

# Editing and Revision

## Symbols

- ab**      **Problem:** Incorrect abbreviation  
**Rule:** Avoid abbreviations in formal writing. When in doubt, write it out  
**Ex:** Dr. Jones or Reverend Franklin
- agr p**      **Problem:** Error in punctuation agreement  
**Rule:** A pronoun must refer to a specific noun (its referent or antecedent), with which its gender must agree.  
**Ex:** **Jane** lost **her** book. The **students** complained that **they** had been treated unfairly.
- agr sv**      **Problem:** Error in subject-verb agreement  
**Rule:** The subject should agree in number with the verb.  
**Ex:** Faulty: There **is** an estimated 29,000 **women** living in our city.  
Revised: There **are** an estimated 29,000 **women** living in our city.
- ap/**      **Problem:** Missing or misused apostrophe  
**Rule:** Apostrophe's indicate the possessive, a contraction, and the plural of numbers, letters, and figures  
**Ex:** The chain saw was **Emma's**.  
The **cows'** water supply is contaminated.
- av**      **Problem:** Active voice needed  
**Rule:** The verb's voice in a sentence signals whether the subject acts or is acted upon. Passive voice makes the recipient of the action the subject.  
**Ex:** Active: Leslie lost her report.  
Passive: The report was lost by Leslie.  
**Words or Phrases to avoid:** Was, will be, Have been, should be, etc.
- ca**      **Problem:** Pronoun in wrong case  
**Rule:** A pronoun's case (nominative, objective, or possessive) is determined by its role in the sentence: as subject, object, or indicator of possession.  
**Ex:** See page 458 of "The Writing Process" by John M. Lannon
- cap Or \_**      **Problem:** Capital letter needed  
**Rule:** A capital is needed for the beginning of a sentence, or for names, titles, proper nouns, etc.  
**Ex:** I am attending Bob Jones University.
- cl**      **Problem:** Word that merely adds clutter.  
**Rule:** Clutter words (i.e. **very, definitely, quite, extremely, rather, somewhat, really, actually, situation, aspect, factor**) stretch a message without adding meaning.  
**Ex: Cluttered:** **Actually**, one **aspect** of a relationship **situation** that could **definitely** make me **very** happy would be to have a **somewhat** adventurous partner who **really** shared my **extreme** love of traveling.  
**Concise:** I'd like to meet an adventurous person who loves to travel.
- comb**      **Problem:** choppy sentences need to be combined  
**Rule:** Fluent sentences make your work easy to read by having clear connections, variety, and emphasis.

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**Ex: Disconnected:** Jogging can be helpful. You need the right equipment. Most necessary are well-fitting shoes. Without this equipment you take the chance of injuring your legs. Your knees are especially prone to injury. (5 sentences)

**Clear, concise, and fluent:** Jogging can be helpful if you have the right equipment. Shoes that fit well are most necessary because they prevent injury to your legs, especially your knees. (2 sentences)

cont **Problem:** Faulty contraction

**Rule:** An apostrophe shows that you have omitted one or more letters in a phrase that is usually a combination of a pronoun and a verb.

**Ex:** they are/they're, can not/can't, do not/don't, etc.

CS **Problem:** comma splice, links two sentences only by a comma

**Rule:** In a comma splice, two complete ideas (independent clauses), which should be separated by a period or a semicolon, are incorrectly joined by a comma.

**Ex: Faulty:** Sarah did a great job, she was promoted.

**Revised:** Sarah did a great job. She was promoted.

Dgl **Problem:** Dangling modifier

**Rule:** Position modifiers to reflect your meaning. Ambiguity occurs when a modifying phrase has no word to modify.

**Ex: Dangling Modifier:** Answering the phone, the cat ran out the door.

**Revised:** As Mary answered the phone, the cat ran out the door.

frag **Problem:** a fragment used as a sentence

**Rule:** A sentence must express a complete idea.

**Ex: Fragmented:** To become an electronics technician.

**Complete:** To become an electrician, Sam had to complete a two year apprenticeship.

ital **Problem:** italics needed for emphasis

**Rule:** In typing or longhand writing, indicate italics by underlining. Use italic print for titles of books, periodicals, films, newspapers, and plays; for the names of ships; for foreign words or scientific names; sparingly, for emphasizing a word; and for indicating the special use of a word.

**Ex:** The *Oxford English Dictionary* is a handy reference tool.

mod **Problem:** a modifying word or phrase misplaced

**Rule:** Modifiers explain, define, or add detail to other words or ideas.

Prepositional phrases, for example, usually define or limit adjacent words as do other types of phrases and clauses.

**Ex:** the foundation **with the cracked wall.** the journey **to the moon.**

neg **Problem:** negative construction needs rephrasing

**Rule:** A positive expression is easier to understand than a negative one

**Ex: indirect:** I did **not** gain anything from this course.

**Direct:** I gained nothing from this course.

nom **Problem:** nominalization (nouns made from verbs)

**Rule:** Nouns manufactured from verbs (nominalization) often accompany weak verbs and needless prepositions.

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**Ex: weak:** Give **consideration** to the possibility of a career change.

**Strong:** **Consider** a career change.

np

**Problem:** a needless phrase, creates wordiness

**Rule: To be**, as well as **that** and **which** phrase, can often be cut out.

**Ex:** She seems [to be] upset.

I find some of my classmates [to be] brilliant.

The Batmobile is a car [that is] worth buying.

This [is a] math problem [that] is impossible to solve.

The book [, which is] about Hemingway [,] is fascinating.

over **Problem:** overstatement or exaggeration

**Rule:** Avoid overstatement or exaggeration because it can make your writing sound phoney.

**Ex:** Be cautious of words like **best, biggest, brightest, most, and worst.**

Recognize the differences among **always, usually, often, and rarely** or among **all, most, many, some, and few.**

par **Problem:** parallel phrasing needed

**Rule:** To reflect relationships among items of equal importance, express them in identical grammatical forms.

**Ex: Faulty:** The new tutor is **enthusiastic, skilled, and you can depend on her.**

**Revised:** the new tutor is **enthusiastic, skilled, and Dependable.**

pct **Problem:** error in punctuation

**Rule:** punctuation marks are like road signs and traffic signals. They govern reading speed and provide clues for navigating your network of ideas.

**Ex:** See "Punctuation Dictionary" handout.

pv **Problem:** passive voice needed

**Rule:** Passive voice is appropriate in lab reports and other documents in which the agent's identity is immaterial to the message

**Ex:** The criminal **was identified.**

The victim **was asked** to testify.

red **Problem:** redundant phrase, says the same thing twice

**Rule:** Avoid needless repetition, unnecessary repetition clutters and dilutes the meaning of what you are trying to say.

**Ex: Repetitious:** In trauma victims, breathing is restored by **artificial respiration.**

Techniques of **artificial respiration** include mouth-to-mouth **respiration** and mouth-to-nose **respiration.**

**Concise:** In trauma victims, breathing is restored by artificial respiration, either by mouth-to-mouth or mouth-to-nose.

ref **Problem:** unclear referent (word a pronoun refers to)

**Rule:** Pronouns (**she, it, his, their,** and so on) must clearly refer to the noun they replace.

**Ex: Ambiguous:** Our patients enjoy the warm days while **they** last. [Are the patients or the warm days on the way out?]

**Clear Referent:** While these warm days last, our patients enjoy them.

ro **Problem:** run-on, no break or link between sentences

**Rule:** the run-on sentence, a cousin of the comma splice, crams too many ideas

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without needed breaks or pauses.

**Ex:** See page 455 of “The Writing Process by John M. Lannon

**shift Problem:** inconsistent tense, voice, mood, or point of view

**Rule:** shifts in point of view damage coherence. If you begin a sentence or paragraph with one subject or person, do not shift to another.

**Ex:** Shift in mood: **Unscrew** the valve and then steel wool **should be used** to clean the fittings.

**Revised:** **Unscrew** the valve and then **use** steel wool to clean the fitting.

**short Problem:** Short sentence(s) needed for emphasis

**Rule:** short sentences (even one word sentences) provide vivid emphasis. They stick in the readers mind.

**Ex: Acceptable sentence:** As our airspeed increases, the plane vibrates, and we reach the point where the battle begins.

**For dramatic emphasis:** Our airspeed increases. The plane vibrates. We reach the point here the battle begins.

**sp Problem:** misspelled word

**Rule:** Take the time to use a dictionary or spell checker for every project.

**Ex:** Their going to take it there, but will anyone be at they're home? OR They're going to take it there, but will anyone be at their home?

**spec Problem:** more specific word or phrase needed

**Rule:** the more specific your words, the sharper your image.

**Ex: General:** Out the cabin window I could see a beautiful view.

**Specific:** Out the cabin window I could see snow capped mountains in the distance, parts of a wilderness lake, and a high, pink granite ledge with 90-foot blue spruce trees on top.

**tone Problem:** Inappropriate tone for topic or reader

**Rule:** Your tone is your personal stamp — the personality that takes shape between the lines. The tone you create depends on (1) the distance you impose between yourself and the reader, and (2) the attitude you show toward the subject.

**Ex: Informal:** Now that you've arrived in the glamorous world of office work, put on your track shoes; this is no ordinary clerical job.

**Semiformal:** As an office assistant with Ames Explosives Corporation, you will spend little of your day at your desk.

**Formal:** Office assistants at Ames Explosives are responsible for duties that extend far beyond desk work.

**trans Problem:** Transition needed, to connect related ideas

**Rule:** Transitional expressions announce relationships between two or more thoughts. Words or phrases such as **for example**, **meanwhile**, **however**, and **moreover** work like bridges between thoughts.

**Ex:** One of every three older Americans lives near or below the poverty level. *Meanwhile*, only one of every nine younger adults lives in poverty.

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WO

**Problem:** Too many words, too little meaning

**Rule:** To trim the fat from a piece of writing, reduce needless phrases to one word.

**Ex:**

at this point	=	now
has the ability to	=	can
aware of the fact that	=	know
due to the fact that	=	because
dislike very much	=	hate
athletic person	=	athlete
the majority of	=	most
being in good health	=	healthy

WW **Problem:** wrong word used

**Rule:** Be careful when using the thesaurus because every word listed as a synonym can carry different shades of meaning.

**Ex:**

fewer / less
imply / infer
eager / anxious
uninterested / disinterested
among / between

¶

**Problem:** New paragraph needed

**Rule:** Writers need definite paragraph divisions for control; readers need them for access.

**Ex:** See page 88 of "The Writing Process" by John M. Lannon

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**Problem:** Insert whatever is missing

**Rule:** The caret (the symbol in the left margin) is used to denote a handwritten insertion that needs to be added to your work.

#

**Problem:** Insert one letter space or line space

This 

**Problem:** Delete this word or phrase

( )

**Problem:** Close up the space

~~This reverse~~ **Problem:** Reverse these elements