TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDICES:

- Avoiding Plagiarism (articles)
- Jared Haynes, Campus Writing Center: Notes on Gainen article re development of critical thinking
- A Guide to Using Internet Texts for Research: How to Evaluate them
- It's Academic, or is it? (*Newsweek* article, November 6, 1995)
- The Sad Fate of the Comma (*Newsweek* article, July 23, 2007)
- Abby implies hoi polloi are weak on grammar (newspaper article)

CARTOONS

Pat Mokhtarian's
Document Production Checklist
(To be completed and turned in with the document you are asking me to read/edit)

One weekend after making the same type of straightforward grammatical correction literally dozens of times on several different theses, the inspiration for this checklist struck. It is intended to make sure you address some common deficiencies that you are perfectly capable of finding and fixing yourself *before* turning in your document, thereby sparing me the time required to point them out to you and freeing me to spend more time on substantive issues that you may not be able to identify on your own.

*Each blank should be filled with either a checkmark indicating compliance, or **(rarely!)** a "N/A" indicating "not applicable", before you turn your document (or any part of it) in to me for review. The discovery of egregious violations will result in my returning the document to you for correction before I read any farther.*

_____   I have reread your technical writing handout in its entirety, and have tried to follow its advice as much as possible.

_____   All references cited in this draft are included in the bibliography, which is submitted with this draft.

_____   Conversely, every reference in the bibliography has been cited somewhere in the text.

_____   I have used an officially accepted bibliographic style, not one I made up myself or borrowed from a non-authoritative source.

_____   When using the exact words of another author, I have enclosed them in quotation marks, and included the cited work's page number(s) on which the quote appears in my reference (e.g., Bacon, 1992, pp. 36-37). I do not enclose the reference within the quotes, but I do make it part of the sentence rather than standing alone. Example: "The buck stops here" (Truman, 1936, p. 12).

_____   Formatting and numbering of section headings, tables/figures themselves, their titles, and bibliographic references are consistent throughout. (I will not be picky about this one IF the document in question is your thesis or dissertation AND I am just a committee member, not the chair. But if it's a report, paper, or thesis for me, this applies!)

_____   Pages have been numbered.

_____   I have searched for all occurrences of the words "they" and "their", and have fixed any places where the plural pronoun was matched with a singular antecedent.

_____   I have searched for all occurrences of the words "its" and "it's", and determined whether an apostrophe was required or not.

_____   I have searched for all occurrences of the strings 's (apostrophe-s-blank) and s' (s-apostrophe-blank), and checked whether I was incorrectly using the possessive form when a simple plural (-s) was required, or incorrectly using the singular possessive (-'s) rather than the plural possessive (-s'), or conversely.

_____   I have searched for all occurrences of the string "comprise", and have changed "is comprised of" to "comprises" or "is composed of".

_____   I have correctly distinguished between percent and percentage points changes.

_____   I have not begun a sentence with a numeral. Integers less than ten are spelled out as words, unless part of a table or figure or other title ("Part 3", "Model 4"), or a percent ("5% of the sample").

_____   Tables and figures reporting empirical results include the sample size.

_____   Discussions of other empirical studies (e.g. in a literature review) include, where available and appropriate, the following information:
  – date and location data collected;
  – sampling unit (adult, household, driver, elderly person, welfare recipient, adult resident of North Carolina, etc.);
  – sample size;
  – type of survey (e.g. stated response, travel diary);
  – analysis methodology.
E.g., "the results were based on a sample of 1,523 retired residents of Innsbruck, Austria, who completed a 7-day activity diary in October 1998. Chi-squared and t-tests were used to examine significant differences in duration of different activity types by gender and employment status."

_____   I have spell-checked this document after the most recent changes have been made.

_____   I have let each section sit for at least a day and re-read it and edited it myself before handing it in.

_____   (For revisions:) I have carefully reviewed *each* of your edits/comments. With respect to your substantive comments, I have either adopted them as is, made a different modification in response, or communicated with you (in person or by note) about it. I have double-checked that each of your substantive comments has been addressed in one of those ways.

[Note: Some of my *routine* edits (i.e. to the narrative style, as opposed to issues of *substantive* content) will be of grammatical errors that of course must be corrected. Others will be alternate suggestions that you are welcome to take or leave. Yet others are intended to establish a more professional tone to the document. How strongly I feel about those will depend on how "far out" the original language is, whether the document is a report or journal article with my name on it too (as opposed to your thesis), etc. Aside from the first category of routine edits (outright grammatical errors that must be corrected), you can use your judgment initially in whether to adopt routine edits in the second and third categories – if I feel strongly about something I'll keep making the same edit, and/or we can hash it out in person.]

CONTENTS OF A PROTOTYPICAL RESEARCH DOCUMENT

Abstract – should include meaningful results (quantitative where possible), not just a description of what you did. Think in terms of "sound bites".

Introduction

- Background/context
- Research questions or hypotheses addressed by this document
- Your specific contribution relative to previous related work
- Organization of the rest of the document

Literature Review

- To the extent possible, develop a common framework within which to review the various studies (see S. Handy example of LU impacts on travel).

- Review may fall into two categories:

  1. Subject area (e.g. telecommuting patterns; studies of attitude-behavior relationships in transportation and marketing)

  2. Methodology (e.g. use of survival theory in transportation; the estimation of structural equations, the use of time-dependent endogenous variables, etc.)

- As a matter of course, reviews of empirical studies should include the following information as applicable:

  – when and where the data were collected,
  – specifically from what kinds of people,
  – sample size,
  – type of survey (e.g. activity diary)
  – analysis methodology, and
  – direction of significant results.

  For example: "The sample comprised 1,632 employed adults living in the Berlin metropolitan area, responding to a 1998 mail-out/mail-back questionnaire. Binary logit models of the intention to purchase a fuel-cell vehicle were developed. The authors found that income and a concern for the environment were positively associated with an intention to purchase, while age and number of children in the household were negatively associated."

- Ideally, don't just cite facts, but critique the methodology and/or inferences. E.g., "Numerous studies (e.g., A, 1991; B, 1996; C, 2003) have found that people living in denser, more mixed-use neighborhoods make fewer auto trips and travel shorter distances by auto. However, the straightforward comparisons used by most of those studies cannot resolve the issue of self-selection: is it the built environment in denser neighborhoods that reduces the

need for an automobile, or do people who are predisposed to travel less by auto choose to live in neighborhoods that allow them to exercise reasonable alternatives? The answer has important implications for policy…" etc.

Substantive Stuff

e.g.:
*   Conceptual model
*   More detail on your hypotheses and how you will test them
*   Implementation/operationalization:

         Variable definition, data collection
         Assumptions, why you made certain key decisions
         Limitations of your approach, threats to validity

*   Empirical results:

         Statistical test outcomes
         Interpretation – what does it mean that this coefficient is significant or that that sign is counterintuitive? What results are consistent with your hypotheses, which are inconsistent and what plausible explanation might there be for that? Look at what's not significant (but hypothesized to be) as well as what is. Do unexpected findings emerge, are new research questions suggested by the results?

*   Summarize each chapter at the end of the chapter

Summary and Conclusions

*   Summary of key results–try to look at big-picture generalities here rather than just repeating a bunch of micro-level quantitative findings
*   Reminder of major caveats
*   Implications for policy, practice, theory (or methodology)
*   New questions raised, directions for future research

Sources – see other document on proper citation practices

ADVICE ON WRITING PAPERS FOR PUBLICATION IN SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS
Patricia L. Mokhtarian
February 10, 2009

Two awesome books:

Glasman-Deal, Hilary (2010) *Science Research Writing for Non-Native Speakers of English*. London, UK: Imperial College Press.

Miller, Jane E. (2005) *The Chicago Guide to Writing about Multivariate Analysis*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press ($28 paper), is a terrific how-to book on the clear presentation and exposition of empirical results. I highly recommend it!

- **First and foremost: cultivate self-detachment!**
  I.e., try to "step outside yourself", to see things from perspectives other than your own "ingrown" view. (See Zinsser quote at end)

  - *In the conduct of the research:*

    - Avoid confirmation bias:
      - Am I only finding what I expected to find?
      - Have I *allowed* the results to differ from expectations? (Hypotheses re men and women choosing to TC. Fix I-5 project – some agencies' evaluations asked about VMT, travel time *reductions* from TC, CWW, but did not ask about *increases* due to delay, detour. Conversely, we initially asked how travel times were *degraded*, but not whether they were actually *better*.) Don't embed as an *assumption* something you can empirically *test* with your data!
      - Could another explanation fit the evidence about as well?

  - *In writing up the results:*

    - Empathy with reader – what does she want to know, and when does she want to know it?
      - Teach (a little!), don't just present: motivate the use of unfamiliar techniques (Kruskal-Wallis ex.) (but see below re appropriate pitch)
      - Explain/defend key decisions, including consideration of alternatives
      - Anticipate and address objections – don't leave them to the reviewer to point out! (personal ex.)
      - Interpret key results, don't just mechanically describe them
      - Look for patterns and relationships
      - *Simplify the reader's cognitive burden wherever possible*
      - Let the paper rest a few days or more, then read it fresh
      - Set up a buddy-review system with a fellow student

- **Where to send your paper**

  - *Pitch the paper appropriately*

    - Choose the right level of journal; ask your major professor if you're aiming too high.

    - Tailor your paper to the focus of the journal.
      o The whole paper, but especially the lit review section, may need the focus fine-tuned to fit the journal. (impacts of ICT on leisure)
      o What's a new methodology to one journal, needing more explanation, may be common knowledge to another, with explanations seen as irritating, patronizing, and/or unnecessary. (RSS method. paper)

  - *Impact factors (formal and informal)*

    - Formal ones – lame! I ignore these as much as possible, and fortunately my department doesn't pay much attention to them either (at least, so far…). Unfortunately, other places do… But I encourage you to form your own opinions on the reputation/rigor of journals, through your own direct exposure to them and through asking colleagues.

    - To maximize your own personal impact, aim for variety, all else equal.
      o You don't want reviewers of your promotion case sniffing that you can only get your work into such-and-such journal, especially if there's a connection between you and the editor (I won't submit a paper to a UCD editor, and declare potential conflicts of interest when asked to review).
      o Exposing your work to the broadest possible audience brings you more "fame", more opportunities, more citations → faster advancement.

    - Publishing interdisciplinary work can be tricky, may "fall between the cracks" and be snubbed by *all* disciplines! (personal exs) Some journals are more receptive than others – scope that out in advance, if possible.

- **Things I've learned from referees, editors, and colleagues over the years**

  - *Titles* are important (at least, if you prefer your work to be read, not just published)! They can draw readers in, or give them a big yawn. Provocative questions ("How Derived is the Demand for Travel?") and wordplays ("A Desire Named Streetcar") are good, but it's possible to be too cutesy. Some journals encourage the key results to be included in the title!

  - The *abstract* should present the key results, not just describe what was done. See comments by Dr. Alan Meier below.

  - The *introduction* should clearly delineate not just the *purpose* of this paper (e.g. to answer certain research questions), but specifically its *contribution* relative to related

work: how does it differ from similar ones out there? Is it the first time something has been done in this way? Does it relax a limitation of an earlier study? Does it try to replicate results of previous studies under different circumstances? Answers to these (and related) questions can help you decide how high a journal to aim for.

- Writing in the *active voice* is OK! (See the complete article by Zinsser referenced below). Some people will still be purists about this, but the active voice is much more interesting to read, and (I think) strengthens the bond of the author to the work: it wasn't just "considered" that this was important – *we* were the ones considering that it was important! It symbolically, at least, forces the author to take full ownership of what was done.

- **Miscellaneous suggestions**

  - Role of auxiliary reports as repositories of additional detail

  - Value of elapsed time in mentally digesting a study's implications

  - Be respectful of editors and referees, not peremptory, but don't be afraid to argue, politely, when you feel strongly about something. It's always exciting to win those arguments!

From William Zinsser, "Writing English as a Second Language", http://www.theamericanscholar.org/writing-english-as-a-second-language/, accessed January 21, 2010.

The epidemic I'm most worried about isn't swine flu. It's the death of logical thinking. The cause, I assume, is that most people now get their information from random images on a screen—pop-ups, windows, and sidebars—or from scraps of talk on a digital phone. But writing is *linear* and *sequential*; Sentence B must follow Sentence A, and Sentence C must follow Sentence B, and eventually you get to Sentence Z. The hard part of writing isn't the writing; it's the thinking. You can solve most of your writing problems if you stop after every sentence and ask: "What does the reader need to know next?"

One maxim that my students find helpful is: *One thought per sentence*. Readers only process one thought at a time. So give them time to digest the first set of facts you want them to know. Then give them the next piece of information they need to know, which further explains the first fact. Be grateful for the period. Writing is so hard that all of us, once launched, tend to ramble. Instead of a period we use a comma, followed by a transitional word (*and*, *while*), and soon we have strayed into a wilderness that seems to have no road back out. Let the humble period be your savior. There's no sentence too short to be acceptable in the eyes of God.

Dr. Alan Meier:

Elements of an Effective Abstract

1. Brief explanation of context

2. A description of what you you investigated, measured, compiled, studied, etc.

3. Conclusions, with concrete results

Things to Avoid in an Abstract

- Names of institutions that distract reader from central topic of Abstract

- Confusing an Abstract with an Introduction

- Complex sentences or statements

    – Use active voice if possible

- 5 wasted words: "In this paper, we show …"

- Citations and footnotes

- Acronyms

- "cents", that is, write $40 instead of $39.76

ASSORTED THOUGHTS ON WRITING AND PRESENTING TECHNICAL PAPERS
Patricia L. Mokhtarian

WRITTEN PAPER

General Advice:

♦ *First and foremost:* Consider learning to write an important part of your education, *every bit as important* as the subject matter you master. It doesn't matter what you master if you can't communicate effectively with others. Not being able to communicate your ideas is, in the words of the Chinese proverb quoted by one of our graduate school applicants, "like a dumpling cooked in a teapot – you have the dumpling, but you can't pour it out." Therefore, be prepared to work as hard at writing as you do at learning other new knowledge and skills. Understand that good writing is more a matter of effort than of innate talent. "Bad" writers can *learn* to be good, and even "good" writers struggle to write well and can always improve.

Arnold Barnett, winner of the 2001 Expository Writing Prize of the operations research society INFORMS says, "as far as I know, there is no such thing as effortless prose. If a sentence is adequate but not as crisp as it can be, it poses an intellectual tax on the reader. The cumulative effect of that tax, sentence after sentence, is considerable. I think what happens with good writing is that the author absorbs the pain so the reader does not" (*OR/MS Today*, December 2001, p. 53).

There *is* a selfish payoff for your efforts. Good writers are so scarce (and becoming more so, in this Twitter generation!) that they are highly sought-after and rewarded. Conversely, career-wise you will be at a disadvantage the rest of your life if you *don't* learn to write well.

Historian David McCollough makes some profound comments on the role of writing in the creative process: "The loss of people writing – writing a composition, a letter, or a report – is not just the loss for the record. It's the loss of the process of working your thoughts out on paper, of having an idea that you would never have had if you weren't [writing]. And that's a handicap. People [I research] were writing letters every day. That was calisthenics for the brain." – Interview in *Time*, June 20, 2011, p. 56.

Another interesting comment on the discipline of writing: "Print's uniformity, its immutability, its rigidity, its logic led to a number of social transformations, among which were the rise of rationalism and of the scientific method… [The] more we text and Twitter and 'friend', abiding by the haiku-like demands of social networking, the less likely we are to have the habit of mind or the means of expressing ourselves in interesting and complex ways." – Neal Gabler, writing in the *Los Angeles Times*, November 28, 2010, quoted in *Time*, December 13, 2010.

♦ *Need for explanation/interpretation:* Probably the most common substantive short-coming I see in the documents I edit is the failure adequately to explain, interpret, and place in context an observation or result. Don't just describe *what* was done, explain *why* it was done! Don't just plop a result down in the middle of nowhere – what does it mean? Is it good, bad, expected, unexpected, does it have significance for policy, theory, or practice? Of course it's hard work and you're not sure of yourself! But it's part of the experience in learning to communicate effectively. Discuss procedures and results with me, the research team, or a colleague until you think you know the "why" and the "what it means". And even after you think you know, it will be a struggle to express it in words! But exercise makes you strong...

♦ A related shortcoming is the *lack of transition phrases and sentences*, without which the document has a "choppy" feel. Try to put yourself in the shoes of someone reading the document for the first time, and think through what they would need to know for it to make sense. Develop an argument logically, don't just put down your thoughts at random.

♦ Always look for patterns, similarities, differences – i.e. ways to *organize* what you are trying to convey. (Move away from "individual trees", and try to see the "forest"). For example, in a literature review, don't just present studies in a random order – group them, e.g., by methodology, moving from simpler to more sophisticated. If interpreting significant effects in a model, group the variables by type: sociodemographic, built environment characteristics, attitudes. And don't just group them, but clue the reader in that that is what you're doing – both with an overall "roadmap" at the beginning of the section, and with "signpost" transitions as you move from one group to the next.

♦ *Clarity vs. brevity:* In writing technical papers, an important goal is to find the optimum balance between economy and clarity. That is, you want to say just enough to be clear, while avoiding redundancies and excessive ornateness. If you can say the same thing more briefly or directly, do it!

Purpose:

The most important thing is to start with a specific question. What question are you trying to answer with this paper? What issue are you trying to address? If your question is too broad or ill-defined, your paper will not succeed. Mentally, if not on paper, your first sentence should be: "This paper addresses the question of (how, what, why, when, where, who, whether)…" Of course your question should be interesting – to you and to others! (S. Handy)

Once you have a clear question, sub-questions should emerge that will define your subsections. Make sure that everything you write about has some direct relationship to your question. Don't let the literature write your paper for you. In other words, don't necessarily follow the structure that another author has used – develop your own structure and fit what others have said into your structure. Even if you are doing a literature review,

you should be making a new contribution, such as structuring a known body of findings in an original way, or critiquing the literature. Always critically evaluate research methods, analyses, and conclusions. (S. Handy)

Procedures for Writing Reports/Papers for Me:

♦ *General rule:* At each stage of the process, do the best you can. Be as complete, well-written, consistent as you can. Barnett's comment applies to documents written for my review as well: you may think something is minor and you'll fix it later, but the cumulative effect on the editor (me) of all those minor things is crushing! Fix them first, so I won't spend my finite energy on them!

♦ *Consistent:* Make an effort to be consistent about acronyms or abbreviations, capitalization, numbering/outlining system, formatting/style (fonts, bullets, etc.) from the beginning. Inconsistencies will have to be corrected sooner or later; it's easier to do it right the first time by just paying a little more attention.

♦ *Well-written:* Inform yourself about good writing practices. (I have a small book I can lend you; make me happy by asking for it). *Plan* to improve your writing; it won't happen automatically. Learn from others' examples, from my comments on your writing, etc. It's frustrating to have to keep correcting the same types of mistakes (by the same person) over and over again!

And nothing irritates me more than an attitude of, "Oh, Prof. Mokhtarian will catch [whatever], so I don't have to be careful". *From my perspective,* it's an insult and a waste of my time to expect me to do something you are capable of doing yourself. Equally importantly, *from your perspective* it's unhealthy to rely too heavily on someone else instead of developing your own expertise (does your mom still tie your shoes for you?) *For the benefit of both of us,* it is most efficient for me to spend my limited resources helping you with substantive issues you *can't* resolve on your own. The more time and energy I spend on editing the style, the less I have to improve the quality of the substance.

My students have noticed that the second time I edit a document they have drafted, some of my (numerous) new edits will be to my own edits from the first time! Some of you may take this as evidence of the capricious nature of my editing. I take it as evidence that (a) my expectations of quality are at least as high for myself as they are for my students; and (b) even good writers need editing and will find *many* ways to improve their own writing on further review. You seldom see the process, only the outcome, but papers on which I am the *single* author undergo the same process of multiple fresh readings and numerous edits before I consider them final.

♦ *Complete:* Even first drafts should have the pages numbered (I may need to make a reference on one page to something on another page), references included, tables and figures named (not necessarily numbered), be spell-checked, and so on. **Proofread and edit your own work before turning it in, preferably after letting it**

rest for at least a day. As I said, *everyone* can find ways to improve their own work on a new reading. Several students have started a "peer review" practice, of reading and critiquing each other's writing. I strongly support that!

Speaking of proofing, I digress to say that I hope you already have the habit of checking your work – analytical as well as textual. When you are analyzing data, check your results multiple times in multiple ways. Do a micro-check: do things "add up", are they internally consistent? And a macro-check: do they make sense, are they what would be expected? As Douglas A. Samuelson wrote, "Answer the questions, then question the answers" ("The Sanity Check", *OR/MS Today*, April 2000, p. 14).

♦   Typical L/R margins: one inch. Typical T/B margins (with page numbering on the bottom): 0.75"/0.5". "Widows/orphans protection" should be on (to prevent single stray lines from ending up at the top or bottom of a page). Text should be full-justified. At least for drafts, line-and-a-half spacing is good (single-spacing doesn't allow enough room for editing; double-spacing wastes trees).

♦   I will mark up your draft and return it to you. When I do that, *before* you read my comments, re-read your unmarked version of the draft, to see what you find on your own fresh reading (you might be amazed!). You develop your judgement and critical skills more by exercising them on your own than by passively accepting the corrections I hand you. Similarly, don't just dutifully record the edits I've made – try to understand the principle or rule behind them, otherwise you'll never be able to apply the principles yourself. Sometimes it's just a matter of personal taste or style, but often the edits are based on objective standards of good writing or correct grammar. Feel free to ask about the reason for any edit I make! Sometimes I jot the reason down on the document, but that gets messy and time-consuming to do all the time. But ask!

When you return a revised version of the document to me, you should return my original marked-up version as well. For intermediate drafts, this saves me the time of having to re-read the document as if for the first time; rather I will typically check back on my earlier comments to see that they are addressed. (On a near-final draft I will read it "fresh" one last time). Therefore, *you should double-check that you have in fact addressed all my comments.* Again it is an insult and a waste of time to force me to point out the same problem twice. You should feel free to argue with any comment that you disagree with: if it is a minor issue you can just write me a note next to my original comment; if it is more substantive we should discuss it in real time. I am capable of being persuaded to change my mind! But what you can't do is ignore a comment and hope I won't notice.

Don't expect to be finished on your second draft! Usually there is so much to respond to the first time around, that a second reading of the cleaner version brings out plenty of things that I missed the first time. Also of course, changing some things can create new problems. Expect perhaps 4 or 5 cycles on a document – *as many as it takes to get it right!* Excellence takes time and energy.

Citations:

The Mishnah of Judaism notes, "He who repeats a thing in the name of him who said it brings redemption to the world" (*Pirke Aboth*, Chapter 6, Paragraph 6); this has been popularized as the proverb, "When you identify the source you are citing, you bring salvation to the world." Isn't that inspiring?! In any case, the principle is: if you include a fact or an observation found in the literature, you must cite the source. If you do not properly credit observations to their source, you are in effect falsely claiming the idea to be your own, which is plagiarism (and which is wrong!). The exceptions are if the fact or observation is considered common knowledge, or if the fact is an original finding derived from your own data. There is obviously some subjectivity as to what is "common knowledge", and indeed that may legitimately vary depending on your audience. However, a good rule is, *when in doubt, cite.* You can't get into trouble for citing too much. (S. Handy) See attached UCD guidelines on plagiarism.

Careless citation practices that should be avoided:

1. **Citing a secondary source as if the thought were original to it**, when in fact the secondary source is only citing previous sources. For example, a student co-author once attempted to cite an earlier paper of mine in support of the point that currently-used air quality models are inaccurate. Now I have never done original research on that question; my paper did make that assertion, but on the basis of, and citing, work by others. So to use *my* paper as the source for that point is lazy on the part of the co-author, and makes *me* look presumptuous – as though I am claiming an authority in that area which I do not possess. Whether or not my own credibility is at stake, it is of course poor practice regardless. Again, it is investing that secondary source with a false authority.

2. **Citing a source without looking it up**, on the basis of someone else's citation. Don't trust others' citations; it is lazy scholarship and you may be guilty of perpetuating a sloppy or incorrect use of someone else's work.

3. **Citing an article in the popular (or even trade) press as an authority**. The press has its place in academic research, but that place is generally last! Although some reporters are doubtless better than others, the pressure of deadlines, (often) a lack of expertise in the area they are reporting on, and (sometimes) biases toward attention-grabbing results lead to numerous inaccuracies.

4. Along the same lines: **uncritical acceptance of a source**. *Don't believe everything you see in print*, even in academic journals! Don't accept someone's *opinion* as *fact*. Weigh the source for blatant biases: an automobile association report may slant things one way, a report from an environmental group another way. This advice applies in spades for the Web as a source! See attached notes on the article by Joanne Gainen, and the guide for evaluating Internet sources.

5. **ABSOLUTELY UNACCEPTABLE: A verbatim quote without quotation marks**. JUST CITING THE SOURCE IS NOT ACCEPTABLE HERE – IF YOU USE ANOTHER PERSON'S WORDS YOU MUST ENCLOSE THEM IN QUOTES. And guess what – just changing a couple of words in a sentence is not sufficient either! It's easy to fall into the trap of near-verbatim language when you are writing that section of the paper immediately after reading the source. Often, by reading the source until you are familiar with it, but then letting even a little time elapse before writing about it, you will find it easier to put the source's message into your own words.

6. **Letting a quote replace understanding**. We sometimes choose to quote rather than to paraphrase because, although we see the relevance of the point and acknowledge the credibility of the source, we don't understand what the author said well enough to put it into our own words! You might be able to get away with it up to a point, but (1) making the effort to understand brings its own reward (of course!), and (2) teachers, referees and the like generally recognize this practice for what it is, and discount your credibility accordingly. Obviously quotes have their place, when they make a point succinctly or colorfully or with authority.

A Few Other Principles about Direct Quotes:

1. Suppose you are making a direct quote, but because you are not including the entire context you need to make an explanatory comment. *Your* comment needs either to go outside the quote:

   "The shorter the previous trip to a leisure activity, the longer the travel time" of the current trip;

   or be placed in *square brackets* if it is more readable to put it inside the quote:

   "The shorter the previous trip to a leisure activity, the longer the travel time [of the current trip] is."

   In general, square brackets within quotation marks are used to signify any changes *you* make to the original verbatim quote. If you use parentheses () within a quote, it is assumed that the phrase is a parenthetical comment in the original quote, which is not appropriate when it is your addition.

2. When you reference a direct quote, many journal styles require the page numbers as well as the author and the date: (Smith, 1999, pp. 27-28). Do it in any case, so you won't have to look it up later! Similarly, bibliographic references for **book chapters** often require the page numbers, so include them from the beginning. If it's a book you checked out from the library, you don't want to have to hunt it down again when the galley proofs come back for your review and you've got a 24-hour turnaround time.

3. Don't put the citation inside the quote! It is not part of the quote.

WRONG: "Fourscore and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation (Lincoln, 1865)". Lincoln did not say, "Lincoln, 1865", so it does not belong in the quote.

4.   In general, words inside quotation marks should be the *exact* words of the source, unless modified by material in square brackets as indicated above (which should only be done sparingly!). If the source says "behaviour" rather than "behavior", so should the quote. If you omit even a single word and then continue the exact quote, the omitted text should be indicated by an ellipsis (three dots: …).

See the references in the "Plagiarism" section below for more information about acceptable and unacceptable practices.

When Citing a URL:

Include the date you accessed it, i.e. "ttp.ucdavis.edu, accessed October 8, 2010." This may aid in later using archival sources to track down sites that have been removed from the Internet.

Common Specific Issues/Problems:

♦   Many students will have come from a British English background. Now there is nothing wrong with the "Queen's English", but there are some differences with the American dialect, and when in America we should do as the Americans do. This is especially important for consistency, when more than one person is working on a document. In particular:

        –   Initial quotations should be double quotes – " " – not single quotes – ' '. A quotation within another quote takes single quotes. Example of a title: "Telecommuting: A Case of the 'Preferred Impossible Alternative'".

        –   -or (e.g. honor) instead of -our (honour), -er (center) instead of -re (centre), etc. Avoid "viz"; use "namely" or another alternative.

♦   Commas, semicolons (;), and periods denoting an abbreviation (unless ending the sentence) are followed by one space. Nowadays, it's also common for terminal punctuation (including periods that end sentences, question marks, and exclamation points) and colons (:) to be followed by one space (although back in the typewriter days it was two spaces). As a rule, there should be a space between a word or number and a left parenthesis, and no space between the parenthesis and the content it encloses: Jonathan (1993), not Jonathan(1993) or Jonathan (1993).

♦   Numbers less than ten should be spelled out: "seven", etc. Numbers 10 or greater may be written as numerals: 17. Never start a sentence with a numeral: "66% of respondents were female." Either rewrite the sentence to start with a word –

"Nearly two-thirds of the sample was female" – or as a last resort, spell out the numeral: "Sixty-six percent of the respondents were female."

♦ And don't say "The sample was [or the respondents were] 66% female." We all do have both "feminine" and "masculine" characteristics in varying proportions, but that wasn't what you meant.

♦ There seems to be an incredible confusion between percent change and *percentage points* change. Suppose an indicator is at 60% in 1994 and at 80% in 1995. This represents an increase of 20 *percentage points*, **NOT** 20 percent. In terms of percents, it is an increase of (.8 - .6)/.6 x 100% = 33%. There *is* a difference, you see!

Also, it makes a difference what base you use. Going from 60% to 80% is an *increase* of 33% (from the base of 60%); going from 80% back down to 60% is a *decrease* of (.8 - .6)/.8 x 100% = 25% (from the base of 80%). The appropriate choice of base will generally be clear from the context; sometimes either indicator would be an appropriate base. Where time is involved, the base will normally be the earlier of the two indicators.

♦ Tables and figures presenting empirical results should always be accompanied with a sample size, either (preferably) as part of the table/figure itself (title, legend, footnote, whatever) or prominently mentioned *nearby* in the text. The reader shouldn't have to hunt a couple of chapters back to find out if 20% means one person or 763.

The text accompanying a table should not just verbally repeat the content of the table ("33% of the sample was 25-34 years old, 26% was 35-44,..."), but should summarize, synthesize, and/or interpret the table: "The respondents were predominantly young, affluent professionals..."

When reporting the distribution of responses from a survey question (whether in tabular or graphic form), don't restrict yourself to the order in which the responses appeared in the survey. Display and discuss them in order of descending frequency of response – you are then giving the most important information first, and it's easier mentally and visually to process the information when there's an obvious pattern to it. An exception would be when there is some other logical grouping to the response categories (for example, based on conceptual similarity or to preserve a consistent ordering of the same categories across several tables) – then that logic may prevail. Also, your discussion may want to call attention to categories with low response, if that is a surprising or important result: [After discussing job and manager constraints resulting in termination of telecommuting,] "Importantly, no one reported quitting telecommuting because of intrinsic dissatisfaction with the arrangement."

The Importance of Punctuation and Spelling:

In this section, I'm starting to collect examples of how incorrect punctuation or spelling can lead to dramatic misinterpretations. The heroine of this theme is, of course, Lynne Truss, whose fantastic book, *Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation* (2003, New York: Gotham Books), is a paean to the importance of those tiny commas and other punctuation marks. Hilarious as well as informative, it is well worth reading!

Also, here is a good place to pronounce my unequivocal support for the Oxford comma. Please see http://www.salon.com/books/grammar/index.html?story=/books/feature/2011/06/30/death_of_the_serial_oxford_comma (accessed July 8, 2011) for a cogent explanation of why.

And now, the examples.

My student's e-mail to her dissertation committee: "Most of [my dissertation] has been written and reviewed by Pat." Yikes!!

Reader's Digest, June 2004, p. 123:

- Get tips on how to keep yourself safe from Trooper First Class Ronald Yanica of the Maryland State Police.

- Authorities said the robber is a 6 foot tall, white male with a beard weighing approximately 220 pounds.

- My husband asked me to read an essay he wrote for a class at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, detailing his goals following retirement. Although quite good, one sentence did leap out at me: "After retiring my wife, the kids and I plan to …"

Reader's Digest, May 2010, p. 64:

- Brevity is next to confusion in the insurance business. When a client died, her daughter told our agency that she would cancel the home policy the following week, once her mother's belongings were removed. Simple, right? Here's the note that was placed in the client's file: "Deceased will call next week to cancel moving her things out."

From William Hordern: A woman who was touring in Europe cabled her husband: "Have found wonderful bracelet. Price $75,000. May I buy it?" Her husband cabled back, "No, price too high." Unfortunately, his comma was left out, and she bought the bracelet. He sued the telegraph company, and won. If telegrams seem awfully quaint these days, jst MagN dmge tht cn B dn w typcl txt msg!

And for a hilarious 22-second lesson on why marrying a good speller is important, check out https://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=1731265676318&comments, accessed February 25, 2011.

Great rules for writing (original list from William Safire, *New York Times*, sent by Brett Koenig, 1/3/96; later augmentations over the Net):
(in case you can't tell, each rule violates itself…)

1. Verbs HAS to agree with their subject.
2. The pronoun also must agree with their antecedents.
3. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
4. If any word is improper at the end of a sentence, a linking verb is.
5. And don't start a sentence with a conjunction.
6. It is wrong to ever split an infinitive.
7. Avoid cliches like the plague (they're old hat).
8. Also, always avoid awkward or affected alliteration – it's annoying.
9. Be more or less specific.
10. Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are (usually) unnecessary.
11. Also, too, never, ever use repetitive redundancies.
12. Do not be redundant; do not use more words than necessary; it's highly superfluous.
13. If you reread your work, you will find on rereading that a great deal of repetition can be avoided by rereading and editing.
14. No sentence fragments.
15. Contractions aren't necessary and shouldn't be used.
16. Foreign words and phrases are not apropos.
17. One should NEVER generalize.
18. Comparisons are as bad as cliches.
19. Don't use no double negatives.
20. Avoid ampersands & abbreviations, etc.
21. One-word sentences? Eliminate.
22. Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake.
23. The passive voice is to be avoided.
24. Eliminate commas, that are, not necessary. Parenthetical words however should be enclosed in commas.
25. Never use a big word when a diminutive one would suffice.
26. Kill all exclamation points!!!
27. It is incumbent on one to avoid archaisms.
28. Eschew obfuscation.
29. De-accession euphemisms.
30. Avoid trendy locutions that sound flaky.
31. Use words correctly, irregardless of how others use them.
32. Understatement is always the absolute best way to put forth earth-shaking ideas.
33. Unqualified superlatives are the worst of all.
34. Use the apostrophe in it's proper place and omit it when its not needed.
35. Eliminate quotations. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "I hate quotations. Tell me what you know."
36. If you've heard it once, you've heard it a thousand times: Resist hyperbole; not one writer in a million can use it correctly.
37. Puns are for children, not groan readers.
38. Avoid colloquialisms, from soup to nuts.
39. Even if a mixed metaphor sings, it should be derailed.

40. Who needs rhetorical questions?
41. Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.
AND FINALLY
42. Proofread carefully to see if you any words out.

Useful References (see elsewhere in this document for others):

Bernstein, Theodore M. (1965) *The Careful Writer: A Modern Guide to English Usage.* New York: The Free Press. As you can see by the date, this one's a classic, but a very useful one. An encyclopedic yet conversational compendium of proper usage (e.g., what prepositions follow a given word: is it "divest of" or "divest from"?).

Hacker, Diana (1995) *A Writer's Reference*, 3rd edition. Boston, MA: Bedford Books. Whenever I've been unsure about proper usage, I've looked it up here and invariably found it.

Wydick, Richard (1985) *Plain English for Lawyers*, 2nd. ed. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press. Guess what – plain English for lawyers turns out to be much the same as plain English for engineers and other people too. This is a great little book with lots of examples. It used to be on sale for $3.00 at the Law Bookstore by the Silo – if the bookstore still has it I can't recommend strongly enough that you pick one up. Otherwise, I have a spare copy that I would be *thrilled* to loan you as an investment into your writing competence. There's now a 2001 edition; recently a student reported that the older editions were available on half.com for about $1; I'm not sure if that's still true or not.

Web Sites that Look Useful (further contributions welcome):

http://www.freerice.com/index.php, accessed October 22, 2010. Test your vocabulary while contributing rice to help end world hunger!
http://cai.ucdavis.edu/trc/trcgrid.html, accessed February 21, 2008. Terrific site.
http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Writing/, accessed October 8, 2003.
http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/index.html, accessed October 8, 2003.
http://www.word-detective.com/, accessed October 8, 2003.
http://nutsandbolts.washcoll.edu/topten.html, accessed August 19, 2004.
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/, accessed August 19, 2004.
http://occawlonline.pearsoned.com/divisions/longman/long_rude_techedit_3/, accessed August 19, 2004.
http://wsu.edu/~brians/errors/errors.html, accessed October 22, 2010. *Common Errors in English Usage* – excellent. Has a clickable "encyclopedia of errors".
http://verbivore.com/, accessed October 22, 2010. "The web site woven for wordaholics, logolepts, and verbivores."
http://wordribbon.tips.net/, accessed October 22, 2010. "Tips, tricks, and ideas" for using Word 2007 (and later).
www.phinished.org, accessed October 22, 2010. "A discussion and support group for people trying to *finish* their dissertations or theses, and those who have been there."

Web Sites Offering Tips on Preparing Abstracts:

http://writing.colostate.edu/references/documents/abstract/index.cfm, accessed
October 26, 2004.
http://www.english.uiuc.edu/cws/wworkshop/advice/writing_abstracts.htm,
accessed October 26, 2004.
http://www.uaf.edu/csem/ashsss/abstract_writing.html#title2, accessed Oct. 26,
2004.
http://www.io.com/~hcexres/tcm1603/acchtml/abstrax.html, accessed Oct. 26, 2004.
http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/bizwrite/abstracts.html, accessed October 26, 2004.

Common Grammatical Mistakes/Issues:

♦   *"A"* and *"the"* (indefinite and definite articles):   Adding or deleting "the" is
        probably the single most common edit I make. I realize that it must be very difficult
        to get this right if English is not your first language. Apparently the rules are tricky,
        and what is instinctive to a native speaker is an arcane mystery to others. The
        following web sites are quite helpful, however – *please* check them out, and try to
        learn. It may not be too important to the understanding of what you are writing,
        but it makes all the difference in the world to the impression you leave about how
        professional and correct your writing is.

        http://bogglesworldesl.com/indefinitearticles.htm
        http://esl.about.com/library/beginner/blathe.htm
        http://esl.about.com/library/quiz/bl_articles1.htm
        http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/esl/eslart.html
        http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Article_(grammar)

♦   *Affect* and *effect* are confusing because they can both be nouns or verbs, but they are
        by no means interchangeable:

        Affect as a noun means feeling or emotion (related to the word "affection").
        Commonly used in behavioral research. *Effect as a noun* means a consequence or
        result. Thus, unless the result you are looking for is a feeling or emotion, it is
        incorrect to write of "bringing about a desired *a*ffect".

        Affect as a verb means (most commonly) to change, influence, produce an *effect* (the
        noun). *Effect as a verb* means **to bring about or make happen.** Thus, to **effect** an
        outcome is slightly different than to **affect** an outcome. In the former case you are
        actually bringing it about, while in the latter case you are only influencing it (you
        can affect or influence something toward a desired result without actually effecting
        or achieving that result). So, the most common usages are of "affect" as a verb, and
        "effect" as the resulting noun:

                "We found that auto ownership significantly *affected* trip generation:
                adding one more car had the *effect* of generating two more daily trips
                per household, on average."

♦   *Apostrophes:* (See attached *Newsweek* column). Apostrophes are used with posses-
sives or contractions. They are *NOT* used with simple plurals. This applies even
when you are pluralizing a numeral or an acronym:

>"In the 1990s, TMAs have become increasingly common."
>NOT
>"In the 1990's, TMA's have become increasingly common."

Possessive *pronouns*, however, do *not* take apostrophes. Just as we write "his, hers,
yours, ours, and theirs" instead of "hi's, her's", and so on, we use *its* rather than it's
for the possessive pronoun. Use *it's* **ONLY** as a contraction of *it is* or *it has*:

>"The poem started out as just a silly joke, but *it's* taken on a life of *its* own."
>
>"*It's* amazing, but a wild animal caught in a trap will gnaw *its* own leg off to
>save *its* life."
>
>"Virtue: *it's its* own reward."
>
>"For what *it's* worth" = For what it is worth
>"For all *it's* worth" = For all it is worth
>"For all *its* worth" = For all the value it has
>"With all *its* might" = With all the strength it possesses

Similarly, *whose* is the possessive pronoun ("the person whose grade was highest";
"whose book is this?"); *who's* is **ONLY** the contraction of *who is* or *who has* ("who's
that knocking at my door?"; "Button, button, who's got the button?"). And don't
forget that for the possessive form of a noun that's pluralized by adding an *s*, it's *s
apostrophe*, not *apostrophe s*:

>"The *protests of the students* regarding the multiple fee hikes became
>increasingly vociferous"
>becomes
>"The *students'* protests...", NOT "The *student's* protests... " (The latter refers to
>just one lonely student).

(If the noun is plural without adding an *s*, it's back to *apostrophe s*: "People's Court",
not "Peoples' Court". Think "Court of the People", not "Court of the Peoples".)

♦   In general, use *between* for two items; *among* for three or more:

>"The relationship *between* transportation and land use is complex."
>"The relationships *among* telecommunications, transportation, and land use
>are especially complex."

Similarly, the words *former* and *latter* – and other comparatives like *better* or *worse* – are only used to distinguish between *two* groups. It is not correct to say, "The latter [or better] of the three concepts". Rather, "The last [or best] of the three...".

♦ Avoid *broken down by*; use *categorized by*, or *divided* or *disaggregated by*:

> "The respondents were broken down by age and sex" doesn't exactly bring the desired image to mind (I assume).

For the same reason, I generally use *gender* rather than *sex*. It's not so much prudery, as just keeping the reader focused on your point! And avoiding potential faux pas like the above. A colleague once asked if I would join an advisory group to add some "sexual diversity". I replied that I was sexually pretty conventional and just what kind of a meeting did she have in mind anyway, but I would be happy to add gender diversity...

♦ A *compliment* is something nice you say about someone; *complimentary* can refer to a compliment or mean "free, without charge": as in *complimentary* tickets to a World Series game.

A *complement* is something that *completes* a whole; it can mean opposite, or balancing: yin and yang are complements. *Complementary* is the corresponding adjective: "The two members of the team had *complementary* skills: one was good with numbers and the other was good with people."

♦ *Compose* and *comprise* are not synonyms; in fact they are somewhat complementary. To comprise means to be composed of. Thus,

> "A week *is composed of* seven days."   OR "A week *comprises* seven days."
> NOT
> "A week *is comprised of* seven days."

♦ *Equations* are sentences or parts of sentences too, and should be punctuated with commas, connector words, and periods accordingly:

> "We can model the parameter λ in a Poisson regression model as
>
> $\lambda = \sum_i a_i X_i + \varepsilon$, where
>
> X_i = the ith explanatory variable (observed),
>
> a_i = the (unknown) coefficient of the ith explanatory variable, and
>
> ε = an unobserved error term."

♦ *Farther* means more distant; *further* means additionally. You should say "We went farther" rather than "We went further". (Learned that relatively late myself. At least

one of my published papers uses the word "further" incorrectly. But we are never too old to learn...)

♦ *Forgone* means given up. *Foregone* means past, settled in advance:

"I had *forgone* an offer from industry to take the university position."

"The winner of the contest was a *foregone* conclusion."

♦ *Hyphenation:* When do you hyphenate between two words? Do **NOT** hyphenate when the first word is an ordinary adjective for the second word, or when both words act as a verb. **DO** hyphenate when the entire phrase becomes an adjective for another word:

"The telecommuting center was partly funded by the *private sector*, and was accessible *24 hours* a day."

IS EQUIVALENT TO

"The telecommuting center was partly funded through *private-sector* donations, and offered *24-hour* access."

"It takes six months to three years to *start up* a telecommuting center."
IS EQUIVALENT TO
"*Start-up* times for telecommuting centers range from six months to three years."

For an example of how confusion can arise when needed hyphenation is omitted, consider the following:

"Average trip speeds are categorized in *5 mph* increments"

sounds like there are 5 categories, where mph is the unit. What was meant was,

"Average trip speeds are categorized in *5-mph* increments" [the 5 and mph together becoming an adjective modifying increments].

The latter statement means that there are an indefinite number of categories, whose widths are 5 mph: 0-5 mph, 6-10 mph, etc.

Another example:

"Ford Motor Co. began offering its Crown Victoria factory equipped to run on natural gas..." (*Newsweek*, Oct. 6, 1997, p. 52)

sounds like the Crown Victoria *factory* was equipped to run on natural gas, when was meant was that a Crown Victoria *car* could be equipped *at the factory* to run on natural gas. In other words, "factory-equipped" should be hyphenated!

A TTP 200 HW (paraphrased):

"Sycamore Street is a two-vehicle lane road"
sounds like Sycamore Street is a "lane road" (whatever that is), designed to hold two vehicles. What was meant was,

"Sycamore Street is a two vehicle-lane road" – i.e. a road with two "vehicle-lanes", i.e. lanes designed for vehicles (presumably as opposed to "bike lanes")

♦ Avoid ambiguities that arise from piling *too many nouns-as-adjectives together*.

Example: "a 750 page book review" – wow, that is one mighty darn long book review! In this case, even hyphenation – "750-page book review" doesn't solve the problem. Better to say "review of the 750-page book [such-and-such]".

Example: "Squad Helps Dog Bite Victim" (newspaper headline submitted by Joan Wilson to *Reader's Digest*, February 2004, p. 163).

♦ The past tense of the verb "to lead" (pronounced "leed") is "*led*". When "*lead*" is pronounced "led", it is referring to the metal.

♦ *Less* versus *fewer*: Use "fewer" when referring to discrete, countable subjects like people, and "less" when referring to continuous quantities:

"Fewer than 500 respondents are expected"
NOT
"Less than 500 respondents are expected" (as I incorrectly used recently!)

More subtly, either of the following is correct:

"Less than 50% of the sample had ever telecommuted"
OR
"Fewer than 50% of the respondents had ever telecommuted".

In the first sentence, "sample" can be thought of as continuously divisible, but in the second sentence, "respondents" are clearly discrete entities.

Consider:

"When a city is perceived as having less relevant functions, …"

vs.

"When a city is perceived as having fewer relevant functions, …"

In the first case, "less" modifies "relevant": The functions of the city are perceived to be less relevant (relevance being a concept that can be measured on a continuous scale). In the second case, "fewer" modifies "functions": The city has a smaller number of functions that are perceived to be relevant (functions being countable, discrete entities).

♦   *"Lose"* looks like it should rhyme with "hose", but actually it rhymes with "booze". It is the opposite of "find" or "win" or "gain". *"Loose"* (rhymes with "goose") is the opposite of "tight". Thus, you might find a variable *losing* (not *loosing*) significance when another variable is entered into the model.

♦   Construct lists with *parallel structure*. WRONG:

"Telecommuters felt considerable *job stability*, *no isolation* from their peers, and *good* about the kind of work they did.

This is a list of noun (job stability), noun (no isolation), adjective (good). The last item in the list should be re-written in the form of a noun:

"Telecommuters felt considerable *job stability*, *no isolation* from their peers, and *satisfaction* with the kind of work they did.

♦   *Principal* (an adjective, meaning "main", except when used as a noun in "school principal" or in the financial context of e.g., "payments on the principal and on the interest") versus *principle* (a noun, meaning "truth, basis, foundation"): Let the "a" in "principal" remind you of "main" (well if you have a better idea, let me know!). So it's:

"The *principal* (main) characteristic of the process"
AND
"The *principle* underlying the solution methodology" (H. Mahmassani).

Of course, you could speak of the principal principle as opposed to lesser principles, but that would be contrived…

♦   *Pubic* versus *public*: This is one common but no less embarrassing mistake that's incredibly easy to make, and I don't think you want to be the one with "pubic policy" displayed on your Power Point slide to an audience of hundreds (or even twos). It's also very easy to avoid, now that word processors have the ability to automatically correct frequently misspelled words.   Just declare "pubic" as a misspelling of "public" in the appropriate list (not being in a medical or related field, the legitimate need to use "pubic" is not likely to arise), and it will automatically be corrected. Failing that, get in the habit of routinely doing a search-and-replace for that word in particular (an ordinary spell check won't catch it, obviously – unless

you remove it from the dictionary, which is possible in some cases). Failing that, make "public" one of those words (like "its", "their" and other problem words are for me) that automatically rings an alarm bell in your brain for taking a second look.

♦ *References:* Use an accepted bibliographic style; there are enough out there already without you making up one of your own! Italicization or underlining is reserved for books, journals, or otherwise full-length works. Quotation marks (or increasingly commonly, no special markings) are used for stories, articles, or other *parts* of a full-length work.

♦ *Repetition:* Generally, you want to avoid repeating the same word or variations of the word too close together. A thesaurus (manual or computerized) can be useful in helping you find alternatives. Sometimes, however, deliberate repetition can serve the purpose of focusing the reader, making it clear that you are still talking about the same thing as before, or acting as a transition from one thought to the next.

♦ Don't use a *singular subject* with a *plural verb*, or vice versa. This generally happens when there is a modifying phrase between the subject and the verb:

> WRONG: "The information provided by the community networks are easy to use."

Just mentally remove the modifying phrase "provided by the community networks" to see that it should read:

> RIGHT: "The information … *is* easy to use."

So get in the habit of checking subject against verb, mentally stripping away any intervening obfuscation!

> WRONG: "The performance of these activities require the person to be at a certain place."
> RIGHT: "The performance … *requires* the person to be at a certain place."

♦ Don't use the plural pronouns *they* or *their* to refer to a singular noun: This is (unfortunately) becoming so common that probably one day it will be accepted practice. But it is not now. Thus,

> "*Each person interviewed* believed that *they* should have taken more time to develop *their* particular center"

is *incorrect* unless the respondent is speaking for more than one person. The temptation to do this generally arises from a commendable effort to avoid the potentially sexist "he" when gender is non-specific. But it is almost always possible to rewrite the sentence in such a way as to avoid the problem (some ways more natural than others):

"Each person interviewed [or, All participants interviewed] believed that more time was needed to develop that particular center."

Alternatively, I simply alternate between genders whenever the occasions arise, usually starting with she/her(s) (although trying to avoid both politically incorrect stereotypes and utterly unrealistic attributions of gender). As a last resort, I occasionally use "(s)he" or "hers/his" when I wish to remain gender-neutral. Some exceptionally enlightened writers generally use the female gender everywhere, figuring that men have had their turn for centuries…

This practice also arises (more correctly, by some standards) when the noun, though singular, refers to a group of people such as a company:

"The company decided to allow *their* employees to telecommute"
should be replaced with
"The company decided to allow *its* employees to telecommute".

Again, it is only one company (although in British English, the former wording is considered correct). On the other hand, if multiple employers were involved, it would be correct to say:

"Some compan*ies* decided to let *their* employees telecommute."

♦   *Which* v. *that:* Use "*that*" when the subsequent phrase is an *essential* qualification, one that narrows down the subject to just the desired group. Use "*which*" when the phrase doesn't *reduce* the focus to a smaller group, but just adds more information about the subject. *Generally* (not always), if a comma *can be imagined* before the phrase (whether actually placed there or not), it should be "which", not "that".

"I'm returning the book *that* you lent me, *which* was quite fascinating."
NOT
"I'm returning the book *which* you lent me…": "you lent me" is an essential qualification – the focus of interest is just the book you lent me, not other books. "…which was quite fascinating" simply adds more information about the desired subject, namely, the particular book of interest.

Personal Preferences (to keep in mind if you ever write a formal research report for me!):

♦   Avoid *verb forms ending in prepositions* – these usually sound more "slangy" and are more awkward syntactically, making the sentence more difficult to process cognitively. Almost always, an alternative can be found. E.g., use

"viewed" instead of "looked at";
"appeared" instead of "showed up" in the model;
"completed" instead of "filled out" the survey; etc.

♦ *Data* is the plural of "datum". Hence, "the data *were* collected".

♦ I avoid the use of *etc.* in formal writing (not in informal!). According to one humorous e-mail I've received (I tried to confirm the source, but could not), the "New Oxford Dictionary" defines "etc." as "a sign to make others believe that you know more than you actually do" – and I agree! It generally suffices to give one or two examples of what you mean, and let the "etc." be implied: "Certain variables have been consistently significant in mode choice models, such as travel time and cost [, etc.]." When I do use a "trailer", I prefer *and so on* to etc. because "and so on" is not an abbreviation, requiring extra periods in the middle of sentences.

♦ The phrase *in order* is usually unnecessary. It's a habit, but once you break it your writing is that much cleaner:

> "In order to study the commute mode choice process, a survey was designed and administered to a random sample of 1000 Sacramento residents."
> versus
> "To study the commute mode choice process, a survey was designed … "

♦ *Insure* involves paying a premium to an insurance company. *Ensure* means to make certain.

♦ As you may have noticed, I prefer *italics* to <u>underlining</u>. Latin phrases such as *ad hoc* and *et al.* should be italicized.

♦ Don't use *over* when *more than* is appropriate. For example, I prefer:

> "More than 800 respondents completed the survey"
> instead of
> "Over 800 respondents completed the survey."

You can see how the word "over" could take on its prepositional role and be ambiguous:

> "After circulating over 1000 door hangers, the site administrator received only three inquiries." (Don't you get the image of the site administrator flying around in circles above a pile of door hangers?)

The same goes for *under* and *less than.*

Along the same lines, most editors will routinely replace *while* with *although* or *whereas* when appropriate: "While the automobile is a status symbol for some people, for others it is simply a means of transportation" would get changed to "Although the automobile..." Again, the reason is that "while" can also mean "as long as", which is not quite what you meant, so why not avoid ambiguity? I'm not hard and fast on that one, but I am myself starting to use "although" and "whereas" more often in those situations.

The same reasoning leads to preferring *because* over *since* – because "since" can mean "from the time that" as well as "because".

♦ Don't use the *possessive form* when referring to concepts: "Telecommuting's contribution to congestion reduction may be minimal." I hate that! Say instead, "The contribution of telecommuting to congestion reduction may be minimal."

♦ *Split infinitives:* In general, I try to avoid splitting infinitives unless it would sound completely contrived not to do so. Thus, I would prefer,

> "Few of the telecenters were able *adequately to accommodate* this requirement."
> INSTEAD OF
> "Few of the telecenters were able *to adequately accommodate* this requirement."

I do tend to observe grammarians' absolute prohibition against splitting the verb "to be". Thus, I would accept the phrase, "*To boldly go* where no man has gone before" (with proper citation, of course), but not, "*To really be* sure of his results, he repeated the experiment three times." Replace it with, "To be completely certain..."

Purists will also not split forms of "to be". For example, "He really could have been precise" is better than "He could have really been precise" (splitting "have been").

♦ *"The"*: see *"A"* and *"the"*.

Personal Abbreviations:

bet.:	between
dep.:	dependent
indep.:independent	
fn:	footnote
ME:	mutually exclusive
nec.:	necessary, necessarily
NORL:	not on reference list
NSD:	no significant difference
SD:	significant difference
s.d.:	standard deviation
o/w:	otherwise
pax:	passenger(s) (*not* packages !)
Q:	questionnaire
q:	question (not always consistent re upper and lower case)
®	respondent
re:	regarding
r.t.:	rather than
s.t.:	such that
sth:	something
S&R:	search and replace
TT:	travel time
v.:	versus, as opposed to
IVTT, OVTT: in-vehicle, out-of-vehicle travel time	
var.:	variable or variance, depending on context
w/o:	without
wh.:	which
w.r.t.:	with respect to
x-:	trans-, e.g. xfer = transfer, xlate = translate
xp:	transportation
∵	because
∴	therefore
∀	for all, for every
∃	there is, there exists
∄	there isn't, there doesn't exist
Δ	change (in)
ψ	psychological
¶	paragraph
§	section
§§	sections
~	(wrapped around two words or phrases) reverse order

Dr. Pamela Demory (phdemory@ucdavis.edu)
English Department / University Writing Program
Writing in the Disciplines Workshop Program (workshops@ucdavis.edu)

Writing Grant Proposals

Monday, February 2, 2004 • 4-5 pm
1003/1007 Kemper Hall

1. Introduction: The Stakes

According to a 1994 report, the National Science Foundation (NSF), funds approximately 25% of the 40,000 proposals it receives every year; the National Institutes of Health funds approximately 30% of the 20,000 proposals it funds each year (rptd. in Penrose and Katz 1998). This means that 70-75% of submitted proposals don't get funded.

Top Ten Reasons for Rejecting Proposals
(according to a survey of NIH reviewers, qtd. in Penrose and Katz 1998)

1. Lack of new or original ideas
2. Diffuse, superficial, or unfocused research plan
3. Lack of knowledge of published relevant work
4. Lack of experience in the essential methodology
5. Uncertainty concerning the future directions
6. Questionable reasoning in experimental approach
7. Absence of an acceptable scientific rationale
8. Unrealistically large amount of work
9. Lack of sufficient experimental detail
10. Uncritical approach

I can't help you with item #1: having an original idea. But as for the rest: this workshop is designed to provide you with a few important guidelines for making the most of your ideas and presenting them in as persuasive a way as possible.

2. Preparing to Write

2.1 Consider your target audience

Typically, proposals are read by a mixed group:

- program officers and staff – generalists whose job it is to make sure that the proposal fits within the agency's general goals;

- specialists in the particular research area, whose job it is to evaluate the scientific merit of the proposal.

Your proposal must respond to the needs of both groups of people.

2.2   Carefully Read the Program Announcement or RFP

- find general review criteria
- find agency's overall mission statement, objectives
- study specific program objectives

Your proposal must respond to both the explicit and implicit requirements of the RFP.

2.3   Do Some Brainstorming

- What are the specific goals of your research project?
- How, specifically, does your research project respond to the explicit and implicit goals and values of your target funding agency?
- What prior research has been done in this area? How, specifically, does your research advance, or move beyond, what has already been done?
- What specific steps will you need to take to reach your goals? What resources will you need? How long will it take? Are your goals reasonable, given your time frame?

2.4   Look at Models—Successful grant proposals in your field

3.   Organizing the Proposal

Organize your proposal according to the directions provided by the funding agency. Most proposals contain the following:

- Abstract
- Title Page
- Table of Contents
- Project Description
- Budget
- Biographies of investigator(s)
- Other (information about handling of human subjects or hazardous materials, for example, or about facilities)
- References

The Project Description is the heart of the proposal—it usually consists of the following:

Introduction: establishes the purpose, significance, and objectives of the proposed research

Background: explains the context for the present research project, including literature review

Methodology: explains how the proposed research will be conducted, including rationale

Overall Significance: explains how the proposed research will further the broader aims and goals of the funding agency

3.1   Introduction

The introduction to a proposal typically makes four moves (Swales 1984, qtd. in Penrose and Katz 1998):

Move 1	Announce the Topic.
Move 2	Summarize previous knowledge and research.
Move 3	Prepare for present research
	by indicating a gap in previous research and/or
	by raising a question about previous research.
Move 4	Introduce the present research
	by stating the purpose and/or
	by outlining the research

Be sure to explicitly tie your research plans to the specific goals of the program.

3.2   Background

In this section, you will provide a thorough grounding/rationale for your research project by reviewing the literature and explicitly tying your proposed research to what has already been accomplished in the field. This accomplishes two things:

- it educates the generalist readers, helping them to see why your research is important, and how it builds on previous, established science;

- it shows your specialist readers that you are familiar with the current state of knowledge in the field

Consider ending with a statement of your specific research objectives.

3.3   Methodology or Work Plan

The methodology section of a proposal differs from a journal article in two ways:

- it is less specific
- it has more rationale

Your objective is not only to explain what you will do, but why your plan is better than other options.

3.4   Overall Significance

Somewhere in the proposal you should explicitly discuss the larger significance of your proposed project – in the terms of the funding agency's goals and values. Where exactly you place this material will vary. You might include it at the end of the Introduction or Methodology sections; you might make it a separate subsection in Methodology; or you might make it its own section at the end of the proposal, as suggested here. Your decision will depend on the nature of

your research project; how obvious the larger significance of your project is to the general reader; how obvious the connection of your research project is to the funding agency's goals; whether the program announcement asks, explicitly, for a section on significance.

4.   Organization within Sections

Headings & Subheadings

- Use *functional* headings for the major divisions of your proposal (Introduction, Background, Methodology);

- Use *topical* headings and subheadings for the divisions within the Background and Methodology sections (and possibly the Introduction as well)

Forecasting

To improve coherence and readability, tell your reader at the beginning of each subsection and paragraph where the section/paragraph is going, and why.   This "forecasting" of your intentions will guide your reader through your proposal. Without such forecasting, the reader may become lost in the wealth of specific detail and lose track of why the detail is being provided.

References

Killingsworth, M.J. (1996) *Information in Action: A Guide to Technical Communication.* Allyn and Bacon.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration. (NASA) Research Announcements. http://research.hq.nasa.gov

National Science Foundation. (NSF) Grant Proposal Guide. http://www.nsf.gov/pubs

National Science Foundation. (NSF) Engineering. http://www.eng.nsf.gov

Penrose, A. M. and Katz, S. B. (1998). *Writing in the Sciences: Exploring the Conventions of Scientific Discourse.* St. Martin's Press.

Perelman, L.C., Paradis, J., and Barrett, E. (1998) *The Mayfield Handbook of Technical and Scientific Writing*. Online access: https://mit.imoat.net/handbook/home.htm

WRITING TECHNICAL PROPOSALS

Useful web sites:

http://www.ssrc.org/fellowships/art_of_writing_proposals.page, accessed 5/23/2005
http//fdncenter.org/learn/shortcourse/prop1.html.
http://www.grad.berkeley.edu/publications/thegraduate/Reprints/proposal.pdf
http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/disspropworkshop/
http://chronicle.com/article/How-to-Fail-in-Grant-Writing/125620/, accessed 2/22/11

How to Review a Technical Paper

Alan Meier
Berkeley Lab, University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720 USA
(Received March 27, 1992)

Abstract

Peer review of journal articles and other technical reports is a key element in the maintenance of academic integrity. This article assists the reader in the efficient preparation of constructive reviews. The parts of a typical review are listed, as well as formats for the most common situations. Common defects of technical papers are discussed.

Introduction

At one time or another, every academic is asked to review papers submitted for publication in journals. These reviews play a key role in maintaining the integrity of a journal. In addition, the exercise exposes the referee and the author to new ideas and perspectives. Unfortunately, nascent academics are never formally taught the art and skills needed to referee a technical paper. As a result, most reviews take more time than necessary, while contributing little constructive knowledge to the author. The following text offers some tips to the referee to assist in the preparation of a written review. Learning the mechanics of review writing can never substitute for full comprehension of the material, but it can transform the review into a constructive document. At the same time, there are simple rules for identifying flaws in the paper that greatly simplify review preparation and allow the referee to concentrate on the paper's content. This guide focuses on technical papers, but some of the advice also applies to papers in the social sciences and liberal arts.

Why is a review necessary?

The peer review serves several roles, although the precise combination varies with the type of review. The most important reasons for review include finding deficiencies in:

- technical approach and analysis;

- computation;

- ignorance of related research.

Each of these categories requires a referee with broad knowledge of the topic to recognize these deficiencies. Even simple arithmetic errors need an expert to detect them. Errors of the "2 x 3 = 7" type are rarely spotted directly; rather, a referee will sense that something is wrong with an argument, and then trace it back to the arithmetic error. No self-respecting researcher wants such errors publicized, so the review process limits the humiliation to a much smaller (and often anonymous) circle.

Reviews are useful to detect a second kind of problem. Two examples are:

- style and grammar that confuse the reader;

- patent or legal issues.

These aspects are often addressed by specialists in editing and law rather than the topic of the paper. Unfortunately, most academic journals lack the staff to assist the author, so the referee should alert the author to style and grammar errors, especially if they are serious. Certainly the author will want his or her paper read, understood, and appreciated by as many people as possible; therefore it is in his interest to repair these problems before the paper is published or circulated.

Types of reviews

There are three types of reviews: "anonymous", "friendly", and "internal". In an anonymous review, the editor solicits a referee to review the article. The referee returns the review to the editor who, after removing any identification, gives it to the author. Academic journals typically use the anonymous review, but it is also used for books, articles in proceedings, and some reports.

Many authors send drafts of articles or reports to other experts and solicit their comments. This is called a "friendly" review. In such cases, the reviewer is known to the author. The timid reviewer may be reluctant to harshly criticize a paper, so these are less valued than an anonymous review (although a true friend should be the severest critic in private).

Many laboratories and research institutes require that all papers be internally reviewed prior to submission to a journal or proceedings. The quality of such reviews is highly variable, from extremely rigorous to worthless beyond protecting the author from the most outrageous errors.

In all cases, however, the procedure to review a paper is fundamentally similar. This guide assumes that you are anonymously reviewing a paper for an academic journal.

Most reviews have four parts

Before reviewing a paper, it is useful to consider the desired output. In this way, you can categorize your comments for later inclusion in the best part. The four parts of a review are:

- referee's review form;

- additional comments;

- original paper;

- cover letter to editor.

Most journals ask the referee to fill out a review form. The form consists of a list of questions about the article, and often solicits recommendations. Poorly designed forms allow "yes/no" answers, but more sophisticated ones prompt the referee to elaborate (and provide space for those comments). The form is typically designed such that the referee's name is on the opposite side or on a tear-off portion to protect his identity.

Nearly all forms ask the referee to write additional comments on a separate page. This may include responses to questions on the form that were too long to fit in the allocated space or comments that were not appropriate for any specific question.

The referee often returns the original paper to the editor. Sometimes it is simpler to write comments directly on the paper than to describe them in the "additional comments" section. Editing corrections are particularly easy to show this way. If only a few pages are covered with red ink, you can save postal charges by mailing only those offending pages.

The cover letter to the editor is a useful document in addition to being a civil act. First, it reminds the editor of your review and the associated paper. (Editors receive reviews every day, so it is difficult to remember every paper and referee.) Second, it gives you a chance to summarize the review in one or two sentences. Finally, the cover letter provides a location for you to write any "off-the-record" comments regarding the paper. For example, a referee might write, "I am astonished that the author wasn't aware of the identical research conducted by Prof. X fifteen years ago". More often than not, the referee uses the cover letter to apologize for the tardy review.

What to write if there is no form

There will be circumstances where no review form is provided. Here is a format to use in such cases.

(1) Title and author of paper

(2) Summary of paper

This needs to be only 1-3 sentences, but it demonstrates that you understand the paper and, moreover, can summarize it more concisely than the author in his abstract.

(3) Good things about the paper (one paragraph)

This is not always necessary, especially when the review is generally favorable. However, it is strongly recommended if the review is critical. Such introductions are good psychology if you want the author to drastically revise the paper.

(4) Major comments

Discuss the author's assumptions, technical approach, analysis, results, conclusions, reference, etc. Be constructive, if possible, by suggesting improvements.

(5) Minor comments

This section contains comments on style, figures, grammar, etc. If any of these are especially poor and detract from the overall presentation, then they might escalate to the 'major comments' section. It is acceptable to write these comments in list (or bullet) form.

(6) Recommendations

Some referees will shower papers with invective even when they like it. An editor may not recognize this habit, and interpret the criticism as grounds not to publish the paper. For these reasons, it is worthwhile to tell the editor if the paper should be published. Three major categories of recommendations are: "publish as is", "publish after corrections have been made", and "reject". Sometimes the recommendations fit better in the cover letter.

Do not write your name on the comments pages because the editor may forget to conceal your name.

What makes a good paper?

Good papers contain something of merit. You, an expert in the subject, should be able to find it (if it exists). However, the item of merit may be poorly presented, which can undermine the paper's value. A logical structure is the first element of a good presentation.

A standard structure for technical papers has evolved as follows:

(1) Abstract
(2) Introduction
(3) Body of the Paper (technique, results, discussion)
(4) Conclusions
(5) References
(6) Tables
(7) Figures (and captions)

Naturally there are minor variations in these sections depending on the topic and the journal's requirements, but the concept is always the same. If the author did not follow it, then it should be quickly obvious to a reader why a different structure was necessary.

Even if the paper was written in the standard structure, major problems may exist. (The standard structure simplifies identification of the defects.) Here are some common errors encountered in each of the above sections.

Read the *Abstract* before and after the whole paper. Does it actually summarize the paper? Does it include the conclusions as well as the statement of the original problem? Is there information not presented elsewhere in the paper? Keep in mind that abstracts are often written in haste, sometimes not by the principal author, and occasionally with knowledge of information not discussed in the paper.

The *Introduction* should explain why the topic is important. The audience for the paper will determine the scope of the Introduction. If the paper is about a new chemical reaction to be published in the *Journal of the American Chemical Society,* then it is probably not necessary to explain to the reader why organic chemistry is important in everyday life. Many technical papers suffer from excessively broad introductions; usually the first few paragraphs can be excised. Does the author cite only his own papers for examples of past work?

The *Body of the Paper* is the part most requiring the referee's expertise. Here you are on your own. As you read it, decide if the approach and analysis are clearly described. Has the author integrated discussions of errors and uncertainties in his analysis at suitable points? Authors also have difficulty identifying what parts of their papers are central and which are either irrelevant or of lesser importance. (Sometimes the author has not carefully considered his audience.) Therefore, look for material that could be deleted. Is the level of detail reasonable? Are too much data presented? Many journal articles are condensations of much longer and detailed internal reports. It is perfectly acceptable to refer to the internal reports for details, especially when only a few readers will be interested. (If they want the details, they can write the author for the report.) When the paper has a page limit, the author may fail to insert enough detail. As a referee,

you need to identify these cases and suggest areas where offsetting deletions could be made so as to remain within the limits.

While reading the Body of the Paper, consider the topic as a whole. Is this the right amount of work for a paper? Is the paper premature? Alternatively, should the paper be divided into two papers? Few referees seriously consider these issues.

The *Conclusions* should follow directly from the Body of the Paper. There should be no surprises and, most important, no new material introduced. Some authors try to broaden their conclusions by "reaching" for results produced elsewhere. This is unacceptable.

The References provide many clues to the author's approach. The paper is immediately suspect (but not necessarily wrong or obsolete) if all of the references are old. A reference list containing papers only by the author deserves special, and skeptical, scrutiny. Beyond this, however, the referee should be able to spot omissions. Has the author forgotten important references? Help the author if possible by supplying the citations.

Tables, Graphs, and Figures are vital components to a paper but only when thoughtfully used. Tables are particularly abused. Is every table and graph necessary? (Perhaps a citation to an internal report would suffice.) Do the tables contain more digits than are actually significant? This is a common problem when computers calculate values and the programmers fail to suppress insignificant digits. Worse, these nonsense numbers clutter up a table, thus making it more difficult for the reader to extract the significant numbers. Zero suppression also removes table clutter. For example:

1.3732145 -> 1.4

0.00045 km -> 45 cm

Substitution of graphs for tables avoids both of these problems.

Table? <- DATA => graph?

Can the table data be presented better in a graph? With the advent of computer plotting programs, graphs are wonderfully easy to create. There are now several guides to the preparation of effective displays of quantitative information. Unfortunately, some treat a graph as a piece of art and refuse to acknowledge that most graphs will be computer generated. You must recognize that a compromise may be required.

Check that all figures and tables are appropriately captioned and are referred to in the text. Journals differ in their policies regarding captions, but it is good practice to have one sentence in the caption summarizing the results.

When to decline

Most editors ask the referee to finish a review within a specified time. Unfortunately, a good review takes many hours to prepare and it must compete with other obligations. Therefore, you can (and should) decline to review a paper if you cannot devote the necessary time before the deadline. But tell the editor immediately so that he can find a substitute referee.

Upon inspection of the paper you may realize that you are not competent to review the paper. This is nothing to be ashamed about because editors cannot perfectly match papers and referees. Once again, you should notify the editor immediately.

When you decline to review a paper, the editor will be particularly gratified if you suggest an alternate referee, with the relevant address, and telephone number. Some editors will encourage you to pass on the paper directly, while others want full control of the review process.

Good editors keep lists of referees. One goal is to avoid asking people to review papers too frequently, but the lists often include information about the quality of the reviews and how often one declines. It is sometimes believed that a good referee gets preferential treatment when he submits his own paper. This belief may have some justification.

In conversations with editors and other colleagues, we are seeing more "early" drafts of papers being submitted to journals. By "early" I mean less than fully polished papers, or papers by graduate students and junior faculty that have not been gone over and criticized by more senior researchers, as well as papers that might have been composed for courses or conferences but not thoroughly rewritten. Sloppy papers by senior researchers are also not so uncommon. The consequence is that more papers are rejected out of hand, or revise-and-resubmit does not lead to acceptance.

Often, people write literature reviews for some purpose, which were they well done might be invaluable as scholarly contributions. But a literature review demands the judgment that comes with maturity, or the iconoclasm that comes with beginning in a field. Otherwise, one has one of those dreaded chapter twos of dissertations.

While we now might demand that new junior faculty we hire have published some articles, my suspicion is that more energy ought to go into finishing the dissertation earlier, and perhaps writing one very decisive and careful article setting forth the achievement of that research.

My dream is to find a wonderful article by an otherwise unknown. My nightmare is to find one more article that should remain unknown.

Similar issues come up in conference presentations. It would help if they represented substantial amounts of research (say a year's worth or two). I realize there are enormous benefits to presenting at meetings--you get better known, people find out what is going on, etc. But right now many researchers do not realize how much they are penalized for substandard work, a paper presentation which is then viewed as a waste by the people who got stuck in the room and could not leave.

One of my friends once wrote a long paper, "Why I Do Not Attend Case Conferences." (Paul Meehl, in his book Psychodiagnosis. Meehl is associated with the MMPI.) It is a great paper, and fun to read. Meehl's point was that most of the presentations at the conferences about particular cases in the medical arena used faulty and dangerous inference, with lots of casual empiricism and anecdotal reasoning. One might write a paper, Why I Do Not Attend Meetings, or Why I Do Not Read Journal XYZ, for much the same reason, I imagine. [There are lots of other reasons to attend, social and political and nefarious.]

What to do? Test out your drafts on senior colleagues. Do two or three drafts, at least. Let a paper sit in a drawer for a month, and then revise. And if you are senior, have your junior colleagues read over your papers--they know better than anyone what is hot at the moment, what is warmed over. You really do not want to have people avoiding your papers or your talks because they have tasted them before and found them lacking in nutritive value.

MK

PRESENTATION ADVICE

You should always respect the time limit you are given, even for a class presentation. It will give you good practice for future presentations on the job and at conferences. (S. Handy) The Golden Rule is still in effect: if you don't like being the last of four people in a session to speak, and being asked to make your remarks in five minutes while people are pouring out of the room because the previous speakers went way overtime, then don't do it to others.

In most presentation settings (job and conference), you will have a relatively short amount of time (15 minutes is typical) in which to speak. You will likely *not* be able to discuss everything that you put into the paper or report on which your talk is based. Don't ramble over a lot of preliminary detail and then have to rush through your most important findings in the last two minutes! Focus on a few specific points to convey, and *plan* to leave out much of your written material (referring the *interested* listeners to it for more details, obviously). If you make a few points well, people will remember your talk far better (and will have a more favorable impression of you as a speaker) than if you cover a lot of ground superficially. (S. Handy)

It has lately become fashionable to bash Power Point, holding it responsible for the "dumbing down" of the communication of complex ideas (including assigning it partial blame for the space shuttle Columbia disaster!). In my opinion, its detractors have a point, but in any case it's a good idea to inform yourself about some pitfalls of relying too heavily on Power Point, and some general principles of good oral communication. Some useful/interesting web sites include:

http://www.norvig.com/Gettysburg/, a hilarious send-up of the Gettysburg address in Power Point, accessed September 19, 2005.

http://www.dartmouth.edu/~chance/chance_news/recent_news/chance_news_13.01.html#item15, accessed September 19, 2005.

http://www.dartmouth.edu/%7Echance/chance_news/recent_news/chance_news_12.06.html#item6, accessed September 19, 2005.

http://www.aaronsw.com/weblog/000931, accessed September 19, 2005.

http://www.dartmouth.edu/%7Ebiomed/workshops/powerpt_faq.shtml, a useful set of tips for Power Point presentations, , accessed September 19, 2005.

http://www.dartmouth.edu/%7Ebiomed/new.htmld/lgr_ppt.shtml, accessed September 19, 2005.

http://www.govexec.com/features/0904-01/0904-01s3.htm, accessed September 19, 2005.

PLAGIARISM

A letter from Donald Dudley of the Office of Student Judicial Affairs, citing the UC Davis *Code of Academic Conduct*, makes the case against plagiarism very articulately:

"Citing one's sources stimulates original thought and shows respect for our intellectual heritage by acknowledging the work of those upon whom we rely in researching, analyzing, and/or writing about a topic. Campus rules regarding plagiarism reflect the fact that individual effort is required to learn from doing homework, solving problems, or writing a paper. Those who rely too heavily on the words and ideas of others do not fully develop their own skills, and therefore do not receive the educational benefit of doing their own work. Working independently and crediting sources helps a student clarify his/her own strengths and weaknesses, and builds self-confidence and good judgment, while encouraging creativity. Similarly, carefully and accurately acknowledging one's sources helps the student to identify what is truly his/her own work, and ensures that the feedback from the instructor corresponds to the student's individual needs and skills."

"Plagiarism is a crime that unleashes functionally illiterate graduates upon the work force and society… [Those who plagiarize] are getting degrees and jobs they don't deserve."
– R. Belkin, letter to *Newsweek*, April 25, 2005

Useful web sites addressing plagiarism; plagiarism in the news:

http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/plagiarism.pdf#search=%22%22avoiding%20plagiarism%22 %22, accessed Oct. 4, 2006. UC Davis's policy/advice re plagiarism. THIS IS REQUIRED READING AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED. If you received a hard copy of this handout in one of my seminars, the document on this website should be attached to it.

http://cai.ucdavis.edu/caihandouts/kcunninghampreventing.htm, accessed Sept. 19, 2005. UCD English department – useful tips and links.

http://www.rbs2.com/plag.htm, accessed Oct. 5, 2004. Plagiarism in colleges in the USA, with links to related sites.

http://www.cnn.com/2004/EDUCATION/09/28/harvard.scholar.ap/index.html, accessed Oct. 5, 2004. Harvard Law Professor Laurence Tribe admits to plagiarism.

http://chronicle.com/free/v51/i17/17a00802.htm, accessed September 19, 2005. Several stunning stories of academic plagiarism.

http://www.historians.org/Perspectives/Issues/2004/0402/0402vie1.cfm, accessed Mar. 13, 2006. Has a nicely-nuanced discussion of plagiarism issues.

https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/overview.html, accessed January 12, 2011. From this overview page, you can reach descriptions of plagiarism examples, plagiarism in the news, a tutorial & test, and other useful resources.

Some journal articles that have been retracted because of plagiarism:

This retraction notice appears in *Transportation Research Part E* **47(4)**, 2011, p. 571:

RETRACTED: The vehicle routing problem with uncertain demand at nodes
Transportation Research Part E: Logistics and Transportation Review, Volume 45, Issue 4, July 2009, Pages 517-524,
Chang-Shi Liu, Ming-Yong Lai

This article has been retracted at the request of the Editor-in-Chief.
The authors have duplicated significant parts of a paper published in Fuzzy Set. Syst., 82 (1996) 307–317, doi:10.1016/0165-0114(95)00276-6. One of the conditions of submission of a paper for publication is that authors declare explicitly that their work is original and has not appeared in a publication elsewhere. Re-use of any data should be appropriately cited. As such this article represents a severe abuse of the scientific publishing system. The scientific community takes a very strong view on this matter and we apologize to readers of the journal that this was not detected during the submission process.

This retraction notice appears in *Landscape and Urban Planning* **79(3-4)**, 2007, p. 401:

Retraction Notice to "A GIS-based gradient analysis of urban landscape pattern of Shanghai metropolitan area, China" [Landscape Urban Plan. 69 (2004) 1–16]

Liquan Zhang, Jianping Wu, Yu Zhen and Jiong Shu

This article has been retracted.

Reason: This article substantially copies an article by Matthew Luck and Jianguo Wu, "A gradient analysis of urban landscape pattern: a case study from the Phoenix metropolitan region, Arizona, USA" published in Landscape Ecology 17 (4), pp. 327–339, 2002. The authors Zhang et al. have indicated in response that this does not amount to plagiarism because the article by Matthew Luck and Jianguo Wu was cited in their paper. In my view, the amount copied exceeds the usual purpose of citation (to refer to prior relevant work) and amounts to plagiarism.

Jon Rodiek

Editor-in-Chief

Landscape and Urban Planning

Retractions in the scientific literature: Is the incidence of research fraud increasing?

Steen, R. G. (in press 2010) *Journal of Medical Ethics*

Abstract
Background: Scientific papers are retracted for many reasons including fraud (data fabrication or falsification) or error (plagiarism, scientific mistake, ethical problems).

Growing attention to fraud in the lay press suggests that the incidence of fraud is increasing. Methods: The reasons for retracting 742 English language research papers retracted from the PubMed database between 2000 and 2010 were evaluated. Reasons for retraction were initially dichotomised as fraud or error and then analysed to determine specific reasons for retraction. Results: Error was more common than fraud (73.5% of papers were retracted for error (or an undisclosed reason) vs 26.6% retracted for fraud). Eight reasons for retraction were identified; the most common reason was scientific mistake in 234 papers (31.5%), but 134 papers (18.1%) were retracted for ambiguous reasons. Fabrication (including data plagiarism) was more common than text plagiarism. Total papers retracted per year have increased sharply over the decade (r=0.96; p<0.001), as have retractions specifically for fraud (r=0.89; p<0.001). Journals now reach farther back in time to retract, both for fraud (r=0.87; p<0.001) and for scientific mistakes (r=0.95; p<0.001). Journals often fail to alert the naïve reader; 31.8% of retracted papers were not noted as retracted in any way. Conclusions: Levels of misconduct appear to be higher than in the past. This may reflect either a real increase in the incidence of fraud or a greater effort on the part of journals to police the literature. However, research bias is rarely cited as a reason for retraction. Copyright Article author (or their employer) 2010.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM (pledge to be signed in TTP 200)

Background: Despite what I thought were ample (even unnecessarily excessive) warnings about the dangers and evils of plagiarism (in my technical writing seminar each fall, at the beginning of the quarter in this class, again with the discussion around HW 1, etc.), I have had to report cases of plagiarism in one or both of my graduate classes nearly every year! In my ongoing search for ways to get the point across more effectively than has apparently been the case so far, I am trying this approach. Please read this document, sign it, and turn it in with HW 1.

Reminder: Review the technical writing handout (on the class website) for "Careless citation practices", as well as the later section on "Plagiarism". *Plagiarism* is the use of other people's words or ideas without giving them appropriate credit. This commonly happens in one of two ways:

1. You present an idea that you obtained from another source, without citing that source.
2. You cite the source for your idea, but you use the source's exact words without enclosing them in quotation marks.

BOTH ARE WRONG!!! Students often commit the second form of plagiarism – they feel that they are off the hook when they cite a source, because they are thereby acknowledging that the idea is not original to them. But if you use another's words without quotation marks, you are still passing off someone else's creative intellectual activity as your own! And *it is not enough to make trivial changes to the exact words* – that is still considered plagiarism. See the UCD website http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/plagiarism.pdf for examples of inappropriate and appropriate paraphrases. You must either use the source's exact words and enclose them in quotation marks followed (or preceded) by the citation (including page number(s)), like this:

"[exact words of source]" (Smith, 2006, p. 10) ,

or you must make a *substantial* paraphrase of the source (not just a trivial or superficial alteration of a few words), *while still acknowledging it with a citation*. For further discussion of acceptable and unacceptable practices, see
http://www.historians.org/Perspectives/Issues/2004/0402/0402vie1.cfm.

Why is plagiarism wrong? I realize that in many cultures from which our students come, neither practice listed above is stressed as being inappropriate. *But this is why it is all the more important, if you are from such a culture, to take what I am saying seriously and make sure you understand it, since you may not have an instinctive grasp of it.* Here's my simplistic view of the situation: in some cultures, *society* takes precedence over *individuals*. Personal benefit is subordinated to the common good, and everyone acts on behalf of the collective good. In a culture like that, perhaps it is not considered stealing to use someone's words – the words were offered by a member of society, and they belong to society for the use of society (but see a contrary view below).

In the American culture (and Western societies in general, as far as I know), the *individual* has a much more prominent role. Individuals act on their own behalf, for their own benefit, while societal good is (loosely, in some cases) safeguarded by laws, moral persuasion, and peer pressure. Individuals are individually rewarded for their specific achievements, and individuals who achieve things that are more highly valued, get more highly rewarded. In that kind of culture, an individual's words are an important aspect of her personal achievement – an achievement that is seen as deserving an appropriate individual reward (whether financial, or fame, or respect, or whatever). So perhaps you can see that in such a culture, plagiarism is considered unethical/immoral for the following reasons:

1. *It defrauds the original source*, of the credit that is due her/him/them for having the idea or expressing it in that distinctive way. That is, it is stealing something that belongs to another.
2. In an environment in which you are being compared to your peers and differentially rewarded accordingly (e.g. in a class where you are graded on the curve, or in the workplace where there is competition for advancement), *it defrauds your colleagues*, by making you look better (more insightful, articulate) than you really are and therefore unfairly making them look worse by comparison.
3. Perhaps most importantly, *it cheats yourself*, by (a) weakening your moral fiber when you steal from others (points 1 & 2), and (b) failing to develop your own creative thinking and expression abilities as fully as they could be. This latter point is especially significant: *whether or not you consider plagiarism to be stealing*, it is undoubtedly mentally "coasting" – taking the lazy way out rather than doing the hard exercise of developing your own original ideas and articulation.

Your signature below attests to the following:

I have read and fully understand this document, **as well as** the sections on *"Careless citation practices"* and *"Plagiarism"* in your technical writing handout, **and** the URLs you gave above.

I understand what plagiarism is and why it is considered wrong in this society [note: you don't have to agree with the reasons given above, only understand them].

I understand that none of the following excuses justify plagiarism [note: I have heard all of these; please don't give me any more to add]:

- **"I didn't mean to be deceptive"** (after all, **I knew you'd recognize** your own words, or those of so-and-so). [That's great, I'm truly glad your intentions were honorable. But I'm not able to judge your intentions, only the outcome, and it's your responsibility to ensure that the outcome reflects your intentions. *Even if unintended, the three reasons given above as to why plagiarism is wrong still apply, and it is still wrong.*]

- **"I was in a hurry to turn the HW in on time, and didn't have a chance (or forgot) to check."** [See comment under first bullet.]

- **"I heard your discussion about plagiarism, but I didn't take it seriously enough – I didn't realize how important it was."** [I hope that is no longer possible, with this latest approach. Don't be someone who has to learn things the hard way…]

- **"I didn't know how to cite the class notes", or "… a web site", or _____ [some other "unconventional" source].** [So your response was not to cite them at all?! A citation that's not style-perfect is not considered plagiarism, but failing to cite at all is!]

- **"In my culture, it's not considered dishonest to use someone else's words without acknowledgement – copying someone is a way of honoring them."** [Also in our culture, we have the saying, "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery." But according to Jeanne Wilson, Director of Student Judicial Affairs at UCD, "Reproducing another's work and passing it off for credit as one's own is not honorable in any culture". Also see discussion above.]

- **"My English isn't very good -- it's hard for me to put things in my own words."** [I totally sympathize with the effort it takes to learn another language well enough to write in it. But when you're unable to come up with enough of your own words, that's why we have those things called quotation marks (" ") , to denote when you are using others' words. My experience has been that when I've pointed this out to students who have plagiarized, they get uncomfortable because they realize that if they put quotes around all the places they have taken directly from other sources, it will expose how much of their writeup is not original to them. This tells me that it *was* a self-serving transgression, not an entirely innocent one. Sorry, but you can't have it both ways: the price for taking the easy way out is that you have to admit you took the easy way out. We all do that some of the time, and (assuming the sources are properly credited) within reason it's nothing to be ashamed of! But if you're embarrassed by how much of your writeup has done that, the solution is to invest the hard work to improve your English writing skills over time, not to try to deceive others about your lack of them.]

- **"I didn't think my direct quote was long enough to require quotation marks" and/or "I didn't think my source's words were distinctive enough to require quotes. After all, how many different ways are there to say something familiar?"** [Even a single word may require quotes if it has been invented by the source, or creatively applied by the source in a new way. When the words and their application are ordinary, a few of them in a row may not need quotation marks (e.g. the phrase *travel is a derived demand* does not need to be attributed to a source -- it is now considered common knowledge in the field, and often repeated by many sources). But the more of them you use, the more necessary it becomes to enclose them in quotes (e.g., you should say, "the tenet that 'travel is a derived demand' ... pervades modern transportation planning approaches" (Mokhtarian and Salomon, 2001, p. 696)). Even if each word individually is not distinctive, the combination of several of them can be. If you are taking a substantive phrase, clause, or complete sentence (or more) from a source, it will almost certainly need quotation marks. *When in doubt, quote!* As Susan Handy says, "you can't get into trouble for citing too much", but you certainly can for citing (or quoting) too little.]

- **"I saw several different sources use the same (or very similar) language, so I didn't think it was necessary to put it in quotes."** [Some instances of this may be legitimate, as when the *same author* repeats her words in somewhat different contexts, or when a word or phrase has entered the "mainstream". But let's take the case where different authors are involved, and either (1) the source is recent, or (2) the thought is sufficiently distinctive that it cannot be considered "common knowledge" or "common expression", or (3) the borrowing is extensive (i.e. several phrases, sentences, or more, not just one word or phrase). So if one person steals from you it's wrong, but if 5 do, it's OK? Look, it's just as easy for other people to plagiarize by copying and pasting from a source, as it is for you to do so. Just because other people do it, and just because they haven't gotten caught (-- yet, – that you know of),

doesn't mean *you* won't get caught, and more importantly, doesn't make it right. Your decision as to whether borrowing constitutes plagiarism should be based on the intrinsic comparison of the contents of the source and of your own document, not on how many people have copied the source without proper attribution in the past.]

- **"I didn't think I needed to quote or cite a dictionary entry – I thought dictionaries were public domain."** [They're not. It takes a considerable investment of intellectual capital to produce good definitions and explanations of words, and the sources you borrow for such purposes must be credited, whether they are journal articles, reports, dictionaries, encyclopedias, other books, websites – or whatever. *Any* borrowed content must be acknowledged – it doesn't matter where you borrowed it from!]

I understand that if I
(1) use others' ideas without citation of the source, *or*
(2) use others' exact words without enclosing them in quotation marks, even if I cite the source, *or*
(3) make only superficial changes to others' words, even if I cite the source,
I have plagiarized.

I understand that if I plagiarize, even if inadvertently, I will get a zero for this assignment and will be reported to the Student Judicial Affairs office for possible disciplinary action.

_____   _____
                      Signature   Date

Avoiding PLAGIARISM
Mastering the Art of Scholarship
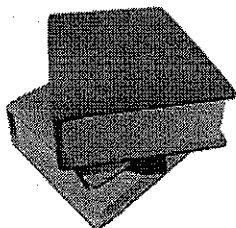
In writing, we draw upon others' words and ideas and the intellectual heritage underlying human progress. Scholarship entails researching, understanding, and building upon the work of others, but also requires that proper credit be given for any "borrowed" material. Under our *Code of Academic Conduct*, UC Davis students are responsible for ethical scholarship, and for knowing what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism means using another's <u>work</u> without giving credit. If you use others' words, you must put them in quotation marks and cite your <u>source</u>. You must also give citations when using others' ideas, even if you have paraphrased those ideas in your own words.

"Work" includes the words and ideas of others, as well as art, graphics, computer programs, music, and other creative expression. The work may consist of writing, charts, data, graphs, pictures, diagrams, websites, movies, TV broadcasts, or other communication media.

The term "source" includes published works -- books, magazines, newspapers, textbooks, websites, movies, photos, paintings, plays -- and unpublished sources (e.g., materials from a research service, blogs, class handouts, lectures, notes, speeches, or other students' papers). Using words, ideas, computer code, or any work without giving proper credit is plagiarism. Any time you use information from a source, of any kind, you must cite it.

Why be concerned about plagiarism?

* If you plagiarize, you are cheating yourself. You don't learn to write out your thoughts in your own words, and you won't receive specific feedback from your instructor geared to your individual needs and skills.

* Plagiarism is dishonest and/or misleading, because it misrepresents the work of another as your own.

* Plagiarism violates the Code of Academic Conduct and can lead to Suspension or Dismissal.

* Plagiarism devalues others' original work. Using and submitting a professional's work as your own is taking an unfair advantage over students who do their own work.

* It is wrong to take or use property (an author's work) without giving the owner the credit due. Further, copyright violations can result in damages, fines, or worse.

* The reputation of UC Davis affects the value of your degree; student dishonesty hurts UCD's standing and can diminish the worth of your diploma.

How to Cite Sources

One citation method is to identify the source in the text, putting the author's last name and publication year in parenthesis and giving the page number where the cited information appears. (Hacker, 2003, p. 391). The author's name links the reader to a list at the end of the paper giving full publishing information. Example:

Sources Cited:
Hacker, D., *A Writer's Reference*, 5th Ed. (Bedford/St. Martin's Press 2003) pp. 391-2.

Two other methods are footnotes and endnotes, which use raised numbers at the end of an idea or quoted words to link the reader to the source which is given either at the bottom of the page (footnote) or at the end of the paper (endnote). For all three methods, you must include the source in a reference list at the end of the paper, fully identifying each source by author's name, title, publisher's name, year of publication, and page numbers. Citations to electronic resources such as websites should include the exact URL, the date last revised, and any available information about the writer, publisher and/or creator of the site.

Resources on citation include:
* *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 6th ed., J. Gibaldi (Modern Language Assn. 2003)
* *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 5th Ed., American Psychological Association (2001)
* UC Berkeley Teaching Library Internet Workshops "Style Sheets for Citing Resources (Print & Electronic)" at http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Style.html

How can you avoid plagiarism?

Know what plagiarism is: ignorance will not excuse a violation. Intentional plagiarism, such as deliberate copying or use of another's work without credit, submitting a paper from the Internet as one's own, or altering or falsifying citations to hide sources is very serious, likely to result in Suspension. Unintentional plagiarism may result from not knowing how to cite sources properly, sloppy research and note-taking, or careless cutting and pasting from electronic resources – it is still a violation of the Code of Academic Conduct and subject to discipline.

Guidelines for Avoiding Plagiarism [1]

* **Use your own words and ideas.** Practice is essential to learning. Each time you choose your words, order your thoughts, and convey your ideas, you can improve your writing.

* **Give credit for copied, adapted, or paraphrased material.** If you copy and use another's exact words, you **must** use quotation marks **and** cite the source. If you adapt a chart or paraphrase a sentence, you must still cite your source. Paraphrasing is restating the author's ideas, information, and meaning in your own words (see examples).

* **Avoid using others work with minor "cosmetic" changes.** Examples: using "less" for "fewer," reversing the order of a sentence, changing terms in a computer code, or altering a spreadsheet layout. If the work is essentially the same as your source, give credit.

* **There are no "freebies."** Always cite words, information and ideas that you use if they are new to you (learned in your research). No matter where you find it – even in on the Internet or in an encyclopedia – you cite it!

* **Beware of "common knowledge."** You may not have to cite "common knowledge," but the fact must really be commonly known. That George Orwell was the author of the anti-totalitarian allegory *Animal Farm* is common knowledge; that Orwell died at age 46 in 1951 is not.[2]

* **When in doubt, cite.** Better to be safe than not give credit when you should!

[1] See Henderickson, R.J., *The Research Paper* (Henry Holt and Company, 1957, xiv-xv; McGill University "Student Guide to Avoid Plagiarism," last updated 8/22/06 http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity/studentguide/

[2] Bowker, G., *Inside George Orwell* (Palgrave MacMillan 2003) p. 420

Examples

Citing a source for factual information:

In describing the personal circumstances and political beliefs of author George Orwell at the time he wrote his greatest novel, 1984, I have relied upon the factual account given in Gordon Bowker's biography Inside George Orwell.

Here the source is identified in the text, and page citations for any quotes or ideas can be given at the end of the material used. Additional citations to the source, with page numbers, are required to reference facts or quotations used later in the paper.

Paraphrase vs. Plagiarism

Original Source: *'[A totalitarian] society ... can never permit either the truthful recording of facts, or the emotional sincerity, that literary creation demands. ... Totalitarianism demands ... the continuous alteration of the past, and in the long run ... a disbelief in the very existence of objective truth.'* [3]

Student Version A -- Plagiarism

A totalitarian society can never permit the truthful recording of facts; it demands the continuous alteration of the past, and a disbelief in the very existence of objective truth.

This is plagiarism; the student has combined copied pieces of the author's language, without quotation marks or citations.

Student Version B -- Improper paraphrase, also plagiarism

A totalitarian society can't be open-minded or allow the truthful recording of facts, but instead demands the constant changing of the past and a distrust of the very existence of objective truth. (Orwell)

This is plagiarism because the student has woven together sentences and switched a few words ("open-minded" for "tolerant," "allow" for "permit") has left out some words, and has given an incomplete and inaccurate citation.

Student Version C -- Appropriate paraphrase, *not* plagiarism

Orwell believed that totalitarian societies must suppress literature and free expression because they cannot survive the truth, and thus they claim it does not exist. (Bowker) pp. 336-337

This student has paraphrased using her own words, accurately reflecting and citing the author's ideas.

Student Version D -- Quotation with cite, *not* plagiarism

In his biography of George Orwell, Gordon Bowker discusses the themes of 1984, quoting a 1946 essay by Orwell: "'Totalitarianism demands ... the continuous alteration of the past, and in the long run ... a disbelief in the very existence of objective truth.'" (Bowker p. 337, quoting Orwell, 1946)

By introducing his source, the student signals that the following material is from that source. Verbatim words are in quotation marks, omitted words are marked by ellipses (...), and both the book used and the original source of the quote are cited.

[3] Bowker p. 337, quoting Orwell, G., "The Prevention of Literature," Polemic, No. 2, January 1946

Getting Help: Read the syllabus and assignment; ask your instructor how to cite sources; and carefully check class rules on citation format. Use resources such as Brenda Spatt's *Writing from Sources (Bedford, Freeman & Worth 2003)* and Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference*, cited above. In addition, contact the UC Davis Learning Skills Center at 530-752-2013 http://www.lsc.ucdavis.edu/ *For questions contact Student Judicial Affairs, (530) 752-1128 or visit http://sja.ucdavis.edu*

Plagiarism
adapted from a handout written by M. Towner, 1996.

What is plagiarism? Webster's New World Dictionary (1990) defines plagiarism as "to take (ideas writings, etc.) from (another) and pass them off as one's own"[1]. In the student writing that I am familiar with plagiarism can range from being quite subtle (not citing sources that one has carefully summarized and synthesized) to being quite blatant (copying directly sentences or even paragraphs from a source and not using quotation marks and an appropriate citation).

Why should you care? First, plagiarism just doesn't work. It results in a choppy, inconsistent writing style and a poor overall organization; frequently the true meaning of the original source becomes botched in its recycling. Strong and effective writing is a product of original thought and synthesis -- not of typing out of an open book. Second, plagiarism is an act of academic dishonesty, and as such breaks the University of California Code of Academic Conduct. As stated on the cover of UC Davis blue books, "violators or questions should be promptly referred to the instructor or the office of student judicial affairs (752-1128)".

What can you do to avoid plagiarism? To start, whenever you use the direct words from another author, you should put those words in quotation marks (or indent appropriately for longer quotations) and cite the source. Alternatively, you may want to summarize several related points from a source. To do this takes more than simply changing a few words here and there in the author's writing. In BOTH cases, the author should be acknowledged (in this class, in the form described in the reader).

A good rule of thumb: if you have to open the book/article when you are writing the sentence, then you should cite the source.

An additional point -- a string of long quotations from a book is also NOT an effective way to develop an argument, even if you cite the sources appropriately. The challenge in writing is for you to develop a strong and coherent paper, not to convince us that someone else has something to say about a topic. And yes, this is a challenge; writing is a difficult process that takes a lot of time, careful thought, and revision!

If you are having problem integrating other authors' facts/hypotheses/ideas within your own work, try looking at the articles you are reading for your research to see how those authors have done it.

Does this apply to me?

While the examples given on the next page come from an Anthro 15 course, the same general problem occurs just as frequently in Anthro 1 papers. The TAs are all very familiar with the books and articles you will be citing in your papers, and we are also grading more than fifty papers each, so it becomes very easy to spot frequently used passages. Again, be sure to carefully read the instructions found in your reader for the paper, and feel free to ask us if you have any questions!

---

[1] *Webster's New World Dictionary.* 1990. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc.

The source:

"There is a large tribe of Tropical Forest Indians on the border between Venezuela and Brazil. They number approximately 20,000 people and are distributed in some 200 to 250 widely scattered villages" (Chagnon, 1992, p. 1)[2]

Excerpts from student papers -- none with citations or any quotation marks (and therefore plagiarized):

The Yanomamo are a tribe of Indians residing in the tropical rain forests on the border between Venezuela and Brazil. There are approximately twenty thousand Yanomamo people that populate between two hundred and two hundred and fifty villages.

Yanomamo is a large tribe of Tropical Forest Indians on the border. There are approximately 20,000 people (plus or minus) that are distributed in some 200 to 250 widely scattered villages.

The Yanomamo are tropical forest Indians from a region in South America between Venezuela and Brazil. Their population is approximately 20,000 people. They live in 200 to 250 widely scattered villages in the tropical rainforest.

The Yanomamo live in an area of the tropical forest, on the border of Venezuela and Brazil. The total number of people in the Yanomamo tribe is quite large, around 20,000, but they scatter themselves out in about 200 to 250 smaller villages.

On the borders between Venezuela and Brazil, South American, 20,000 Tropical Forest Indians live widely scattered villages.

The Yanomamo is a large tribe of Tropical Forest Indians that are scattered along the Venezuelan and Brazilian boarder. They occupy 200 to 250 small villages that contain large pieces of unoccupied land between them.

The Yanomamo live on the borders of Venezuela and Brazil in the tropical rainforests. They live in small villages with a population of about 20,000.

I, _____ have read and understand the above and agree to abide by these guidelines.

x_____ date_____

YOU MUST SIGN AND RETURN THIS FORM ATTACHED TO YOUR ESSAY.

---

[2] Chagnon, N. A. (1992) *Yanomamo: The Fierce People*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Jared Haynes
Campus Writing Center

Gainen, Joanne. "Cognitive Development." Presented at The Seventeenth National Institute on Issues in Teaching and Learning: *Teaching Critical Thinking and Writing*. The University of Chicago, June 13-16, 1990.

College students develop intellectually in fairly predictable ways as they confront new ideas and beliefs different from their own. As they progress through various stages of cognitive development, their attitudes toward knowledge and their strategies as writers change. Gainen's scheme for these stages, presented below as four "perspectives," is based on two studies of the cognitive development of college students (Perry, William G., Jr. *Forms of Intellectual Development in the College Years: A Scheme*, New York: Holt Rinehart, 1970, and Belenky, Mary F. et al. *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*, New York: Basic Books, 1986). An understanding of these attitudes and strategies is crucial to an understanding of why student writers write the way they do and how writing assignments might be best designed.

Perspective I: Dualism. Characteristic of high school students and many first-year college students.
1. As knowers, students exhibit polarized, right-wrong thinking. They mistake their personal views for "truth," believe knowledge is factual information, expect to learn by absorbing "truth" from authorities (teachers, textbooks) and by accumulating facts, lack tolerance for ambiguity and qualified language, and lack standards for judging what is important. They tend to read for facts instead of meaning. These attitudes can lead to such questions as "Will this be on the exam?" "How many pages of reading are required for this paper?" and "What does the teacher want?"
2. As writers, dualists may offer facts without interpretation, give simplistic solutions, or leave ideas undeveloped, with little regard for alternative interpretations. They may use dogmatic, moralistic, or categorical rhetoric, citing and praising those who agree with them and ignoring or blaming those who don't. They are likely to write by some rigid formula, perhaps organizing a paper by lumping all related facts together with no clear focus. They may believe that they should be graded on effort and on the quantity and accuracy of information.

Perspective II: Multiplicity. Most common perspective of college students, even many seniors.
1. As knowers, these students believe that although all answers aren't known, they will be known eventually. Where answers aren't known, different views are mere "opinions" that are equally good or bad. In other words, students see no way to distinguish between opinions and supported positions. Some may assert themselves ("I have a right to my opinion") while others may diminish themselves ("It's just my opinion"), but both groups tend to perceive truth and values as arbitrary.

2. As writers, these students may be able to present or acknowledge different positions but be unable to address disagreements or implications, to distinguish between an opinion and a supported position, or to effectively persuade because of an inability to understand an audience's needs. They fail to take the views of others into account or rush to contradict opposing views without serious analysis. They may attribute a low grade to arbitrary factors (instructor bias, disagreement, or difference in "style") since they don't recognize that the lack of justification for their ideas subtracts from the effectiveness of their writing.

Perspective III: Relativism. Characteristic of accomplished seniors.
1. As knowers, these students realize that many views exist, but that some are more valid and can be justified more convincingly. They can develop criteria (quality of reasoning; credibility of evidence, and internal consistency) for judging ideas. They recognize that people have reasons for their differences that are grounded in different assumptions, contexts, knowledge, emphasis, and weighting of evidence. They are beginning to understand that knowledge structures are provisional, and that while authorities don't have the ultimate truth, they do have experience and have thought deeply about the topic. They may also begin to see that different disciplines have different procedures for analyzing, categorizing, and synthesizing information.
2. As writers, these students can recognize the needs of an audience and write for it effectively. They can anticipate objections to their arguments, represent opposing views sympathetically, and critically examine their own conclusions. Their tone is reasonable and rational, and they use qualified language to indicate degrees of conviction.

Perspective IV: Commitment in Relativism. Probably rarely achieved by students (or anyone) in all facets of life.
1. As knowers, such students recognize that knowledge is inherently indeterminate, value-laden, and constructed by fallible humans who are trying hard to be objective and rational. They perceive that experts search for understanding and try to make reasonable judgments along the way. Such people are willing to make choices and commitments based on analysis, judgment, and acknowledged values.
2. As writers, such students can identify and evaluate assumptions, values, and ethical perspectives underlying a position or dispute. They can present issues and topics in complex terms and forms, they can reason dialectically, and they can understand writing as a process that both generates and displays understanding and knowledge.

A Brief Annotated Bibliography
A Guide to Using Internet Texts for Research: How to Evaluate Them
<http://wwwenglish.ucdavis.edu/cwc/cwc.htm>

This bibliography of Internet sites is a guide to helping students evaluate Internet texts for academic research. It is for faculty whose students use Internet sources for research papers and is based on the principles of evaluation that researchers have long used with printed texts.

Most commonly researchers use this "print" or "bibliographic" approach with Internet texts in order to assess their potential reliability or trustworthiness before looking at content. Scanning the electronic text, the researcher reviews critically the textual data conventionally recorded in, or inferable from, a bibliographic citation: author, title, genre, publisher, date, length, etc. This preliminary screening on the basis of bibliographic or external features saves much time.

Students may think that the first five sites listed by an Internet search are as potentially reliable as the five texts shelved next to an assigned book in the university library. Often unaware of the filters of librarianship and scholarly publication—filters so lacking on the Internet—students must learn to screen Internet texts in the ways that scholarly editors or librarians or their professors have previously screened printed texts in the library or on a reading list. We are asking much of these students, so we should provide guidance in the principles of screening texts for reliability. We must also remember that today's students have often grown up learning less about books, journals, scholarly editing, and librarianship than their teachers did.

As faculty, we readily assume the responsibility of teaching students the research methods of our particular disciplines. We must also teach them the assumptions by which we find worthwhile research texts. This guide to evaluating Internet sources should help in that effort; it also should save researchers much time.

You may wish to assign this guide to your students. First try to assess how much time your students can afford to spend on the Internet either at home or in busy computer labs so that you can be realistic in your requirements.

Susan Palo, Lecturer in English
Campus Writing Center

1. Using the Internet for research
2. Evaluating Internet sources
3. Demonstrating the standards for printed research
4. Determining authorship and authority
5. Assessing and using bias and point of view

Appendix A. Devising exercises that require critical evaluation of Internet texts

Appendix B. Sample exercises in evaluating sources in
  Psychology
  Environmental Science/Ecology
  Health Sciences/Biology
  History

1. Researching on the Internet

Teaching Library at the University of California at Berkeley. "Finding Information on the Internet: A TUTORIAL."
<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/FindInfo.html#Outline>

This large and constantly updated site is the UC Berkeley Library's tutorial on searching the Internet. The librarians' credo is practical: "we . . . believe that the investment of time to learn to effectively and efficiently find information on the Internet using complex search strategies is worthwhile, and simple searching is usually not." For the novice, the tutorial indeed requires an investment of time. However, its table of contents is organized progressively from beginning to advanced information, and readers can find their level of expertise. You might make this site recommended reading in a course with a research paper.

The outstanding features of this site are its tables differentiating between Internet search engines, such as MetaFind, Infoseek, Alta Vista, etc. Because the different databases, search capacities, and search terms of the many Internet search engines are highly confusing, researchers may wish to print hard copies of these tables for reference.

Two pages in particular are worth printing for their tables comparing search engines:

> The librarians walk the researcher through a progressive four-pass search, using different search engines at
> <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Strategies.html>

> The Librarians provide a useful chart showing how to write search terms for eight search engines at
> <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/ToolsTables.html#Recommend>

2. Evaluating Internet sources

Elizabeth Kirk. "Evaluating information found on the Internet."
<http://milton.mse.jhu.edu:8001/research/education/net.html>

Dozens of guides to evaluating Internet pages exist, but they frequently introduce criteria, such as graphics or browsability or interactivity, that are not the primary criteria of university researchers.

In contrast to most of these other evaluation sites, Kirk's "Evaluating information found on the Internet" provides a checklist for determining whether a text is likely to be reliable or trustworthy or useful for university research. Kirk's is essentially a print approach and calls attention to the screening that librarians and scholars have traditionally performed on library materials.

Kirk considers six criteria: authorship, publishing body, point of view or bias, referral to other sources, verifiability, and currency. A series of probing questions under each criterion teaches systematic screening for reliability and promotes critical thinking.

University students sometimes say that they avoid using the Internet for research because they waste a lot of time—and they are referring to time browsing through useless texts, not just time searching for texts. The appeal of Kirk's evaluation method is that it introduces students to an efficient two-stage process: first students quickly but rigorously screen sites to see if they are worthwhile; only after screening do students read the worthwhile texts, using the research criteria of their discipline.

For other sites on evaluation, see also the bibliography "Evaluation of information sources" by Alastair Smith for the World-Wide Web Virtual Library at
<http://milton.mse.jhu.edu:8001/research/education/net.html>

3. Demonstrating the standards for printed research

Very often in their assignments for research papers, professors and instructors introduce students to distinctions between kinds of texts in their field (for example: primary and secondary sources; popular magazines, trade publications, and research journals; original research articles and review articles; trade books, textbooks, scholarly books). Thus, students learn the textual sources of evidence and specialized knowledge in their field. Most students, however, do not understand the process of peer-review and publication. Consequently they do not understand why current articles in peer-reviewed journals are so often the benchmark for reliability and authority in their field. Not understanding this benchmark, students may not see why unreviewed or self-published Internet texts are unreliable.

> To distinguish between scholarly, substantive news/general interest, popular, and sensational publications, see the definitions and explanations at
> <http://www.library.cornell.edu/okuref/research/skill20.html>

Professors and instructors might want to direct students to the "Instructions for Authors" pages of electronic journals in their field to show students how researchers prepare and submit articles and undergo the scrutiny of their peers. While these sites show how disciplines screen new research, they can also add weight to the teacher's standards for written work.

Two sites, among many others, show the editorial processes conducted by research journals:

> The "Instructions for Authors" from JAMA, the Journal of the American Medical Association, provides a clear picture of rigorous scientific editing at
> <http://www.ama-assn.org/public/journals/jama/instruct.htm#toc>

> The journal Conservation Ecology describes its peer review process. This site is instructive because: (1) it is intended for an electronic journal, so the editorial policies reflect new technology, and (2) it outlines for students the process by which articles are reviewed and shows—in the linked sites—how to submit an article for publication. It appears at
> <http://www.consecol.org/Journal/submit/format/peer-review.html>

4. Determining authorship and authority

Elizabeth Kirk, "Practical Steps for Evaluating Authorship, Publishing Body, and Currency."
<http://milton.mse.jhu.edu:8001/research/education/practical.html>

This site from the library at the Johns Hopkins University offers Elizabeth Kirk's practical advice on how to extract electronic information about the author, publishing body, and currency of an Internet site. It is a linked supplement to her "Evaluating information found on the Internet." She reminds us that if we cannot determine the author or publisher of a page, we are looking at "information that is as anonymous as a page torn from a book. It is unwise to use information of this nature. Look for another source."

Fortunately, Kirk's tips are specific and useful. Remind your students that social or professional prestige does not automatically confer authority on a subject; the distinguished professor of animal science is not necessarily an expert on human psychology.

5. Assessing and using bias and point of view

Jan Alexander and Marsha Tate. "Evaluating Web Resources."
<http://www.science.widener.edu/~withers/webeval.htm>

This site from the library of Widener University in Chester, Pennsylvania, alerts researchers to the specific types of Internet sites which may reflect their writers' or publishers' biases or points of view. The librarians provide checklists for critically evaluating five types of Internet pages: advocacy; business/marketing; news; informational; and personal home pages.

The checklists are rudimentary but take an analytical, as opposed to judgmental, stance toward bias. The neutrality of this approach to bias or point of view is valuable. Novice researchers who regard only

factual secondary sources as reliable may fear using multiple views in their research or they may be unaware that the "factual" information they find is, in fact, biased. This site helps novice researchers determine the actual nature of the bias in order to begin dealing with it critically.

Professors and instructors in some fields (such as political science, environmental science, cultural or ethnic studies, medical ethics, community and regional development, sociology, and history) may ask students to research the nature of conflict or diversity of opinion on an issue. In such research, the Internet is invaluable for providing primary evidence of point of view (as opposed to secondary sources with differing interpretations). Voices often silenced by the editorial policies of print media appear on the Net. These checklists help researchers begin a systematic approach to the free-for-all of opinion the Internet offers.

Two pages at this site address the more common types of biased site that students may turn up in Internet research:

> "Checklist for an Advocacy Web Page" at
> <http://www.science.widener.edu/~withers/advoc.htm>

> "Checklist for an Informational Web Page" at
> <http://www.science.widener.edu/~withers/inform.htm>

Appendix A. Devising exercises in your field that require critical evaluation of Internet texts
Simple exercises can challenge student researchers to evaluate Internet texts according to the principles of evaluation suggested by this guide and—more significantly—according to the research methods of specific disciplines. Such exercises are best designed by faculty in specific disciplines.

Here are a few guidelines for devising exercises:

- Find at least three Internet texts on a related topic that do not equally meet criteria of authorship, publishing body, point of view or bias, referral to other sources, verifiability, and currency.
- If you expect your students to use research articles in their papers, be sure to include one article from a scholarly or scientific, peer-reviewed journal and one that is self-published or is journalistic.
- Ask the students to rank order the Internet texts according to the standards of reliability or usefulness which you have explained.
- Suggest that they work in teams (so they must talk about their criteria) and expect them to explain their reasoning. Ask them to jot down notes.
- Set a time limit in order to underscore that this is a preliminary screening, designed to save time for careful reading of worthwhile texts.
- Discuss the exercise afterward and expect systematic assessments.
- If researchers in your field investigate people's beliefs, attitudes, or assumptions, select a text the students have correctly rejected as an unreliable secondary source of information because it is biased or not authoritative. Ask them to explain how they could nonetheless use the rejected text in their research as evidence demonstrating values, attitudes, point of view, position, current or popular beliefs, etc. This question is very challenging to most students.

To supplement your own knowledge of the best (and worst) sites on the Net for research in your field, you may wish to consult one of the useful <u>subject or discipline</u> search engines available at academic institutions:

> From UC Santa Barbara, a guide organized by subject/department at
> <http://www.library.ucsb.edu/subj/>

> A comparable site at Yale University, also a useful beginning point for finding texts in a particular academic field, at
> <http://www.library.yale.edu/Internet/>

4

Appendix B. Sample exercises in evaluating Internet sources

Directions: _Rank order the texts within each group from most trustworthy or reliable to least trustworthy or reliable, based on the criteria developed in the sites listed in this bibliography/guide. Remember that you are screening texts BEFORE spending time reading them for content._

The object is to _articulate the reasons_ for your preliminary rankings of the texts' probable reliability for research. Briefly jot down the reasons for your rankings.

Take time to investigate author, credentials, affiliation, publisher, editorial policy, bias etc.

Note: Please remember that URLs often change or expire.

<u>Group 1: Psychology.</u> Three texts, on different topics
- Text #1: <http://www.apa.org/pubinfo/anger.html>
- Text #2: <http://www.cogsci.soton.ac.uk/cgi/psyc/newpsy?7.06>
- Text #3: <http://www.cybertowers.com/selfhelp/interactive/expectn.html>

<u>Group 2: Environmental Science/Ecology.</u> Four texts, different genres, different topics.
- Text #1: <http://www.state.nv.us/nucwaste/news/editr01.htm>
- Text #2: <http://www.monolake.org/politicalhistory/impacts.htm>
- Text #3: <http://www.consecol.org/Journal/vol1/iss1/art6/>
- Text #4: <http://host.envirolink.org/publications/rachel/rehw482.htm>

<u>Group 3: Health Sciences/Biology.</u> Five texts on angiogenesis; do not evaluate reliability simply on the basis of currency. Take your time.
- Text #1: <http://www.yale.edu/scimag/angio.html>
- Text #2: <http://www.entremed.com/prodtech/aa.html>
- Text #3: <http://www.pnas.org/cgi/content/full/94/3/861>
- Text #4: <http://207.121.187.155/NCI_CANCER_TRIALS/zones/PressInfo/Angio/fsangio.html>
- Text #5: <http://www.sciam.com/0996issue/0996folkman.html>

<u>Group 4: History.</u> Three book reviews.
- Text #1: <http://www.clark.net/~bell/eibr/history/desjardin_stand_firm.html>
- Text #2: <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/reviews_in_american_history/v025/25.3taylor.html>
- Text #3: <http://www.depauw.edu/~dtrinkle/hrol/us41.html#balogh>

If you are reading the printed version of this bibliography/guide, you may wish to read the Internet version, with links to the sites described in the bibliography, at <http://wwwenglish.ucdavis.edu/cwc/cwc.htm>

ITS ACADEMIC, OR IS IT?

Soon, no one will care about correct grammar, and the apostrophe will disappear into infinity

BY CHARLES R. LARSON

F YOU'RE 35 YEARS OR OLDER, YOU PROBABLY IDENTIFY A common grammatical error in the heading on this page. Younger than that and, well, you likely have another opinion: "Its all relative"—except, of course, for the apostrophe. Unfortunately, age appears to be the demarcation here. For those in the older group, youth has already won the battle.

I've been keeping a list of places where *its* is misused: newspapers, magazines, op-eds in major publications and, more recently, wall texts in museums. A few weeks ago I encountered the error in a book title: "St. Simons: A Summary of It's History," by R. Edwin and Mary A. Green. My list is getting longer and longer.

Does it even matter that the apostrophe is going the way of the stop sign and the directional signal in our society? Does punctuation count any longer? Are my complaints the ramblings of an old goat who's taught English for too many years?

What's the big deal, anyway? Who cares whether it's *its* or *it's*? Editors don't seem to know when the apostrophe's necessary. (One of them confessed to me that people have always been confused about the apostrophe—better just get rid of it.) My university undergraduates are clearly befuddled by the correct usage. Too many graduate applications—especially those of students aspiring to be creative writers—provide no clue that the writer understands when an apostrophe is required. Even some of my colleagues are confused by this ugglesome contraction.

How can a three-letter word be so disarming, so capable of separating the men from the boys? Or the women from the girl's? When in doubt use it both ways, as in a recent advertisement hyping improved SAT, GRE and LSAT scores: "Kaplan locations all over the U.S. are offering full-length exams just like the actual tests. It's a great way to test your skills and get a practice score without the risk of your score being reported to schools. And now, for a limited time only, its absolutely free!"

And now, students, which one of the above spellings of the I word is correct: (a) the first, (b) the second, (c) both or (d) neither? Any wonder why Educational Testing Services had to add 100 points to the revised SAT exams?

It's been my recent experience that the apostrophe hasn't actually exited common usage; it's simply migrated somewhere later in the sentence. Hence, "Shes lost her marble's" has become the preferred use of this irritating snippet of punctuation in current American writing. "Hes not lost his hat; hes lost his brains'." "Theres gold in them there hill's." Or "It was the best of times' and the worst of time's." The latter, of course, is from Charles Dicken's "A Tale of Two Cities'." Or is it Charle's Dickens?

Where will this end? Virtual apostrophe's? At times I wonder if all those missing apostrophes are floating somewhere in outer space. Don't they have to be somewhere, if—as some philosophers tell us—nothing is ever lost? Lately, I've seen the dirty three-letter word even punctuated as its'. What's next?

I'ts? 'Its?

How complicated can this be? How difficult is it to teach a sixth grader how to punctuate correctly?

Heaven knows I've tried to figure it out, agonized about it for years. I remember being dismayed nearly 20 years ago when I was walking around the neighborhood and discovered an enormous stack of books that someone had put out on the curb, free for the taking. Most of the titles were forgettable; hence the reason they'd been left for scavengers or the next trash pickup. However, mixed among the flotsam and jetsam was a brand-new hardback collegiate dictionary. How could this be, I asked myself? Could someone have too many dictionaries? I think the ideal would be one in every room.

Someone was sending me a signal. If words are unimportant, punctuation is something even more lowly. Why worry about such quodlibets? When was the last time anyone even noticed? Certainly, no one at Touchstone Books caught the errors in a recent ad for "Failing at Fairness: How Our Schools Cheat Girls," by Myra and David Sadker. A testimonial for the book reads as follows: "Reader's will be stunned at the overwhelming evidence of sexism the author's provide." You bet, and the blurb writers' lack of grammatical correctness.

If editors at publishing houses can't catch these errors, who can? Errors common to advertising copy have already spread into the books themselves. I dread walking into a bookstore a decade from now and encountering the covers of classics edited by a new generation of apostrophe-challenged editors: "Father's and Sons'," "The Brothers' Karamazov," "The Adventure's of Huckleberry Finn," "The Postman Alway's Ring's Twice," "A Midsummers' Night Dream." (Who's wood's these are I think know . . .)

The apostrophe is dead because reading is dead. Notice that I didn't say "The apostrophe's dead because reading's dead." That's far too complex an alteration. When in doubt simply write out the full sentence, carefully avoiding all possessives and contradictions. Soon, no one will be certain about grammatical usage anyway. Computers will come without an apostrophe key. Why bother about errors on the Internet? E-mail messages are often so badly written they make no sense. Fortunately, they get erased almost immediately. Everything pass'es too quickly.

Last week I went to a lamp store to purchase two new floor lamps for our living room: five rooms of lamps and hundreds of styles—except for one minor problem. Not one lamp was designed for reading. Virtually all the lamps illuminated the ceiling; all were designed for television addicts, not readers. So how is one supposed to read TV Guide? The place was so dark (was I expected to hold my book up to the ceiling?) I could hardly find my way out. And speaking of TV, what's the plural: TVs or TV's?

Time to stop this grumbling. Thing's fall apart. If I start making a list only of the times the apostrophe is used *properly*, I won't even have to worry about it. I can already hear you say, "Your kidding."

LARSON *is a professor of literature at American University. His works include 'Academia Nuts' and 'Arthur Dimmesdale.'*

Robert J. Samuelson

The Sad Fate Of the Comma

I HAVE ALWAYS LIKED COMMAS, BUT I SEEM TO BE in a shrinking minority. The comma is in retreat, though it is not yet extinct. In text messages and e-mails, commas appear infrequently, and then often by accident (someone hits the wrong key). Even on the printed page, commas are dwindling. Many standard uses from my childhood (after, for example, an introductory prepositional phrase) have become optional or, worse, have been ditched.

If all this involved only grammar, I might let it lie. But the comma's sad fate is, I think, a metaphor for something larger: how we deal with the frantic, can't-wait-a-minute nature of modern life. The comma is, after all, a small sign that flashes PAUSE. It tells the reader to slow down, think a bit, and then move on. We don't have time for that. No pauses allowed. In this sense, the comma's fading popularity is also social commentary.

It is true that Americans have always been in a hurry. In "Democracy in America" (1840), Alexis de Tocqueville has a famous passage noting the "feverish ardor" with which Americans pursue material gains and private pleasures. What's distinctive about our era, I think, is that new technologies and astonishing prosperity give us the chance to slacken the pace. Perish the thought. In some ways, it seems, we Americans have actually become more frantic.

Evidence to support this hunch hasn't been hard to find. Exhibit A is a story a few months ago in The Washington Post headlined, TEENS CAN MULTITASK, BUT WHAT ARE COSTS? We meet Megan, a 17-year-old honors high-school senior. After school, she begins studying by turning on MTV and booting up her computer. The story continues:

Over the next half an hour, Megan will send about a dozen instant messages discussing the potential for a midweek snow day. She'll take at least one cellphone call, fire off a couple of text messages, scan Weather.com, volunteer to help with a campus cleanup [at the local high school], post some comments on a friend's Facebook page and check out the new pom squad pictures another friend has posted on hers.
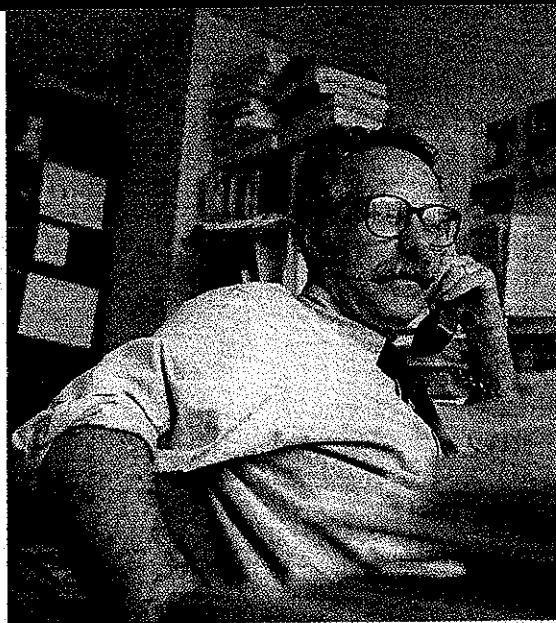
Whew! And remember, she's also studying. Naturally, the story includes the obligatory quote from a brain scientist, who worries that so much multitasking will turn young minds into mush. "It's almost impossible," says the scientist, "to gain a depth of knowledge of any of the tasks you do while you're multitasking."

In reality, multitasking isn't confined to the young. It's hard to go anywhere these days—including restaurants and business meetings—without seeing people punch-

Its slow decline is a metaphor for something much larger: how we deal with the frantic, can't-wait-a-minute nature of modern life.

ing furiously on their BlackBerrys, cell phones or other handheld devices. More mush, maybe. At the least, serious questions of etiquette have arisen. In one survey, almost a third of the executives polled said it is *never* appropriate to check e-mails during meetings.

Next, there's work. Unlike most rich nations, the United States hasn't reduced the average workweek over the past quarter century. In 2006, annual hours for U.S. workers averaged 1,804, barely different from 1,834 in 1979, reports the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. By contrast, the Japanese cut annual hours by 16 percent to 1,784, the Germans 20 percent to 1,421 and the French 16 percent to 1,564. One commentator in the London-based Financial Times calls America "the republic of overwork." A study by economists Daniel Hamermesh of the University of Texas and Joel Slemrod of the University of Michigan argues that long working hours, especially among the well paid, may be an addiction, akin to alcoholism and smoking. (The paper is titled "The Economics of Workaholism: We Should Not Have Worked on This Paper.")

I could go on, but the column's only 800 words, and more evidence would simply reinforce the point: de Tocqueville's "feverish ardor" endures. There's always too much to do, not enough time to do it. The comma is a small victim of our hustle-bustle. If we can save a few seconds a day by curtailing commas, why not? Commas are disparaged as literary clutter. They're axed in the name of stylistic "simplicity." Once, introductory prepositional phrases ("In 1776, Thomas Jefferson ...") routinely took commas; once, compound sentences were strictly divided by commas; once, sentences that began with "once," "naturally," "surprisingly," "inevitably" and the like usually took a comma to set them apart.

No more. These and other usages have slowly become discretionary or unacceptable. Over the years, copy editors have stripped thousands of defenseless commas from my stories. I have saved every last one of them and piled them all on a secluded corner of my desk. They deserve better than they're getting. So here are some of my discarded commas, taking a long-overdue bow: ,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,

I'm not quitting quietly. By my count, this column contains 104 commas. Note to copy desk: leave them be.

Abby implies hoi polloi are weak on grammar

DEAR ABBY

DEAR ABBY: I wish you would rerun your collection of "pet peeves." Seventy years ago, I learned to conjugate verbs, and I am amazed at the number of people who use "got" when they should say "have."
— Mr. J.W. Anderson, Levittown, Pa.

P.S. Remember, Abby, "Got has got to go!" use "got" when they should say "have."

DEAR MR. ANDERSON: It has been nearly 10 years since these rules of basic grammar appeared in my column — and we can all use this refresher course. Read on:

DEAR READERS: A while back, I wrote a column on the misuse of words and other irritants, and named a few. I then asked readers to send their pet peeves concerning common misusage in grammar and pronunciation. How's this for a collection?

The "lie" and "lay" confusion: To "lay" means to set or put; to "lie" means to recline. Remember, chickens lay eggs. People lie down.

The use of "all are not." Example: Saying, "All means "not all are." Example: Saying, "All women are not beautiful." "Not all women are beautiful."
We frequently hear "between you and I."

Wrong! It's "between you and me." Another irritant is "try and" instead of "try to." For example, one may try to win — then lose. But how can one try and win — and then lose?
One hears supposedly educated people say "between she and I" instead of the correct "between her and me."

My pet peeve — double negatives; "I don't know nothing" and "We don't go nowhere" are the worst offenders.

The word "forte" (meaning strong point) is pronounced "fort," not "for-tay."

Also, people use the word "snuck" instead of "sneaked." Although "snuck" somehow sneaked into the dictionary, it's not used by

people who use proper English.

Ask someone to define "hoi polloi," and it's a good bet that he will say "high-tone or upper class." Actually, it means "the masses."

"Nuclear" is pronounced "nuke-lee-er," not "nuke-you-ler"!

And how about "he's got," "she's got" and "they've got"? The better word is "has." ("He has," "she has," etc.) "Got" has got to go! "Got" has got to go! "R's" in it, but has two "R's" in it, but "R's" in it, but has "R's" in it, but

The month of February has two "R's" in it, but we keep hearing "Feb-yoo-ary."

We frequently hear that a man has "prostrate" trouble, when actually he has "pros-tate" trouble. The writer "imply" mix-up. The writer "imply"; the reader "infers." (It's like pitching and catching.)
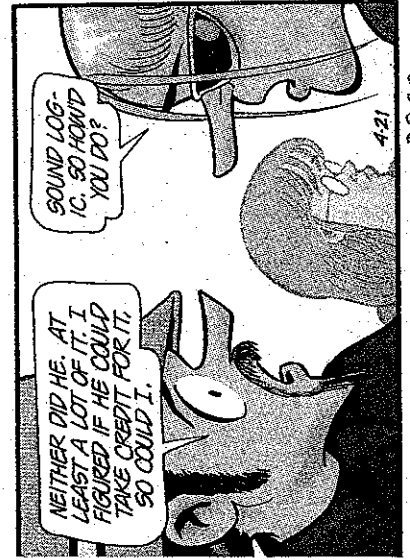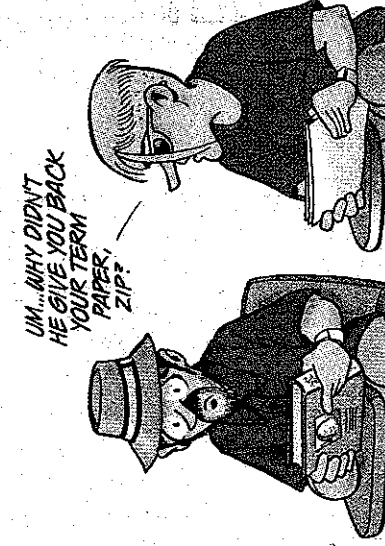
Please do not say "o" instead of "zero." Or use the word "that" when "who" is correct. ("That" refers to inanimate objects; "who" to people.) Some the word "ask." I would much rather

Finally, the misuse of the word "ask": Some say "ax" instead of "ask." I would much rather be "asked" than "axed." Wouldn't you?
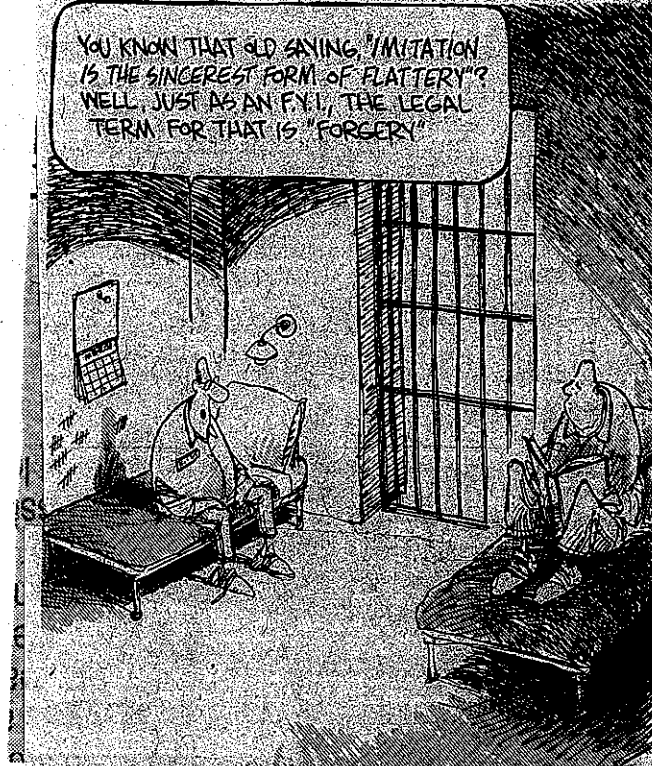
☐   ☐   ☐
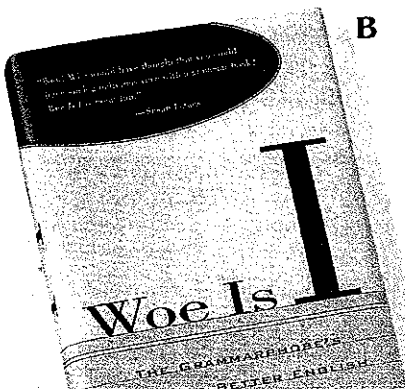
DOONESBURY / by Garry Trudeau

Non Sequitur

YOU KNOW THAT OLD SAYING, "IMITATION IS THE SINCEREST FORM OF FLATTERY"? WELL, JUST AS AN F.Y.I., THE LEGAL TERM FOR THAT IS "FORGERY"
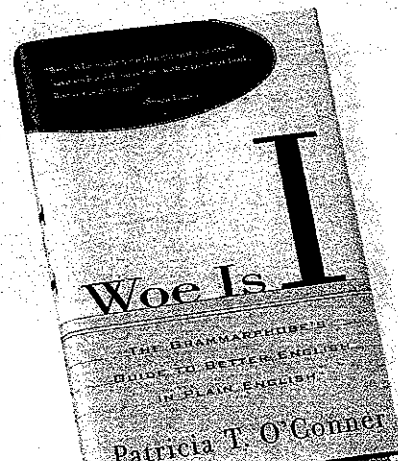

B. <u>WOE IS I</u>. What's the difference between "lie" and "lay"? Is "couple" a singular or a plural noun? If you've ever been tripped up by grammar, this delightful, 227-page hardcover volume belongs on your reference shelf. It not only speaks plain English – with clear examples of correct and incorrect usage – it's free-flowing style is *fun* to read. A must for all those who aspire to good grammar.
#2616 16.95

ack!!!

OK!

#2148   72.00

E. <u>WOE IS I</u>. What's the difference between "lie" and "lay"? Is "couple" a singular or a plural noun? If you've ever been tripped up by grammar, this delightful, 227-page hardcover volume belongs on your reference shelf. It not only speaks plain English – with clear examples of correct and incorrect usage – its free-flowing style is *fun* to read. A must for all those who aspire to good grammar.
#2616 16.95

B

C. BOO

Woe Is I

Woe Is I
Patricia T. O'Conner

BORN LOSER / by Art & Chip Sansom