A GUIDE TO ACADEMIC AND SCHOLARLY WRITING

by

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Effective writing skills are essential not only for attaining professional credentials but also for advancing in one's career. Although sometimes treated synonymously, academic and scholarly writing do have some variations in their purposes and characteristics. Understanding the distinctions between academic and scholarly writing and employing them appropriately may be the difference between a stellar professional career and one of continual angst resulting from the publish-or-perish paradigm.

The purpose of this guide is twofold:

- to aid graduate students in understanding the distinctions between academic and scholarly writing and

- to provide professionals with a resource for maintaining and improving their skills in crafting scholarly discourse.

To accomplish these objectives, information concerning both academic and scholarly writing is presented. Specific problems graduate students and professionals may encounter in crafting publishable works are also identified and explained. The tips and techniques presented have been gleaned from numerous sources and represent the most common problems and pitfalls in producing well-written papers, articles, monographs, and books.

Chapter 2: The Two Types of Writing

Academic and scholarly writing bear striking resemblances to each other. However, subtle differences exist between the two. Where academic writing may be defined broadly as any writing completed to fulfill university or college requirements, scholarly writing is produced to inform a specialized audience of other scholars in a particular field. Scholarly writing is crafted by one professional for other professionals ("Definition of Academic Writing," 2011). Graduate students may wish to think of scholarly writing as a subset of academic writing.

The purpose of academic writing is to present information about a specific subject precisely and objectively (Nordquist, 2011). Academic writing in college and graduate school is usually geared toward students demonstrating their mastery of content and the analytical and writing processes requisite for entry into their professions. Generally, authors generate either expository or argumentative prose to complete the requirements.

The purpose of scholarly writing is the advancement of knowledge within a specific field. More than a demonstration of the author's expertise, scholarly writing is produced to add to the body of knowledge, extending, challenging, or expanding what is known or believed within the field. Thus, while all scholarly writing is academic writing, not all academic writing is scholarly writing.

The Forms of Academic and Scholarly Writing

The forms of writing authors may produce are varied. In general, academic writing is found in essays, course papers, research papers, book reports, translations, theses, dissertations, books, articles, technical reports, critiques, and abstracts. Scholarly writing is limited to scholarly books, treatises, technical reports, legal documents, journal articles, and monographs. However, according to Stanton (2008), the accepted forms for scholarly writing are expanding. Although monograph and journal articles are the preferred forms of scholarly writing—for some, the only appropriate forms—other forms, such as collections of articles or essays, translations of primary texts, trade books, articles for more general audiences, essays, critical reviews, trade publications, and even textbooks, have begun to be recognized as legitimate vehicles for authors to demonstrate their content knowledge and to contribute to the body of knowledge within their specific fields.

Although the forms of scholarly and academic writing are converging, in part due to the advances in digital publishing, the purpose and intended audience of scholastic writing continue to demark the subtle differences between the two types (Stanton, 2008). Graduate students, doctoral candidates, and individuals in the beginning stages of their professional careers may benefit from choosing to present their views in more traditional formats. As in most arenas, one must follow the rules until one achieves a certain level of acceptance and authority. At that point, if one breaks the rules, others consider it creativity and genius rather than immaturity, naïveté, or ignorance.

Language: Levels of Formality

Graduate students and professionals must be aware of the level of formality required in the works they produce. Authors employ one of three basic levels of language: formal, semiformal, or informal (Driscoll & Brizee, 2011). The level for any work should be based on the target audience and the purpose of the work.

Informal language is rarely used in academic or scholarly writing. This level is more conversational in style, often does not follow conventional rules of grammar and mechanics, and may include the use of slang and colloquialisms. Personal letters, conversations, social networking entries, and dialogue in popular forms of literature are usually written in informal English.

In academic writing, authors may use either semiformal or formal language. The choice should be based on audience and purpose. Authors use semiformal language in business letters to individuals well known to them, in professional writing intended for a general audience such as trade publications, and in personal essays. Conventional rules of grammar and mechanics apply; however, the tone is more personal. Authors refer to themselves in the first person (i.e., *I, we*) and to their readers in second person (i.e., *you*). Judicious use of contractions, shorter sentences, and more reader-friendly vocabulary mark this level.

Formal language is generally used in academic and scholarly writing. Conventional rules of grammar and mechanics apply; however, the tone is more serious. Authors use third person in referring to themselves and to their readers. Contractions are not used. Sentences may be more complex in structure. Vocabulary is more formal and precise. Abbreviations and acronyms are used judiciously. Because the audience is often other people in the same profession, authors may use more technical terms. People within the profession know and understand these terms and expect them to be used. However, if the audience is more general, including people not familiar with the vocabulary of the profession, the use of technical terms should be kept to a minimum. Authors should also consider defining the technical terms that are used.

Chapter 3: Structure: Planning the Paper

Structuring a paper or an article is not a one-time event but an ongoing process. It is not complete until the final draft is ready for submission. Planning includes topic selection, research, and basic organization and structure.

Topic Selection

In graduate classes, students may have the general topics of their papers selected for them. Within those generalities, however, each student must choose a specific area of focus. Professionals may select from the topics of interest noted in the journals within their fields as the starting points for articles. Authors may also engage in brainstorming, free writing, and mind mapping to generate potential topics. Another option is to choose to transform one's dissertation or course papers into scholarly articles for submission to those journals.

Research

After choosing the general topic, authors must engage in research to narrow the topic and gather additional information for support material. The intricacies of research are beyond the scope of this paper. However, authors should conduct a thorough literature review as a minimum. Doing so will allow them to see what others have written on the topic and to determine the gaps in the literature.

Research should also be ongoing, done intermittently throughout the writing process. As authors craft their thesis statements and develop their points of discussion, they may need additional material to flesh out their works. Authors should also keep abreast of the most recent publications concerning their topics to ensure their articles are timely.

Organization

Authors may use either informal or formal techniques to organize their material into a cohesive whole. Once the thesis statement is developed (see next section), the author may use the informal techniques of brainstorming, free writing, or mind mapping to identify primary and secondary points of discussion and evidentiary support. Authors may also generate lists or questions to guide the organization of their material.

A more formal approach is the classic outline. One of the benefits of an outline is its parallel structure (i.e., if there is an A, there must be a B). The outline should contain the main ideas, the key points under those ideas, and the specific details of those key points. With well-developed outlines, authors can see insufficiencies in information immediately and adjust accordingly.

Basic Structure of Academic Writing

Academic writing is usually expository or argumentative and is structured similarly to the five-paragraph theme learned in high school: introduction, body, and conclusion. At the college or graduate level, authors use a more refined version of this structure:

- introduction (including thesis statement),

- background,
- points of discussion, and
- conclusion.

In argumentative writing, authors may refine the structure further:

- introduction,
- background,
- evidentiary support,
- counter arguments, and
- conclusion.

Thesis Statement

The thesis statement is the controlling idea of the paper. More than a topic, which may be only a word or phrase, the thesis states the specific point of view of the author in relation to the topic and identifies the focus of the paper for the reader. Thesis statements may be the most difficult part of academic writing, but the stronger the thesis statement, the easier the rest of the paper is to write. The following three examples show the difference between weak and strong thesis statements for a paper on the Emancipation Proclamation.

Weak: *Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation to free the slaves.*

Better: *Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation to free the slaves in the South, hoping they would fight with the North to secure the Union.*

Best: *Although slaves in the South were freed under the provisions of the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln's purpose in issuing the proclamation was not to abolish slavery but to end the war more quickly.*

In each successive example, the focus of the paper becomes narrower as the thesis statement becomes more specific. The first thesis identifies only one general fact about the topic. The second gives a more specific point of view but is still general compared with the third thesis. The last example tells the reader specifically what to expect in the paper.

In the early stages of writing, authors should be flexible in terms of their theses. Writers usually refine their thesis statements as they continue to research their topics and write their drafts. Doing so is normal. Authors may find they have either too much or too little information to support their original positions and must shift the foci of their papers.

In traditional American academic writing, the thesis statement is usually placed in the introductory paragraph or section of a paper. Having the thesis at or near the beginning allows the reader to identify the author's specific intent and position immediately. Readers may then follow the supporting points and arguments more easily. Depending on the purpose, however, and the intrinsic interest the target audience may have for the topic, authors may place thesis statements anywhere in their papers that makes sense and grabs the attention of their readers, even at the end of their papers as part of their conclusions.

Occasionally, authors may use implied thesis statements. Although still well developed, implied thesis statements are never stated. Readers deduce the theses from the content of the papers. Using implied thesis statements may be risky, however, because what is clear to authors may not be clear to readers.

Some forms of writing do not require thesis statements at all (not even implied theses). These forms include factual reports, many types of business writing, and narrative or descriptive pieces.

Introduction

It's been said that, if an author creates a strong beginning and a strong ending, what happens in the middle is not important. Although that statement is not entirely true, especially in academic and scholarly writing, a strong beginning is still important in well-written papers.

Introductions are the hooks authors create to capture the attention of their readers. Through introductions, authors must not only identify the content of their papers but also engage the readers sufficiently so that they continue reading. To do so, authors should avoid weak introductions, illustrated in the following three examples:

> *This paper is about the Emancipation Proclamation.*
>
> *Lincoln had several reasons for issuing the Emancipation Proclamation.*
>
> *The Emancipation Proclamation was issued in 1863 to free the slaves in the Confederacy*.

Although these statements do tell readers something about the paper, they generate little enthusiasm for continuing to read.

Writers may choose from several techniques and variations of these techniques to build interest-grabbing introductions. For each of the four techniques listed, an example of an introduction for the paper on the Emancipation Proclamation is given:

- **Statistics or unusual facts**: In 1863, only 50,000 of the 4 million slaves in the United States were freed when Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. The remainder of the 3.1 million slaves in the South did not gain their freedom until the areas in which they lived were under the control of Union armies. However, not until the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment were all slaves released from bondage (*Emancipation Proclamation*, 2011).

- **An anecdote, brief story, or illustration**: On a recent trip to Washington, D.C., my family and I saw the Emancipation Proclamation during a rare exhibit of the document at the National Archives. Hearing a parent explain that Lincoln freed the slaves with this proclamation, I realized the extent to which the intent and actual effect of this document are misunderstood by most Americans.

- **A quotation: "My paramount object in thi**s struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery," stated Lincoln in his letter of August 22, 1862, to

Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*, in response to one of Greeley's editorials. Yet many Americans erroneously believe that the intent of the Emancipation Proclamation, announced in September 1862 and officially issued January 1, 1863, was to free the slaves (*Emancipation Proclamation*, 2008).

- **A question: As we celebrate the 150th a**nniversary of the Civil War, we are drawn to the most notable events during that conflict, not the least of which was the issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation. B*ut what was Linc*oln's real intent in issuing this famous decree? The end of slavery or the preservation of the Union?

Finding the right hook may be difficult, but a perfect introduction is not necessary during the drafting stages of the writing process. Authors may begin with rough introductions to use as guides. As they work with the information, organizing it and rewriting it, they may discover the perfect introductions for their papers.

Background Information

To ensure readers have sufficient information about the topic to follow the arguments presented, authors provide background information about the topic. This basic information forms the context for the main points of the paper. Authors may use possible questions readers may have as guides for choosing the information to present. In the case of the Emancipation Proclamation paper, readers may have these questions concerning the context of the proclamation: What had been happening up to that point, not only in the war effort but also on the home front? What was the average person expecting? What was the political climate?

The amount of background will vary with the topic and the length of the paper. In short papers, the background may be contained in one or two paragraphs. In a dissertation, background may consist of several pages or even of a chapter if one considers the literature review a form of background information. Remember, however, that the purpose of the background is to give readers enough information to ensure they can follow the main points of the paper.

Points of Discussion

Points of discussion are the main ideas or points about the thesis. The bulk of the paper should be based on this material. Each point should be developed in a separate paragraph or two, depending on the amount of support for a particular point. The number of points included depends on the thesis.

In developing each discussion point, effective writers use a combination of general and specific statements to provide structure and to keep readers involved in the work. Most of these paragraphs will begin with a general statement, the topic sentence, followed by a series of specific, concrete details that support that statement. Each paragraph should end with a concluding or transition sentence, again dependent on the organizational structure of the paper.

To show connections between points, authors use transition words or phrases. Transitions may occur at the beginning of a paragraph to show connection to the previous material or at the end of the paragraph to show connection to the next paragraph. Transitions may even be whole paragraphs linking multiparagraph sections in longer works.

In argumentation, the sections between the background information and the conclusion may contain two parts. The first presents the evidentiary support for the position the author is taking in the paper. Evidentiary support is equivalent to the discussion points in expository writing. The second part puts forth counter-arguments. Authors may identify the major arguments in opposition to their views to show the reasons those arguments are incorrect or incomplete.

Conclusion

A well-written paper ends with a well-written conclusion. A conclusion is usually a summary of the key points of the paper. Often, the thesis is restated to tie these points to the reason for the work. Writers may also issue a “call to action” in the conclusion if the purpose of the paper is to persuade readers to do something. Writers may also refer to the introduction, using the same technique. For example, if in the introduction of the example paper on the Emancipation Proclamation the author refers to the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, the author may mention the anniversary again in the closing to tie the paper together. This technique creates symmetry in the paper, which psychologically causes the reader to feel that the paper is complete.

Chapter 4: Revision

Seldom is a paper ready for submission after the first draft. To ensure their works say what they want them to say clearly, correctly, and succinctly, authors engage in revision and editing. Revision is primarily examining a work to see that it accomplishes its purpose in the most effective way possible.

Authors may go through several rounds of revision before their works are ready for submission. The key is knowing when that point is reached. A perfect work is the aim but seldom the achievement. Therefore, the goal is to get as close to perfection as possible within the time available prior to submission deadlines.

Before revising, authors should set their works aside for a few days. Doing so allows authors to approach their works with fresh perspectives. They may see their works more clearly, noticing problems with organization and clarity.

Authors may also benefit from having someone else read their papers for content, organization, and clarity. Trusted colleagues who know the content fairly well and whose opinions are respected are valuable assets. Such professional friends should advise authors about gaps in information, organizational problems that interfere with the flow of information, possible lapses in the logic of the arguments, and the overall impression of the piece. Even though these colleagues may note problems with spelling, grammar, and mechanics, their primary purpose is to focus on the overall quality of the work, the content, the reasoning, the clarity and preciseness of language, and the flow of information.

In working with revision and editing, authors should also rely on their publisher's preferred style and formatting guide to ensure their finished works conform to publication requirements. Commonly used style or publication guides include the following:

- *Modern Language Association Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing* (MLA)
- *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA)
- *Chicago Manual of Style* (CMS)

Some professions, journals, and publishing houses have their own style guides. Authors may find these in the publication or submission guidelines. These style sheets have been tailored to fit the publishers' requirements. Authors should follow such guides explicitly.

Graduate students may also be given adapted style guides. Not only universities and colleges but also departments and individual professors may have tailored guidelines for students to use in their classes. Graduate students, especially doctoral candidates, must be especially careful to know and follow the specific style and format guides for their schools and departments.

In the next chapters, some of the key areas that should be examined during revision are presented. Chief among these areas is coherence. These chapters are followed with some specifics of the editing process, which differs from revision. Authors should rely on the style

guides required by their potential publishers to ensure they revise and edit in accordance with those specifications.

Chapter 5: Coherence

Coherence has to do with the way in which information presented in a paper is organized to move the reader as effortlessly as possible from beginning to end. Coherent writing is easier to read because the ideas flow seamlessly from one to another. It is achieved through organizational structure, paragraph unity, and sentence cohesion.

Organizational Structure

Organizational structure refers to the order of presentation. Poor structure equates to poor writing, regardless of the importance or relevance of the topic (see Chapter 3). Authors should use their outlines or informal plans to organize their papers initially. As they develop their material, if more logical or effective approaches are discovered, authors can modify their original plans to improve coherence.

Paragraph Unity

Paragraph unity is achieved by structuring paragraphs to ensure that each has only one main idea, usually stated in a topic sentence. That topic sentence is followed by specific details. In writing paragraphs, authors may organize their material based on one of several patterns. The following list of patterns is by no means exhaustive:

- Topic Chain: Each sentence includes the topic words or pronouns representing the topic (Boise State University Writing Center, 1999).

- Known–New: Each sentence begins with information known to the reader (even if it is from the preceding sentences) and then introduces the next piece of new information (Boise State University Writing Center, 1999).

- Parallel: Key phrases or sentences with similar meaning and grammatical structure are repeated to create rhythm and emphasis. This pattern may also include the repetition of the same word or phrase throughout the paragraph for emphasis (Sebranek, Meyer, & Kemper, 1997).

- Chronology: Details are presented according to their order in real time (Hodges, Homer, Webb, & Miller, 1994).

- Order of Importance: Details are presented either from least important to most important or vice versa, depending on the relationship of the paragraph to the next paragraph or section (Hodges et al., 1994).

- General to Specific (Deductive): The most general statement is given first. Each succeeding sentence contains more and more specific information (Hodges et al., 1994).

- Specific to General (Inductive): The most specific information is given first, building to the general statement at the end of the paragraph (Hodges et al., 1994).

- Topic–Restriction–Illustration: The general topic is given in the topic sentence. The topic is then narrowed or restricted in the next sentence or two. The author then explains the restricted topic, providing details, examples, or illustrations (Hodges et al., 1994).

- Question–Answer: A question is proposed and answered through the supporting details (Hodges et al., 1994).

- Problem–Solution: The problem is stated. The solution is given through the supporting details (Hodges et al., 1994).

- Cause–Effect: The supporting material forms an explanation for the occurrence of something (Bates, 2000).

- Sequence: A process is detailed step-by-step (Bates, 2000).

Authors may also combine patterns appropriately to create the best flow for a work.

Sentence Cohesion

Sentence cohesion refers to the linking of one sentence to the next sentence in a paragraph (Kies, 2011). Authors may use several techniques to achieve sentence cohesion, including the organizational pattern chosen (see previous section).

Transition Words and Phrases

Discussed earlier in terms of the movement from one paragraph to another in a work, transition words and phrases may be used to link one sentence to the next within a paragraph.

Parallelism (Parallel Construction)

According to Strunk and White, "This principle, that of parallel construction, requires that expressions similar in content and function be outwardly similar" (Strunk & White, 2000, p. 26). Parallelism is the intentional use of equal grammatical constructions within a sentence or paragraph to improve flow and to emphasize the relationship between the ideas or elements (words, phrases, clauses, or sentences). Because these expressions must be equal grammatically, authors should pair nouns with nouns, verbs with verbs, adjectives with adjectives, prepositional phrases with prepositional phrases, and so on.

Note the various parallel structures in the Gettysburg Address, given by Lincoln in 1863 (*Gettysburg Address*, 2010; bold and italics added):

> Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, **conceived in liberty**, and **dedicated to the proposition** that all men are created equal.
>
> Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether **that nation**, or **any nation**, **so conceived** and **so dedicated**, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We

> have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.
>
> But, in a larger sense, **we can not dedicate**, **we can not consecrate**, **we can not hallow** this ground. The brave men, **living** and **dead**, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. **The world will *little note*, *nor long remember* what we say here**, **but it can never forget what they did here**. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve **that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom**—and **that government *of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth***.

Note also the use of the parallel structures within parallel structures (italicized wording).

Authors should be careful to avoid faulty parallelism, which occurs when authors pair expressions that are not similar in construction or try to add variety to their sentence construction, inadvertently connecting dissimilar elements.

Faulty: *We went to the mountains last spring and in the summer*. (connecting a word and a phrase)
Correct: *We went to the mountains last spring and last summer*.

Faulty: *Mom gave us a choice of ham, cheese, turkey, and a movie*. (connecting food and entertainment; the two are not equal in thought)
Correct: *Mom gave us choices of ham, cheese, and turkey for lunch and of three movies for entertainment.*

Faulty: *We traveled by train, while my cousin drove to the reunion*. (connecting two independent clauses that are not constructed in the same way)
Correct: *We traveled by train to the reunion, while my cousin traveled by car*.

Repetition

Repeating a key word from one sentence to the next or throughout a paragraph lets readers see connections. However, using the same word too frequently may be monotonous. To avoid such monotony, authors may use different forms of the word (i.e., *monotonous*, *monotony*), replace a noun with its equivalent pronoun (be sure the antecedent is clear), or use a synonym.

In the Gettysburg Address, Lincoln repeats clauses (*we cannot*), subordinating conjunctions in parallel clauses (*that*), objects of parallel prepositional phrases (*the people*), adverbs (*so*), and nouns (*nation*).

Enumeration

Adding the element of numerical order is one of the more common strategies to create coherence. In developing this chronological or sequential paragraph pattern, authors should be consistent in the type of marker they use within the sequence (i.e., if introductory words are used, do not shift to phrases). However, different markers may be used to denote different sequences. For example, if a process contains three steps, each step may be marked by an introductory word (e.g., *first, second, third*). If Step 3 contains four parts, the author may mark that sequence with letters placed in parentheses.

Introductory Words or Phrases

Words (e.g., *first, second, third,* etc.) or phrases (e.g., *in the first place, in the second place,* etc.) may be used to show the sequence of the information being presented. Note that each item should be parallel in grammatical construction. Also, authors should be consistent in the word form used (i.e., use *first, second, third,* not *in the first place, second, third*). NOTE: Use of *–ly* versions of these numbers (i.e., *firstly, secondly,* etc.) should not be used (Strunk & White, 2000).

Letters or Numbers

Authors should consult their style guides (see Chapter 12: Formatting) to determine the appropriate way to enumerate sequences or lists. Some guides specify the use of numbers for lists constructed as separate paragraphs and of letters for enumerated series within sentences. Other guides require only consistency in the use of either letters or numbers. Again, authors should ensure that all elements in the list or series are parallel in form.

Common Problems with Cohesion

Problems in cohesion may occur as the result of inconsistencies in the writing. These inconsistencies or shifts usually involve tense, tone, voice, person, number, style, or viewpoint. The shifts may cause readers to miss key points because the connections between the ideas are not clear.

Tense

Authors should consult their style guides for specifics. Some guides specify the use of past tense when conveying certain types of information, for example, when referring to a source. Others make no reference to a preferred tense. The key is to determine the required or appropriate tense and then consistently apply it except when it is illogical to do so. Unnecessary shifts in verb tense may confuse the reader.

Tone

Tone refers to the overall feeling or effect authors create in their works: serious, humorous, satiric, solemn, and so on. A shift in tone may confuse the reader as to the intent of the author.

Voice

Voice refers to whether the subject of a sentence is doing or receiving the action. Sentences may be written in either active (e.g., *I ate the pie*) or passive voice (e.g., *the pie was eaten by the children*). Generally, authors should use active voice.

However, there are times when the passive is preferred, either to emphasize the role of the receiver or to minimize the role of the doer. In writing about methodology, for example, authors should emphasize the receivers of the action not the researchers who set up the study (see Chapter 9: Sentence Sense).

Person

Person refers to the individual being referred to. In first person (i.e., *I, we*), the narrator (fiction) or author (nonfiction) is referred to. In second person (i.e., *you*), the reader is being referred to. In third person (i.e., *he, she, they*), other individuals are being referred to.

Traditionally, in scholastic and academic writing, authors have been expected to refrain from using first or second person. However, that taboo is no longer consistently enforced because of its artificiality. Both the Modern Language Association (MLA; 2008) and the American Psychological Association (APA; 2010) permit the use of first person to refer to the author of the work. Other guides, especially guides prepared by universities for dissertation and thesis style and formatting, still mandate the use of third person only. The only way to know which use is permitted is to consult the specific style guide.

Nevertheless, shifts in person within a paper should be avoided. Common shifts include the following:

- Second person to third person: *<u>You</u> should buy the records because <u>one</u> needs all the data <u>one</u> can get.*

- Third person to second person: *As <u>authors</u>, <u>you</u> should develop the habit of writing daily to hone <u>your</u> craft.* (*Authors* is third person even though it is not a pronoun.)

Number

Number refers to singular and plural forms of nouns, pronouns, and verbs. Often, problems occur when authors try to eliminate gender bias in language. They replace gender-specific singular pronouns (i.e., *he, she*) with nouns but then use plural possessive pronouns (i.e., *their*).

Incorrect: *The secretary should bring their calendar to the meeting to aid in scheduling follow-up meetings.*
Correct: *Secretaries should bring their calendars to meetings to aid in scheduling follow-up meetings.*

Problems with number may also occur when authors use collective nouns, nouns that may be either singular or plural depending on the context. In the incorrect example, the collective noun *committee* is used in the singular sense, but the possessive pronoun is in the plural form.

Incorrect: *The committee gave their report to the full membership*.
Correct: *The committee gave its report to the full membership*.

Chapter 6: Precision and Clarity in Language

In revising, authors should look carefully at their word choice and usage. Using the most precise wording and ensuring ideas are communicated clearly result in a more readable work. The sections in this chapter concern some of the more common problems in this area, some of which are also covered in the various style guides previously discussed. When in doubt, always follow the required style guide.

Biased Language

Biased language is words or phrasing that shows either favorable or unfavorable dispositions toward individuals or groups of individuals. Terms commonly used a few years ago may be considered offensive in current usage. Although gender bias may be the most common form, other forms of language bias also must be avoided.

Gender Bias

No longer is it acceptable to use masculine pronouns or nouns to refer to persons of both genders who belong to the same group. However, eliminating biased wording may result in twisted, illogical sentences. To eliminate gender bias, consider the following:

- Rewrite to change masculine or feminine pronouns to plurals:

  Incorrect: *The nurse wore her school pin on her collar*.
  Correct: *The nurses wore their school pins on their collars*.

- Change gender-specific nouns to genderless nouns.

  Incorrect: *The chairman banged the gavel three times*.
  Correct: *The chairperson banged the gavel three times*.

- Avoid invented combinations.

  Incorrect: *The student may refer to the work as his/her capstone project.*
  Correct: *Students may refer to the works as their capstone projects.*

- Avoid alternating gender-specific wording.

  Incorrect: *The student brought his work to the class and offered her opinions during discussion.*
  Correct: *The students brought their work to the class and offered their opinions during discussion.*

Other Forms of Bias

Authors should be cognizant of the specific style guide rules governing language that may be sexually, racially, or ethnically biased or that may objectify individuals according to disability or

age. However, authors must also be cognizant of historical contexts and not use neutral or inclusive language if it alters the historical accuracy of the context in which the language is being used.

NOTE: Capitalization rules for races and ethnicities vary from style guide to style guide. Be sure to follow the requirements in the guide for your potential publisher (see Chapter 11: Capitalization).

Slang and Shortened Word Forms

Authors should avoid the use of slang and colloquial or regional expressions in scholarly and academic writing. Such wording is seldom clear to all readers because slang expressions become dated quickly and may have different meanings based on the regions and cultures in which the terms are used. If such language is important to the understanding of the topic being discussed, be sure to define these terms or expressions.

Shortened forms (e.g., *TV* instead of *television*; *phone* instead of *telephone*; *taped* or *recorded* instead of *audio tape-recorded, digitally recorded, audio recorded, video recorded*) should also be avoided in formal writing. Use the full terms unless they are in a direct quotations.

Coined Words and Expressions

As with slang, new terminology may be fresh but, because the words are not well known, may also be unclear to readers. Authors should define all such terms and use them sparingly unless the terms are essential to the topic being discussed. (See Quotation Marks for punctuation of these terms.)

In addition, authors should avoid the temptation to coin terms. Before doing so, authors should be sure no existing word or expression exists that has the same meaning of the created word. Although the creation of specific wording to convey new concepts or theories is an acceptable practice in scholarly work to advance the field of study, doing so should be weighed against the possible confusion and misunderstanding that may occur.

Imprecise Words

Authors should always aim for the most precise language possible in writing. In academic and scholarly writing, that principle is even more important. Authors should avoid the use of incorrect, inexact, and ambiguous wording or of wording that evokes inappropriate feelings in the context in which the wording is used.

- Use words that have the exact denotation required. *Denotation* refers to the meaning of a word, its name or dictionary definition. Check the dictionary.

- Use words that connote the feeling the writing is supposed to evoke. *Connotation* refers to the emotional connections words create, the images the words evoke in the readers' minds. For example, *it was dark* and *it was gloomy* give two different emotional images, even though the sentences are descriptions of the same place.

- Use specific, concrete terms rather than abstract terms whenever possible. In academic and scholarly writing, authors deal with concepts and abstractions. Therefore, the more concrete the word choice, the clearer the writing. Specificity also increases clarity.

- Use figurative language appropriately. Similes, metaphors, analogies, hyperbole, idioms, and personification may be used judiciously in scholarly writing. Some authors even produce entire works built around a particular metaphor. However, the purpose of the work, the audience, and the field or discipline determine the appropriateness of this kind of language. Authors should also remember that idioms are sometimes regional and may not be understood by all readers.

- Avoid anthropomorphism. *Anthropomorphism* is the attribution of human behavior and motivation to nonliving or nonhuman things. The difference between personification and anthropomorphism is slight; hence, both should be avoided in technical and scientific writing. Authors following APA (2010) guidelines must be careful to avoid anthropomorphism, which appears most frequently in statements such as the following:

  Incorrect: *The study proved that girls outperform boys in spelling.*
  Correct: *The study showed that girls outperform boys in spelling.*
  Correct: *The study indicated that girls outperform boys in spelling.*
  Correct: *The researchers found that girls outperform boys in spelling.*

  Incorrect: *The test found that 2 out of 3 individuals hate paying taxes.*
  Correct: *The test indicated that 2 out of 3 individuals hate paying taxes.*
  Correct: *Researchers found that 2 out of 3 individuals hate paying taxes.*

In both cases, the subjects of the sentence cannot physically do the actions indicated by the verbs: A study or a test cannot prove or demonstrate; only humans can engage in such actions. Studies or tests may show, indicate, or reveal.

Anthropomorphism becomes more of a problem because of the preferences for using active voice and for not referencing the author of an article or dissertation. These issues will be discussed more completely later in this paper. Note, however, that the field or discipline affects the use of anthropomorphism. For example, in computer science and other technology fields, computers, machines, processes, and programs are frequently discussed in terms of human qualities and behaviors. Authors should rely on the required style guide and the standards in the premiere journals in their fields for guidance.

- Avoid clichés and trite expressions. Authors should aim for a level of freshness in their writing without sacrificing clarity.

- Understand the distinctions between commonly misused words such as *while* and *since*, *while* and *although*, *since* and *because*, *between* and *among*, and *compose* and *comprise*. Authors may find these pairs discussed in their required style guides. In

addition, they should consult a good standard dictionary or book on usage, such as *Garner's Modern American Usage*.

Wordiness

Writing should be as concise as possible. In the writing process, authors should aim first to get their thoughts on paper. Then they must aim to eliminate excess verbiage and redundancy without sacrificing clarity. Wordiness may be the result of faulty or circuitous thinking, imprecise language, overemphasis, or unnecessarily complex sentence structure. Before finalizing any work, authors should examine their writing carefully to eliminate unnecessary words and parenthetical expressions, replace general terms with more specific or concrete ones, and rephrase complicated sentences with simpler constructions.

Authors should also understand the difference between effective repetition and redundancy. Repetition is the use of the same word or phrase several times within a paragraph. Judicious use of repetition may enhance a scholarly piece through ensuring the reader understands the importance of the concept being discussed. It is also a technique to create coherence within a paragraph.

Redundancy is using the same word or phrase over and over in an attempt to clarify or to emphasize. Authors may use the same word too frequently for emphasis (repetition gone awry) or may rephrase a thought two or three times to make it clearer. Redundancy may also result in awkward sentence constructions and convoluted paragraphs.

Word Choices in Discussing Results

When discussing research results, authors should avoid using the word *prove*. Results of studies support or fail to support the author's hypotheses or the findings of previous researchers. Most research disciplines hold that nothing can be proven beyond doubt.

In the same vein, hypotheses are never accepted. While the results of statistical analyses can cause a hypothesis to be rejected, they can never cause a hypothesis to be accepted. Rather, they support a hypothesis, may (rarely) strongly support a hypothesis, but never prove a hypothesis.

For these reasons, results should always be discussed using qualifying terms. If a study on the math abilities of children had an equal number of boys and girls, and 80% of the girls scored higher on a math-skills test than all of the boys, the researcher cannot say that girls are better at math than boys are. The results must always be qualified: *Girls tended to score higher on the math-skills test than boys did.* Other qualifying words and phrases include *in general*, *usually*, *frequently*, *rarely*, *often*, *seldom*, *generally*, and *usually*.

Chapter 7: Quotations

Quotations embedded in a work should also be examined closely in the revision process. Direct quotations are one source of evidence in academic and scholarly writing. However, graduate students and novice authors may include more quotations than needed. Authors should include quotations for one of two reasons: (a) to give readers the exact wording of a statement that is going to be discussed or (b) to refrain from paraphrasing a statement that is already elegant in its wording and clear in its meaning (Hodges et al., 1994). Quotations that do not meet those tests may need to be paraphrased, summarized, or eliminated. When paraphrasing and summarizing, authors should keep the overall tone and style of the work their own, not those of the sources quoted.

In minimizing the number of direct quotations, especially long excerpts, authors may also ensure they do not violate the fair use doctrine of the Copyright Law of 1976 (MLA, 2008). Extensive discussion of copyright is beyond the scope of this paper; however, authors seeking to publish their works should understand the provisions of the law and obtain permissions for use of any material that does not fit the fair use requirements.

After they have ensured the quotations in their works are, in fact, needed, authors must ensure that the quotations have been included properly. The following are aspects of using quotations that should be checked during revision.

Accuracy

All direct quotations must be entered exactly as they are printed in the source. Wording, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing—all should be exactly as found in the source material.

Introduction and Discussion

Quotations should be introduced and discussed. Readers must know why a quotation is included. A few words, even if only to identify the author of the quotation, should precede the quoted material. Then, unless the quotation is being used to summarize the point addressed in the paragraph, the author should explain the connection of the quotation to the point of the paragraph.

Grammatical Context

Quotations embedded in sentences within the authors' writing should fit the grammatical context of those sentences. Generally, authors should rewrite their sentences so that quotations fit. When that is not possible, authors may make judicious changes to the quotations so they fit the text. The following changes may be made without any additional indication that the material has been changed:

- capitalization of the first letter of the first word;
- end punctuation;
- quotation marks within the quotation (single marks to double or double marks to single)

All other changes, except omissions, must be clearly indicated with brackets.

NOTE: Bracketing should also be kept to a minimum. If several changes must be made to fit the grammatical context, the sentence should be rewritten or the quotation paraphrased instead.

Shortened Quotations

Authors may minimize use of quotations by incorporating only the key wording of longer statements that support the authors' points or by deleting wording in the middle of quotations and replacing the deleted wording with ellipses.

Shortening

Authors should judiciously shorten quotations to key words, phrases, or sentences to ensure the meaning of the original quotation is not changed. As an example of what may happen when authors do not ensure the original meaning of quoted material, personnel from the Writing Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill used this statement from John Adams: "*This would be the best of all possible worlds if there were no religion in it"* (Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2007). The actual quotation is this:

> Twenty times, in the course of my late reading, have I been on the point of breaking out, "this would be the best of all possible worlds, if there were no religion in it!!!!" But in this exclamation, I should have been as fanatical as Bryant or Cleverly. Without religion, this world would be something not fit to be mentioned in public company—I mean hell.

When read in context, readers receive an entirely different meaning from the quotation than when the one sentence is read in isolation. Thus, the meaning of quoted material should not be changed or manipulated to meet authors' needs, for example, as support for an argument.

Using Ellipses

To shorten some quotations, authors may choose to delete parenthetical expressions or descriptive wording not essential to the meaning. To show that wording has been deleted, authors replace the wording with an ellipsis (. . .). Use of an ellipsis is also dependent on the location of the deleted wording within the quotation.

- If the deleted material is at the beginning of the quotation, the author does not need to use an ellipsis unless the reader must know that other material came before the quoted wording.

- If the deleted material is in the middle of the quotation, the author should use an ellipsis.

- If the deletion is at the end of the sentence, the author does not have to use an ellipsis unless the reader must know that there is more to the quotation than the wording included.

Spacing of ellipses varies with specific style guides (see Ellipsis in Chapter 10). In general, however, authors should refrain from using the automatic ellipsis available through their word processing programs because the spacing is seldom correct.

NOTE: As with brackets, if authors use more than a couple of ellipses in a quotation, they should consider paraphrasing or summarizing instead of quoting directly.

Block or Indented Quotations

Style guides vary in what constitutes a quotation long enough to warrant being set off in print. Authors should follow their specific style guides not only for number of lines or words required but also for left and right margin adjustments and use of justified margins.

Block quotations are not set off with quotation marks. The indented format denotes the existence of quoted material. In quotations that contain quoted material punctuated with single quotations marks, authors may change them to double quotation marks. The first word of the quotation may or may not be capitalized, depending on the grammatical relationship of the quotation to the preceding introductory sentence. Any other changes to the quotation for ease of reading or clarity may be made only in accordance with the specific style guide (see Grammatical Context).

Emphasis

Authors may add emphasis to a quotation by italicizing the wording (or eliminating the italics when the entire quotation is italicized). Immediately after the emphasized words, place the words *emphasis added* (not in italics) in brackets.

> Correct: "He noted in the report that the effects were *not significant*" [emphasis added].

Citation of Sources

Material quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from specific sources must be cited when appropriate to do so (see Chapter 13: Plagiarism). Because citation formats vary among the style guides, authors should follow the formats in the guides specified by their schools or publishers.

Chapter 8: Editing

Editing and revision are not synonymous, although they may overlap. Editing involves the minutiae of writing. Authors should not only engage in self-editing but also obtain the services of a colleague or professional editor to proof final drafts. Certain types of editing (i.e., developmental and substantive) involve revision: The editor works with the author to refine content and organization and correct stylistic issues. Copy editing (line-by-line editing) is focused on the conventions of writing (i.e., spelling, grammar, mechanics, and sentence structure) and on formatting and style. The specifics of formatting and style vary according to the style guide used by the department, school, journal, or publishing house for which the work is being prepared. Most style guides include accepted formats for using the following:

- Hyphenation;
- Numerals versus written numbers;
- Abbreviations and symbols;
- Italics, underlining, and bold fonts;
- Heading hierarchies;
- Citations, footnotes, endnotes, reference list entries, and bibliography entries;
- Tables and figures, including captions and notes;
- Margins, headers, preliminary pages;
- Appendices;
- Spacing; and
- Font style and size.

Conventions of Writing

Authors should use formal language and the accepted conventions for academic and scholarly works unless the specific style guidelines for a school or publisher indicate otherwise. In the following chapters, some of the more common problems found in such writing are discussed. In this chapter, spelling, hyphenation, abbreviations and acronyms, and apostrophes are discussed. Chapter 9 concerns sentence structure; Chapter 10, punctuation; Chapter 11, capitalization; and Chapter 12, formatting. These chapters are not meant to comprise a comprehensive guide to grammar and mechanics but a brief overview of the major problems editors find in academic and scholarly writing. Authors should have their own resource libraries, including authoritative books on grammar, usage, a comprehensive dictionary, a thesaurus, and the major publication style guides used in their professions.

Spelling

Although tempting to do so, authors should not rely on spelling checkers to ensure the accuracy of their wording. These programs are useful as preliminary guides or for final double-checking only. Although spelling checkers find common misspellings, they do not usually note problems with content-specific vocabulary and often do not distinguish between homophones. Therefore, if spelled correctly, words may not be identified even though they are the wrong words for the context.

Instead, authors must assume responsibility for ensuring their papers are spelling-error free:

- Rely on a widely accepted dictionary such as *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. Many publication guides specify this dictionary or other widely accepted dictionaries.

- Use the most common spelling of a word, the most widely accepted spelling. Use less common spellings only if they are (a) the accepted spellings within one's field or (b) the spelling used within quoted material.

- Do not use contractions. Contractions are a*ppropriate in informal language but not* in academic or scholarly writing. Spell everything out.

Hyphenation

Correct use of the hyphen to join words together or to join prefixes to root words is ever changing. As the language evolves, words that were once new and required hyphens become commonplace and the hyphens disappear. For example, *electronic mail* became *e-mail* and now, in most guides, is *email*.

Style guides usually include rules governing the use of hyphens, but not all style guides agree. Therefore, authors should follow the specific rules in their required style guides. If the guide does not include hyphenation rules, authors should check the dictionary for the accepted spelling.

Although a hyphen is used to split words syllabically when there is insufficient room for the entire word at the end of a line, authors should refrain from doing so. They should rely on the word-wrapping feature of the word processing program instead.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

The use of abbreviations and acronyms is governed by the kind of writing being produced. In scholarly or academic writing, abbreviations and acronyms are permitted in tables, figures, reference and bibliography entries, and notes. They are also used more commonly in highly specialized works and technical writing aimed at specific, knowledgeable audiences for whom the abbreviations are meaningful. In works for more general audiences, abbreviations and acronyms may be more muddling than clarifying.

Each style guide has specific rules for the use of abbreviations and acronyms. In general, however, authors should do the following:

- Be sure the abbreviation or acronym will be used several times within a work. A rule of thumb is to use the abbreviation or acronym at least five times within the text. These instances do not include use in notes, tables or figures, or citation or reference list entries. The exceptions to this principle are widely known acronyms (e.g., FBI for Federal Bureau of Investigation) or the formal proper names of companies (e.g., IBM).

- Introduce each abbreviation or acronym by using the fully spelled-out form first. Follow the term with the abbreviation or acronym in parentheses.

- Use the abbreviation or acronym exclusively after it is introduced. Spelling the term out sometimes and using the abbreviated form other times may confuse readers.

- Avoid overuse of abbreviations and acronyms. Too many abbreviated forms will overwhelm most readers, even those familiar with the field. The work will read more like "alphabet soup" than a scholarly article. Conserving space is not a legitimate reason for using abbreviations or acronyms. The purpose is to make the writing clearer and easier to read, not the opposite.

- Use only those abbreviations and acronyms that are accepted in one's field or are commonly known. Refrain from creating abbreviated forms.

Apostrophes

Although technically a form of punctuation, apostrophes are essentially used in the spelling of words to show either possession or omission.

Possession

Nouns are made possessive through the addition of an apostrophe, an apostrophe plus an *s*, or an *s* plus an apostrophe, depending on the spelling and number of the nouns.

- All singular nouns form the possessive with the addition of *'s*:

  Mary's, the bird's, Larry Bass's

  NOTE: Some style guides include exceptions to this rule, such as ancient names (e.g., Marcus Aurelius') and biblical names (e.g., Jesus', Moses').

- Plural nouns that end in *s* form the possessive through the addition of only an apostrophe:

  the Joneses', the penguins', the committees'

- Plural nouns that do not end in *s* form the possessive through the addition of *'s*:

  women's, men's, geese's

- When ownership is shared between two or more individuals, the possessive is formed by adding *'s* to the last name only:

  Sally and John's boat was damaged in the storm.
  Marcus and Welby's book on diagnostic procedures was selected for the new course.

- When ownership is not shared, the possessive is formed by added *'s* to all names:

  Smith's and Jones's books were selected by the committee for use in the department.

Omission

An apostrophe is used to represent the omitted letters in contractions.

can't = cannot, he's = he is or *he has, I've = I have, let's = let us*

NOTE: As indicated previously, authors should not use contractions in academic or scholarly works unless the contractions are embedded in quoted material.

Chapter 9: Sentence Sense

Academic and scholarly writing is only as effective as the sentences created to discuss the chosen topic. When revising, authors should examine each sentence as an individual entity and as a component of the paragraph in which it appears. Effective sentences should make sense individually and contextually.

NOTE: These types of errors occur more frequently in complex or compound-complex sentences. Authors may become so involved in getting their ideas written down that they miss the problems they are creating for their readers.

Complete Sentences

A complete sentence has both a subject and a predicate that work together to create meaning. If all the words except the subject and the verb are eliminated, a complete sentence still exists.

> *The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy cow.* (Fox jumped.)
>
> *Citing improvement in the grades of 12 girls in the study, the researchers advocated a number of changes to the curriculum that resulted in increased achievement for all students in the class*. (Researchers advocated.)

Sentences that do not have a subject and predicate are fragments, parts of sentences that need additional grammatical construction to be complete.

Some sentences contain too many ideas connected inappropriately. Known as run-on sentences, these constructions usually contain several predicates or complete sentences strung together with conjunctions. Even if punctuated correctly, these sentences do not convey meaning clearly and succinctly.

Fragments

A fragment is part of a sentence. It does not contain both a subject and a predicate that work together to create meaning. Fragments may be phrases or subordinate clauses. Either type must be expanded into a complete sentence, added to an existing complete sentence if appropriate, or deleted from the work.

> Incorrect: *Left the water running* (verb phrase without a subject)
> Correct: *I left the water running.*
>
> Incorrect: *Someone who wants to regain the championship title* (noun with subordinate clause but no predicate)
> Correct: *Someone who want to regain the championship title fights harder than persons who do not have that goal.*
>
> Incorrect: *Although I went to the store to pick up the birthday cake I'd ordered that came with a dozen red roses at no extra charge* (subordinate clause with

no independent clause [a sentence] attached. Note that just adding a predicate will still not resolve the awkward phrasing.)

Correct: *Although I went to the store to pick up the birthday cake I'd ordered, I almost forget the dozen red roses that came with it at no extra charge.*

Run-On Sentences

Technically, run-on sentences are complete sentences. Such constructions are not considered effective writing, however, because they contain too many ideas joined into one sentence. Authors trying to get their thoughts down quickly may join several related ideas together with coordinating conjunctions. The result is a sentence peppered with *ands, buts,* and *sos,* often without appropriate punctuation. Readers may become breathless just trying to understand what is being said.

Incorrect: *I went to the store to get the cake and then realized I'd left my wallet at home and thought I'd call my husband to get it but the clerk assured me that I could return later that afternoon to pay so I took the cake and rushed home to get my wallet and got to the store just before the clerk took her break so I paid for the cake and then remembered I still needed to get some ice cream.*

Consider what results when the content of such a sentence is a complex concept or abstraction.

Instead, break run-on sentences into shorter units. Authors may find when they do so that wordiness or redundancy is part of the problem.

Correct: *When I arrived at the store to get the cake, I realized I'd left my wallet at home. I started to call my husband to bring it to me, but the clerk assured me I could return later that afternoon to pay. I took the cake, rushed home to get my wallet, and returned to the store just before the clerk took her break. As I paid for the cake, I remembered that I still needed to get some ice cream.*

Voice

As discussed in Chapter 5, *voice* refers to who or what in the sentence is doing the action of the verb. Active voice means the subject is doing the action. Passive voice means the subject is receiving the action of the verb.

Active voice: *I saw someone in the field*.
I (the subject) is doing the action of *seeing* (the verb).

Passive voice: *Someone was seen in the field*.
Someone (the subject) is receiving the action of *being seen* (the verb).

Active constructions tend to be direct, forceful, and dynamic. In general, therefore, authors should write in active voice.

However, in academic and scholarly writing, there are legitimate reasons for authors to use the passive voice. Authors may wish to emphasize objectivity in their works. They may wish to focus on the study, process, instrument, or project under discussion rather than on the researcher or other individuals performing the work. They may also need to use the passive voice to eliminate anthropomorphism (see Chapter 6).

In using the passive voice, authors must be cognizant of the potential problems with such constructions. Passive constructions may be more difficult for readers to follow, especially if the sentences contain several descriptive phrases or subordinate clauses. Such sentences are also often awkward or wordy.

Subject–Verb Agreement

The subject of a sentence and the verb must agree in number: Plural subjects must have plural verbs. Singular subjects must have singular verbs. To ensure proper subject–verb agreement, locate the subject and the verb phrase with which it is connected. Do not consider any of the modifiers, which may include nouns or pronouns of a different number (see Complete Sentences). In the following example, *understanding* is the subject and *is* is the verb. Both are singular in number:

> *Simply understanding the concepts is the basis for growth in this discipline.*

The more complicated the sentence, the more likely one is to make errors in subject–verb agreement. Pay particular attention to the following constructions:

- Compound subjects connected with the conjunctions *or*, *neither–nor*, or *either–or*: The number of the verb must match the subject closest to the verb. The following two examples are correctly written:

  The mice or the rat is the cause of the damage. (*Rat is closer,* so the *verb is* singular.)

  Either the cake or the cookies were my diet downfall. (*Cookies* is closer, so the verb is plural.)

- Sentences with inverted word order:

  At the top of her list of priorities was buying a new car. (*Buying a new car* is the subject, not *priorities*; so the verb is singular).

  On his list of the greatest literature ever written were Shakespeare's tragedies. (*Tragedies* is the subject, not *literature*; so the verb is plural).

- Sentences beginning with *here* or *there*:

  There exists one reason for his tardiness. (*Reason* is the subject, so the verb is singular.)

Here lie the books for the charity book sale. (*Books* is the subject, so the verb is plural.)

- Pronouns that are always considered singular in number regardless of their contextual meaning:

  Everybody in the class is going to the play. (*Everybody* is the subject.)

  Every book, computer, and notepad is to be inventoried. (*Every* is a modifier that renders the subject singular in number, even though the three items [book, computer, notepad] are joined with the conjunction *and*.)

The following chart shows which indefinite pronouns take which verb forms in terms of number.

Singular verbs	Plural verbs	Singular or plural, depending on context
every, each, one, everybody, everything, anyone, everyone, anything, anybody, each one, no one, nobody, nothing, somebody, something, someone, other, much, another	both, few, many, several	all, most, none, some, such, half

Source: Adapted from *Writing for College* by Patrick Sebranek et al., 1997, Wilmington, MA: Write Source, pp. 842–844. ©1997 by The Great Education Group.

- Sentences with collective nouns as subjects. Collective nouns may be either singular or plural, depending on their context: If the noun is being used to represent a unit as a whole, it is singular. If the noun represents the individual components of the unit, it is plural.

  The committee meets on Tuesdays. (*Committee* represents the unit as a whole and is singular.)

  The committee eat at different times because of their varying schedules. (*Committee* represents the individuals that comprise the whole unit and is plural.)

NOTE: Spelling and grammar checkers usually identify this use of collective nouns as an error even though it is correct. Do not rely on word processing programs to find errors in subject–verb agreement.

Misplaced Modifiers, Dangling Modifiers, and Split Infinitives

In clear, cohesive sentences, the parts are arranged logically. Modifiers should be placed next to the words they modify or as close to them as possible to prevent misreading and confusion. Problems arise when authors do not place modifiers appropriately in sentences (called *misplaced modifiers*) or when they fail to ensure modifiers are clearly connected to other words in the sentence (called *dangling modifiers*). Both problems are solved either by moving the modifier into a more appropriate position or by rewriting the sentence to eliminate the problem.

Incorrect: *Joe ate the sandwich in his pajamas*. (misplaced modifier)
Correct: *Still in his pajamas, Joe ate the sandwich.*

Incorrect: *Riding in the early morning quiet, the bike meandered through the park.* (dangling modifier)
Correct: *Riding my bike in the early morning quiet, I meandered through the park.*

In speech, people may place modifiers such as *almost*, *only*, *just*, *even*, *hardly*, *nearly*, and *merely* in various locations within sentences to emphasize their points. However, in formal writing, these words should be placed next to the words they modify to ensure clarity.

Incorrect: *He only paid $300 for the refrigerator*.
Correct: *He paid only $300 for the refrigerator*.

Another form of misplaced modifier is the split infinitive (e.g., *to completely finish his speech*). Although using split infinitives has become more acceptable in formal writing, authors should refrain from doing so unless there is no other way to express the intended meaning. Most split infinitive constructions can be eliminated by rearranging or rewriting the sentence. Placement is dependent on the author's intended meaning. Deleting the modifier is often the best way to correct this problem.

Incorrect: *He forgot to completely write his speech.*
Correct: *He forgot completely to write his speech* (i.e., he did not remember to write it.)
Correct: *He forgot to write his speech completely* (i.e., he started but did not finish the speech).
Correct: *He forgot to write his speech*.

Faulty Parallelism

Parallelism results from ensuring that two or more parts of a sentence that are equal in value are also the same in grammatical construction. These equal parts may be joined by coordinating or correlative conjunctions: *and*, *or*, *but*, *nor*, *yet*, *so*, *for*, *neither–nor*, *either–or*, *both–and*, *not only–but also*. Authors may also use parallelism in other ways, as discussed in Chapter 5.

To solve problems with parallelism, authors should ensure that parts of equal value are the same type of construction. Join nouns with nouns or pronouns, verbs with verbs, prepositional phrases with prepositional phrases, and so on. Authors may need to rewrite sentences to change the type of structure used or to eliminate the need for parallel structure.

Incorrect: *I not only added the paper, I found the button to start the machine*.
Correct: *I not only added the paper but also found the button to start the machine*. (The second part of the correlative conjunction is added and placed before the second verb, after removing the subject in that position, so that the two parts are of equivalent construction.)

Incorrect: *His low score on the test was due either to his failure to study or his inability to write coherent answers to the essay questions*.
Correct: *His low score on the test was due either to his failure to study or to his inability to write coherent answers to the essay questions*. (The preposition *to* was added to complete the second prepositional phrase.)

Chapter 10: Punctuation

Punctuation is one of the signals used in written expression to let readers know when one thought is ending and another is beginning and to let them see the relationships between the parts of a sentence or paragraph. Correct use of punctuation results in clarity. Readers are less likely to misread what has been written or to be confused about the author's intended meaning if punctuation is used correctly. Only the more common problems with punctuation are addressed in this section.

Commas

Dispelling the myths about comma placement is essential to using this punctuation mark correctly. Commas are not used to show pauses in sentences. The myth that commas indicate when a person takes a breath when reading the sentence aloud has resulted in numerous comma usage errors. Commas must be placed in sentences for specific purposes, not because readers need to pause or to breathe.

The following rules for commas are based on requirements for academic and scholarly writing. In business, people do not always follow these rules due to efficiency and cost management concerns. However, persons who read typical sales letters and note the number of times they must stop to reread sentences because commas have been omitted will understand the need for following these rules in producing scholarly works.

Separating Items in a Series

When three or more words, phrases, or clauses are joined with coordinating conjunctions, writers should use commas to separate the items. In such lists, writers should always use a comma before the conjunction prior to the last item in the list.

Incorrect: *I bought soda, apples and pears*.
Correct: *I bought soda, apples, and pears*.

Connecting Independent Clauses

When two independent clauses are joined by a coordinating conjunction, place a comma before the conjunction.

Incorrect: *Hal studied his multiplication tables to prepare for his math test and Sally wrote her essay for history class*.
Correct: *Hal studied his multiplication tables to prepare for his math test, and Sally wrote her essay for history class*.

The comma may be omitted if both independent clauses are short: *Hal studied math and Sally wrote an essay*. When in doubt, add the comma.

Setting Off Introductory Phrases and Clauses

Phrases and clauses placed at the beginning of sentences are generally separated from the independent clauses with commas.

Incorrect: *As I analyzed the test results I looked for specific patterns in the achievement of males and females.*
Correct: *As I analyzed the test results, I looked for specific patterns in the achievement of males and females.*

Incorrect: *Driving through the mountains the girls held their breath as they entered each hairpin turn.*
Correct: *Driving through the mountains, the girls held their breath as they entered each hairpin turn.*

Setting Off Introductory Words

When a single word is used to introduce a sentence, the author must determine its relationship to the sentence to determine whether to set off the word with a comma. When in doubt, use the comma.

Incorrect: *Finally he entered the courtyard and collapsed on the ground.*
Correct: *Finally, he entered the courtyard and collapsed on the ground.*

Incorrect: *Admittedly he was a strong man capable of easily lifting 200 pounds.*
Correct: *Admittedly, he was a strong man capable of easily lifting 200 pounds.*

Depending on the context and the intended effect, either of these sentences is correct:

Then, I waited for the water to boil.
Then I waited for the water to boil.

Setting Off Nonrestrictive Phrases and Clauses

A nonrestrictive phrase or clause is descriptive but is not essential to the meaning of the sentence or to the identification of the word that the phrase or clause modifies. If the author deletes the nonrestrictive construction, the sentence will still have the same basic meaning. Restrictive constructions must be included for the reader to understand what the author means.

Incorrect: *Myron spoke to Bob who was standing in the line at the concession stand.*
Correct: *Myron spoke to Bob, who was standing in the line at the concession stand.* (Because *Bob* is a proper noun, the clause *who was standing in the line at the concession stand* is not needed to identify the person to whom Myron spoke.)

NOTE: In American English, the general practice is to introduce nonrestrictive clauses with the relative pronoun *which* when use of the relative pronouns *who* or *whom* is not appropriate. When

authors use the relative pronoun *that* to introduce clauses, they are generally using restrictive constructions.

Setting Off Nonrestrictive Appositives

An appositive renames a noun or pronoun and provides additional information about that noun. A restrictive appositive identifies the noun or pronoun. A nonrestrictive appositive adds information but may be deleted from the sentence without changing the meaning.

Incorrect: *Hal the senior class president met with the secretary prior to the council meeting*.
Correct: *Hal, the senior class president, met with the secretary prior to the council meeting*.

Incorrect: *The young man, who was senior class president, met with the secretary*.
Correct: *The young man who was senior class president met with the secretary*.

Setting Off Contrasting Elements

Contrasting elements are used to show the opposite position or alternative position to the main position identified in the sentence.

Incorrect: *I ordered the chocolate malt not the vanilla for dessert*.
Correct: *I ordered the chocolate malt, not the vanilla, for dessert*.

Incorrect: *He wanted to go to Boston not Philadelphia*.
Correct: *He wanted to go to Boston, not to Philadelphia*.

Setting Off the Year in Exact Dates

An exact date consists of month, date, and year. If only the month and year are given, no comma is required.

Incorrect: *The bill was due April 15 2011*.
Correct: *The bill was due April 15, 2011*.

Incorrect: *The study was conducted in March, 2010*.
Correct: *The study was conducted in March 2010*.

If the date appears in the middle of the sentence, the year is set off with commas.

Incorrect: The bill was due April 15, 2011 by 1:00 p.m.
Correct: The bill was due April 15, 2011, by 1:00 p.m.

Setting Off Items in an Address

When authors write address information into text, they must separate each element from the others with commas. This rule includes placing a comma after the last item of the address before continuing with the rest of the sentence.

Incorrect: *He sent the gift to 1004 Ivory Place, Concord, Massachusetts 34020 three days before the wedding*.
Correct: *He sent the gift to 1004 Ivory Place, Concord, Massachusetts 34020, three days before the wedding*.

Incorrect: *He sent the gift to Concord, Massachusetts three days before the wedding*.
Correct: *He sent the gift to Concord, Massachusetts, three days before the wedding*.

NOTE: Zip codes are considered part of the state name. Authors should not place commas between state names and zip codes. In addition, state names written in text are not abbreviated; only full spelling is used.

Semicolons

Semicolons are used only to connect equal grammatical structures.

Independent Clauses

- Use semicolons to connect two or more independent clauses without using coordinating conjunctions:

  Incorrect: *We attended the lecture at Harvard then we went to see the exhibit at the museum*.
  Correct: *We attended the lecture at Harvard; then we went to see the exhibit at the museum*.

- Use semicolons to separate two or more independent clauses connected with coordinating conjunctions when at least one of the clauses contains commas:

  Incorrect: *We liked the play so well that we went to see it twice, however, my sister thought differently and left at intermission.*
  Correct: *We liked the play so well that we went to see it twice; however, my sister thought differently and left at intermission.*

Items in a Series

When one or more of the items in a series contain commas, use semicolons to separate the individual items.

Incorrect: *The girls bought tea, strawberries, and sponge cakes, but the boys bought nuts, beer, and jerky*.
Correct: *The girls bought tea, strawberries, and sponge cakes; but the boys bought nuts, beer, and jerky*.

Colons

A colon is used either to indicate a formal introduction to the material that follows or to show the division between elements of other constructions, such as the hours and minutes in time, chapters and verses in scriptural references, and titles and subtitles.

With Explications or Amplifications

Place a colon between an independent clause and an explication or amplification of that clause:

> *No one knew the most appropriate group to contact: the police or the fire department.*
>
> *The old house was luxurious compared to similar properties: The kitchen had been remodeled, new heating and cooling systems and flooring installed, and walls removed to create an open floor plan.*

NOTE: Style guides differ on whether an independent clause following a colon should be capitalized. In APA (2010), the sentence is always capitalized. In MLA (2008), capitalization is dependent on the purpose of the second sentence: Explications are not capitalized; rules and principles are. Authors should check their required style guides for clarification.

With Lists

Use a colon to introduce a list. However, do not use a colon if the list follows a form of the verb *to be* or a verb that requires an object (e.g., *include*).

> *The following items were auctioned at the benefit to raise money for the charity: two oil paintings, season tickets for the theater, gift baskets from a local spa, and hockey equipment.*
>
> *The winners of the talent show were Bill, Jackie, and Susan.*

With Quotations

Place a colon before a quotation that is independent of the main sentence. Do not use a colon if the quotation is introduced by a relative pronoun (i.e., *that, which, who, whoever, whom, whomever, whose,* and sometimes *what, where,* and *when*) or if it follows a form of the verb *to be*.

> Incorrect: *The researcher stated that: "I found boys outperformed girls on this task."*
> Correct: *The research stated that he "found boys outperformed girls on this task."*
>
> Incorrect: *I still remember what Dr. Rogers said to me, "Just remember to treat your students as you want them to treat you."*
> Correct: *I still remember what Dr. Rogers said to me: "Just remember to treat your students as you want them to treat you."*

With Time

Place a colon between the hours and minutes and seconds in writing specific times. There should be no space after the colon. Specific times are usually written as numbers. Times written using the "o'clock" designation are generally written as words.

> *He entered at 7:14 p.m.*
> *He arrived at six o'clock.*

With Scriptural References

Place a colon between the chapter and verse in a scriptural reference. There should be no space after the colon. NOTE: Not all style guides use a colon for this purpose. Some use periods instead (MLA, 2008).

Authors should also indicate the translation of the Bible being used if the verse is quoted. The first time the version is cited in text, it should be spelled out. Thereafter, the appropriate abbreviation may be used. No version designation is needed if the verse is referenced but not quoted.

> *The pastor read John 3:16.*
> *The Sunday School class recited the verse together: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1 King James Version).*

NOTE: When scriptural references are part of parenthetical citations, authors should use the appropriate abbreviations for the books of the Bible. When the references are in text as part of the sentence, the name of the book is given in full (Hudson, 2004).

End Punctuation

Sentences should end with periods, question marks, or exclamation points. However, in scholarly writing, authors should not use exclamation marks unless they are included in a quotation being used in the text. Authors should also examine sentences ending with question marks to ensure the constructions are truly questions and not declarative sentences.

> Incorrect: *That leaves us with one last question, which is whether that particular bird can fly?*
> Correct: *That leaves us with one last question, which is whether that particular bird can fly.*
> Correct: *That leaves us with one last question: Can that particular bird fly?*

Dashes and Parentheses

When an author inserts or interjects material that interrupts the main thought of a sentence, that is related but not directly connected to the main thought, or that explains something in the main sentence, that material is separated from the main sentence with dashes, parentheses, or commas. Although commas should be used for separating items in a sentence whenever possible,

sometimes the interruption is too important or the material may be misunderstood if set apart only by commas.

Dashes

The dash is considered the stronger of these two forms of punctuation. Authors use it to show a sudden interruption in the content of the sentence or to emphasize the importance of the inserted material. Dashes should be used sparingly in scholarly and academic writing. Overuse is an indication of poor writing and revision skills.

> *The majority of the researchers—only three dissented with this opinion—argued in favor of the reduced penalties.*

Some guides suggest using no more than one set of paired dashes (as shown in the previous example) or one unpaired dash per sentence (MLA, 2008). If more are needed, the author should rewrite the sentence.

Dashes are also used between an introductory list of items and the main sentence to prevent confusion.

Incorrect: *Spinach, kale, and dandelion and collard greens, these dark green, leafy vegetables are rich in nutrients*.
Correct: *Spinach, kale, and dandelion and collard greens—these dark green, leafy vegetables are rich in nutrients*.

Parentheses

These marks of punctuation are less emphatic than dashes. They are used to set off material inserted that is explanatory or illustrative in nature, hence the term *parenthetical expression*. As with dashes, parentheses should be used sparingly (MLA, 2008). Authors should ensure that sentences containing parentheses read smoothly.

When the material in a pair of parentheses is also a complete sentence, authors should punctuate the sentence and use initial capitalization correctly within the parentheses. Capitalization of the first word of parenthetical material is dependent on whether the parenthetical expression is part of the main sentence (see Chapter 11: Capitalization).

Correct: *The grocery store was the last place I thought I would see athletic shoes on sale. (I had gone to buy milk and bread.) However, shoppers were adding pairs of running shoes to their carts full of fruits, canned goods, and deli foods as if the shoes were typical grocery inventory*.

Correct: *The argument that women do not think as logically as men (a rather old-fashioned sentiment) may never be settled satisfactorily*.

Brackets

Brackets are used for the following purposes:

- To add explanatory material to a quotation for purposes of clarity.

  "The editor wondered if it [my novel] was going to be a best seller."

- To show that an error in spelling or grammar within a quotation is from the original work and not an error in transcription. The word *sic* ("thus" or "in such a manner") is placed within the brackets. The word should be italicized.

  *"He groped [*sic*] the items according to type."*

- To add a word or words to a quotation so that it makes sense.

  "*I feel my mom is worried but not him because he's never [here] when I need him."*

- To set off a parenthetical expression within a parenthetical expression.

  The material is needed for the newspaper (at least that['s] what he told me).

NOTE: Brackets should be used sparingly. Whenever possible, rewrite the sentence to eliminate brackets (see Chapter 7: Quotations).

Quotation Marks

Quotation marks serve a variety of purposes, not just the identification of direct quotations. In addition to knowing the uses of quotation marks, authors should know how to place other types of punctuation in relation to them.

Direct Quotations

Set off direct quotations embedded in sentences. Do not use quotation marks around block quotations. Authors should consult their required style guides to determine the maximum word count (or line length) for quotations placed within sentences and for those set apart in block format.

Titles of Minor Works

Set off titles of works that are usually part of longer works such as anthologies: chapters, short stories, essays, poems, periodical and newspaper articles, songs, television and radio episodes, and lectures.

Translations of Foreign Words and Phrases

Foreign terms are usually italicized, but the translations of those terms should be set off in quotation marks. Some disciplines and style guides require single marks for the translation or gloss of a word or phrase in the text. (Translations in bibliographies and reference lists are treated differently.) Authors should check their dictionaries to determine whether the quotation marks are necessary. If a word or phrase from a foreign language is in an English dictionary, the term has been accepted into the language and should not be treated as a foreign term.

Coined Words and Words Used in Unusual Ways

Authors who use words ironically should place the words in quotation marks *the first time* they are used in the work. All subsequent uses of those words for those meanings should not be set off. Slang expressions used in scholarly writing should also be set off with quotation marks to show the distinction in meaning. Authors who coin words because none exist with the exact meaning required should set the new expression off with quotation marks.

CAUTION: Authors may easily overuse this technique instead of taking the time to find appropriate wording and phrasing to convey the intended meaning. This use, although legitimate, should be employed minimally. Too many quoted terms may interfere with the reader's ability to understand the author's meaning and intent.

Punctuation with Quotation Marks

Authors writing in American English should follow these rules for placing other punctuation marks used with quotation marks:

- Periods are placed inside end quotation marks.

  Johnny said, "I am going home."

- Question marks are placed outside end quotation marks unless the quotation is a question.

  Did he say, "I am going home"?
  I asked, "Why am I here?"

- Exclamation marks are placed outside end quotation marks unless the quotation is an exclamation.

  Peter yelled out the window, "The house is on fire!"
  I can't believe he's singing "The Name Game"!

- Dashes are placed outside end quotation marks unless they are part of the quotation. However, this is an extremely awkward construction. Authors should rewrite instead.

  Helen yelled, "I need you to—" but was cut off when John pushed her out of the way to pick up the box to carry it inside.

- Commas are placed inside end quotation marks.

  He said, "I am going to the store," and left the house a few seconds later.

- Semicolons are placed outside end quotation marks.

  I heard Kate say, "I don't want to go outside"; however, her mother reminded her that she could not watch television.

- Colons are placed outside end quotation marks.

  I remembered only one brief passage from "For Whom the Bell Tolls": "No man is an island."

Double or Single Quotation Marks

In American English, authors use double quotation marks. Should authors need to include quotations in which other quotations occur (e.g., Bible verses that contain dialogue or a title within a title), the main quotations are placed in double quotation marks. The inner quotations are placed in single quotation marks.

I read the article entitled "The Use of Irony in 'The Most Dangerous Game.'"

Ellipsis

The ellipsis (. . .) is an essential punctuation mark for authors including quoted material in their works. Because a minimum of quotations should be used (see Chapter 7), authors must ensure that the main point they wish to illustrate is the focus of the quotation they use. Lengthy quotations may contain information not needed in the work. As long as doing so does not change the meaning of the original quotation, authors may use ellipses to indicate the deletion of unnecessary words.

Authors should consult their required style guides for specific information about the formatting of ellipses. However, in general, authors should not use the automatic function of their word processors to insert ellipses. Instead, after the last word or punctuation mark prior to the material to be deleted, one space should be entered, followed by a period, a space, a period, a space, a period, and another space before the first word of the rest of the quotation. Retaining the punctuation following the word immediately before the elliptical marks depends on the overall reading of the quotation. In general, when information deleted follows the end of sentence, the period is retained.

Original quotation: *"A generation ago, students of the short story were constantly drilled to employ the device known to the trade as the 'narrative hook.'"*

Shortened quotation: *"A generation ago, students of the short story were constantly drilled to employ . . . the 'narrative hook'"* (Bates, 2000, p. 102).

CAUTION: Ellipses should be used judiciously. If more than one or two ellipses must be used in a quotation, the author should consider paraphrasing instead. Multiple ellipses may give the impression that the author is choosing not to do the required analysis or is manipulating the quotation to mean something different from the intent of the original author.

Chapter 11: Capitalization

Academics and scholars deal with a variety of capitalization issues not found in other types of writing. In addition, the various style guides address some of these issues differently. Therefore, authors are advised to consult both their specific style guides and an authoritative book on grammar for more information. The following lists contain some of the more common errors found in scholarly and academic writing.

When to Capitalize

Capitalization should be used for the following:

- The first word of a direct quote that is a full sentence.

  Incorrect: *He said, "let's go there."*
  Correct: *He said, "Let's go there."*

- The first word of a complete sentence in parentheses that is separate from the main sentence. Note the placement of end punctuation as well.

  Incorrect: *The shirt did not fit. (the clerk should have known just by looking at me)*
  Correct: *The shirt did not fit (the clerk should have known just by looking at me).*
  Correct: *The shirt did not fit. (The clerk should have known just by looking at me.)*

- The first word of a complete sentence following a colon. NOTE: Some style guides do not agree with this, specifying capitalization only of principles, rules, and quotations that follow colons; others specify all complete sentences. (See Colon.)

  Incorrect: *The quality of the film was poor: the texture was grainy and the dialogue was not synched with the film*. (In MLA [2008], this is the correct form.)
  Correct: *The quality of the film was poor: The texture was grainy and the dialogue was not synched with the film.* (In APA [2010], this is the correct form.)

- Department names only if they are the specific names of departments at a school or university.

  Incorrect: *He had a class in the Psychology department.*
  Correct: *He enrolled in classes in the Department of Psychology at the university.*

- Course names only if they are the titles of specific courses.

  Incorrect: *She got an A in Music.*
  Correct: *She got an A in Music Theory 203.*

NOTE: If the course contains another proper noun, that noun is capitalized even if the whole title is not the formal name. (She took an English class. Her Spanish class ran late. He passed French 101 with a B.)

- Brand names but not the products. NOTE: Some brands have become generic terms. Check the dictionary specified in the required guide to determine whether something is generic or not.

  Incorrect: *He took coumadin because of his stroke*.
  Correct: *He took Coumadin because of his stroke*. (Coumadin is a brand name for the generic drug warfarin.)

  Incorrect: *She bought Kleenex Tissues.*
  Correct: *She bought Kleenex tissues.*

- Nouns followed by numerals or letters.

  Incorrect: *The new course, trigonometry 3, is quite advanced.*
  Correct: *The new course, Trigonometry 3, is quite advanced.*

- The specific titles of tests and instruments, both published and unpublished. NOTE: The words *test* and *scale* are not capitalized when they are used to refer to subscales of a test or instrument.

  Incorrect: *Minnesota multiphasic personality inventory*
  Correct: *Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory* (APA, 2010, p. 103)

  Incorrect: *MMPI Depression Scale*
  Correct: *MMPI Depression scale* (APA, 2010, p. 103)

- Proper nouns that are the specific names for sections (regions) of the country. Do not capitalize words that are directions or that are used as adjectives (University of Chicago Press, 2003).

  Incorrect: *He was moving to the South of the city*.
  Correct: *He was moving to the South*.

  Incorrect: *He was moving to a midwestern city*.
  Correct: *He was moving to the Midwest*.

- The names of races, nationalities, ethnicities. NOTE: Not all style guides agree on capitalization of terms that are based on color. If not specified in the style guide, capitalize such terms.

  Incorrect: *The study population was 83% white and 17% black*.
  Correct: *The study population was 83% White and 17% Black*.

  Incorrect: *Hispanics and latinos constituted the majority of the class*.
  Correct: *Hispanics and Latinos constituted the majority of the class*.

NOTE: Terms specifying certain groups have changed through the years. Authors should be sensitive to the current preferred usage as well as the historical context (see Biased Language). In

addition, terms that were once hyphenated (e.g., African-American) are now written without the hyphen (i.e., African American).

When Not to Capitalize

Capitalization should not be used for the following:

- Titles, unless given as part of a person's name.

  Incorrect: *The senator was from Missouri*.
  Correct: *At the end of the year, Senator Bond retired*.

  Incorrect: *Dr. Davis, President of the university, spoke for over an hour*.
  Correct: *Dr. Davis, president of the university, spoke for over an hour*.

- The names of seasons unless followed by a number.

  Incorrect: *He enrolled in the Fall*.
  Correct: *He enrolled in Fall 2001*.

Again, each style guide has its version of correct capitalization. Works produced for use within a school, organization, or profession may reflect different rules than works produced for general use. Authors should be sure to follow the specific rules in the style guides required by their publishers or schools.

Chapter 12: Formatting

Formatting is the physical set up of the article or paper and of the individual pages within it. From margins and headers to spacing between lines and placement of page numbers, every school and publisher establishes or adopts formatting requirements. Authors who fail to conform to these formatting requirements risk not having their works accepted for publication.

Schools and publishers may base their requirements on the recommendations given in one of the style guides previously mentioned (see Chapter 4). However, schools and publishers may adapt these formatting guidelines to meet their specific publication preferences. Therefore, authors should obtain copies of both the general guides and the specific publication guides. More important, *authors should follow the guides precisely*.

Chapter 13: Plagiarism and Citation

Plagiarism is the use of material from another source or author, *either intentionally or accidentally*, without providing appropriate identification of the source (Hodges et al., 1994). Appropriate citations must be given for all quoted and paraphrased material and all summarized material not considered general knowledge in a particular field. Only by being widely read within one's field can one know what is and is not general knowledge (Hodges et al., 1994). Therefore, authors should err on the side of caution and cite sources whenever there is any doubt about whether to do so.

Scholars should be well aware of the consequences of plagiarism. Although not technically a legal matter unless copyright infringement is involved, plagiarism may result in destroying one's reputation. One may also be fired or, if a student, expelled. In some cases, the offender may be sued by the person or company that holds the copyright to the plagiarized material.

Citing Sources

Citing sources consists of two parts: noting the specific source for the material in text and giving complete bibliographic information for that source in the reference list or bibliography of the work. Each general formatting guide has slightly different configurations for citations and reference list entries. These differences are too numerous to present in this paper. Authors should follow their required guides to ensure accurate identification of each source.

Using Endnotes and Footnotes

The general trend in citation has been away from footnotes and endnotes and toward parenthetical or internal citation. The reasons for this trend are both economic (the costs of printing) and stylistic (Stanton 2008). According to MLA (2008), authors should use parenthetical citations to note specific sources for information presented. Content (substantive) and bibliographic notes may be included as either footnotes or endnotes. Content notes contain explanations, elaborations, or discussions not suitable for inclusion in the main text. Bibliographic notes contain additional sources for the information given, evaluative comments about the sources cited, or illustrations or anecdotes not essential to the main text.

The use of footnotes and endnotes in scholarly work is well documented, dating from the printing of the first books, and is not likely to disappear (Stanton 2008). In some fields, the use of notes is essential, an element of scholarship. Through these mechanisms, scholars not only credit the sources of their material but also expand upon their arguments or those of the sources cited. Such explanations may be too digressive for inclusion within the text yet are important to the most thorough understanding of the work and to the satisfying of readers' intellectual curiosity.

Chapter 14: Final Words

Scholarly writing is a process, not just a product. In producing academic or scholarly works, authors should remember to do the following to enhance their success.

- Obtain copies of the general and specific style guides from the department, school, or publisher before beginning research or writing.
- Follow the requirements within the style guides.
- Research the subject thoroughly, noting all required information for citations and reference list entries needed in the finished work.
- Develop a sound thesis statement.
- Develop a sound organizational plan for the work.
- Write the first draft according to the plan.
- Revise the work one or more times to obtain the clearest, most succinct product possible.
- Edit the work to ensure correction of any grammatical, mechanical, stylistic, and formatting issues.
- Submit the work according to the specific requirements of the school or publisher.

Producing a well-written scholarly piece is as much art as craft. Authors must engage in the activity regularly to maintain and improve their skills. By following the general information in this paper and the specific requirements of the school or publisher, authors should hone the writing abilities needed to advance in their chosen professions.

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