personnel often heard howling coyotes straying into the area.**

I found my earrings cleaning my room.

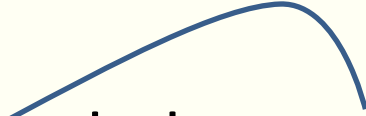
**I found my earrings when I cleaned my room.**

# Dangling Modifiers

A dangling modifier is a word or phrase that modifies a word not clearly stated in the sentence.

Tells  
more  
about

A **modifier** describes, clarifies, or gives more detail about a concept.

After reading the novel, the movie was a great disappointment.

*Remember, when beginning a sentence with a modifying clause, the **next noun** should be its intended subject.*

After removing all modeled facilities,  
the nonpoint loading...

**ALWAYS READ YOUR WORK.**

**You know what you meant but do others?**

**The complex houses married and single  
soldiers and their families.**





# Squinting Modifiers

Huh?



Usually adverbs:

**almost, just, nearly, hardly, only, quickly, clearly**

These words could modify the word before it or after it.

Defining your terms **clearly** strengthens your argument.

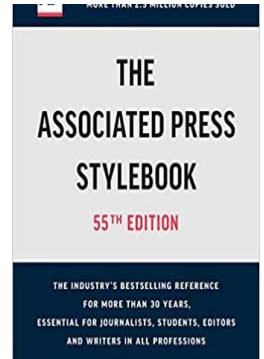
Listening to loud music **only** gives me a headache.

Getting married **quickly** changes your life.

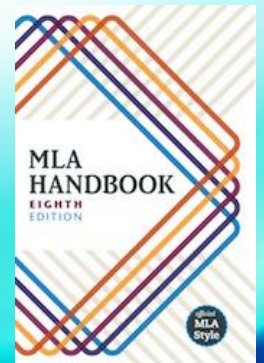
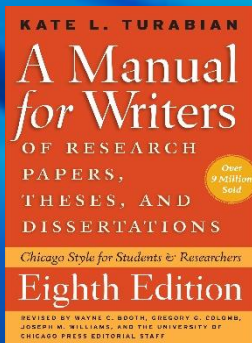
He **nearly** brushed his teeth for twenty minutes.



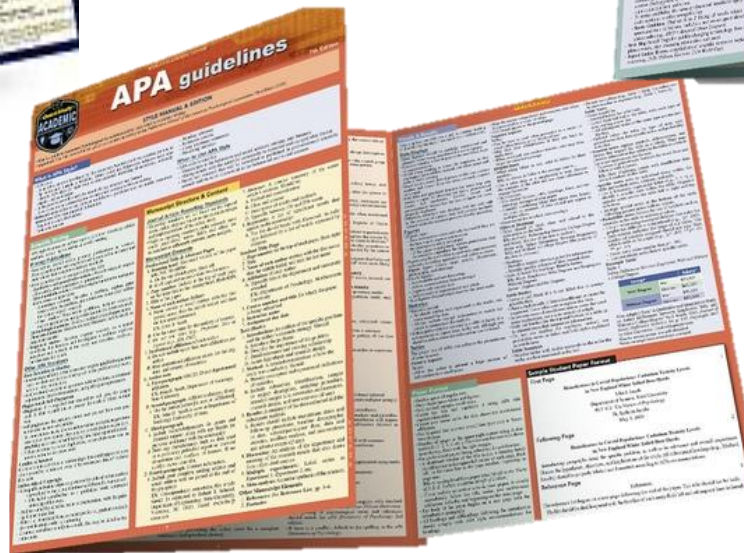
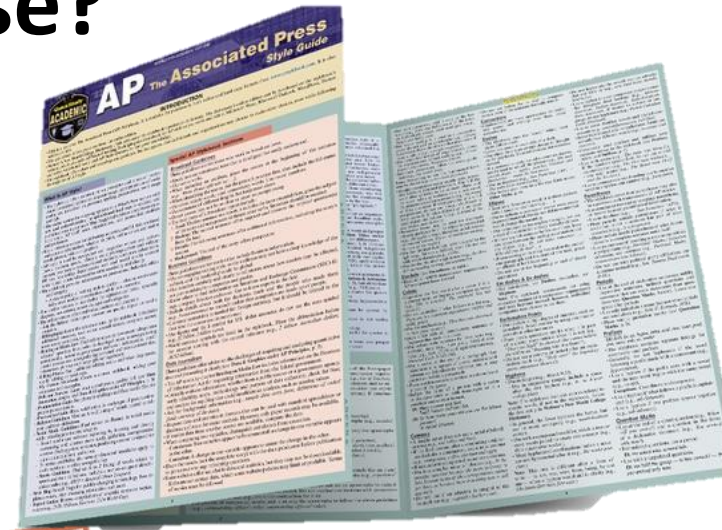
# Formatting Styles Vary Among Institutions



This Defines Composition Usage



# What Style Guide Does Your Institution Use?



\*Quick Study Guides under \$8.00.

*Many states have an online style guide available to employees.*

*Style guides are essential tools:*

- **They reduce the time spent worrying about details.**
- **They ensure consistency across documents.**
- **They help standardize the organization's writing process.**

***In-house*** style guides are especially helpful because they deal with the specific issues that your organization and staff encounter.

Some organizations are unique in how they want to represent **names, dates,** or even how they **organize documents**—all of which a style guide addresses.

# Such as Writing Numbers

**CMS:** Spell numbers from zero to one hundred:  
*zero, ten, twenty, thirty-five, one hundred.*  
Then, starting with 101, numerals.

**Percent or %?** With percentages, express the number as a numeral and spell out the word “percent.” *The younger students finished 80 percent of their homework.*

- **MLA:** spells **out numbers** that can be written in one or two words (three, fifteen, seventy-six, one thousand, twelve billion) and numerals for other **numbers** ( $2\frac{3}{4}$ ; 584; 1,001; 25,000,000).
- **AP & APA:** uses words for **numbers** through nine and numerals for **numbers** 10 and above.



*Even the largest avalanche is triggered by small things.*  
—Vernor Vinge

# *Polish Your Work*





Microsoft adds spaces between paragraphs if not formatted to maintain uniformity.

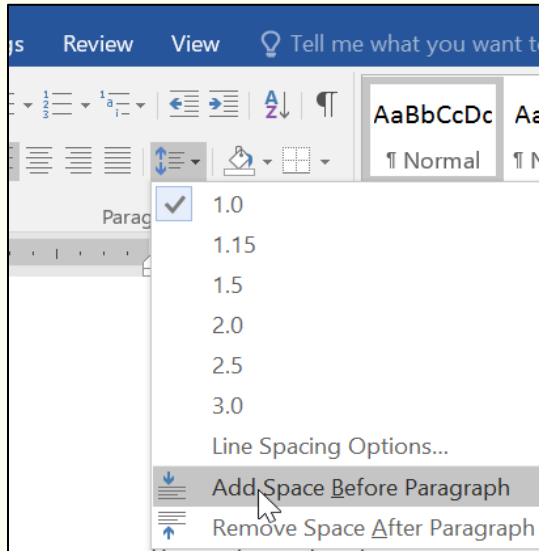
Consistency is important. APA & Chicago does not allow for extra spaces between paragraphs.

Your computer can be set to omit them.

- Go to **Design > Paragraph Spacing**.
- Choose an option. To single space your document, select **No Paragraph Space**.

# Microsoft Paragraph Uniformity

Open Line Spacing in the Paragraph section of the **Home Tab**.



The bottom should read:

Add Space Before Paragraph

Add Space After Paragraph

The wording seems opposite from the intended message. APA, MLA, & CMS formatting allows no spaces between paragraphs.

## Questions?

# Writing Years as a Possessive

Never use an apostrophe when writing number plurals:

**sevens, 12s, 1990s**

On-the-ground field reconnaissance surveys were conducted in the early 1990's and again in October 2008.

Every time you use an apostrophe to make a plural, a puppy dies.



➤ **Choose sentences or fragments—never a mixture.**

I like 5:00 traffic in Houston because:

- Stress thrills me.
- Bumper-to-bumper
- I do not want to get home in under three hours.

**This creates a parallel flow and improves the reader's grasp.**

➤ **Interrupt a long list with a word or short phrase (7).**

➤ **If you want it to be remembered, list only in sets of three.**

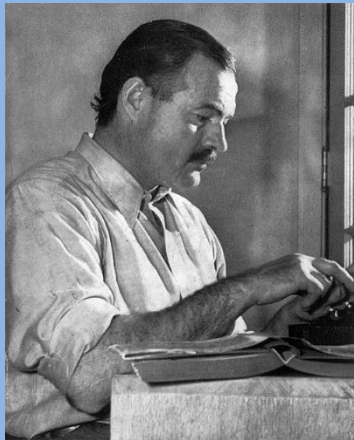
*There is great power in words, if you don't hitch too many of them together.*

—Josh Billings

# **CLEAR and CONCISE**

✓ **Streamline Technical Writing**

# ***Good Writing is Never Without Effort***



*“...Writing is something that you can never do as well as it can be done. It is a perpetual challenge...”*

*—Ernest Hemingway*

## ***Hemingway Believed in Concise Simple Text***

- To the point
- Filled only with necessary words or phrases
- Minimal and focused

# Simplicity is Not a New Concept.



William Strunk Jr. (Cornell 1899-1937)

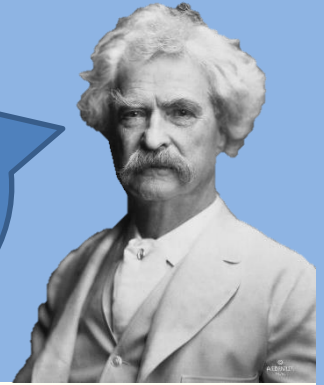
“A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts. This requires not that the writer make all sentences short or avoid all detail and treat subjects only in outline, but that every word **tell.**”

“...when a sentence is made stronger, it usually becomes **shorter.**”



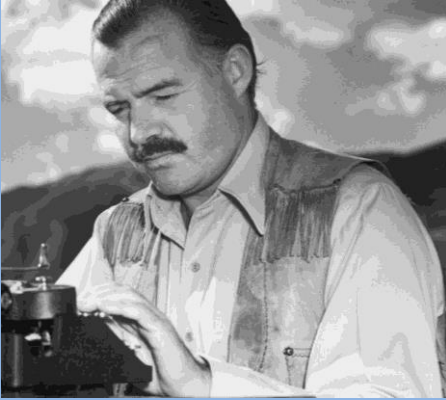
## Mark Twain Knew

Cut  
Wasted  
Words.



*“Use plain, simple language, short words and brief sentences. That is the way to write English—it is the modern way and the best way. Stick to it; don’t let fluff and flowers and verbosity creep in.”* (1880)

# Economy in Practice



## Hemingway or Faulkner



*Farewell to Arms*  
*The Sun Also Rises*  
*For Whom the Bell Tolls*  
*The Old Man and the Sea*

*The Sound and the Fury*  
*Sanctuary*  
*As I Lay Dying*  
*Soldier's Pay*

Faulkner holds the Guinness Book of World Records for the longest grammatically correct sentence (1,288 words) from *Absalom, Absalom!*

✓ Streamline Technical Writing

Hemingway is famous for economic script. He knew:

- How to prune language,
- How to multiply intensities with the least amount of adverbs, adjectives, and subordinates.

Hemingway's message speaks volumes:

***BE MINIMAL IN DELIVERY.***

He referred to his style as the *iceberg theory*.

The facts floated above the water...[with] much more complexity and meaning beneath the surface.

Faulkner once retorted Hemingway had “...**never been known to use a word that might send a reader to the dictionary.**”

His own bondage to wordiness is evident. Behold his passage about laziness:

*He did not still feel weak, he was merely luxuriating, in that supremely gutful lassitude of convalescence in which time, hurry, doing, did not exist, the accumulating seconds and minutes and hours to which in its well state, the body is slave both waking and sleeping, now reversed and time now the lip-server and mendicant to the body's pleasure instead of the body's thrall to time's headlong course.*

The riposte: “**Poor Faulkner. Does he really think big emotions come from big words? He thinks I don’t know the “ten-dollar words.” I know them all right. But there are older and simpler and better words, and those are the ones I use.**”

Hemingway manipulated words simply.

He successfully employed ***parataxis***.

Using simple sentences or phrases which hold an equal relationship to one another with minimal use of

**subordinate clauses** (*while, since, until*)  
**or coordinating conjunctions** (*fanboys*).

*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*

Behold Hemingway's passage dealing with basically the same topic:

**“Manual drank his brandy. He felt sleepy himself. It was too hot to go out into the town. Besides, there was nothing to do. He wanted to see Zurito. He would go to sleep \*while he waited.”**

*\*Only **one** subordinate clause*

*\*No coordinating conjunctions (fanboys)*

# **Parataxis** Greek for “side-by-side” arrangement.

Words, phrases, clauses, or sentences (minimal use of fanboys) are set next to each other so that each element is equally important.

Technical writers need to be paratactic, to provide the most information using only necessary subordinates, presented in equal sequence. They flow together and have a relationship.

# **You see parataxis all the time in advertising:**

- **“Melts in your mouth, not in your hands.”—M&Ms**
- **“Maybe she’s born with it. Maybe it’s Maybelline.”—Maybelline**
- **“Pork. The Other White Meat.”—National Pork Board**



Though parataxis often involves the minimal use of coordinating conjunctions, it can use "and" or "but," to join elements (*syndetic parataxis*).

**“Nothing outlasts the Energizer. It keeps going and going and going.”—Energizer batteries**

**“In the bed of the river were pebbles and boulders, dry and white in the sun, and the water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels.”** —*Hemingway*

**When you write, be a Hemingway!**

# Asyndeton

**Asyndeton** and **Parataxis** are similar. In fact, sometimes the two terms are used interchangeably.

However, asyndeton removes *fanboys* completely from a sentence or parts of a sentence.

Parataxis places phrases one after the other, with or without *fanboys* like ***and*** or ***but***.

Therefore, while the two terms are very similar, they do have some distinctions.

# Asyndeton

Constructing sentences or clauses without the use of *fanboys*.

**“I came; I saw; I conquered.”**

*—Julius Caesar*

**“Be one of the few, the proud, the marines.”**

*—Marine Corps Advertisement*

**“The steer was down now, his neck stretched out, his head twisted, he lay the way he had fallen.”**

*—The Sun Also Rises*

**“I needed a drink, I needed a lot of life insurance, I needed a vacation, I needed a home in the country. What I had was a hat, a coat, and a gun.”**

*—Raymond Chandler*

*Tale of Two Cities:*

**“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity...”**

**“It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to, than I have ever known.”**

*—Charles Dickens*

## **Parataxis**

Constructing sentences, clauses, or phrases with **minimal** use of subordinating or coordinating conjunctions set in equal relationship.

## **Asyndeton**

Constructing sentences or clauses without the use of coordinating conjunctions.

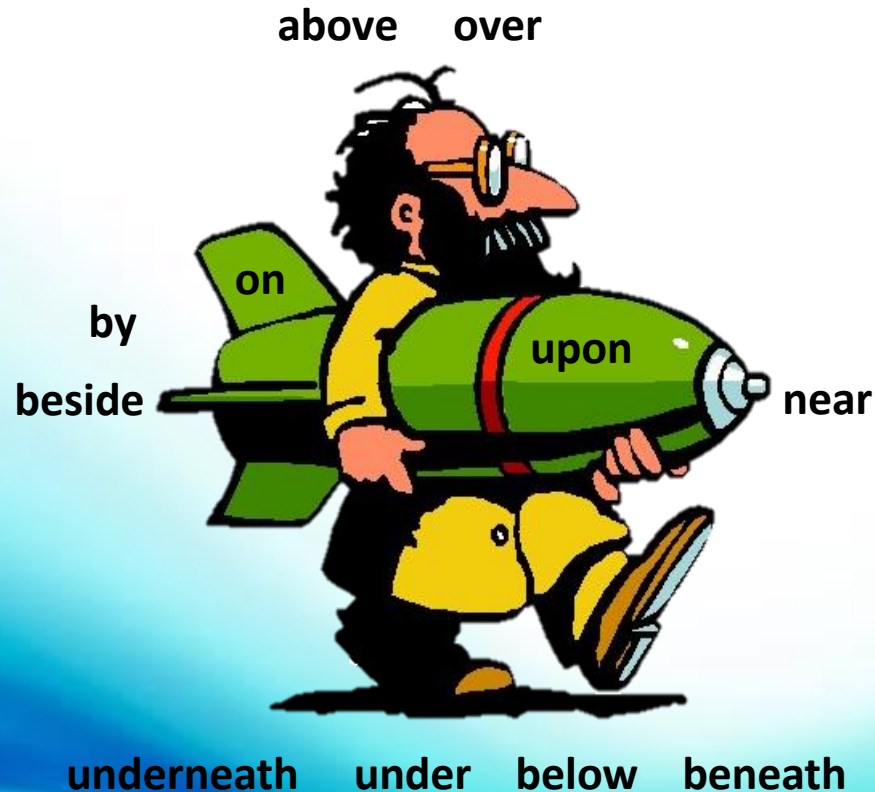
# The Power of Three

## **omne trium perfectum:**

What comes in threes is perfect;  
the perfect combination of brevity  
and rhythm.



# PREPOSITIONS



✓ Streamline Technical Writing



# Reduce Unnecessary Prepositions

- **Prepositions** show relationships **to other words (noun or pronoun) in a sentence**. A preposition indicates position, location, direction, or time.
- If your text contains **20%**, that's too many.
- CMS recommends the use of one preposition per 10-15 words. The appropriate number may be context dependent. Focus on clarity and flow.
- If you find yourself reading a dull passage, or skimming over words, then the writing may suffer from preposition overdose.

Food or drink supplied on or from any premises is “hot” for the purposes of this Schedule if the food or drink, or any part of it,--(a) before it is supplied, is heated on the premises or elsewhere for the purpose of enabling it to be consumed at a temperature above the ambient air temperature and, at the time of supply, is above that temperature, or (b) after it is supplied, may be heated on the premises for the purpose of enabling it to be consumed at a temperature above the ambient air temperature.

Department for Culture, Media, and Sport in Great Britain

Food or drink supplied **on** or **from** any premises is “hot” **for** the purposes **of** this Schedule if the food or drink, or any part **of** it,--(a) **before** it is supplied, is heated **on** the premises or elsewhere **for** the purpose **of** enabling it to be consumed **at** a temperature **above** the ambient air temperature and, **at** the time **of** supply, is **above** that temperature, or (b) **after** it is supplied, may be heated **on** the premises **for** the purpose **of** enabling it to be consumed **at** a temperature **above** the ambient air temperature.

**[20 Prepositions]**

## Selected as Part of D-Day Re-enactment in Normandy

While **in** France, Capps told news media that by having the opportunity to see the grounds where men, **from** 75 years ago, **on** June 6, 1944, known forever **as** the day **in** World War II, **on** which Allied forces invaded northern France **by** means **of** beach landings **in** Normandy fought, died and wept; and just being able to be **in** that one location was definitely an honor.

—Atoka County Times June 17, 2020

# ***Three Repair Techniques***

<b>1.</b>	<b>Eliminate</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Possessives</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Adverbs</b>

## Eliminate the Prepositions

- *The reason for the failure of the basketball team of the University of North Carolina in the Final Four game against the team from Kansas was that on that day and at that time, some players were frequently unable to rebound the ball.*(9)
- Revision: *UNC's basketball team lost the Final Four game against Kansas because it was frequently unable to rebound the ball.*(1)

# Transform to Possessives.

*Perhaps a location within a location:*

The Museum of Modern Art  
in New York City...

*Activate with efficiency to:*

New York **City's** Museum  
of Modern Art...

## Wordy:

- The **President of the Senate** was in charge of the lobbying against the merger. (4)

## Concise:

- The **Senate President** oversaw lobbying against the merger.(1)



# Prepositions to Possessives

1. She *was troubled* by the unhappy theme of the movie.

**The movie's unhappy theme troubled her.**

2. The food from the restaurant was spoiled.

**The restaurant's food was spoiled.**

3. This is the greatest movie of the year.

**This is the year's greatest movie.**

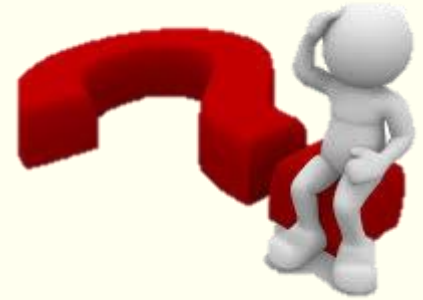
# Prepositions to Adverbs

1. The employee responded to the pay cut with anger.  
**The employee angrily responded to the pay cut.**
2. She sang with great volume.  
**She sang loudly.**
3. He attended the party with eagerness.  
**He eagerly attended the party.**
4. Danita answered the questions with hesitation.  
**Danita hesitantly answered the questions.**

# ***May I End A Sentence With a Preposition?***



Experts now declare the practice as acceptable.  
But are you ending with a preposition?



*She just **showed up**.*

*He put his new shoes **on**.*

*Please **come in**.*

**Adverbs**

*The **price** fell but now it's **up**.*

*I study while the **television** is **on**.*

*This **outfit** is what's **in**.*

**Adjectives**

*In this business, it helps to have an **in**.*

**Noun**

## Is Dryden to Blame?



Since Latin based writing was a fashionable trend in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, John Dryden chastised earlier writers (Shakespeare) for ending sentences with prepositions.

Latin did not allow for this practice. He probably started the campaign against such a format. The words were set as a unit and could not be separated.

# Prepositions—The Controversy

Do not end a sentence with a preposition.



What are you  
looking at?



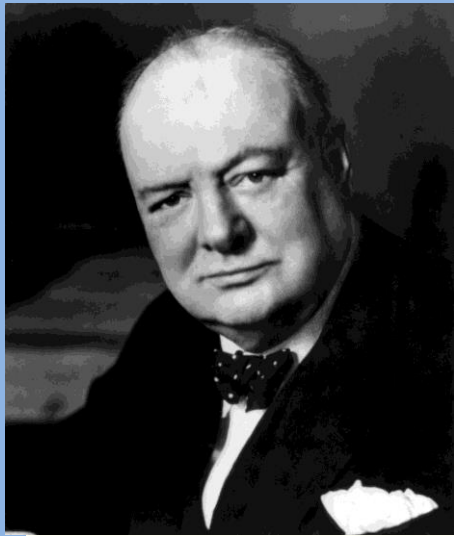
Where are you  
driving to?

**A dangling preposition is used at the end of the sentence or phrase.**

A **prepositional phrase** includes a preposition and **its object** (noun or pronoun).



Why is it called “Dangling?” It is just dangling out there at the end of a sentence, without its object.



Supposedly an editor rearranged one of Churchill's sentences to avoid ending it in a preposition.

**“This is the just the sort of bloody pedantry  
up with which I will not put.”**

\*Apocryphal  
of doubtful authenticity though widely circulated as true.

Ask yourself how you will be judged.



A **prepositional phrase** placed between the subject and verb will not alter their agreement. Remember your subject.

The infrastructure **conditions** *after the flood* was recorded monthly.

**Results** for the calibration model with no facilities and a 32% reduction of the nonpoint load **was** considered to be in the upper limit of the range. (5)

Results indicate that the minimum natural background dissolved oxygen **concentrations** for many of the reaches in the Bayou Lacombe watershed **is** less than 5 mg/L.

# Why Plain Language is Better

**Readers strongly prefer plain language.**

- Faster to read.
- Choose that format.
- More likely to comply quickly.



**“Do not be tempted by a twenty-dollar word when there is a ten-center handy, ready, and able.”**

—William Strunk Jr.

**Appendix C. (Folder Three)**  
**contains examples of precise**  
**action verbs & succinct text.**

# Logorrrhoea

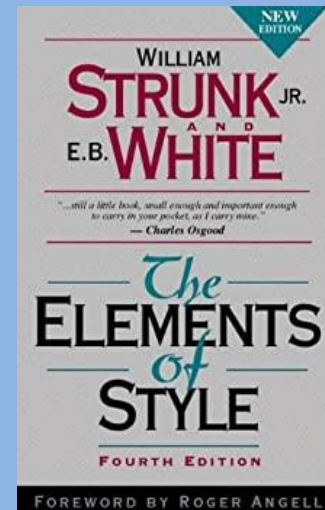
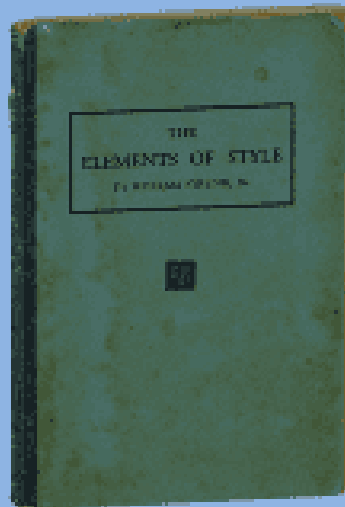
**This form of wordiness can be the most frustrating. Logorrhoea is the intentional use of long sentences or overly abstract wording.**

**If you read some lab reports, law journals, or Faulkner, you have likely encountered it.**

**Using overly complex words in place of simple ones is a perfect way to alienate your readers.**

“Avoid fancy words....If you admire fancy words, if every sky is beauteous, every blonde curvaceous, every intelligent child prodigious, if you are tickled by discombobulate, you will have bad time.”

— *William Strunk Jr.*



Better to be clear and get your message  
across than to be fancy and lose your  
audience.

Remember, when you sit down to write,  
you will be paid by the word.

*I am paid by the word, so I always write the  
shortest words possible.* —Bertrard Russell

Here is a deliberate example of logorrhoea by a famous writer, George Orwell:

Objective considerations of contemporary phenomena compel the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must invariably be taken into account.



**Ann Wylie, President of Wylie Communications and PRSA writing trainer (<http://comprehension.prsa.org/?p=217>), reported findings from an American Press Institute study:**

- **When the average sentence length was fewer than eight words, the reader understood 100% of the story.**
- **At 14 words, they could comprehend more than 90% of the information.**
- **At 29 words, less than half of the writing was understood.**
- **But move up to 43 words, and comprehension dropped below 10%.**
- **The average sentence length should be between 8-14 words, but preferably under ten (articles excluded). The length of a sentence should not surpass 27 words.**

# Sentences should vary in length to avoid choppy flow.

- Use **shorter** sentences when the subject **matter is complicated**.
- Use **longer** sentences when **linking ideas**.
- However, the **briefer the better**.

## Wordy Sentences

Long sentences are not necessarily wordy, nor are short sentences always concise. A sentence is wordy if it can be tightened without loss of meaning.

# Clichés and Stock Phrases

**Clichés** should not be used in formal writing. Their unnecessary addition may cause the reader to “abandon ship.”

**Clichés** Appendix D,  
**Stock Phrases**

✓ Correct **Usage**, Grammar, & Spelling

*The community benefits were the low hanging fruit of the project.*

**The project provided community benefits.**

*No new studies are available at this point in time.*

***No new studies are available.***

*In the end, there is no new data available.*

***New data are unavailable.***

*The commission's project is delayed since it cost an arm and a leg.*

***The commission delayed the expensive project.***

# Avoid Verbosity

Every word must contribute meaning to the sentence. Technical writing is information delivery.

**In the end...**

**It was expected that...**

**At this point in time...**

**In order to...**

**Especially at...**

**Folder Three: Strunk Omit Needless Words #13,**

**No:** Furthermore, large volumes of water are also required for the process of natural gas extraction.

**Yes:** Natural gas extraction requires large volumes of water.

*The cable hook up was damaged in the storm.*

*The storm damaged the cable connection (link, assembly).*

*The elaborate write up sparked an extensive investigation.*

*The elaborate report sparked an extensive investigation (inquiry).*

*The accumulation to the burdened electrical complex caused the entire set up to overload.*

*The (increase, addition) to the burdened electrical complex caused the entire system to overload.*



# George Orwell's General Writing Rules

- Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech you are used to seeing in print.
- Never use a long word when a short one works.
- If possible to cut a word out, do so.
- Never use passive. Use active instead.

- Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an English equivalent.
- *Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.*

# Exceptions for Tech Writing

- A metaphor, simile, or other jargon, is acceptable if used as a technical term.
- If scientific jargon is a standard, use it.
- Once you explain a word, you have made it usable in that document as a technical term.

**Questions?**

# Redundancy & Repetition

- Man is Fatally Murdered
- Speaker Adds an Additional Note
- Northfield Plans to Plan a Strategic...



Streamlined Technical Writing

lower ratio (1-1.8) indicated more man-made loading. In general the results of the two **evaluations** (TOC/UCBOD ratio and landuse) compared favorably. Only two reaches did not compare favorably (Reaches 32, 33). For the purpose of this modeling effort, reaches 32 and 33 were considered to be impacted by man-made loading based on the landuse evaluation.

The third **evaluation** included a comparison of reaches with modeled facilities to the two previous **evaluations**. This **evaluation** produced the same results as the previous **evaluations** in 17 modeled waterbody reaches (58.9% - excluding 12 modeled ditch reaches).

The fourth **evaluation** involved carbon/nitrogen ratios and general water quality.

## Redundant Phrases

**Redundancy** uses more words than necessary to express something, especially words or phrases that mean the same thing.

*small in size*

*consensus of opinion*

*briefly summarize*

*collaborate together*

*past history*

*end result*

*postpone until later*

*revert back to*

***Pleonasm: The use of more words than those necessary to denote mere sense.***

***“An army of words escorting a corporal of thought.” —Ambrose Bierce***

# Pleonasm/Tautology

*Merriam-Webster: The use of more words than those necessary to denote mere sense; saying the same thing twice using different words.*

- ***Rebecca twirled her hair with her finger as she looked out the window.***
- Of course she's twirling her hair *with her finger*, what else would she use? A fork? Her tongue?
- **Low Pay Reason for Poverty, Study Says**
- **No Cause of Death Determined for Beheading Victim**



## **Pleonasm**      A phrase that repeats itself.

- 3 a.m. in the morning
- Wrote an autobiography about my own life
- I saw it with my own eyes
- Meeting is at twelve noon
- HIV virus. (V stands for virus)
- ATM machine (M stands for machine)

# *Redundancy*

## “Hot” Water Heater

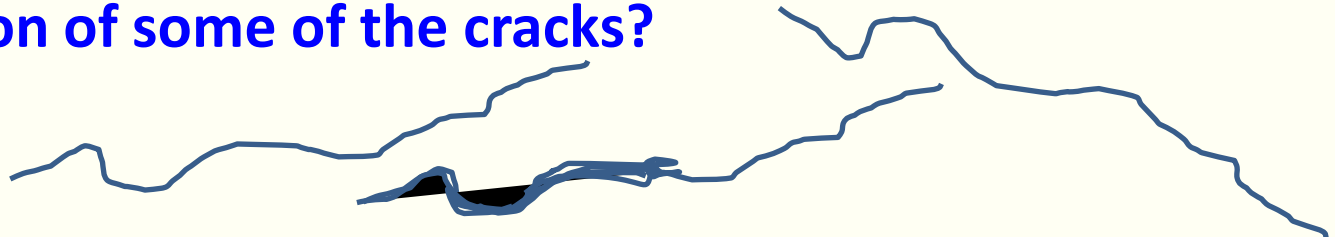


# *Repetition*

"It looks like a busy weekend on the ferries, **particularly Saturday and Sunday.**"

The crew partially filled some of the cracks in the road.

Did they fill all of some of the cracks, or did they fill only a portion of some of the cracks?



# Concise Writing Will Streamline Technical Work

## Avoid Meaningless Redundancy

~~Repeat~~ again   ~~brief~~ summary   ~~new~~ innovations



## Calibration Model – All Man-Made Loading Removed

After removing all modeled facilities, the nonpoint loading (benthic, incremental, and headwater) was reduced in reaches previously identified as impacted by man-made loading according to the evaluations discussed. This was done to account for unpermitted facilities, unsewered areas, and residual loading from all dischargers (permitted and **T**his number was rounded off to 32%. The nonpoint loading in not/least reaches was not reduced. LDEQ's loading spreadsheet was used to calculate nonpoint loads in the model. This spreadsheet utilizes a Margin of Safety (MOS) factor. It also appeared as if lower ratios of carbon to nitrogen **may** be a general overall indicator of man-made impacts.

## Avoid Repetitive Wording

The **landuse** evaluation included **landuse...**

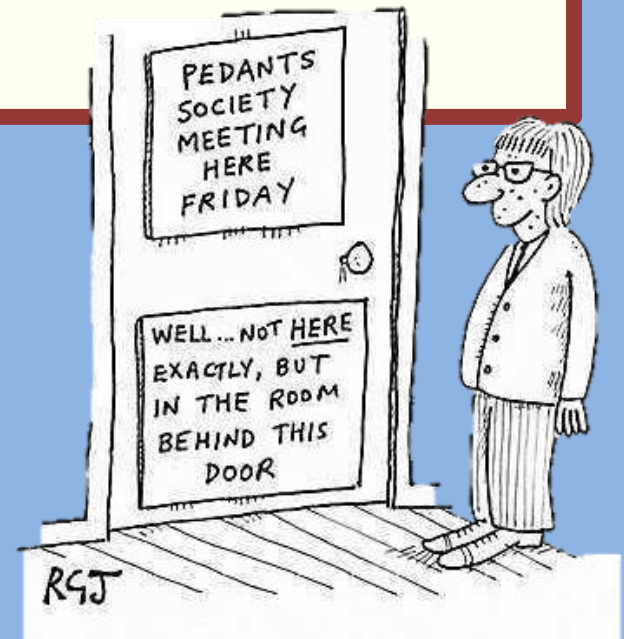
**Results** for the calibration model **results...**

**...shapefile** so that the **shapefile** depicted...

...the **facilities** are producing a residual benthic (nonpoint) loading and therefore the actual impact of removing the **facilities** would not be demonstrated by simply removing the **facilities**. After removing all modeled **facilities...**

## Eliminate words that explain the obvious or give excess detail.

- The teacher demonstrated some of the various ways and methods for cutting words from my essay that I had written for class. (22)
- The teacher showed ways to cut words from my essay. (10)



# Contractions and Abbreviations

**Contractions** are informal and should never be used in academic writing. However, sometimes allowed in reports.

## Abbreviated Words

Never use **Phone, DVD, TV, & Photo.**



Correct **Usage**, Grammar, & Spelling

# Modal Auxiliary Verbs

**Modal Auxiliaries** are additional supplementary verbs that express condition, possibility, obligation, or ability. Provide certainty by eliminating such words. The purpose of technical writing is to clearly state the facts:

*An improved flow line (**might, may, could, would, should**) improve the speed of delivery.*





**It also appeared as if lower ratios of carbon to nitrogen may be a general indicator of man-made impacts.**

Since Technical writing cannot always deal in absolutes, use phrases such as:

**Lower ratios of carbon to nitrogen indicate man-made impacts.**

# Self-Edit

Use minimal language.

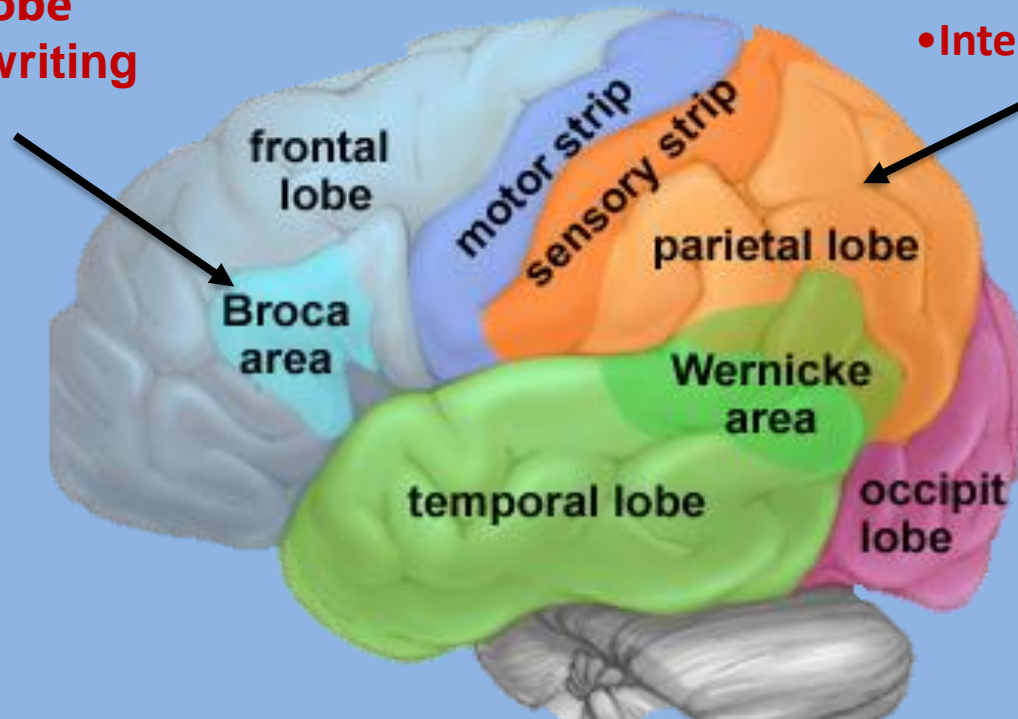
- *Read it aloud (different part of the brain).*
- *Does it have a natural flow?*

## Left frontal lobe

- Speaking and writing
- (Broca's area)

## Parietal lobe

- Interprets language, words



# Editing Tricks

If you find editing difficult:

## Take a Break

Let your writing rest for a while. Put distance between you and your work. When you return, you're more likely to spot mistakes.

## Read Your Writing in a New Format

If you typed it, print it out. Change your text to a different font, color, and size. These techniques will help you see your content from an “outsider’s” perspective and give you a more critical eye.

## Choose the critical words and separate them.

With only the vital words, rewrite the sentences again.

 **Streamline Technical Writing**

# How to Eliminate Wording

## Class Exercise: Folder 1, #7

**Separate the vital information of each sentence.**

**Then, rewrite those main details.**

<sup>1</sup>There is a Technical Writing 101 class that will be offered in the fall. <sup>2</sup>The class is at the University of Alabama. <sup>3</sup>It is expected that enrollment will begin by June 1<sup>st</sup> and be completed by June 13<sup>th</sup>. <sup>4</sup>Students will be assisted with financial aid and grants will be available to those who qualify for needed assistance.

# Technical Writing 101

University of Alabama; Fall

June 1-13

Financial aid available.

Possible Sentence:

University of Alabama's Technical Writing 101  
fall enrollment is June 1-13 with financial aid  
available.

**Wording is often difficult to change since the author has mindfully embedded the sentence in that form.**

**Use this technique to eliminate wordiness and streamline all sentences.**

***Underline specifics***

***Discard the unnecessary***

***Find the subject—begin with it,***

***Rewrite in active voice.***

# Eliminate Wordy Phrases.



✓ Streamlined Technical Writing

## Remove and Reduce

After removing all modeled facilities, the nonpoint loading was reduced in reaches previously identified as impacted by man-made loading. (4)

After removing all modeled facilities, the nonpoint loading reduced in the identified artificially impacted reaches.

With modeled facilities removed, the nonpoint loading reduced in the identified artificially impacted reaches.

This was done to account for unpermitted facilities, unsewered areas, and residual loading.

This marked; highlighted; clarified; explained the unpermitted facilities; unsewered areas, and residual loading.



During the development of the projection model,  
it was noticed that the TMDL input files contained  
nonpoint/benthic load values that were lower  
than the reference stream values. (28)

While **developing** the projection model,  
data showed the TMDL contained nonpoint **and**  
benthic load values (amounts, sums) lower than  
the reference stream values. (21)

A Nominalization  
*noun + change into*

## Active Verbs, Shorter Phrases

He gave an introduction of the analysis.

He **introduced**

Pat will give a definition of...

Pat will **define**

## Active Voice

The decision was made by Carla.

Carla **decided**...

## Strong Words

The device was ~~unpredictably~~ volatile.

**MORE  
LATER**

The device was **unstable**.

## Shorten

The crew found the guide ~~to be~~ helpful.

Bayou Lacombe Example (Folder 3):

8 **Four evaluations** were conducted to accomplish this task. ~~They were~~ (1) a Landuse **evaluation**, (2) TOC/UCBOD ratios **evaluations**, (3) an **evaluation** of modeled dischargers within each reach, and (4) C/N ratios and general water quality **evaluations**.

First, learn to count.

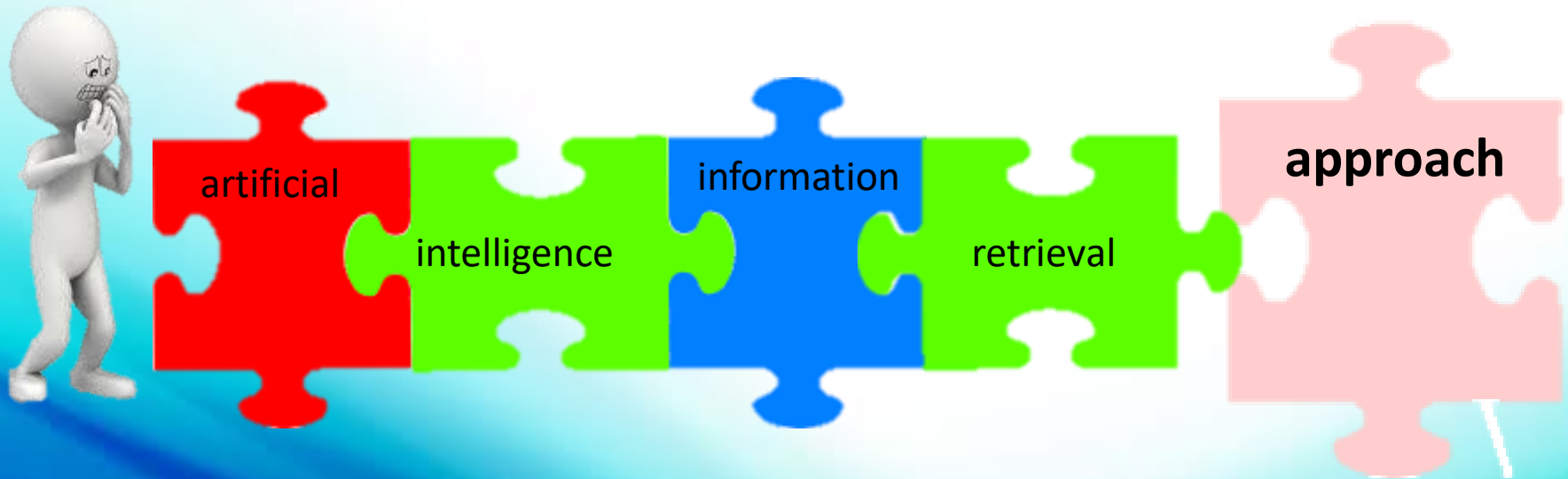
5 **Four evaluations** accomplished this task:

3 This study **evaluated**:

1. Land use
2. TOC and UCBOD ratios
3. Modeled dischargers within each reach
4. C/N ratio & general water quality

Once is enough to establish it is an *Evaluation*

# Noun Stacks/Word Strings



✓ Correct **Usage**, Grammar, & Spelling

# Noun Stacks/Word Strings

A noun stack is a series of related words; some created from verbs.

Noun stacks alter the natural flow of thought.

***an acquisition candidate identification process***

The first three words do not reveal the meaning.

Only after the last word (process), do we understand the phrase.

Knowing that prepositions need to be minimal, they are beneficial to break a noun stack.

The rule is **three** or more modifiers jammed in front of a noun, **but even that is excessive if it impedes understanding.**

To clarify: Starting with the phrase's last word and reverse the order. Break the string with *prepositions, infinitives, relative pronouns*.

***an acquisition candidate identification process***

***a process for identifying acquisition candidates***

***a process to identify and acquire candidates***

***A process that identifies and procures candidates***

Relative pronoun

Author, Stephen Wilbers advises:

***“Practice noun stack construction avoidance.***

***Oops! I mean avoid noun stacks.”***

Noun stacks do not allow for smooth sentence flow.

**\*...minimum natural background dissolved oxygen concentrations...**

Remember, the last word is the subject and should be stated early. Ideally, the last word becomes the first word. However, many **words** can be grouped together; especially if they are related: The merry-go-round kill switch  
The high school caution alarm bell.

**Current Media Data Access Control Protocols**  
**Protocols for Access Control of Current Media Data**

**Gradient Stream Habitat Assessment Form**  
**Assessment Form for Gradient Stream Habitat**



*"Oh goody, English class!"*

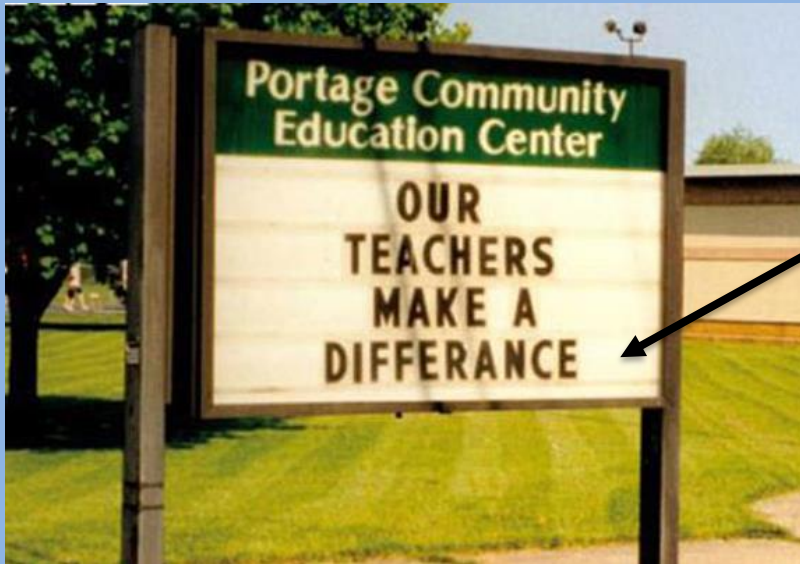
# Spelling

d-e-f-i-n-i-t-e  
u-n-n-e-c-e-s-s-a-r-y  
s-e-p-a-r-a-t-e



✓ Correct Usage, Grammar, & **Spelling**

# Spelling Makes a Difference



# Someone Will Notice



ensure insure

Discrete discreet

Affect effect

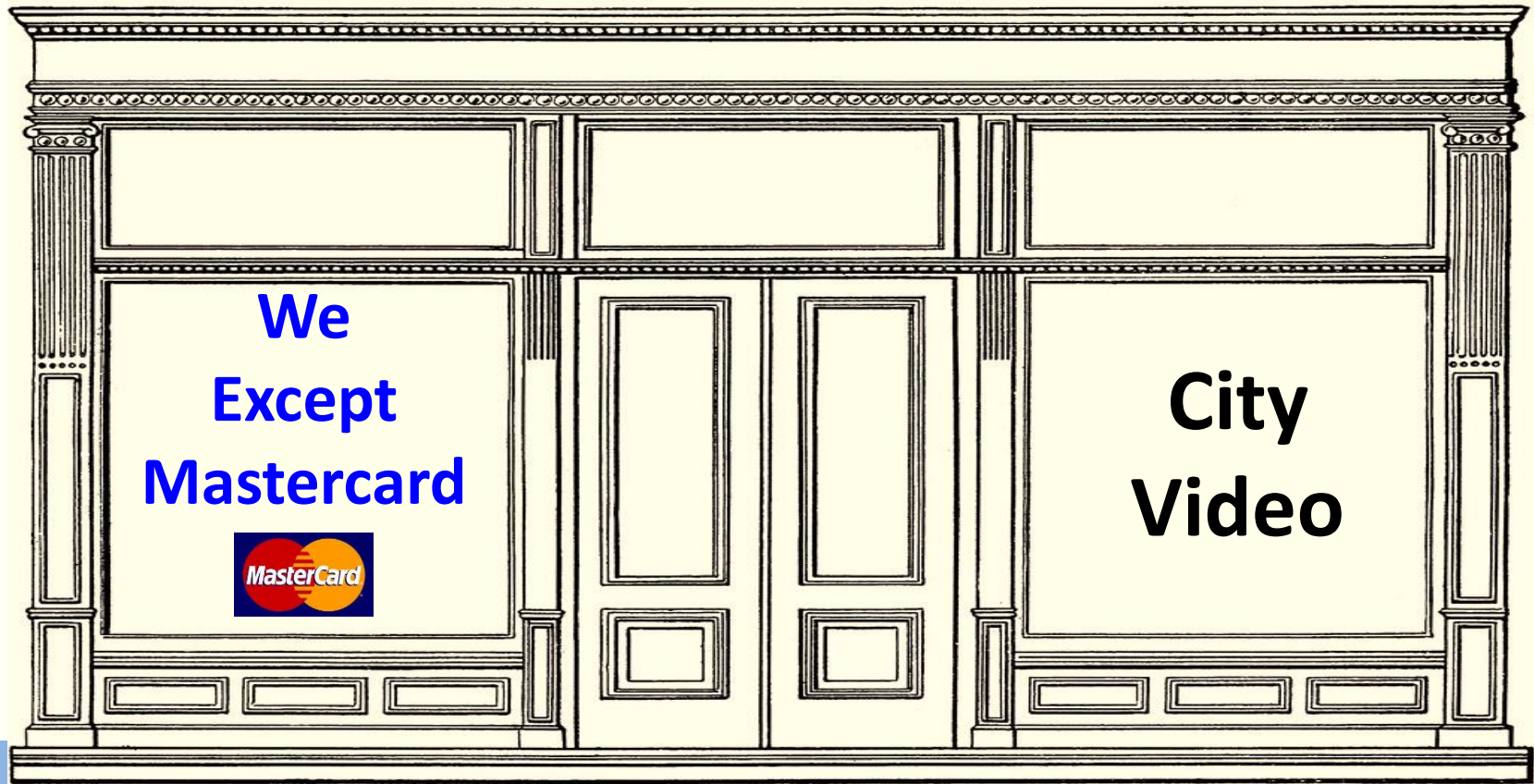
# Tricky Words

Farther further

Stationary stationery

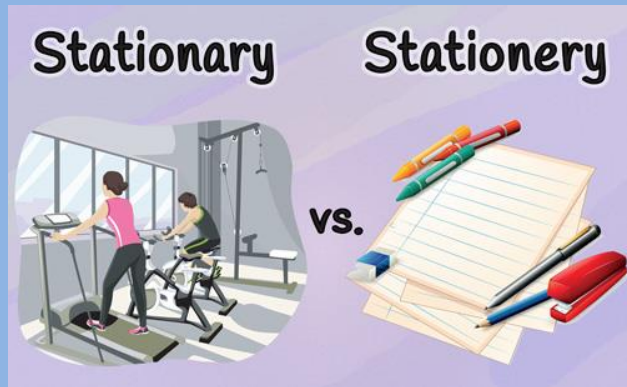
Accept except


**Misused words & phrases** often confuse some and appall others. The writer's credibility is put into question if the message is delivered inadequately. A poor command of language might cause one to question data accuracy.



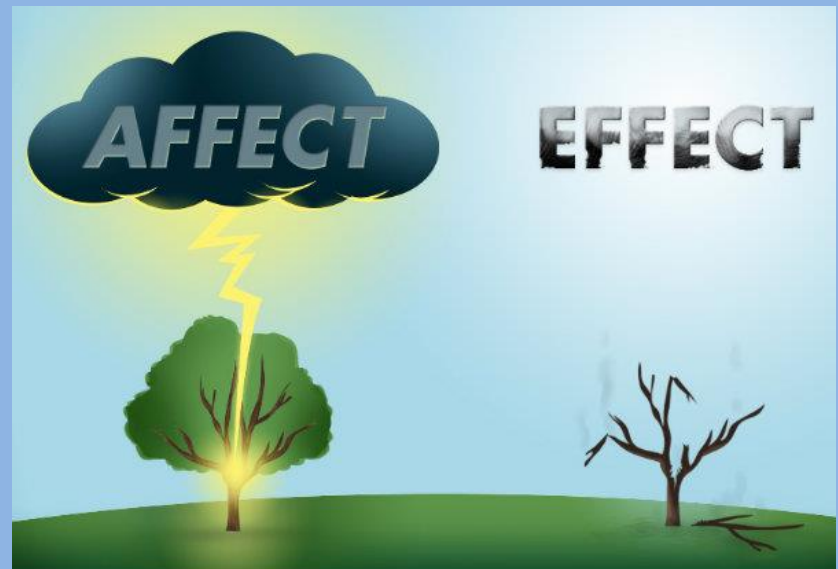


# Know Your English



FARTHER	FURTHER
Physical Distance	Anything Else
	Any <b>further</b> Questions?

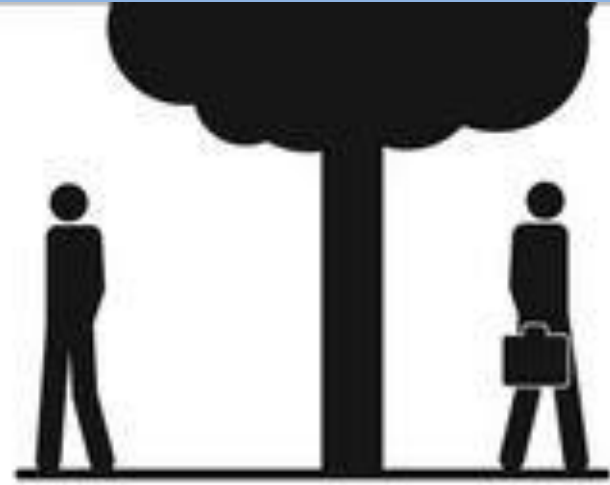
<b>Ensure</b>	vs.	<b>Insure</b>
Guarantee		Safeguard against loss
Some American dictionaries give these as synonyms. They are NOT the same.		





**Discreet**

**Careful or showing good judgment  
in what one says or does**



**Discrete**

**Separate or detached.**

*In mathematics, discrete has several specialized senses, such as “defined only for an isolated set of points,” such as a discrete (noncontinuous) variable.*

The best way to remember the difference:

**discrete**    **Separate** the two **e**’s with a **t**.

# Example: Ensure or Insure

**Ensure** is something done to **guarantee** an event or condition.

Ensure with an “e” is to guarantee

*To ensure we had enough food for winter, they did a lot of canning.*



**Insure** to **protect** a person, place, or thing against loss.

Insure with an “i” protects our income.





# Farther vs. Further

- Use *farther* with physical differences.



- Use *further* with everything else.

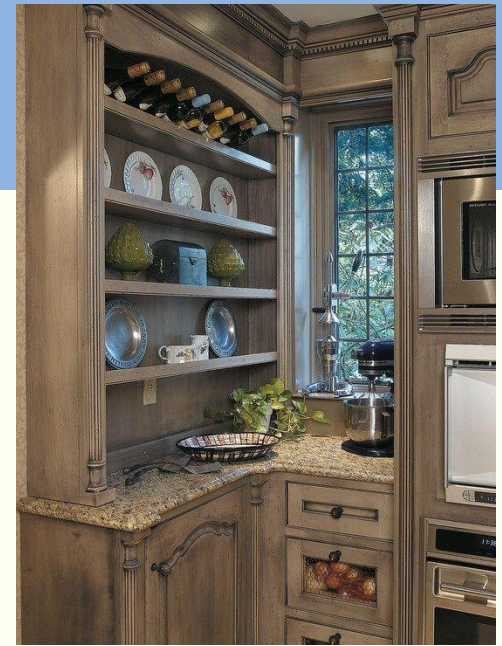
Additional to:

- What already exists,
- Has taken place
- Been accounted



## Stationary

fixed, immobile, or unchanging.



## Stationery

refers to paper, matching envelopes, and writing implements.



# Affect

To alter or change (verb):

- The weather **affects** our moods.
- The quality of your work **affects** your grade.



# Effect

To cause or bring about; result (noun):

- The effects of the drought were evident.



REMEMBER, MOST OF THE TIME:

**To alter or change = affect**

**A result = effect**

- *farther*  
*further*      The more we talked, the **further** (not a physical difference) our discussion moved away from its original intent.
- *ensure*  
*insure*      To **ensure** (guarantee) there would be food for the winter, they did a lot of canning.
- *affect*  
*effect*      The **effect** (*a* result) of diligent study habits is better learning.

# Transitional Words

**Transitional words** connect one idea to the next or provide directions about previously discussed information. Connecting words are bridges that smoothly compare, contrast, or link concepts. Before using a transitional word or phrase, be sure the meaning is correct and *needed* to combine topics or ideas.

If the coordinating conjunctions: ***for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*** (FANBOYS) are the only transitional words ever employed, the writing will be weak and inadequate: *in other words, in effect, again, that is*. They only reiterate a previous statement. The wrong unnecessary transitional word or its overuse hinders the flow of a sentence or paragraph.

Transitional Words—see **Appendix G**, p. 80

# Coordinating Conjunctions

**for** means because

**nor** removes alternatives

**or** offers a choice

**yet** expresses a stronger contrast than but

**and** adds information

**but** contradicts

**so** means as a result

Can one start a sentence with a coordinating conjunction?

**Historical or grammatical foundation has yet to be found.**

Also; In addition

Otherwise

Consequently

However

conjunctive adverbs

• And

• Or

• So

• But

fanboys

**Try combine  
thoughts  
without them.**



### Combining Without Transitional Words

~~*It appears the*~~ test group participants were financially diverse.

This is different *than* previous study conducted in 2008 where all participants were in the \$70,000 income range .

**(18 words)**

This study's income range differs from the \$70,000 salary unit in 2008. **(Reduced to 12)**

Students were administered two intelligence tests .

No significant academic difference among the students was detected (*passive sentence—try combining*). **(15 words)**

Two intelligence tests placed students academically equal. **(7)**

***Find the subject and the main ideas—state them simply.***

*The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug.*

—Mark Twain

# Structure and Grammar



Correct Usage, Grammar, & Spelling

## Commas

**Commas should only precede Coordinating Conjunctions (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*) when they introduce an *independent* clause.**

The movie has already started, but my friend has not arrived.

**Commas are unnecessary unless separating two independent clauses.**

He pulled the plug and drained the oil.

## “Avoid a succession of **loose sentences**.

This rule refers especially to loose sentences of a particular type, those consisting of two co-ordinate clauses, the second introduced by a conjunction or relative. Although single sentences of this type may be unexceptionable ... a series soon becomes monotonous and tedious. An unskillful writer will sometimes construct a whole paragraph of sentences of this kind, using as connectives **and, but,** and less frequently, **who, which, when, where, and while,** these last in non-restrictive senses...”

relatives



—Strunk; Elements of Style

## Sing-Song Flow:

“A paragraph of sentences, each connected with **joiners**. Independent Clauses using the coordinating conjunction (*and*) and non-restrictive clauses with subordinating conjunctions (*while*, *when*). This creates a “mechanical symmetry.”

—Strunk

...the team will report such findings **and** a preferred treatment, **even though** it is a more expensive to remove the waste **than** to clean the area, **which** places a financial burden on the city.

*"The third concert of the subscription series was given last evening, and a large audience was in attendance.*

*Mr. Edward Appleton was the soloist, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra furnished the instrumental music. The former showed himself to be an artist of the first rank, while the latter proved itself fully deserving of its high reputation. (38)*

*The interest aroused by the series has been very gratifying to the committee, and it is planned to give a similar series annually hereafter. The 4th concert will be given on Tuesday, May 10th, when an equally attractive program will be presented."*

*—Strunk*

A large audience attended the third concert last evening.

Mr. Edward Appleton was a superior soloist and the Boston Symphony Orchestra proved deserving of its high (*repute standing, status*). (18)

Due to stirred interest, the gratified committee will offer subscriptions annually.

The 4<sup>th</sup> equally attractive program will be on Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>.

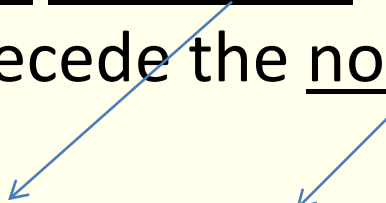
# Schools of Thought About **Hyphens**

Elaborate rules for hyphens tend to produce more hyphens than many good writers will accept.

**Avoid the hyphen when it does not serve a useful purpose.**

**Keeping this in mind:**

Most compound adjectives are hyphenated when they immediately precede the noun they modify:



**common-mode voltage**

**high-frequency behavior**

**odd-integer terms**

Compound terms containing the word “**half**” or **numbers**:

**half-life**

**one-third**

**8-bit digitizer**



- All compounds formed with the word “free” are hyphenated:
  - **divergence-free**
- The prefixes formed with “**self-**, **all-**, **ex-**, and **quasi-** are hyphenated:
  - **all-inclusive**
  - **ex-president**
  - **self-extinguishing**
- When the last letter of the prefix is identical to the first letter of the following word:
  - **non-negative**
  - **semi-independent**

- With a repeating sequence of letters that is confusing:
  - **re-reading**
  - **non-oscillatory** (which looks like “no no scillatory” without the hyphen).
- When a prefix is added to a **name**, symbol, or number:
  - **non-Newtonian physics**
  - **mid-1970s**
- To distinguish from homonyms:
  - **re-cover**
  - **re-solved**

# Restrictive or Non-restrictive Clauses

Using **that** or **which** is as easy as understanding the importance of the *element it introduces*.

***That*** is essential (**restrictive**) to the sentence.

*A restrictive clause* modifies the noun that precedes it in an essential way.

The chair ***that*** has a broken leg is dangerous.  
Vital to sentence meaning.

The bill, ***which*** is in the House, will be signed.  
Unessential—just added information.

# The Non-restrictive “Which”

*Which* is non-essential (**non-restrictive**) to the meaning of sentence.

*On Friday, which was the first test day, the participants completed the majority of the survey.*

Make sure the clause using *which* is non-vital to the sentence meaning.

**NO: Machines which are used for gaming purposes are quite expensive.**

This is a necessary clause discriminating it from other machines.  
Use “**that**” or even better:

***Gaming machines are quite expensive.***

- Use a comma before *which* when it introduces a **nonrestrictive phrase**.
- Don't use a comma before *which* when it's part of a prepositional phrase, such as "in which."
- Don't use a comma before *which* when it introduces an indirect question.

Indirect questions start with a phrase like 'could you tell me...' or 'do you know...'. For example:

*Could you tell me which of these roads goes to Kent?*

# Be Stingy with “That”

If the sentence meaning is not altered, remove it. Check how the sentence reads without it.

*Usually, you can drop “that” if it follows a verb that essentially means “to say.”*

***The director ~~said that~~ compliance was mandatory.***

***NAAQS would likely require ~~that~~ infrastructure SIP revisions be open to the public...***

NAAQS indicated that if a state determines that its existing SIP is adequate, the state can certify, via a letter to the EPA that the existing SIP contains provisions that address the infrastructure requirements. However, on [REDACTED] staff communicated to the [REDACTED] that pending guidance for the 2008 lead NAAQS would likely require that infrastructure SIP revisions be open to public notice and comment and that certification letters would no longer be adequate to meet the requirements of §110(a)(1) and (2). EPA region [REDACTED] staff sent a draft lead NAAQS infrastructure guidance document to the [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]. This draft guidance indicates that the submittal may be a certification in the form of a letter to the EPA from the governor or the governor's designee but that the state must provide public notice and opportunity for public hearing on a submittal prior to submission to the EPA.

NAAQS indicated that if a state determines that its existing SIP is adequate, the state can certify, via a letter to the EPA that the existing SIP contains provisions that address *(ing)* the infrastructure requirements.



NAAQS indicated that if a state determines its existing SIP is adequate, the state can certify, via a letter to the EPA that the existing SIP contains provisions that address the infrastructure requirements. (33)

**NAAQS indicated that states may send a letter to the EPA confirming the existing SIP contains provisions addressing infrastructure requirements.**

(20)

## ***SIMPLE IS BETTER***

- An example is the word “use” instead of “utilize.” This is not a better word; just a longer word!
- Do not obscure the message: **“Everything should be made as simple as possible, but no simpler.”** —*Einstein*
- Keep even complex things simple, if the statement essence remains. However, some things cannot be reduced without significant message loss.
- **If you can use a one-syllable word instead of three—do it.**

Questions?

## Expletives

“There are” or “there is” in a sentence:

Weak: *There are a considerable number of mistakes in the data.*

Better: *A considerable portion of the data is incorrect.*

**There** is the subject, yet neither a noun nor a pronoun. It is an **expletive** (a word that has a grammatical task but no meaning of its own) and often fosters nominalizations.

Since clarity is important in technical writing, the subject must be apparent.

**Rewrite sentences to avoid there is and sometimes it is.**

Folder 3 article: *Avoid These Technical Writing Mistakes*

**Avoid Expletives:** Expletives are words that serve a grammatical function in a sentence but have no meaning. The most common expletives are ***it is, there is, there are.***

Weak: ***There is*** no alternative for the company except to withdraw the product.

Strong: The company must withdraw the product.

Weak: ***It is*** hoped that testing the evaluation copies will help the team make a decision.

Strong: The team hopes testing the evaluation copies will aid in a decision.

# Nominalized Verbs

(Zombie Nouns)



# Nominalized Verbs aka **Zombie Nouns**

Verbs that have been changed into nouns then coupled with weaker verbs.

Helen Sword (*New York Times*, July 23, 2012) termed “nominalizations” — (**nouns** that contain within them shorter verbs, or adjectives) as “**zombie nouns**” because they “cannibalize active verbs, suck the lifeblood from adjectives and substitute abstract entities...

If it ends in:

- **-tion** application illustration calibration experimentation
- **-ity** reliability functionality variability conformity
- **-ness** usefulness appropriateness
- **-ance/-ence** performance appearance reference intelligence
- **-ism** cronyism realism individualism sensationalism
- **-ment** enhancement announcement agreement
- **-sion** erosion conclusion discussion diffusion
- **-ship** relationship ownership dictatorship
- **-acy** accuracy diplomacy immediacy



The word is probably a **Zombie Noun**.

"Nominalizations give the action the weight instead of the people who created it. Sometimes this is appropriate because we don't know who is responsible or because responsibility isn't important.

"Often they conceal power relationships and reduce our sense of what's truly involved in a transaction. As such, they are an instrument of manipulation, in politics and in business. They emphasize products and results, rather than the processes by which products and results are achieved."

—*Henry Hitchings*

Restoring nominalizations to verbs will create a more direct and readable sentence.

Weak: The police conducted an *investigation* of the crime.

Strong: The police investigated the crime.

Weak: There was considerable *erosion* of the land after the flood.

Strong: The flood eroded the land considerably.

Weak: Each *preparation* of the solution is done twice.

Strong: Each solution is prepared twice.

The test group prepared each solution twice.

Weak: *Consideration* should be given to an *acquisition* of the properties.

Strong: The company should consider acquiring the property.



**Nominalizations are not tangible. They cannot be touched, felt, or heard.**

**Nominalizations are noun forms of action verbs:**

The instability **of** the motor housing did not preclude the completion of the field trials.

**The unstable motor housing...**

Nominalizations are often introduced by unspecified verbs.

...issued an announcement—announced

...led to the decision—decided

Change to action verbs & decrease the number of words in a sentence & clarify intended meaning:

**An expansion in the use of new Highway 3 was the cause of the reduction in the congestion of Highway 12.**

**Newly expanded Highway 3 reduced congested Highway 12.**

# Wasted Words and Phrases



**After writing a sentence, check for unnecessary words that can be cut without sacrifice of meaning.**

**Avoid:**

- Actual; actually
- All of (just write “all”)
- As it were
- At the present moment of time (now)
- As you know
- Basically
- Being that (since)

- Completely
- Essentially
- Extremely
- In order to (to)
- In terms of
- It is anticipated that
- It is imperative that
- Moreover
- Necessitate (require)
- It should be noted that
- Irregardless (Not a word! “regardless”)



## Different

The word different is often redundant, as in several ~~different~~ options or many ~~different~~ participants.

**So as to**

The word **to** alone works fine.

**This** ~~continues to~~ remain the flood access source.

This **remains...**

Construction of the spillway is ~~currently~~ underway.

Spillway constructing is underway.

# Repeated Words

**Using the same word in a paragraph.** If replacements do not come to mind, use the **Thesaurus** in *Microsoft* to provide some examples. This will improve the flow of the sentence.

# USE THE THESAURUS

**“Sovereignty.” Use your thesaurus as an aid to replace repetitive terminology.**



Tribal *sovereignty* means that; it's *sovereign*. I mean you're a-- you've been given *sovereignty*, and you're viewed as a *sovereign* entity. And therefore, the relationship between the federal government and the tribes is one between *sovereign* entities.

— G. W. Bush

Tribal **sovereignty** signifies **independence**. The inhabitants possess recognized **autonomy** and are perceived as a **self-governing** entity. Therefore, the relationship between the federal government and the tribes is one involving **self-ruling** dominions.

**Avoid Wordy Phrases:** Wordy phrases also make writing long and boring.

For example, many people write *on a daily basis* instead of *daily*. The longer sentence may sound more important, but *daily* says the same thing more concisely.

Wordy: The Company's CEO is of the opinion that, in regard to profit achievement, the statistics *pertaining to* this month *will appear to indicate* an upward tendency.

Concise: The Company's CEO thinks this month's statistics will show a profit increase.

<b>Wordy Phrase</b>	<b>Better</b>	<b>Wordy Phrase</b>	<b>Better</b>
by means of	by	on the subject of	about, concerning
at the conclusion of	after, following	in favor of	advocate, support
during the course of	during	a majority of	most
as a consequence of	because, for	a number of	many, some
in light of	because	In the event of	if

Wordy Expression	Example	Improved
<b>the amount of</b>	The amount of disbursement is excessive.	<b>The disbursement is excessive.</b>
<b>the case of</b>	In the case of the bridge repairs, the council is undecided.	<b>The council is undecided about the bridge repairs.</b>
<b>the characteristic of</b>	The engineers are studying the characteristics of the problem.	<b>The engineers are studying the problem.</b>
<b>the issue of</b>	Dealing with the issue of funding proved problematic.	<b>Dealing with funding proved problematic.</b>
<b>the level of</b>	The level of pollution in the area is extreme.	<b>Pollution in the area is extreme.</b>
<b>the occurrence of</b>	The occurrence of high levels of radiation resulted in food contamination.	<b>High levels of radiation resulted in food contamination.</b>
<b>The use of</b>	New regulations governing the use of the contaminants, begins in January.	<b>New regulations governing contaminants, begins in January.</b>

## Omit needless words. From Strunk and White Elements of Style:

*the question as to whether*

*there is no doubt but that*

*used for fuel purposes*

*he is a man who*

*this is a subject which*

*His story is a strange one.*

*whether (the question whether)*

*no doubt (doubtless)*

*used for fuel*

*he in a hasty manner hastily*

*this subject*

*His story is strange.*

...*the fact that* should be revised out of every sentence...

*owing to the fact that*

*in spite of the fact that*

*call your attention to the fact that*

*I was unaware of the fact that*

*the fact that he had not succeeded*

*the fact that I had arrived*

*since (because)*

*though (although)*

*remind you (notify you)*

*I was unaware that (did not know)*

*his failure*

*my arrival*

\*About Public Domain: Any work **published before January 1, 1925**, is in the **public domain**.

Weak:

There is no alternative for the company except to withdraw the product.

Strong:

The company must withdraw the product.

Weak:

It is hoped that testing the evaluation copies will help the team make a decision.

Strong:

The team hopes testing the evaluation copies will aid in their decision.

# Correcting & Revising Examples





## Background and reasons for the SIP revision: SIP revision rationale (purpose)

Section 110 (a)(1) of the FCAA requires states to submit a plan to ~~provide~~ for the implementation, maintenance, and enforcement of the NAAQS. ...requires states to submit a plan to implement, maintain, and enforce the NAAQS.

Section 110 (a)(2) lists the elements that the new SIP revision must contain. ...lists new SIP mandatory elements.

States are required to submit ~~these~~ infrastructure SIP submittals to the EPA to demonstrate that basic program elements have been addressed within three years of ~~its~~ the promulgation of new or revised NAAQS. States must address and submit the SIP basic program elements within three years of the new or revised NAAQS decree.

**C. Additional staff recommendations that are not required by federal rule or state statute:** Non-compulsory staff recommendations

Senator Smith has voiced interest in and filed legislation that would further control a specific lead source in Smogville.

Senator Smith voiced interest and filed legislation to further control a specific lead source in Smogville.

5  
There has also been considerable interest in lead emissions ~~from the citizens and elected officials in Smogville.~~

Also, Smogville's citizens and elected officials show great interest in lead emissions. 1

These concerns have been focused on potential exposure and minimizing emissions and not the infrastructure requirements themselves.

Chief concerns are potential exposure and reduced emissions but exclude the infrastructure requirements.

The October 2, 2007, EPA guidance regarding obligations under FCAA, §110(a)(1) and (2) for the 1997 eight-hour ozone and the 1997 particles with an aerodynamic diameter less than or equal to a normal 2.5 micrometers (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) NAAQS, and the September 25, 2009, guidance for the 2006 PM<sub>2.5</sub> NAAQS indicated that if a state determines that its existing SIP is adequate, the state can certify, via a letter to the EPA, that the existing SIP contains provisions that address the infrastructure requirements. However, on [REDACTED] staff communicated to the [REDACTED] that pending guidance for the 2008 lead NAAQS would likely require that infrastructure SIP revisions be open to public notice and comment and that certification letters would no longer be adequate to meet the requirements of §110(a)(1) and (2). EPA region [REDACTED] staff sent a draft lead NAAQS infrastructure guidance document to the [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]. This draft guidance indicates that the submittal may be a certification in the form of a letter to the EPA from the governor or the governor's designee but that the state must provide reasonable public notice and opportunity for public hearing on a submittal prior to submission to the EPA. The adopted SIP revision will meet the notice and comment requirements identified in the draft guidance. To meet the infrastructure SIP submittal deadline of October 15, 2011, the [REDACTED] must adopt this SIP revision despite the lack of finalized EPA guidance.

## A. Summary of what the SIP revision will do:

Pending SIP revision summary

These requirements include basic program elements **such as** ??? enforceable emission limitations and control measures, air quality monitoring and modeling, a permitting program, adequate funding and personnel, authority under state law to ~~carry out~~ implement the plan, emissions reporting, emergency powers, public participation, and fee collection.

It was a type of new, just released model can opener.  
The can opener is the newest model.

The plan is a simple one; easy-to-follow instructions should be created.

Easy instructions should be created (are necessary).  
Create easy instructions.

In the event that it rains, the track meet will be moved indoors.

The track meet is indoors if it rains.

He found himself studying the lessons more; as well as, retaining the lessons better.

He studied more and retained better.

## How to Use References & Citations in Word

- Open **Folder 2 # 197.**
- An excerpt is provided.

**Handout 4.**

**Page 13**

- **In-Text Citations & Bibliography Page.**

**He can compress the most words into the smallest  
idea of any man I know. —*Lincoln***

# **Sentence and Paragraph Coherency**



# Message Briefly

“My responsibility is to work as closely with the president and the people he has designated in the operationalizing of those mechanisms and modes of activity and strategies necessary to maintain the viability of this institution's fiscal management operations.”

## Excerpt from the Office of Naval Research, Naval Science, and Technology Strategic Plan

“Central to achieving that vision is the development of a distributed system of heterogeneous unmanned systems relying on network-centric, decentralized control that is flexible in its level of autonomy, with the ability to get the right level of information to the right echelon at the right time. This may include defeating asymmetric and emerging threats via persistent and stealthy distributed large-area presence, stimulation of suspect entities, and disruption and deception of potential hostiles.”

## Combine two closely related short sentences by omitting part of one.

- **Wordy:**

The director is also concerned about problems. Typical problems may occur with lighting, sound, and props.

- **Concise:**

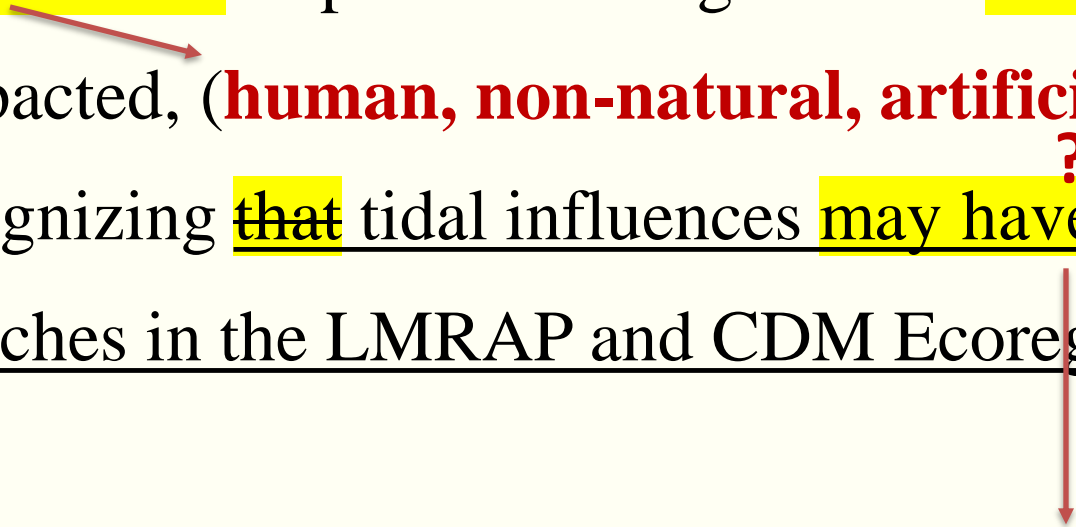
The director's concerns include typical problems with lighting, sound, and props.

The director's concerns include lighting, prop and sound problems.

**Place key information in the main clause, most important first:**

- Despite making several errors in the first half, the Patriots won the game.
- The Patriots won the game, despite making several errors in the first half.

In the end, reference stream **data** was not used for Bayou Lacombe. Instead, each reach was thoroughly evaluated for **man-made** impact and designated as **not/least** impacted or impacted, (**human, non-natural, artificial, synthetic**)  
...recognizing that tidal influences may have some impact  
on reaches in the LMRAP and CDM Ecoregions.



**...recognizing tidal influences (*minimally, amply*) impact reaches...**

- <sup>1</sup>Results <sup>2</sup>for the calibration model <sup>3</sup>results <sup>4</sup>with facilities <sup>5</sup>were considered <sup>6</sup>to be <sup>7</sup>in the lower limit <sup>8</sup>of the range.

**Calibration model results with facilities were in the lower limit range.**

**Facilities calibration model results statistically placed in the lower limit range.**

- <sup>1</sup>Results <sup>2</sup>for the calibration model <sup>3</sup>with <sup>4</sup>no facilities and a 32% <sup>5</sup>reduction <sup>6</sup>of the nonpoint load <sup>7</sup>was <sup>8</sup>considered to be <sup>9</sup>in the upper limit <sup>10</sup>of the range.

**Calibration model results minus facilities and a 32% non-point load reduction, placed in the upper limit range.**

# **Minimal Wording** (*Logorrhoea*)

**The National Council of Teachers of English presented its annual Doublespeak Award to the Metropolitan Edison Co., operator of the Three Mile Island nuclear plant, for coining such terms as:**

**Energetic disassembly (explosion)**

**Rapid oxidization (fire)**

**Normal aberration (reactor accident)**

# When Not to Use a Comma

A **Comma splice** is a sentence containing two or more independent clauses joined only by a comma. Either use a semicolon or separate into two sentences.

*It's not a better word, it's just a longer word.* **X**

*It's not a better word. It's just a longer word.*

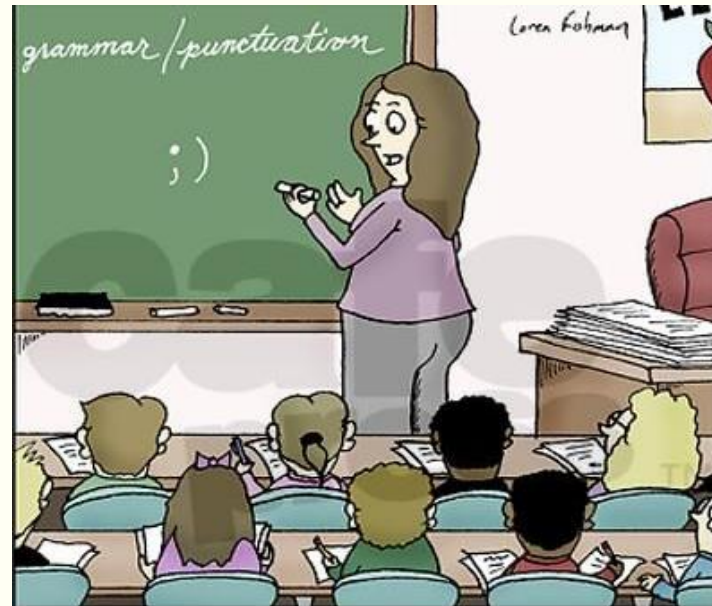
*It's not a better word; it's just a longer word.*

*It's not a better word—it's just a longer word.*



Place a **semicolon** when joining independent clauses with independent marker words and to separate phrases and clauses containing several commas.

***He played the fiddle, guitar, and piano in Waco, TX every week; and monthly, performed at the Grand Old Opry in Nashville, TN.***



"Yes, a winky face is correct... But in ancient times, the semicolon was actually used to separate archaic written devices known as 'complete sentences.'"

# Phrasing is Everything

**Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.**

**Said the assistant fire chief: "I would unequivocally say, it very probably could have been set."**

**He was as tall as a six-foot-three-inch tree.**

# Learn to Count!

**Dear Fellow Resident:**

**Washington is a city that only cares about one thing: money, power and politics.**

**Three lucky people will win an elegant French dinner for two.**

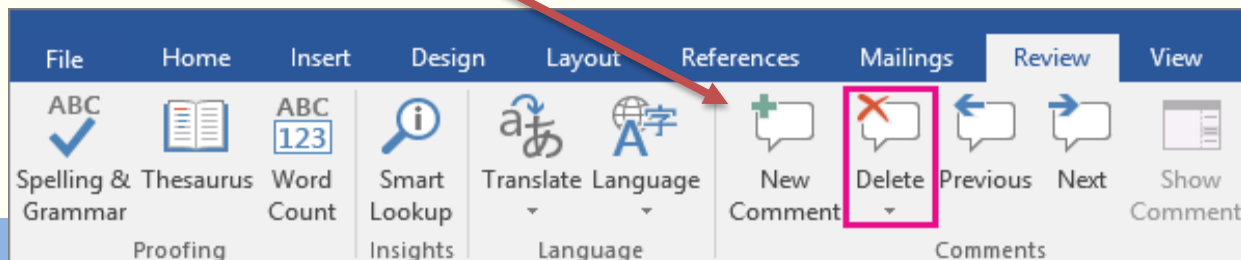
# Comment Sidebars

Add facts deemed necessary. They must be on the same page as the information. Use them sparingly.

Side comments assist when editing the work others or when teaching.

## Open Folder 2 # 297

Review Tab; New Comment.



**Open Microsoft Word.**

**Page 15**

- Type:
- Find **Red Tab 5** printed instructions to create Footnotes.
- *Return to the text by clicking twice before the footnote number.*

**=rand(9)**

# Swat Useless Words



In the end

It appears that

As a result of

Due to the fact that

There is

In order to

**In the end, reference stream data was  
not used for Bayou Lacombe.**

## To Pre-verify

**It is believed** this study covers all the needed data.

**Studies show that** people like this product more.

*Don't talk about studies. For all we know, you read about them in high school. Give data.*

These phrases ultimately make your writing much longer and make you look **unsure** about your information.

# Write in the Positive

~~NOT~~

Consciously or unconsciously, the reader is dissatisfied with being told only what is **not**; the reader wishes to be told what **is**... If your every sentence admits a doubt, your writing will lack authority.”

—*William Strunk Jr.*



## Identify Negatives—Change to Positives

*If you do not have more than five years of experience, do not call for an interview if you have not already spoken to human resources.*

*Applicants with more than five years of experience can bypass human resources and call for an interview.*

*He was not very often on time.*

*He usually came late.*

*He did not think that studying Latin was much use.*

*He thought the study of Latin useless.*

—Strunk; The Elements of Style

**Non-finite clauses can use “not” and are recognized by their position in a sentence.** A non-finite verb is **never** the main verb in a sentence.

Infinitives      ***Not to have invited** James to our little party*  
*would have been impolite.*

Gerunds          *She left the house very quietly, ***not wishing** to a**  
*alarm anyone.*

participles      ***Not funded** by any government grants, the*  
*research...*

**With negative sentences, your readers must comprehend the important words in the sentence and then negate them.**

<b>not able</b>	<b>unable</b>
<b>not certain</b>	<b>uncertain</b>
<b>not clearly</b>	<b>unclearly</b>
<b>not able</b>	<b>unable</b>
<b>not different</b>	<b>alike/similar</b>
<b>not many</b>	<b>few</b>
<b>not possible</b>	<b>impossible</b>
<b>not the same as</b>	<b>different from</b>
<b>did not</b>	<b>failed to</b>
<b>did not accept</b>	<b>rejected</b>
<b>not important</b>	<b>minor/immaterial</b>

# The Solidus, Virgule, Whack, Forward Slash /

The purpose of this modeling effort is to used the existing model to identify/evaluate natural background conditions.

- This use is **Shorthand** for ***and***.
- When a slash is used in formal text, it is meant to indicate the word ***or***.
- NEVER: ~~his/her~~   ~~he/she~~

## The Slash /

For writing regular texts, try to avoid slashes. Use them if you must, but they put a dent in the flow. It's easier to read a sentence without them.

- *APA* cautions use of a slash when a phrase is clearer written with words.
- *AMA* urges rewording around the slash “in the likelihood of ambiguity” (p. 353).

**Two approaches were taken to accomplish this task.**

**The first approach** involved the use**d** of LDEQ's modeling/TMDL ...

**The second approach** involved the **evaluation** of individual reaches by **man-made loading** or as not/**least** impacted.

 Does this mean **or** or **and**

Two approaches were taken to accomplish this task.

## Evaluating (appraisal) Methods:

1. The first approach involved the used of LDEQ's modeling/TMDL...
1. **LDEQ modeling and TMDL to evaluate...**

Folder 3: Periods at the end of bullets?

2. The second approach involved the evaluation of individual reaches as impacted by man-made loading or not/least impacted.

2. Individual reaches impacted, least impacted, or **not** impacted due to *manufactured (artificial, synthetic)* loading.

The second approach involved the evaluation of individual reaches **by man-made loading or as not/least impacted**



# Anthropomorphism

Human emotions and abilities  
assigned to non-living things.

*To be or not to be?*

✓ Correct **Usage**, Grammar, & Spelling



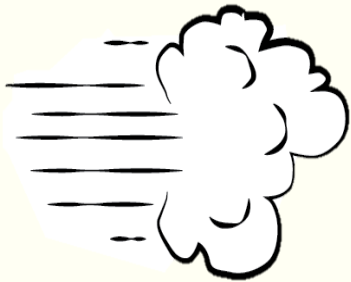
## Personification:



Inanimate objects totally embody human characteristics and abilities.

## Anthropomorphism:

Inanimate objects retain nonhuman form taking on human ***emotions*** and ***abilities***.



*The devious wind waged war through the night.*

We often see anthropomorphisms when reporting **theories, models, tables, data, and results.**

Writers anthropomorphize a concept or object to avoid:

- **First person**
- **Passive voice**
- **Unknown author.**

## Acceptable When:

Organizations, **as groups of people**, can take actions that are appropriate for human actors.

- *The school **board voted** to require school uniforms.*
- *The Society of Professional **Journalists issued** new ethics guidelines.*
- *The **hospital implemented** new procedures regarding RN staffing requirements.*

Refrain from this practice if possible.

Anthropomorphism is common in some fields.  
Permission to anthropomorphize mainly depends on:

- Your institution's personal preferences
- The style guide used

***Style guides do vary.***

- **APA guidelines**, "...writing with anthropomorphism means that the writer attributes an action to objects that cannot take that action..."
- Tables and figures cannot "compare." However, they can "**show**" or "**indicate**" (APA, 2010, p. 69).
- In fact, the only "safe" verbs to use to comply with APA are "**show**" and "**indicate**."

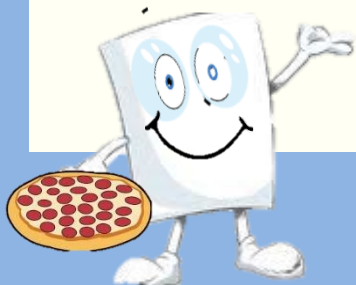
~~Studies show~~ What studies?

**CMS no guidelines,** "Why reword it? Documents do *analyze, present,* and consider. They discuss and bemoan and mangle and make mockeries of things."

CMS has no rule that restricts writers to use only literal meanings.

Writers must individually judge.

If it gets to the point where the  
***documents are ordering pizza,***  
consider rewording.



## More Pizza Orders

- The experiment **voiced** a relationship between the previous study. (*showed*)
- The statistics **argued** in favor of adding new guidelines. (*indicated*)
- The report **bellowed** three instances of application misuse. (*supported*)



*The available data **suggested**...*

Data do not have little mouths that offer us suggestions on anything?

Data can **show, indicate, support**.

*What these cannot do is **speak, talk, or prefer**.*

- The **battery speaks** about quantitative MRI biomarkers related to itself in several scenarios.
- Surgical site **infections talk** about the contamination of saline solutions.
- The **bacteria prefers** XYZ as a growth medium.

# Good

APA {

- Show
- Indicate
- Provide
- Support
- Find

# Bad

Answer  
Think  
Aware  
Refuse  
See

Demand  
Assume  
Know  
Want  
Collect

Realize  
Recognize  
Own  
Understand  
Discuss



The paper **remembered**  
The report **talked about**  
The theories **worked hand in hand**  
The survey **decides**  
The statistics **implied**  
Data **encouraged**

If you can, focus on the writers and state what they found, not their results as the subject of the sentence.

- The **theory** concluded that transformational leadership style influences follower job satisfaction.
- The **theorists** concluded that transformational leadership style influences follower job satisfaction

## **Show**

The results show a relationship between time spent in the intervention program and student standardized test scores.

## **Indicates**


The theory indicates that societies work much like ecological systems.

## **Supports**

The table supports the demographic information of this study.

Many times, Anthropomorphic statements reduce the objectivity of research, narrow our viewpoints, and prevent a true understanding.

Choose precise sentences. Is the subject capable of performing the action of the verb?



**It is unclear why cows in the US choose to face north when they eat.**

This states that cows make a "conscious" decision to turn their bodies north.

***“Research is unclear as to why cows in the US eat facing north.”***

**The factory walked out on strike.**

*Is the factory able to perform such a task?*

**All factory employees walked out on strike.**

Organizations, **as groups of people**, can take actions that are appropriate for human actors:

- **Johnson & Johnson recalled products from Target store shelves.**
- The school board voted to require school uniforms.
- **The Society of Professional Journalists issued new ethics guidelines.**
- The hospital implemented new procedures regarding RN staffing requirements.

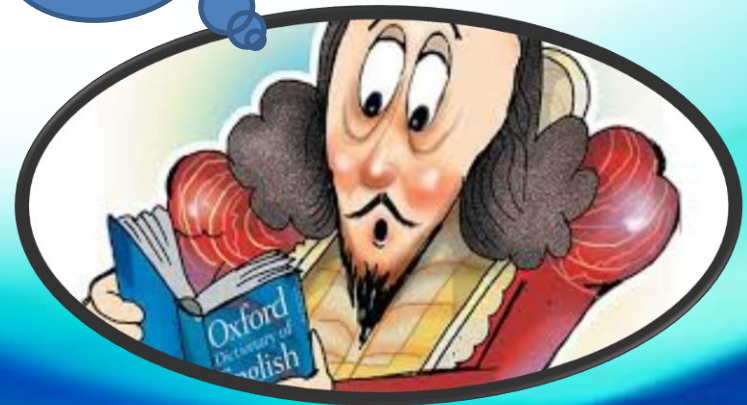
- The experiment **demonstrated** that waves emitted by the transmitting plant were evident.
- The statistics ***argued*** in favor of adding new guidelines.
- The report ***shouted*** three aspects of application.

***The ideal is to use the author as the subject of the experiment, statistics, or review.***



# Subject-Verb Agreement

How Strange;  
“VERB” is a  
noun.



Correct **Usage**, Grammar, & Spelling

Subject and verb agreement is a must. Beware!  
When the subject is presented as a unit  
(**collective noun**), it is considered a single entity:  
*Mr. Bayou thinks “data” a collective noun.*

The entire network group is offline today.

**Time periods & sums of money use single verbs:**

Ten years is a long sentence for the crime.

Twenty dollars is adequate pay for his time.

APA p.78; CMS p.269

When single & plural subjects are joined by **or** or **nor**, the verb should agree with the noun nearest the verb:

The girl **or** her friends work after class.

Her friends **or** the girl works after class.

The subject must agree with the verb, even though words or phrases separate them:

The **queen**, *with her attending ladies*, **is** on the balcony.

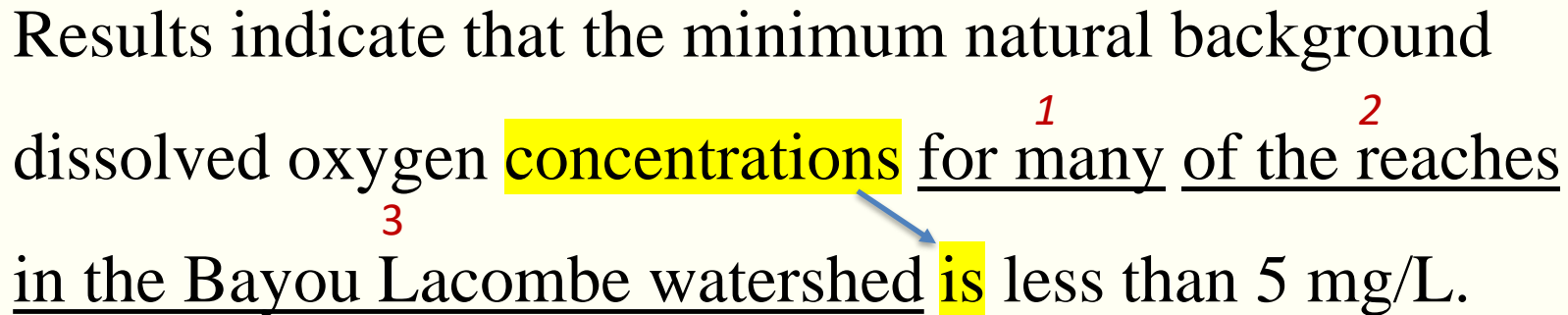
*This is a simple example, but the Bayou report contained several subject-verb errors. Since his sentences contained so many prepositional phrases or subordinate clauses, he often agreed with the noun closest to his verb. Remember your subject.*

APA Manual p. 78

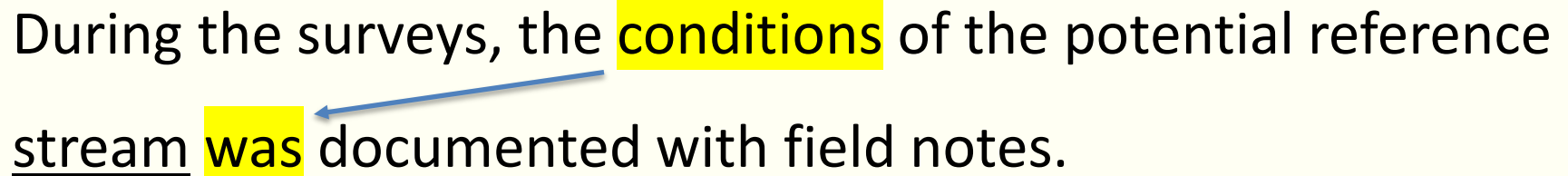
CMS p. 269

**A prepositional phrase will never contain the subject of a sentence.**

Results indicate that the minimum natural background dissolved oxygen **concentrations** <sup>1</sup> for many <sup>2</sup> of the reaches <sup>3</sup> in the Bayou Lacombe watershed **is** less than 5 mg/L.

A blue arrow points from the word 'concentrations' to the word 'is'. Another blue arrow points from the word 'concentrations' to the word 'is'. A third blue arrow points from the word 'concentrations' to the word 'is'.

During the surveys, the **conditions** of the potential reference stream **was** documented with field notes.

A blue arrow points from the word 'conditions' to the word 'was'.

*Sometimes a noun within the **prepositional phrase** seems the logical **subject** of a verb. However, you will **never** find the **subject of the sentence in a prepositional phrase.***

# What is that Subject, Anyway?

- Due to the fact that the facilities had minimal impact on the results, the calibration **model** developed under near summer

*(The model is providing oxygen?)*



critical conditions may be providing  
dissolved oxygen concentrations that are  
close to ...

# The Split Infinitive

The **split infinitive** often sparks debate. The rule states: **no words should come between the word **to** and the base form of a **verb**, e.g. *to run, to dance, to pray*.**

The rule derived from Latin and Greek, where the infinitive was one word and impossible to split.

Our language is far removed from those ancient times.

Captain Kirk felt the need **to boldly go** where no man has gone before. (*I did see women on that ship.*)

*Patients are encouraged **to gradually decrease** their post-op medications.*

*Patients are encouraged **gradually to decrease** their post-op medications.*

***Avoid Uncertainty***



# Parallel Structure



# Parallel Structure

When elements of a sentence are similar, they should be presented in equivalent forms. Using “**and**” or “**or**” **require** that the parts be written in equal form.

**The same construction must apply throughout:**

The report was completed quickly, accurately, **and** ~~in a detailed manner.~~

*Same structure With the **-ing form** of words:*

**The baby is always eating, sleeping, or she will play in her room.**

*A parallel structure that begins with prepositions:*

**The father of our country was first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen.**

*A parallel structure that begins with clauses, must continue with clauses:*

The coach told the players that they should get a lot of sleep, that they should not eat too much, and that they should do some warm-up exercises before the game.

**WORDY!**

The coach said to get a lot of sleep, to avoid overeating, and to do warm-up exercises before the game.”

Sam's responsibilities are **stocking** merchandise, **writing** orders for delivery, and **sales** of computers.

Sam's responsibilities are **stocking** merchandise, **writing** orders for delivery, and **selling** computers.

# Charles McCall

## for State House District 22

Businessman Charles McCall will be a strong leader for southern Oklahoma promoting economy growth and creating jobs.

Nobody will be more determined **to** preserve our rural way of life, and **to** protect our conservative values.

**Charles McCall is fully vested in southern Oklahoma's future.**

## More About Lists

- List only comparable items
- Use parallel structure
- Choose words that create short phrases
- Provide adequate transitions before and after

**Though wonderful for the reader to quickly grasp data:**

**Do not overuse.**

## Select the Same **Verb Tense** and **Parallel Parts of Speech**

Items in lists should have parallel structure. Never mix past, present, & future tense. Never combine items that begin with a **verb**, with items that start with a **noun**:

- **Field** documentation duplicate maintenance
- **Prepared** weekly field payroll
- **Material** purchasing, expediting, and returning
- **Recording** OSHA regulated documentation
- **Change** orders



# Choose Parallel Parts of Speech

## Not a Mixture

- **Field** documentation duplicate maintenance
  - **Prepared** weekly field payroll
  - **Material** purchasing, expediting, and returning
  - **Recording** OSHA regulated documentation
  - **Change** orders
- 
- **Maintain** duplicates of field documentation
  - **Prepare** weekly field payroll
  - **Purchase**, expedite, and return materials
  - **Record** OSHA regulated documentation
  - **Change** orders

## ***The infinitive Phrase***

*If presenting **single** elements, just once at the onset:*

**Mary likes **to** hike, swim, and bicycle.**

If a phrase, use in each section:

**Mary likes **to** hike in the mountains, **to** swim in the ocean, and **to** bicycle in the city.**

- The police officer stopped, listened a moment, and then, he began unlocking his car door.
- His home is made not with lumber & brick but thousands of old tires.
- The boss rewarded the employees for hard work and going the extra mile.
- They believe in equal rights but not equal pay.

- She was expelled not so much for the offense but her reaction to the punishment.
- He learned to read better and appreciate good literature.
- Employees who did not meet production were quickly reassigned or eventually fired.

**COUGH      THROUGH**  
**ROUGH      THOUGH**

None of these words rhyme. But  
for some reason

**PONY** and **BOLOGNA** do!  
ENGLISH IS WEIRD.

# Pronoun Agreement



PRONOUN CASE	SINGLE	PLURAL
First Person Speaker or writer	I me	we us
Second Person	you	you
Third Person	she    he him   her   it	they them

Informal Usage

# INDEFINITE PRONOUNS

Singular		Plural	Singular or Plural
another	anybody, anyone	both	all
each	anything	few	any
much	everybody	many	more
one	everyone	several	most
other	everything		none
neither	nobody, no one		some
either	nothing		
	somebody		
	someone		
	something		

\* Listed in Appendix K

## Singular Indefinite Pronouns

### **each & everyone**

**Each** of the engineers reported (**his/her** ~~their~~) findings as to the potential sources of nonpoint pollution.

**Each engineer reported potential sources of nonpoint pollution.**

**Everyone** should take (**his/her** ~~their~~) education seriously.

**Everyone should take personal education seriously.**

The problem remains.

**A plural pronoun for “he” “she” “him” “her”  
has yet to be created; though people have tried.**

*What to do? What to do?*



# The Singular They

Seventeenth Edition Chicago Manual of Style 5.256 (pp. 360-361)

“Many people substitute the plural *they* and *their* for the singular *he* or *she*. They and their have become common in **informal** usage, but neither is considered fully acceptable in **formal** writing, though they are steadily gaining ground. For now, unless you are given guidelines to the contrary, be wary of using these forms in a singular sense.”

# Oxford English Dictionary

## The Singular “They”

Singular *they* has become the pronoun of choice (informal writing) to replace *he* or *she* in cases where the gender is unknown, irrelevant, nonbinary, or where gender needs to be concealed.

The **minor** had slurred speech, red watery bloodshot eyes, and was unsteady on **their** feet.

*The **minor** was released from the scene to **their** mother after being cited for public intoxication...* —Atoka County Times

*The child’s mother received custody after the minor was cited for public intoxication.*

# Countable or Uncountable

When the object of the preposition is uncountable, use a singular pronoun:

***Some of the glittering sand lost its shine.***

Since sand is uncountable, the pronoun is singular.

When the object of the preposition is countable, use a plural pronoun:

***Some of the pearls fell from their chain.***

The pearls are countable; therefore uses a plural pronoun.

# Collective Nouns

**Collective nouns** refer to groups as a single unit. When expressed as a unit, use *it*. When stated as individuals, use *they*:

***The team was thrilled with its winning season.***

A problem arises when the collective acts individually. If the team goes home to individual places, the collective will become plural:

***The tired team went to their homes and slept in their own beds for a change.***

When single & plural subjects are joined by **or** or **nor**, the **noun** nearest the verb should agree.

The girl or her friends work after class.

Her friends or the girl works after class.

## Pronoun and Antecedent Agreement

If any one of the brothers win(s) the contest, ~~he~~(they) ~~she~~(she) will share the prize.

The family held ~~(their)~~(its) family reunion on Saturday.

The family argued over ~~(his)~~(their) opinion of the legislation.

Either Larry or his teammates will accept ~~(their)~~(his) award.

Neither the bridesmaids nor the bride saw ~~her~~(their) bouquet(s).

On Monday, the committee voted to fire ~~(their)~~(its) secretary.

The committee voiced ~~(its)~~(their) about about the secretary's dismissal.

Both of the students will lose ~~(his)~~(their) scholarships.

After the party, the staff returned to ~~(his)~~ ~~(their)~~ ~~own~~ cubicle(s).

Some of the sugar fell out of ~~(their)~~ ~~(its)~~ sack.

Some of the pennies fell out of ~~(their)~~ ~~(its)~~ sack.

The committee read ~~(its)~~ ~~(their)~~ findings.

The committee members read ~~(its)~~ ~~(their)~~ findings.

# Capitalization Tidbits

- Brands, but not the actual product:  
***Folgers** coffee, Ivory soap, Gerber baby food*
- Capitalize regional people: ***Southerner**.*
- Definite regions: in the North.  
*Will I get lost if I go to **north** Little Rock at night?*
- The word State if referring specifically to that area.  
*The **State** shall vs ...given to all member **states**.*



Correct **Usage**, Grammar, & Spelling



# Punctuation: Oxford Comma

Words or clauses in a series (comma):

In a list of three or more items, the “serial comma” (Oxford comma) is placed just before the word “and.”

Scientific writing requires its use to ensure the work remains unambiguous.

*He purchased circuit boards, copper wire, and fuses.*

**Red Tab** p.3: Omit the last comma of business firms e.g., Bonn, Smith & Rogers).

Oakhurst Dairy settled an overtime dispute with its drivers that hinged entirely on the lack of an Oxford comma in state law. The dairy company in Maine agreed to pay \$5 million to the drivers.

The canning, processing, preserving, freezing, drying, marketing, storing, packing for shipment **or distribution of:**

- (1) Agricultural produce;
- (2) Meat and fish products; and
- (3) Perishable foods.

The court ruled that it was not clear whether the law exempted the distribution of the three categories **that followed**, or if it exempted *packing for* the shipment or distribution of them.

Children inheritance divided:

Harold,

Beth,

Thomas and Anna.

Without complete separation, reports might relay the wrong message:

***I had lunch with my parents, Elton John and Madonna.***



Journalistic writing, however, does not require the use of the serial comma.

## Parentheses and Brackets

Parentheses ( ) are used to add information within a stand-alone sentence. The sentence must remain intact if they are removed,

Brackets [ ] are used to add information. Perhaps, an explanatory word is necessary within quoted or instructional material.

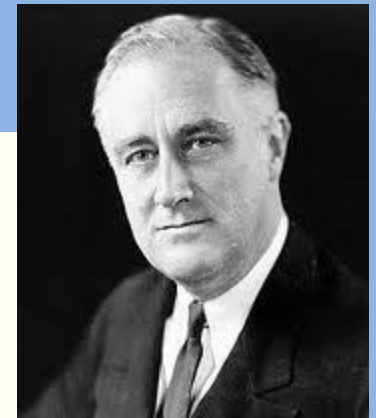
**The professor stated, “Books used [in our class] show the method of operation.”**

Brackets inform the reader that presentation mistakes are not yours but the original author's:

“The teacher found many mispelings [sic] in the report.”

The use of [sic] is a bit insulting to the original author. Use it only if important to do so and place it right after the mistake.

Neither the word sic nor the brackets require a bolded font.



## Quotation Marks: “ ” and ‘ ’

Are used to enclose quotes.

Use a single quotation for a quote within quote:

Bill explained, “FDR said, ‘The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.’”

James replied, “The quote, ‘I myself am entirely made of flaws, stitched together with good intentions’ best describes my character!”

Final punctuation is placed inside the quotation marks even at the end of the sentence:

***From that time on, we called him “Benji Bullet.”***

**Ellipsis**, Greek for “*omission*” (...), is used within a sentence to indicate where **material is omitted** due to its irrelevance to the subject being presented.

*He found the treasure...rescuing Annabelle.*

*He found the treasure....eventually, lived happily ever after.*



**Many use this as a hesitation in thought:**

*I was thinking...maybe we should call home.*

*I was thinking; maybe we should call home.*

*I was thinking—maybe we should call home.*

**Preceding a list of information:**

On this final day before the election...

I come from a law-enforcement family.

I will serve you diligently.

I have lived in this county for 50 years.

**ONLY Used in Informal Writing**

**Ellipsis Questions?**

## Three kinds of dashes in written English

### Hyphen, Em, and En

**Hyphens** are used to join *closely related words* or *written & related numbers*:

**Their divorce was a real *eye-opener*.**

**His phone number is *973-224-8164*.**

The discretionary hyphen (end-of-a-line continuance) is not used in formal writing:

The small oval orb was glowing and starting to vibrate.

**En dash** (longer than a hyphen, roughly the size of an *n*, *often meaning “through”*) is used for *periods of time, inclusive dates & numbers*, and between *words of equal weight*.

**The conference is scheduled for *January 6–11*.**

**They agreed to a *fifty–fifty* split but she insisted on keeping the hyphen.**

**Em dash** is used *instead of a comma, colon, semicolon or parentheses, to indicate added emphasis, or an abrupt interruption in thought:*

**He was the one—the only one—who came to my rescue!**

**Jones asked so much from his staff—all of whom were already overloaded with work.**



# Sparse Use and Only When it Flows Smoothly

"Writers who deploy this mark comfortably and adeptly (rather than haphazardly) are conscious of the rhythm and dynamics of a sentence. A well-placed dash adds energy and voice." It's not about the mark, it's about the writers who use it.

[From \*The Elements of Style\*](#), “[An Em] dash is a mark of separation stronger than a comma, less formal than a colon, and more relaxed than parentheses.”

*New York Times Opinionator Blog Jen Doll Ben Yagoda Oct. 23, 2012*

# Style Manual Requirements

## ***APA & CMS standards:***

*Absence of **spaces** before or after the hyphen, em dash, or en dash.*

## ***AP standards:***

*Spaces before and after.*

**Open MS Word.**

**Let's practice inserting the  
em dash:**

Make sure **Number Lock** is engaged.  
On the number pad at the right:

**Control, Alt, Minus**

**OR:**

- Do not enter a space after the first word.
- Add two hyphens.
- Type the next word.

Inserting an **en dash** using Word:

**Control, Minus** (number keys at the right)



Remember:

3 commands for em (***Control, Alt, Minus***)  
**(two hyphens)**

2 commands for en: (***Control, Minus***)



# Reducing Bias



...all men are created equal...

—U. S. Declaration of Independence



Correct **Usage**, Grammar, & Spelling

To avoid bias:

- **Be appropriately specific.**
- **Be sensitive to labels.**
- **Acknowledge participation.**

This is hard because “bias” changes over time.

Terms that were once acceptable are not tolerable today.

To test if a statement is a fact, ask these three questions:

- Can the statement be proved or demonstrated to be true?**
- Can the statement be observed in practice or operation?**
- Can the statement be verified by witnesses, manuscripts, or documents?**

The fact must be true in every single instance and for every single person on the planet!

# Words That Foster Bias

<b>unbelievable</b>	<b>very</b>	<b>horrible</b>
<b>miserable</b>	<b>smart</b>	<b>disgusting</b>
<b>handsome</b>	<b>good</b>	<b>great</b>
<b>favorite</b>	<b>greatest</b>	<b>exciting</b>
<b>best</b>	<b>better</b>	<b>frightful</b>
<b>beautiful</b>	<b>fun</b>	<b>awful</b>

## Note Qualifiers to Identify Opinions

Watch for words that qualify an idea. Qualifiers express an absolute using words like **always**, **never**, or **every**.

When every adjective or adverb is preceded by **very**, **extremely**, **barely**, or **hardly**, the **qualifiers** **begin to lose their meaning**.

Use **one** good word rather than two or three mediocre ones. This will instantly improve your writing.

Replace with more potent words. For example, "Sue is extremely angry" could be shortened to "Sue is furious."

Qualifiers indicate different degrees of **doubt** with words like **seems, may, might, can, & could**.

**Modal auxiliary verbs** express **opinion** in the form of a command as in **must**, or the desire of an action as in **should**.

**Modal auxiliary** verbs **changes the meaning of the main verb**. They indicate the **attitude** of the speaker.

<b>may</b>	<b>might</b>	<b>must</b>	<b>could</b>
<b>can</b>	<b>should</b>	<b>would</b>	<b>seems</b>

**Seems** (verb) expresses a modal meaning: (it appears to be, or you feel it is) e.g., ***The stream seems to be within regulations.***

# Be specific rather than descriptive.

- **Participants include poor, elderly, dropouts.**
- Give specific information about the age of the participants, so the reader assumes nothing.
- **Participants include non-graduates, ages 60-80, with incomes below the federal poverty level.**

# Keep Descriptions Equal

- **Enterprising** men and **creative** women have recently shown interest in home-based businesses.
- Note that different terminology is used for the genders, suggesting a bias.





# Personal Perspectives Assumptions

- **Personal Perspectives** of the author are never revealed.

“Though sunburn is a common experience for human beings, there’s surprisingly little information on how energy in sunlight...”

# Gender Bias

**Gender** bias occurs when unspecified participants are addressed generically in the masculine form.

**The fact that English lacks gender-neutral singular pronoun makes it hard to avoid sexist language.**

*He or she* (he/she) is awkward in writing and makes the flow bulky.

Restructuring the sentence is a beneficial alternative.


***If a new employee works hard, he will attain a permanent position.***

Lose the pronoun:


***Hard working employees will attain permanent positions.***

More neutral; more streamline

Change to a **plural** statement to avoid gender, but make sure the subject is also plural.



An editor would immediately see the error. He would return it with an unkind message.



Editors would immediately see the error. They would return it with an unkind message.

Examine these sentences:

**Wrong:** *The seven horsemen participated in the county parade.*

**Better:** ***The seven riders participated in the county parade.***

**Wrong:** *Creature comforts are man's reward for hard work.*

**Better:** ***Creature comforts are people's reward for hard work.***

## Biased

**policeman  
mankind  
hunter  
maids  
chairman  
countrymen  
stewardess  
mailman  
salesman  
woman doctor  
male nurse**

## Unbiased

**police officer  
humanity  
hunter  
housekeeping staff  
chairperson  
patriots  
flight attendants  
postal worker  
salesperson  
doctor  
nurse**

**No:** The operator must turn in **his** cycle log on Friday.

**Yes:** The operator must turn in **a** cycle log on Friday.



# Business Emails

**I can write better than anyone who can write faster; I can write faster than anyone who can write better.**

**—A. J. Liebling**

# E-mail Format

**E-mail writing** should maintain the formal business letter format.

**Never:**

- Use all capitals. It implies yelling.
- Use exclamation point—same reason.
- Use abbreviated or created spellings.

## **Always:**

- List the theme and action needed in the body—not an attachment.
- Provide mailing addresses and phone numbers.
- Be business-like, during business use. E-mails are subject to disclosure, a permanent record, retrievable as court testimony, and many times, forwarded to others.

# Poorly Formatted E-mails

## Informal is Inappropriate.



**Be professional when sending e-mails. They instantly become a permanent record.**

E-mails that are received from Jim and I are not either getting open or not being responded to. I wanted to let everyone know that when Jim and I are sending out e-mails (example- who is to be picking up parcels) I am wanting for whoever the e-mail goes to respond back to the email. It is important that Jim and I know that the person intended, had read the e-mail. This gives an acknowledgement that the task is being completed. I am asking for a SIMPLE LITTLE 2 SECOND NOTE that says “ok” I got it, or alright.

**Parcel Express**  
**1204 Parkway, Ennis, TX**  
**Phone: 204-364-9018 Fax: 222-222-2222**  
**[parcelexpress@hughes.net](mailto:parcelexpress@hughes.net)**

**June 1, 2011**

**All Staff Members**  
**Parcel Express**  
**1204 Parkway,**  
**Ennis, TX**

**Dear Staff Members,**  
**All company e-mails require a response. Management must be aware of each employee's daily assignment. Immediate acknowledgement will ensure that Mr. Smith and Mr. Wesson know who is responsible for the timely completion of a task. Responses need not be lengthy. Simply answer every e-mail inquiry with a quick reply as to your daily assignment.**

**Thank you,**

**Mr. Wesson**  
**General Manager**  
**JW/rl**

# Formality

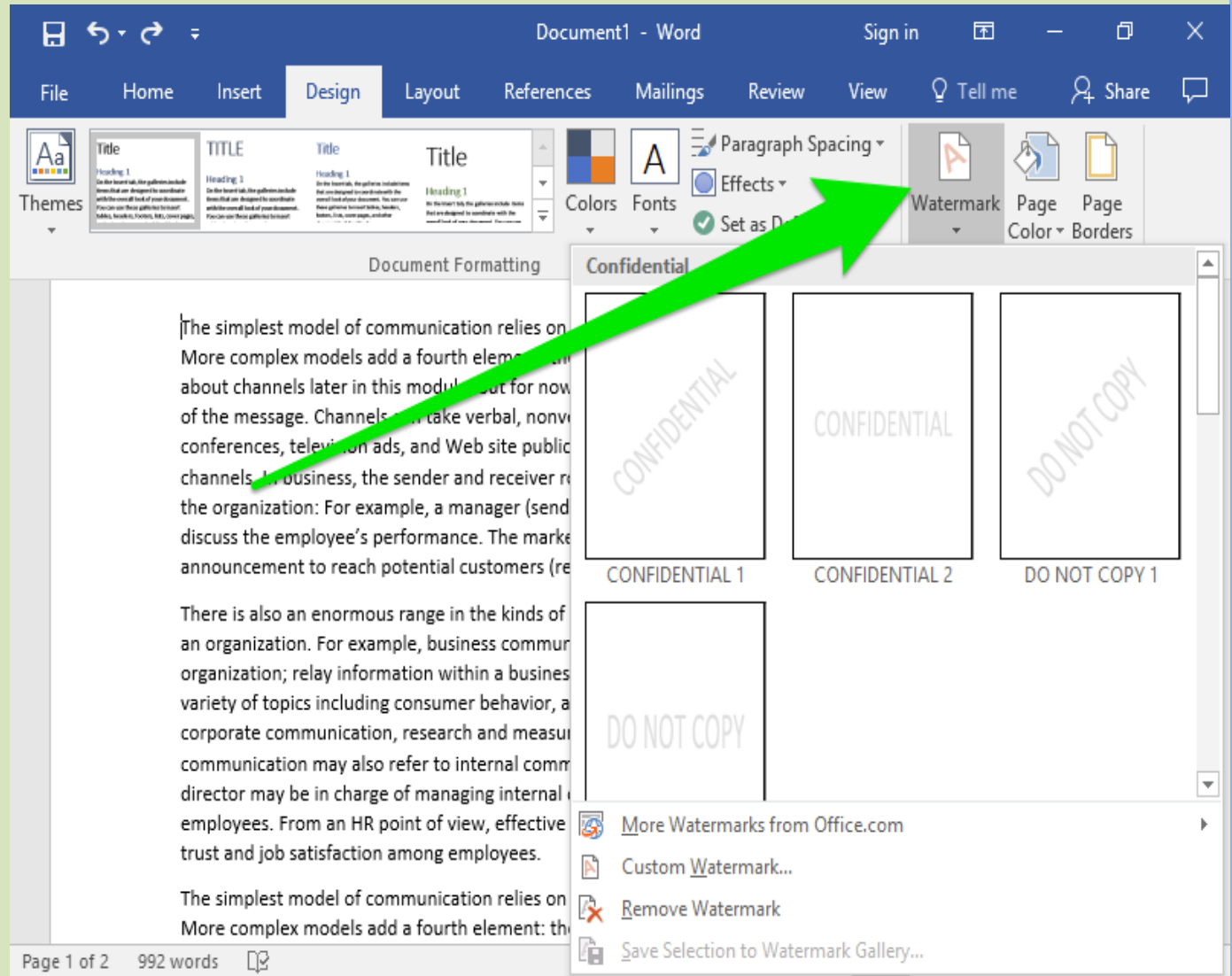
**In writing for educated and experienced engineers, an informal manner is inappropriate. Technical writing requires a reasonably formal tone.**

**Consider the audience, purpose, and subject.**



# Watermarks to remind readers not to copy your work.

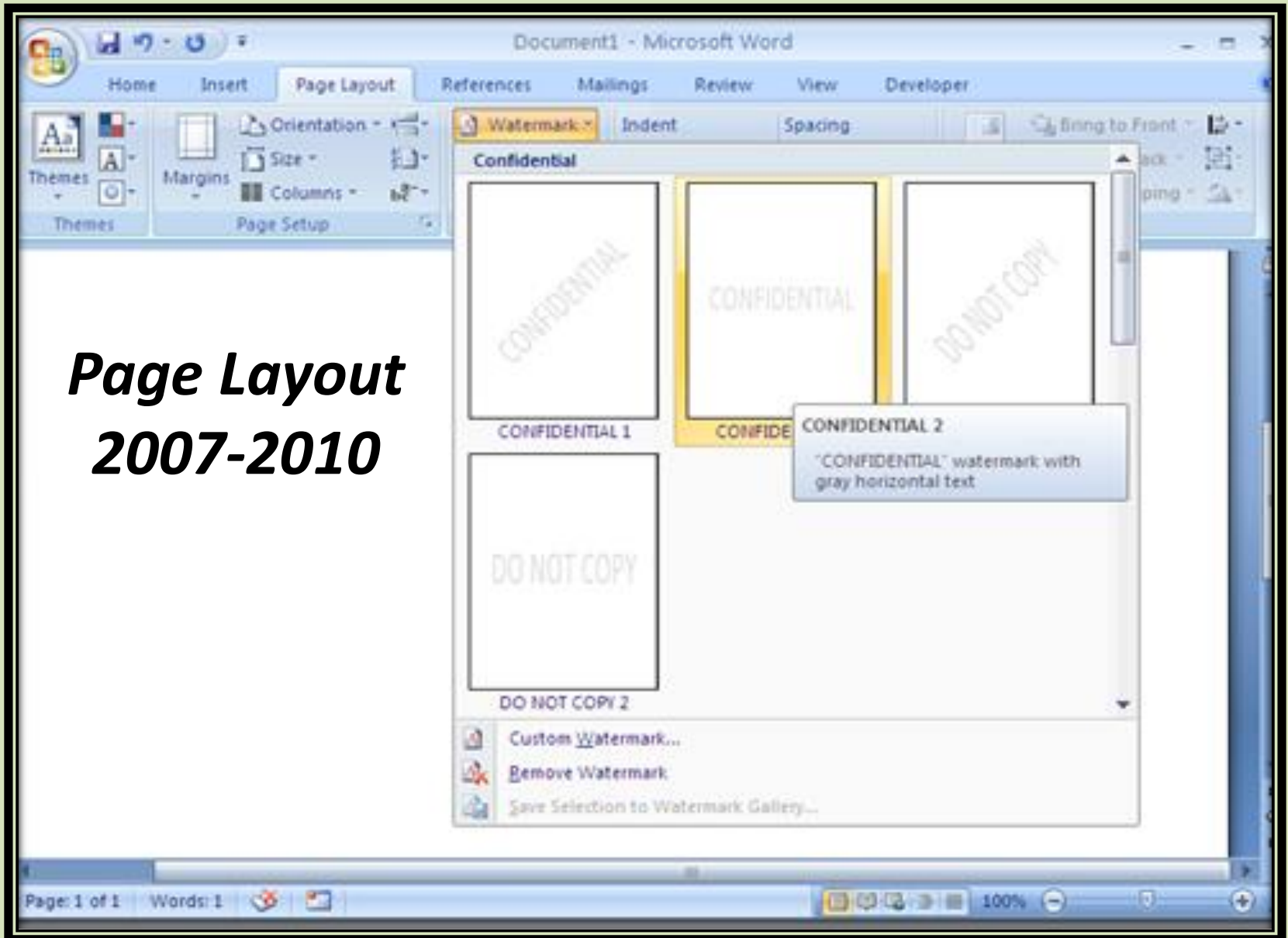
## •Design Tab 2013-2016



•Choose those offered, a picture from your computer, or a message of your own.

## Older Versions

### *Page Layout 2007-2010*



## Overused Words—Signs of Awkward, Unaware Writing

### 1. Read your work out loud.

*Listening to your sentences with a goal to pick up word repetition is a strong first step.*

### 2. Use a thesaurus.

*Prefer the simple replacements.*

### 3. Careful with those “elegant variations” (H.W. Fowler).

*Hartnell **read** the **newspaper**. After he **perused** the **periodical**, he went outside.*

*I prefer to **explain** my visions thoroughly. So let me **elucidate** in detail my plans for this company.*

# The Same Rule Applies for **Verbs**

## Variance of Common Verbs

Researchers agree...

Irizzary adds...

Research literature reveals...

Previous studies reported...

Further investigation exposed...

He stated....

Ryan and Deci define...

Diaz found...

Ryan and Deci declare...

... has been consistently linked...

They further indicate...

... suggest ...

## **Variance of Word Expression** *reveal* and *show*: (Folder 2 # 19)

The research **revealed** prevalence toward early retirement for professions in the middle-income bracket. Further studies **revealed** women were twice as likely to retire early. This study **showed** 62 years as a most popular age to leave a career. Dr. L. Cahall (2012) said the desire to quit a career far offset the ominous reduction in pay. Professor A. D. Burger **showed** a direct connection to job stress as a mitigating factor. The studies **revealed** the willingness of the older population to opt out of the work force and **showed** a trend continuing to this day. This suggests early retirement trends will continue but does **show** a need for further investigation.

# Creating an Index

9

- Use Handout Green Tab.
- Refer to **Folder 2, #17, Index.**
- A three-page excerpt will appear.
- Darken the word “incentives” (first line).
- Follow the instructions.



# Research Paper Design

It's none of their business that you had to learn to write. Let them think you were born that way. *—Hemingway*

## Qualitative

- Explores the interactions, experiences, & attitudes of people.
- It is subjective; inclined to reflect the researcher's interpretation.
- Non-specific; hard to pinpoint or generalize.
- Deals with emotions.

## Quantitative

- Gathers & interprets numerical data; maybe involving people but not always.
- Dispassionate; dealing with defined analysis.
- Specific & generalized.
- Counts people & things.

APA

CMS, AP

Turabian



## **Five Basic Components**

- Title Page
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Method
- Results
- Discussion

What information belongs in each section?

# Formatting Research Papers

## APA

**Font** 12-point

**Margin** 1-inch

**Line Space** Double space

**Bibliography title page** References (not bold)

## CMS

**Font** 10 to 12-point but prefers 12 (Medicare/Medicaid demand 12 +)

**Margin** 1 to 1 ½ inch

**Line Space** Double space

**Bibliography title page** Bibliography not bold

# Title Page

- The title can be relatively long but no more than **APA**: 50 characters or 12 words; **CMS**: 45 including spaces.
- No abbreviations or unnecessary words should be included.
- The title is placed near the middle but in the top half of the page; center-align the text:

Paper title

Author's name

Affiliation

**Page 59 & 110**  
**Available in Folder 3**

- **Headers** are required for *research papers* and contain the document title (shortened, 50 characters max) set to the left in upper case, preceded by the words: “**Running Head:**” on the title page only for APA research papers.
- **CMS** As little as last name and page number.

Title Page Example (Folder 3)

Running Head: MOTIVATIONAL DYNAMICS IN INTRANET TRAINING

1

Motivational Dynamics in Intranet Training  
(38)

2

Title shortened to under 50 characters:

Motivational Dynamics in Intranet Professional  
Air Quality Training (60)



# Abstract

The abstract is a short summary of the research paper's key points:

- Under 250 words (**APA**); Check university (**CMS**)
- On a **separate page** that is not indented
- No **references** or **math equations** ( $E=mc^2$ )

Readers often, scan the abstract, judge its relevance, and never bother with the rest of the paper.

CMS Books p. 71; APA p. 26

**Folder 3:**

**Research Paper**

**Refer to the Abstract.**



# **Research Inclusionary Requirements For Each Section**

**Color coded outline of what should be included in each section and an example of each.**

**The complete research paper is in Folder 3.**

*An **abstract** should contain:*

- The research question
- **Participants and their characteristics**
- **Methodology**
- **The results**
- **Conclusion**
- **Relevance and implications**

## Abstract

**This study examined motivational incentives for science and engineering professionals to engage in intranet instruction.** Prior to a training course in Austin, Texas, **30 Air Quality science and engineers** completed a **Likert-type & questionnaire survey** affirming a) age & gender demographics, b) previous course completion rates, c) intranet or traditional course delivery preference, and d) motivational training incentive choices. **Specific characteristics emerged as influential factors in intranet training. Although 80% reported traditional training preference, statistics revealed a) ability to self-pace (46%), b) convenience (23%), and c) navigational ease (10%) as most interesting aspects of web training. Participants selected a) no human interaction (53%), b) boredom (10%), and c) lack of focus (10%) as least favorable elements. In addition, 100% of participants agreed job relevance was important. Data implies a more interactive, meaningful program design could successfully engage students.**

# Introduction

The introduction is crucial. This section initially captures the interest of the reader.

- **The problem**
- **Why it is important**
- **Key factors of this “new” approach**
- **Any given limitations.**
- **Hypothesis.**

## **Problem:**

**The purpose of this study was to examine motivational incentives for science and engineering professionals to engage in intranet training as opposed to traditional face-to-face instruction.**

## **Importance:**

**Identifying key motivational dynamics will assist in learner-preferred intranet course development. Invested individuals could use data from this research for implementation purposes.**

## **Key Factors:**

**“Learners’ motivation has been consistently linked to successful learning.”**

**Researchers agree the extent to which a person takes ownership is governed by three basic needs: the need for competence, relatedness, and autonomy.**

**Several variables were presented as operative indicators to increase motivation in training. Specific intrinsic and extrinsic factors emerged as valid facilitators, as well as motivation inhibitors.**

## Limitations:

A larger sample size is necessary in order to provide more data. More elaboration in each category and reasoning for participant's selections might provide insight to why the group reported certain choices *(not stated in introduction)*.

## Hypothesis:

The hypothesis for this study is that particular motivators (rewards, recognition, relevance, and personal benefit) and learner characteristics (age, gender, and education) are key determining factors for Air Quality employee training success.

## Write in the Positive

Null hypothesis is a confusing term. Simplistically, it is a hypothesis that the investigator tries to disprove.

Particular motivators and learner characteristics **are not key** determining factors for Air Quality employee training

Particular motivators (rewards, recognition, relevance, and personal benefit) and learner characteristics (age, gender, and education) **are key** determining factors for Air Quality employee training success.



Start with a clear statement of the problem, explaining *who, what, and why*.

**Who** will this study affect?

**What** will be studied?

**Why** there is a need for the study?

Before writing begins:

- **Understand the audience, the point you are trying to make.**
- **How it differs from all previous works, and how you intend to tackle the issue.**
- **Coordinate the work to support only those points.** Do not get off track or speak of theory without data to sustain it.

Many times, the writer will become invested and forget to write for the reader.

- **Use simple terms, not assuming the terminology will be understood.**
- **Never assume or speculate.** If it does not support your point, it is irrelevant. Issues are often complex; but if the purpose is not reinforced, it is a distraction.
- Thoroughly study your subject before presenting any data.

Beacon students will head to Kentucky to study ocean...

## **Be brief.**

The reader should not be burdened with all the avenues taken to achieve the documented results. They want to know what the study is, what worked, and why it did. Be very brief when describing what didn't work and why it didn't work. Readers usually do not care.

**Method's Section** addresses the  
*where* and *when*.

Where the study will take place.

When the study will take place.

Investigation revealed **Austin, Texas** participants contained ample demographic diversity regarding age and gender to provide a representative sample. This sample group met in Austin, Texas on **March 8, 2011**, for regular CenSARA...

# Method

The method section describes the process and procedures used; elaborating on detailed information of the **participants**, pertinent materials, variables, and the research blueprint. It contains the **instruments** used and the data analysis. Charts (make sure they're legible), surveys, and other information gathering utensils are listed and defined. This section tells the **procedure** used and the **analysis**. Remember to write so the work could easily be replicated by another researcher. If a survey is too lengthy to include in the methods section, it can be listed in an appendix.

## **Participants**

**Air quality science and engineers are the target population for this study.**

## **Instruments**

**This research project is a descriptive study with a convenience sampling.**

## **Procedure**

**Investigation revealed Austin, Texas participants contained ample demographic diversity regarding age and gender to provide a representative sample. This sample met in Austin, Texas on March 8, 2011, for regular CenSARA Air Quality training. Administration of the ten-minute survey was prior to the first session beginning at eight o'clock.**

**Participants understood of the purpose of the study, its anonymity, and that they were under no obligation to participate. Volunteers signed a consent form and were aware the survey in no way connected to their course grade or employment, but rather, for gathering research data on the motivational dynamics of science and engineer professionals. The consent form took five minutes to complete.**



## **Analysis**

**Survey data was compiled using Statistical Analysis Software (SPSS) using frequency counts based upon percentage weight of the descriptive statistics. Three sample areas included (1) learner characteristics: age, gender, education, web-cast, & self-instruction course experience, (2) internal motivators: education value, perceived competence, competitive tendency, and (3) external motivators: social interaction, monetary rewards, bonus incentives, & perceived employer support. This was a limited convenience sample of one group of Air-Quality science and technology engineers.**

**Research Paper p. 9**

# Statistics

1. Never display or attempt to interpret statistical procedures you do not fully understand.
2. Consider your audience. Will they understand the statistics?
3. Use graphics and tables. They simplify information for the reader.
4. Translate your statistics into understandable form.

Poor example: *A t-test ( $t=359$ ) showed that the two groups were significantly different ( $p < 0.01$ ).*

Better example: *Women scored higher than men on the aptitude test ( $t=3.59$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).*

# Results

The **statistical findings** are explained in detail in quantitative results. This section is the most variable part of the work because it all depends on the results of the project. Do not give your opinions about the findings or speculate on the impact or interpretations.

## Results

Participant responses displayed strong indicators as to importance of education with 33% in agreement and 67% strongly in agreement. Categorized by age, participants under 26 all strongly agreed. In addition, all participants 46 or older voted strongly agree with the exception of one who abstained. The 26-35 age group contained three agree & five strongly agree and the 36-45 age group showed two agree and four strongly agree. Participant's choice noting gender resulted in 72% of females and 58% of males in strong agreement as to the importance of education.

The entire sample group agreed (43.3%) or strongly agreed (56.7%) when asked if they considered themselves competent to complete any training. There was not a significant difference relating to gender reporting only a 3% variance between male and female choices. Participants who chose “strongly agree” in weighted order were: a) under 26 years( 83%), b) 36-45 years (71%), c) 26-35 years (43%), and d) 46 & older (40%).

Preference for job training relevant to job duties received 100% favorable response with 17% choosing agree and 83% strongly agree. Male and female choices were statistically the same. The majority of all age groups selected “strongly agree.”

***Research Paper p. 11.***

# Discussion

The discussion section **elaborates and details** the findings. Explain **what was discovered**. Remind the reader of the purpose of the study and what the findings indicated with regard to that purpose. Thoroughly explain each subcategory's results.

*Research Paper p. 15*

# Conclusion

Finally, state the **implications of the study results** and how one might further proceed to test the subject. Mention any flaws in the study and how they might be corrected in further research investigations. Do not get sidetracked, revealing findings irrelevant to the subject under investigation. Any results unconnected to your thesis should not be discussed. They carry no significance to the subject of your research. APA

*Research Paper p. 17*

# Passive

vs.

# Active

In passive voice sentences, the subject is not the doer, but acted upon.

In active voice sentences, the subject is the doer:

Passive

Active

The store was opened by the **owner**.

The **owner** opened the store.

The man was bitten by a **dog**.

The **dog** bit the man.

# Misplaced Modifiers

Think of modifiers as arrows shot from a bow and the words they describe as bull's eyes. Writers should aim so that they strike their intended target.

**Be sure the next noun that follows the modifier is the intended noun.**





An apostrophe is improper when writing years (1980s); but necessary with the Contraction: *it's*



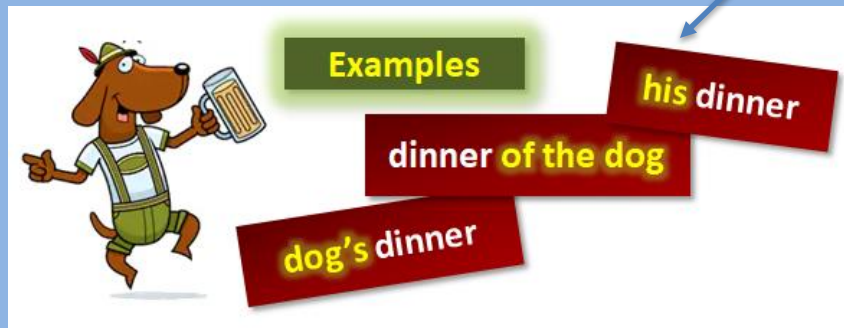
*Wrong on so many levels.*

# Prepositions Genitive Case

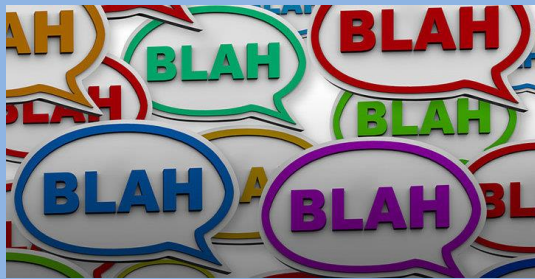
The approval <u>for the construction plan</u> was given <u>by the board</u> .	The board approved the construction plan.
The home <u>of my grandmother</u> sat <u>on a huge hill</u> .	My grandmother's home sat on a huge hill.

The genitive case indicates ownership.

- If a noun, usually by adding 's to the word
- If a pronoun, third person possessive  
*his, hers, its, theirs*



PREPOSITIONS  
are the wrong  
part of speech  
to end a  
sentence with



# Wordiness

Wordiness increases the length of your work but does not add meaning. The reader must sift through countless unnecessary words. Be more concise.

Wordy	Concise
At this point in time	Now
For the purpose of	For
In the event that	If
By means of	By
In the vicinity of	Near
Until such time as	Until
Due to the fact that	Because
That being said	But; Thus

## ***Streamline sentences:***

It was noticed that the TMDL projection input files contained nonpoint/benthic load values that were lower than the reference shown values. (22)

**TMDL projection input files contained nonpoint/benthic load values lower than the reference shown values. (15)**

***Combine sentences using active voice:***

Maps were created to aid in this evaluation.  
All permitted facilities were plotted on the  
map. (16)

**Newly created maps plotted all permitted  
facilities. (7)**

## ***Minimize wording:***

This updated version of the model was then run and the results are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4 displays updated model run results.**



# Repetitive Wording

Use the Thesaurus

To my knowledge, no **employee mission statement exists**. This being said, either there is no **mission statement** or the **mission statement** that **exists** is not being made readily available to all **employees**. (32)

An unnecessary beginning & worthless words abound.

**Either an employee mission statement is non-existent, or it lacks availability to everyone. (13)**

**Sometimes repetitive wording has intent and written to make key words memorable.**

***Victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror,  
victory however long and hard the road may be;  
for without victory there is no survival.***

***~ Winston Churchill ~***

## ***Gettysburg Address***

The speaker before Lincoln, **Edward Everett**, was one of the most popular orators of his day. He spoke for two hours.

Short, direct, with purpose:  
Lincoln's speech lasted just **three minutes**.



## *Gettysburg Address*


Short, direct, with intent, he repeated the word “**dedicate**” six times.

Workbook last page of Blue Index Tab

The speaker before Lincoln, **Edward Everett**, was a very popular orator of that time.

- Everett’s speech **two hours**.
- Lincoln’s **three minutes**.

## ***Repetitive wording:***



**Results** for the calibration model **results** were considered to be in the lower range.

Calibration model results were in the lower range.

## ***Formatting lists:***

Assessments were run (by LDEQ) to achieve this assignment. They are: (1) accessibility **assessment**, (2) reference stream surveys **assessment**, (3) land use statistics **assessment**, (4) organic composition percentile **assessment**.

**LDEQ completed four assessments: (1) accessibility, (2) reference stream surveys, (3) land use statistics, (4) organic composition percentile.**

---

LDEQ completed four assessments:

- Accessibility
- Reference stream surveys
- Land use statistics
- Organic composition percentile

# The Power of Three

Groups of three:

More appealing and easier to remember.

**Words**      *Keep America Beautiful — 1953 National Advisory Council*

**Phrases**      ...Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”  
—Declaration of Independence

**Sentence**      *To succeed in life, you need three things: a wishbone,  
a backbone, and a funny bone. —Reba McEntire*

**Three bullet points are more effective than  
two or four.**

# Nominalizations

## Verbs into Nouns

If it ends in:

- **-tion** application illustration calibration experimentation utilization
- **-ity** reliability functionality variability conformity
- **-ness** usefulness appropriateness
- **-ance/-ence** performance appearance reference intelligence
- **-ism** cronyism realism individualism sensationalism
- **-ment** enhancement announcement agreement
- **-sion** erosion conclusion discussion diffusion
- **-ship** relationship ownership dictatorship
- **-acy** accuracy diplomacy immediacy

The word is probably a Zombie Noun.



## ***Nouns to verbs:***

It also appeared as if lower ratios of carbon to nitrogen may be a general indicator of man-made impacts.

**Lower ratios of carbon to nitrogen**  
**indicate man-made impacts.**

## ***Noun Strings***

...minimum natural background dissolved oxygen  
concentrations...

Dissolved oxygen concentrations that are minimal  
natural background...

## ***Avoid Adverbs and Qualifiers***

really, very, basically, absolutely

## ***Separated Subject-Verb Agreement:***

**Areas** in the eastern region of the Red River basin generally contains shortleaf conifers. The western regions generally contain longleaf pine savannas.

**Eastern areas mostly contain shortleaf conifers while western regions largely have longleaf pine savannas.**



# Peter Clark's Writing Tools Checklist

- Begin sentences with subjects & verbs. Place subject at the beginning.
- **Make meaning early.**
- Activate your verbs. Strong verbs create action, save words, and reveal the message.
- **Be active. Use passive to highlight the “victim” of the action. Prefer the simple present or past.**
- Take it easy on the “ings.”
- **Do not repeat a distinctive word unless a necessary technical term. Use the Thesaurus.**
- Choose words the average reader understands.
- **Reject clichés or stock phrases.**
- Vary sentence and paragraph length.
- **Read drafts aloud.**

## **1. In a passive voice sentence, the subject:**

- Is expressed in a non-assertive voice.
- **Receives of the action.**
- Initiates the action.
- Is always placed at the beginning.

## **2. In formal writing, passive sentences should:**

- Be used frequently.
- Should never be used.
- Never have a purpose.
- **Be used sparingly.**

### **3. Writing format style is determined by:**

- The subject matter.
- Your institution or field of study.
- The reader.
- The length of the writing.

### **4. When beginning a sentence with a modifying clause:**

- The verb should immediately follow.
- The subject should never be the recipient.
- The next noun should be its intended subject.
- There should be no other clauses in the sentence.

**5. Constructing sentences or clauses so that each element is equally important, with minimal use of coordinating conjunctions:**

- Logorrhoea.
- Asyndeton.
- **Parataxis.**
- Jargon.

**6. Sentences, clauses, and related words should be presented in clusters of:**

- Two.
- **Three.**
- Four.
- Five.

## 7. Constructing sentences or clauses without the use of coordinating conjunctions:

- **Asyndeton.**
- Logorrhoea.
- Jargon.
- Parataxis.

## 8. Tables & figures should be:

- At least  $\frac{3}{4}$  page in size.
- At least  $\frac{1}{4}$  page in size.
- **At least  $\frac{1}{3}$  page in size**
- A full page in size.

## 9. The average sentence length should be:

- Under eight words.
- Between 14-29 words.
- Never under ten words.
- Between 8-14 words.

## 10. Minimize prepositional phrases with:

- Transitional words.
- Adverbs & possessives.
- Relative clauses.
- Abstract wording.

## **11. When presented as a unit, a collective noun:**

- Has a plural verb.
- **Has a singular verb.**
- Always has an auxiliary with the verb.
- Both are permitted.

## **12. If a phrase separates the subject & verb:**

- **It will not alter their agreement.**
- It will affect their agreement.
- The subject must agree with the noun in the phrase.
- It is only altered if a collective noun.

# **13. Noun stacks are a series of four related words that:**

- Alter the natural flow of thought.
- Do not reveal the meaning early.
- Are difficult to understand.
- All the above.



## 14. An ellipsis:

- Indicates the final complete thought.
- Indicates where material is omitted.
- Indicates an introduction of new material.
- All the above.

## 15. Nominalizations:

- Create shorter sentences.
- Simplify vocabulary in a sentence.
- Are verbs turned into nouns.
- Never have suffixes.

## 16. Quantitative Research:

- Explores the interactions & attitudes of people.
- **Gathers & interprets numerical data.**
- Never reflects the researcher's interpretation.
- Deals with participant's behaviors.

## 17. Keep track of references using:

- The author's appendices.
- A Table of Contents.
- **The Reference toolbar.**
- Color coded index cards.

## 18. The Oxford comma:

- Must always be used.
- Is often unnecessary.
- Is not necessary in formal writing.
- Should be avoided.

## 19. Formal sentences:

- Must never end with an object of the preposition.
- Must always use transitional words.
- Must never end with a preposition.
- Must never contain subordinate clauses.

## 20. Bulleted & numbered list:

- Must be italicized.
- Are never indented.
- Should not be used in formal writing.
- Must begin with a capital.

Three evaluations were conducted to accomplish this task. They were: (1) a Landuse evaluation, (2) TOC/UCBOD ratio evaluation, (3) an evaluation of modeled dischargers within each reach, and (4) C/N ratios and general water quality evaluations.

Let's Sort the Important:

Four evaluations

Accomplished this task

Land use

TOC/UCBOD ratio

Model dischargers with each reach

C/N ratios and general water quality

**Four evaluations accomplished this task.**

- 1. Land use**
- 2. TOC/UCBOD ratio**
- 3. Modeled dischargers within each reach**
- 4. C/N ratio and general water quality**

The first approach involved the used of LDEQ's modeling. The landuse is primarily mostly forested and municipal. The stream bed consists primarily of sand and the watershed is primarily forested.

First approach used LDEQ's modeling

Land use: forest including the watershed

Municipal areas

Streambed is sand

**The first approach used LDEQ's modeling. The land use consists of forest (including the watershed) and municipal areas. Sand comprises most of the streambed.**

It was noticed that the TMDL may have been too high. In the end, reference stream data was not used for Bayou Lacombe.

TMDL too high?

No reference stream data for Bayou Lacombe

**Data indicates excessive TMDL. The evaluation excluded reference stream data for Bayou Lacombe.**

Due to the fact that the facilities had minimal impact on the calibration model, it would appear that test results indicate the amenities are providing dissolved oxygen that is close to natural background conditions.

Facilities minimal impact on calibration model

Test results show amenities provide dissolved oxygen close to natural background conditions

**Since the facilities had minimal impact on the calibration model, test results show the amenities provide dissolved oxygen close to natural background conditions.**

Results for the calibration model results were considered to be in the lower limit of the range.

Calibration model results

In lower range

**Calibration model results place in the lower limit range.**



**Four evaluations accomplished this task.**

- 1. Land use**
- 2. TOC/UCBOD ratio**
- 3. Modeled dischargers within each reach**
- 4. C/N ratio and general water quality**

**Data indicates excessive TMDL. The evaluation excluded reference stream data for Bayou Lacombe.**

**Since the facilities had minimal impact on the calibration model, test results show the amenities provide dissolved oxygen close to natural background conditions.**

**Calibration model results place in the lower limit range.**

**“You can get help from teachers, but you are going to have to learn a lot by yourself, sitting alone in a room.”**

***—Dr. Geisel***

**Writer’s Checklist in Folder 3**



**GO ONLINE.**  
**Research your writing**  
**problems.**

**Final Words From Dr. Geisel:**

It has been said

**There's so much to be read.**

You never can cram

**All the words in your head.**

So the writer who breeds

**More words than he needs**

Is making a chore

**For the reader who reads**

That's why my belief is

**The briefer the brief is**

The greater the sigh

**Of the reader's relief is.**

And that's why your books

**Have such power and strength.**

You publish with shorth!

**(shorth is better than length).**

*—Dr. Seuss*