

Ferkauf Clinical Program's Grammar Guide

Resources

- Strunk, William, Jr.; White, E. B. (2009). *The Elements of Style* (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon. p. xiii. ISBN 978-0-205-31342-6.
- <http://www.drgrammar.org/frequently-asked-questions>

General guidelines/Reminders:

- Irregardless is not a word.
- It should be clear why one paragraph logically follows another. What is the conceptual thread linking one paragraph to the next? Consider adding connective/transition sentences between paragraphs.
- Be concise in your writing and try to avoid long, drawn-out sentences.
- Know the different dashes:
- vs –
- Numbers under 10 should be spelled out
- Avoid contractions
- Watch your tenses - If you are writing in the past tense, keep your descriptions in the past tense
- Do not use "however" as if it were a conjunction like "and." When you do that, you often form a run-on sentence. If you break the run-on sentence into two sentences, do not automatically start the second sentence with "However" as the first word. It is better style to place "however" later in the sentence where it will mean what the word "nevertheless" means. When "however" is placed at the beginning of a sentence, it tends to mean "in whatever way," not "nevertheless." Alternatively, you may use a semi-colon just before the "however" instead of making a second, new sentence.
- "In regards to" is not only incorrect (the correct phrase is "in regard to,") it is also an empty phrase even when written correctly. Students often use the phrase to transition to new content. The use of contextually meaningful transitional phrases and expressions to link ideas, however, will improve student writing that relies on generic phrases as connectors. The phrase "in terms of" is similarly misused and should be edited out of papers.
- Do not end with a preposition:
WRONG: That is a situation I have not thought of.
If RIGHT will be awkward, reword: That is a situation of which I have not thought (awkward)
Not awkward RIGHT: That is a situation I have not considered.

- Do not use dangling modifiers:
 WRONG: Hungry, the leftover pizza was devoured.
 RIGHT: Hungry, we devoured the leftover pizza.
 RIGHT: Walking down the street (clause), the man (subject) saw the beautiful trees (object).
 WRONG: Walking down Main Street, the trees were beautiful.
- Its vs. it's
 WRONG: The paper was creative, however, it's formatting was incorrect
 WRONG: Questions were raised about it's use
 RIGHT: It's snowing today
- Possessives and plurals
 WRONG: the therapist's in the study did not follow the protocol
 WRONG: All of the therapist's levels of anxiety were high
 RIGHT: the therapists' assessments were correct
- Singular vs plural:
 WRONG: A good therapist should realize that their therapeutic style will develop
 WRONG: Each child needs to bring in their permission form
 RIGHT: Each child needs to bring in his/her permission form OR All of the children need to bring in their permission forms
- Gender neutral:
 WRONG: A good therapist should realize that his therapeutic style will develop
- Affect vs. effect:
 WRONG: the affect of the intervention
 WRONG: Making mistakes can effect one's level of self-esteem
 Exception: "effect" can also be used as a verb to mean "to bring about." Thus you can "effect change."
- Know the difference between Their/they're/there:
 WRONG: They're ideas
- Placement punctuation with quotation marks:
 In American English, periods and commas go inside quotation marks.
 WRONG: As the patient explained, "The treatment lasted four weeks".
 RIGHT: Your professor said, "Please place periods inside quotation marks."
- Avoid split infinitives:
 WRONG: to quickly leave; to always want; to easily excel; to not fail a class
 RIGHT: to leave quickly; to want always; to excel easily; not to fail a class
 BUT some do accept this. For example most prefer "to boldly go where no man has gone before" over "to go boldly." You should consider your reader's preference.

- Who and Whom
Who is subject, Whom is an object
RIGHT: Who loves you?
RIGHT: I consulted an attorney whom I met in New York.
- That and Which
That is a restrictive pronoun while which is a relative clause (it qualifies)
RIGHT: I don't trust fruits and vegetables that are not organic
RIGHT: I recommend you eat only organic fruits and vegetables, which are available in area grocery stores.
- The word "data" like the word "men" is plural. "The men are marching down the street" = "The data are ..."
- "Lie" vs. "Lay"
The word "lay" must have an object. Someone lays something somewhere. You lie.

	Present	Past
Lie	Lie	Lay
Lay	Lay	Laid

Now I lay me down to sleep. (Object=me)