

Ten common errors in manuscripts

1. Use “to” instead of “in order to”. There is no difference to the meaning of the sentence. As a general rule remove all superfluous, repetitious and extraneous words and redundancies (*sic*).
 2. Using the present tense when referring to published literature. Writing that “the authors states” implies that the author still believes what was published, when in truth, recent advances or new data have changed the author’s opinions.
 3. Always put a space between a number and its units of measure, e.g., 26.2 N.m or 80 kg. The only exceptions are the percent sign (10%), the degree symbol (5°) and the foot or minute (') and inch or second (") symbols.
 4. Use “it’s” for “it is”; “its” is a possessive pronoun. Use the apostrophe (') for contractions and possessives excepting the pronouns: his, hers, its, yours, ours, theirs and ones.
 5. Use the active voice instead of the passive voice. For example, use “the subject exercised ten minutes prior to testing” rather than “the subject was exercising for ten minutes prior to testing”. The active voice communicates more effectively.
 6. Improper use of the hyphen, “-”. Use the hyphen to join two or more words to make a compound word, such as, toe-off, follow-through or day-to-day. It should not be used to join prefixes or suffixes, such as, bio-mechanical, co-ordinate or bi-articular, instead use biomechanical, coordinate and biarticular.
 7. Use *italics* for identifying foreign words, such as, *in vitro* or *post hoc*, exception is etc. (which is English for *et cetera*). Et al. should also, in principle, be *et al.* since this is a Latin abbreviation for *et alii*. Use **boldface** or underlining or CAPITALS for emphasis sparingly and use quotation marks (“yikes”) for colloquialisms.
 8. Order references chronologically. That is, order the authors from earliest to latest, for example, (Elftman, 1939; Winter, 1980; Aleshinsky, 1985).
 9. Using the past tense when describing the results of an experiment. You may use the present or future tenses in the discussion but always use the past tense when referring to your or other authors’ results.
 10. The word “data” as a plural word. “Datum” is the singular form; “data” are plural.
- Extra. Use gender neutral or inclusive language and avoid terms such as, “the obese”, “the amputee” or “the person suffering from ...” etc. Instead use “the person with obesity”, “the person with a below-knee amputation” or “the person with ...”.

Some stylistic considerations

1. Use *sans serif* typefaces (also called fonts) for titles and subtitles, as above, and *serif* typefaces for the text. *Sans serif* fonts include Arial, Univers, Swiss and Helvetica. Times, Times Roman, Times New Roman, TMS RMS and CG Times are *serif* typefaces.
2. Full justification of text makes the reader's eyes work harder. Left justification is easier to read and is required by most publishers. Fully justified text is used in newspapers and multicolumn text. Professors may have to read several dozen papers after a long day at work and do not need any added stress. This item has full justification of margins.
3. Avoid starting or ending a sentence with "however". It is best used, however, in the middle of a sentence.
4. Avoid using point form. Point form in a manuscript is contraindicated. It is acceptable and preferred in slide presentations, overhead transparencies or project outlines.
5. Refrain from using American spellings, such as, "center, centimeter, liter, color" in Canada use "centre, centimetre, litre, colour" The word, "meter", in Canada refers to a measuring device, such as, a voltmeter or gas meter but not as a unit of distance.
6. Use capital letters for abbreviations, such as, EMG (electromyography), MVC (maximal voluntary contraction) or MUAP (motor unit action potential). Pluralize these by adding an "s" without apostrophes, e.g., EMGs, MVCs and MUAPs.
7. In some typing classes students are taught to use two spaces after the period in a sentence. This archaic form was necessary when nonproportional fonts were used, such as these lines in Courier typeface, to emphasize the end of a sentence. It just wastes space now, preferably use only proportional fonts like, Times Roman, MS Serif or Arial.
8. When reporting numbers, have a number before the decimal even if it is only a zero, e.g., 0.56 versus .56 and do not use excessive significant figures, e.g., 25.067 kg. Two to four significant digits (25 kg or 25.1 kg) are usually enough.
9. It is preferable to use the author-date format (Day, 1996) for references as opposed to the numerical (12) or superscript¹⁰ formats.
10. Avoid using numbers in a series of items, e.g., (1) ankle, (2) knee and (3) hip. They waste space and add no useful information.
11. The serial comma is obsolete. Don't use a comma before "and" or "or" in a series; i.e., use displacements, velocities and acceleration, instead of, displacements, velocities, and accelerations.
12. Use the semicolon to join two sentences that need to be together; use the comma for clauses that cannot stand alone.