

A/an historic

a is correct
historic begins with the consonant H
It was **a** historic meeting

See: Articles

Articles

the **indefinite article (a or an)**

with **general** (not particular, definite, defined) items

A capacitated spermatozoon can undergo hyperactivation (**any** capacitated cell)
A hyperactivated spermatozoon can penetrate the cumulus oophorus (**any** hyperactivated cell)
An acrosome-reacted spermatozoon can penetrate the zona pellucida (**any** acrosome-reacted cell)

written as

a before words beginning with
consonants (except those sounding like vowels) **a** five-fold increase
vowels that **sound like** consonants **a** university, **a** unit
abbreviations starting with vowels that **sound like** consonants **a** UN committee

an before words or abbreviations beginning with
vowels (except those sounding like consonants) **an** epididymis
consonants that **sound like** vowels (a silent **h**) **an** hour, **an** honorarium
abbreviations starting with consonants that **sound like** vowels **an** RGC application
numbers that **sound like** vowels **an** 80 µl aliquot
symbols that **sound like** vowels **an** ~ (approximately) five-fold increase

the **definite article (the)**

with **specific** (particular, definite, defined) items

Spermatozoa underwent **the** acrosome reaction
[**a specific** reaction]
The acrosome-reacted spermatozoa penetrated the zona pellucida
[**only** acrosome-reacted cells]
The capacitated spermatozoa underwent hyperactivation
[**only** capacitated cells]
The hyperactivated spermatozoa penetrated the cumulus oophorus
[**only** hyperactivated of cells]

with **superlatives**

The best/worst scientific report this year
[**only** one, as no report is as good/bad]

pronounced as

the (short vowel) before
consonants (except those sounding like vowels) **the** five-fold increase
vowels that **sound like** consonants **the** university, **the** unit
abbreviations starting with vowels that **sound like** consonants **the** UN committee

thee (long vowel) before
vowels (except those sounding like consonants) **the** epididymis
consonants that **sound like** vowels (a silent **h**) **the** hour, **the** honorarium
abbreviations starting with consonants that **sound like** vowels **the** RGC application
numbers that **sound like** vowels **the** 80 µl aliquot
symbols that **sound like** vowels **the** ~ (approximately) five-fold increase

no article (written here as ^)

with **general** concepts

It is useful for studying ^developmental biology
[developmental biology **in general**]

with **specific** parameters, processes or data that themselves require the **definite article**

^Human semen was used
[**the** semen of humans]
^Sperm concentration was assessed in a Neubauer chamber
[**the** concentration of spermatozoa]
^Sperm motility was assessed by CASA
[**the** motility of spermatozoa]
^Sperm morphology was assessed from stained preparations
[**the** morphology of spermatozoa]
^Sperm vitality was assessed with eosin-nigrosin
[**the** vitality of spermatozoa]
The cells underwent ^capacitation
[**the** capacitation process]
The spermatozoa displayed ^hyperactivation
[**the** hyperactivation process]
^Optimised RNA transfection
[**the** optimised transfection method]

with **plural nouns** in general

Human semen comprises ^accessory organ fluids and ^spermatozoa
I enjoy correcting ^theses, ^manuscripts and ^grants
^Spermatozoa attach to the oviductal epithelium before reaching the site of fertilisation

with **uncountable** objects
 She likes doing ^cell culture
 ^Human semen comprises several fluids

with **well known** places or people
 I used to work at ^Ebo's Institute
 I studied at ^Münster university

ALERT Check whether an **article** is needed when a **specific** term is referred to in a **general** way

After **the** capacitation, spermatozoa displayed **the** hyperactivation
ERROR *Syntax:* capacitation and hyperactivation are both **general terms that need no article**
CORRECT by **omitting the definite articles**
 After **capacitation**, spermatozoa displayed **hyperactivation**
retaining the definite article and adding a specific compound noun
 After **the capacitation process**, spermatozoa displayed **the hyperactivation process**

After **the** hyperactivation, spermatozoa displayed acrosome reaction
ERROR *Syntax:* **hyperactivation** is a **general term** for a specific process, so **needs no article (the)** before it; the acrosome reaction is **specific** and **needs one**
CORRECT by **moving the definite article**
 After hyperactivation, spermatozoa displayed **the** acrosome reaction
retaining the definite article and adding a specific compound noun
 After **the hyperactivation process**, spermatozoa displayed **the** acrosome reaction

Only in **the** cauda epididymidis do spermatozoa have the potential to undergo **the** post-ejaculatory events
ERROR *Syntax:* as the post-ejaculatory events are **not specified, no article is required**
CORRECT by **omitting the second definite article**
 Only in **the** cauda epididymidis do spermatozoa have the potential to undergo post-ejaculatory events

Only in **the** cauda epididymidis do spermatozoa have the potential to undergo post-ejaculatory events of capacitation and hyperactivation
ERROR *Syntax:* as the listed **specific** post-ejaculatory events are referred to, **the definite article is required**
CORRECT by **adding a second definite article**
 Only in **the** cauda epididymidis do spermatozoa have the potential to undergo **the** post-ejaculatory events of capacitation and hyperactivation

See: Inversion of verbs

A considerable amount of
Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **much**, or be specific about the extent

A few/few

<i>a few</i>	some	They bought a few books [none was expected]
<i>few</i>	a small number of, not many, some	They bought few books [more were expected]

See: Few/several

A majority of
Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **most**, or be specific about the number
 See: Majority of ... is/are

A number of
Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **many**, or be specific about the number
 See: Number of ... is/are

A priori/posteriori (Latin)

<i>a priori</i>	from what comes before , before experience relating to or derived by reasoning from self-evident propositions deductive , not from observed facts You cannot assume a priori that your expenses will be the same in that country
<i>a posteriori</i>	from what comes after , after experience relating to or derived by reasoning from observations inductive , from observed facts His was clearly an a posteriori explanation of the facts

See: Arguments, Deductive/inductive, Empirical/theoretical

Abbreviation/acronym/contraction

abbreviation	any shortened form of word, phrase, name or title achieved by use of the initial letters or contraction without full stops
	upper case WHO (World Health Organization)
	lower case ldc (less developed country)
acronym	an abbreviation that produces a pronounceable word without full stops
	in upper case MALDI-TOF (Matrix-assisted laser desorption/ionization–time-of-flight)
	in lower case laser (light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation)
contraction	a word shortened by omission of some letters without a full stop
	if the last letter of the full word is included in the abbreviation
	Dr (doctor) plural Drs
	with a full stop
	if the last letter of the full word is not included in the abbreviation
	Prof. (professor) plural Prof.s

See: Apostrophes

Able

the ability to do something
does not necessarily mean that something is done

Overused vague word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check whether the verb **able** is necessary

After treatment we **were able to measure** an increase in testosterone
ERROR *Tautology:* this states that you **were capable of measuring** testosterone but the increase detected indicates **that you did**
 As testosterone was measured, it is **unnecessary** to state the ability to do so
CORRECT by **omitting** the **auxiliary verb**
 After treatment we **measured** an increase in testosterone

Able to/capable of

able to	auxiliary verb followed by an infinitive with the infinitive marker to He is able to operate the electron microscope himself
capable of	auxiliary verb followed by a gerund She is capable of operating the electron microscope herself

Abnormal/normal/subnormal/supra-normal

normal	common, ordinary, regular
abnormal	not normal
subnormal	below normal
supra-normal	above normal

Abolishment/abolition

abolition is correct

Absence in/of

absence of is correct
The **absence of** EEAC1 staining in the mutant epididymis is noteworthy

Absent

adjective not present or attending, not existing
My **absent** colleagues
 verb to go away or stay away
He **absented** himself from the meeting
is not a preposition

ALERT Check that **absent is not** used as a **preposition**

Absent the evidence, this conclusion cannot be drawn
ERROR *Syntax:* absent **is not** a **preposition**
CORRECT by **using** a **preposition**
Without the evidence, this conclusion cannot be drawn
prepositional phrase
In the absence of evidence, this conclusion cannot be drawn

ALERT Check that the use of **absent** makes sense

Androgens in contraceptive-suppressed men were reduced to low but not **absent** levels
ERROR *Semantics:* if there is no level it cannot be reached

CORRECT by

replacing **absent** by **non-detectable**

Androgens in contraceptive-suppressed men were reduced to low but not **non-detectable** levels

replacing **absent** by **still detectable**

Androgens in contraceptive-suppressed men were reduced to low but **still detectable** levels

retaining **absent** and **omitting levels**

Androgens in contraceptive-suppressed men were low but not **absent**

Absent at/from/on

absent at related to a certain period of time
Basal cell staining was **absent at** puberty

absent from related to a certain region
It is noteworthy that EAAC1 staining is **absent from** the mid-corpus epididymidis

absent on related to a certain instant in time
The basal cell layer was present on day 25, but was **absent on** day 15

Absent from/in

absent from is correct

Abscissa/ordinate

abscissa the y-axis
for the **dependent** variable

ordinate the x-axis
for the **independent** variable

Absolute/non-absolute verbal construction

absolute **not** grammatically connected with the rest of the sentence
controls the **entire sentence**

e.g. **phrasal clauses**

not separated by commas

The surgeons having finished the operation the lights were dimmed

non-absolute grammatically connected with the rest of the sentence
controls only the **subject** of the sentence

e.g. **adjectival phrases**

separated by commas

The surgeons, having finished the operation, went to dinner

See: Adjectival phrase/phrasal clause, Being so/the case, Having said that, Judged by/from, Judging by/from, Phrase, Regarding/with regard to, Resulting

Absorption/adsorption/resorption

absorption penetration and uptake of material, fluid or radiation
There is fluid and solute **absorption** from the gut

adsorption binding of material or molecules to a surface, membrane or protein
The antibody was **adsorbed** with its relevant antigen

resorption absorbing components of a secreted fluid (*i.e.* absorbing again, re-absorption)
There is **resorption** of testicular fluid in the efferent ducts

Accede

Synonyms: to agree, to allow, to grant

Accomplished

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by **what was accomplished**

ALERT Check whether **accomplished** should be **replaced** by a **more informative verb**

Sealing of the multi-well plates was **accomplished**

STYLE *Verbosity:* can be shortened

CHANGE by **replacing** the **noun** with a **verb**

The multi-well plates **were sealed**

Accord/accordance

accord verb transitive to give or grant someone status, power, recognition
These are the powers **accorded to** the Safety Officer

verb intransitive be consistent with
The results are **in accord with** the first hypothesis

noun agreement or harmony

The lecturers and deans are **in accord over** the examination marks

accordance noun a manner conforming with authority, experience, guidelines or instructions

The ballot was held **in accordance with** the union rules

Accordance/agreement

accordance a manner conforming with authority, experience, guidelines or instructions

agreement absence of incompatibility, consistency

ALERT Check that **accordance** relates to an **authority**

The CD45 to F4/80 cell ratio in the magnetic bead-sorted fragment is in **accordance** with the immuno-histochemical results
ERROR *Anthropomorphism: results are inanimate and cannot* provide authoritative information
CORRECT by **replacing *accordance* by *accord***

The CD45 to F4/80 cell ratio in the magnetic bead-sorted fragment is in **accord** with the immuno-histochemical results
agreement

The CD45 to F4/80 cell ratio in the magnetic bead-sorted fragment is in **agreement** with the immuno-histochemical results

According to/in accordance with

according to participial phrase

as stated by or in, in a manner conforming to

The Northern blot analysis was performed **according to** protocols described previously
 in proportion to an authority, experience, guidelines or instructions

According to the guidelines, persons entering the culture area should wear sterile gloves

in accordance with prepositional phrase

in a manner conforming with authority, experience, guidelines or instructions

The rules were made **in accordance with** the regulations of the Safety Department

ALERT Check that **according to** relates to objects **capable of providing** authoritative information or instructions

According to our results the topical administration of PRDX6 inhibits ROS damage and PMN infiltration
ERROR *Anthropomorphism: results are inanimate and cannot* make conclusions

CORRECT by **rewriting the sentence** and **adding a *human element***

From our results **we conclude that** the topical administration of PRDX6 inhibits ROS damage and PMN infiltration

From our results **it can be concluded that** the topical administration of PRDX6 inhibits ROS damage and PMN infiltration

See: Claim/demonstrate/establish/show

Accordingly

Synonym: so

Account for

phrasal verb to be the reason for something

The high numbers of immune cells **accounted for** the low cancer rate in adipose tissue

Accounted for by the fact

*Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **because***

Accuracy/precision

accuracy being accurate

precision being precise

See: Accurate/precise

Accurate/precise

accurate correct in all detail

close to the true, target or consensus value

precise specifying details exactly

9.786 is more precise than 9.8

See: Decimal places/significant figures, Dispersion/precision

Accusative (object) case

requires **inflexion** of possessive pronouns with gender and number

used for the **object** of a sentence

After reading the CVs, the professor wanted **me [him/her/us/them]** to take the position

used after a **preposition**

She gave the manuscript **to me [him/her/us/them]**

See: Us/we

Accustomed to

Synonym: used to

Achieved

successfully bring about or achieve a desired objective or result

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by **what was achieved**

ALERT Check whether **achieved** should be **replaced** by a **more informative word**

An **increase** in sperm motility was **achieved**

STYLE *Verbosity*: can be shortened
 CHANGE by **replacing the noun with a verb**
 Sperm motility **increased**

Acknowledge

to accept or admit the existence or truth of something
 The student **acknowledged** that he had used the incorrect statistical method
 to recognise the importance or quality of something or someone
 That institute is **acknowledged** as a leader in the field of stem cell research
 to show that one has noticed or recognised someone or something
 The technician's contribution was **acknowledged** at the end of the paper

See: Acknowledge/thank

Acknowledge/thank

acknowledge gifts are acknowledged
 We **acknowledge** the gift of ornidazole epoxide from Dr Haufe
thank people are thanked
 We **thank** Dr Jones for the gift of ³⁶Cl-labelled ornidazole

Acoustics is/are

is is correct
 the branch of physics concerned with the properties of sound
 acoustics is a **plural noun** treated as **singular**
Acoustics is the study of the behaviour of sound

Acoustics of ... is/are

are is correct
 the properties or qualities of a room or building that determine how sound is transmitted in it
 as what the **acoustics of** refers to (a **plural noun**) is the subject, use the **plural**
 The **acoustics of** the seminar room **are** terrible

Acronym

See: Abbreviation/acronym/contraction

Acrosome/acrosomal

acrosome noun the cap overlying the anterior sperm head
 The sperm head has an **acrosome** and a post-acrosomal segment
 used as an **adjective** in a compound noun
 The **acrosome** reaction
 [a reaction **occurring to** the acrosome]
acrosomal adjective of or to the acrosome
acrosomal membranes
 [membranes **of** the acrosome]
acrosomal damage
 [damage **to** the acrosome]

ALERT Check that **acrosomal** is used as an **adjective**

A23187 stimulated the **acrosomal** reaction

ERROR *Syntax*: the reaction occurring to the acrosome is the **acrosome reaction**

CORRECT by using a **noun**

A23187 stimulated the **acrosome** reaction

See: Acrosome reaction/-reacted

Acrosome reaction/-reacted

acrosome reaction compound noun, a reaction **occurring to** the acrosome
 As a **specific** reaction, it requires the **definite article**
The acrosome reaction was assessed by antibody binding
acrosome-reacted a compound hyphenated adjective, formed from a noun (acrosome)
 When **specific** spermatozoa are described, it requires the definite article
The acrosome-reacted spermatozoa were incubated with the antibody
 when describing **plural** nouns, it requires no article
Acrosome-reacted spermatozoa were labelled with the bound antibody

See: A/an/the/^

Active/passive verbs

active **subject performs** the action of the verb
Dr Kahn designed the laboratory
 [A statement about **Dr Kahn**]
passive the **subject suffers** the action of the verb
 The laboratory **was designed by** Dr Kahn

[A statement about the laboratory]

only **transitive verbs** can have both active and passive forms

A shift from active to passive

shifts **emphasis**

from the performer (Dr Kahn) to the receiver (the laboratory) of the action

may **change the meaning**, if associated with an auxiliary verb

when active

can means **is able to**

The wires **can [are strong enough to]** support the sheet

when passive

can means **is possible to**

The sheet **can [but does not have to]** be supported by the wires

a passive verb may have a **direct object**

He was read **a manuscript** by his student

which can be considered shortened from

The manuscript **was read to him by** his student

[with the subject (**he**) created from the indirect object (**him**)]

See: Intransitive/transitive verbs

Actual/current/present

current existing or happening now

The **current** issue of the journal contains your article

present existing or happening now

In the **present** financial climate our grant is unlikely to be funded

actual based on fact, what is true

The estimate was far less than the **actual** cost of the repair

used for emphasis

His **actual** words were "He thought he had not committed plagiarism"

does not mean existing or happening now (confusion with **German**)

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that **actual** is the **intended word**

The **actual** guidelines require sterilization of the surface at the end of each working day

ERROR *Tautology:* guidelines are **by definition** factual

CORRECT by **replacing actual** by words **meaning existing or happening now**

The **current** guidelines require sterilization of the surface at the end of each working day

The **present** guidelines require sterilization of the surface at the end of each working day

The **most recent** guidelines require sterilization of the surface at the end of each working day

See: Bone fide

Actual truth

Pleonasm: as **actual** and **truth** both mean based on fact, **actual** is **superfluous**, use **truth**

Actually/indeed

actually based on fact, as the truth or facts of a situation

Find out which methods are **actually** used

used for emphasis

He **actually** expected me to be grateful

indeed to emphasise a statement confirming something already suggested

Writing the grant was not expected to take long, and **indeed** it took less than three weeks

to introduce a further or stronger point

The hypothesis is attractive to most in this field, and **indeed** to others in other fields as well

ALERT Check that **actually** is the **intended word**

Expression may require post-transcriptional modification: it has **actually** been reported that MTA1 regulates DNA repair

ERROR *Tautology:* as all reports are based on fact, **actually** is **superfluous**

CORRECT by **using** a word **providing emphasis**

Expression may require posttranscriptional modification: it has **indeed** been reported that MTA1 regulates DNA repair

Acute/chronic

acute sudden onset, short duration

chronic slow onset, long duration

Ad/post hoc (Latin)

ad hoc for this, created or done for a particular purpose as necessary

The committee to examine the breach of rules was formed **ad hoc**

post hoc after this, occurring or done after the event

When a statistical test shows overall significance, a **post hoc** test is used to find out which groups differ

Adapt/adopt

adapt to change something for a specific purpose
adopt to accept something as it is and use it

Addendum/corrigendum/erratum (Latin)

addendum an addition, extra information added to a publication after it has been written
corrigendum an error found after publication and listed subsequently, erratum
erratum an error, especially one found post-publication and listed subsequently, corrigendum

Additionally

Synonyms: also, in addition
See: Also/in addition

Address

Synonyms: to consider, to deal with, to tackle

Adequate

Synonym: enough, but only just
See: Enough/sufficient

Adenylate/adenylyl cyclase

adenylyl cyclase is correct
 the **adenylyl (not adenylate)** functional group is cyclised

Adjectival phrase/phrasal clause

phrasal clause a phrase used as a **clause**, with a participle instead of a finite form of verb
 an absolute verbal construction controlling the whole sentence
 not separated by commas
The optimal number of spermatozoa being collected the wound was closed
The surgeons having finished the operation the lights were dimmed
cannot be omitted without a change to the meaning of the sentence

adjectival phrase a phrase acting as an **adjective**
 modifies **only** the **subject** (noun, pronoun, noun phrase)
 separated by commas
 The **surgeons, having finished the operation**, went to dinner
Having finished the operation, the **surgeons** went to dinner
can be omitted without a change to the meaning of the sentence
 The **surgeons** went to dinner

Adjectives

describe (govern, qualify) nouns, pronouns or noun phrases
do not qualify verbs

attributive adjectives come before the noun
single words

The **red** WHO manual
 [red **describes** the manual]

hyphenated words when more than one

A **5- μ l** aliquot
 [5- μ l **describes** the aliquot]

A **10- μ m-deep** chamber
 [10- μ m-deep **describes** the chamber]

MVA cascade inhibition induced **p53-dependent** autophagy
 [p53-dependent **describes** autophagy]

paired adjectives can be

co-ordinate adjectives, which
 modify the noun in the **same** way
 are of **equal** importance
are separated by commas

A **fertile, healthy** marmoset
 [a marmoset which is **fertile and healthy**]
 A **healthy, fertile** marmoset
 [a marmoset which is **healthy and fertile**]

cumulative adjectives, which
 modify the noun in **different** ways
 are of **unequal** importance (the one closer to the noun taking precedence)
are not separated by commas

A **fertile healthy** marmoset
 [a **healthy** marmoset which is **fertile**]
 A **healthy fertile** marmoset
 [a **fertile** marmoset which is **healthy**]

distinguished by applying one of two tests

They are **coordinate** adjectives if

they can be **separated by *and*** without a change in meaning

A fertile ***and*** healthy marmoset

they can be **reversed** without a change in meaning

A healthy, fertile marmoset

when [**male** contraception] (contraception **for males**) and [**hormonal** contraception] (contraception **by means of hormones**) are to be combined

the adjective **to be emphasised** is placed **first**, because it will be read **first (*from left-to-right*)**

when used alone

place the species first

[**human male** contraception]

[**human female** contraception]

when contrasting **hormonal contraception** between ***men and women***

for emphasis place the sexes first

[**Male hormonal** contraception is more difficult than **female hormonal** contraception]

when contrasting **types of contraception** available for **men**

for emphasis place the types first

[**Hormonal male** contraception is easier to develop than **non-hormonal male** contraception]

when [**epididymal** spermatozoa] (spermatozoa obtained **from the epididymis**), [**ejaculated** spermatozoa] (spermatozoa obtained **from an ejaculate**) and [**human** spermatozoa] (spermatozoa obtained **from men**) are to be combined

the adjective **to be emphasised** is placed **first**, because it will be read **first (*from left-to-right*)**

when used alone

for emphasis place the species first

[**human ejaculated** spermatozoa]

[**human epididymal** spermatozoa]

when contrasting spermatozoa from **two sources** in the **same species**

for emphasis place the different sources first

[In this study **epididymal** and **ejaculated human** spermatozoa were compared]

when contrasting spermatozoa from the **same source** in **different species**

for emphasis place sperm source first

[In this study **human** and **monkey epididymal** spermatozoa were compared]

when [**sperm maturation**] (maturation **of spermatozoa**), [**epididymal maturation**] (maturation **of the epididymis**) and [**epididymal spermatozoa**] (spermatozoa **from the epididymis**) are to be combined

the process of **sperm maturation** occurring **within the epididymis** can only be written one way

since **sperm epididymal** makes no sense

for emphasis place the source first

[**Epididymal sperm** maturation]

predicative adjectives come after the noun

single word

The manual is **red**

more than one word

not hyphenated, when a **noun** is used

An aliquot of **5 µl**

A chamber **10 µm deep**

A chamber of **depth 10 µm**

hyphenated, when the adjective is used

MVA cascade inhibition-induced autophagy is **p53-dependent**

may be

<i>absolute, positive</i>	the basic form	<i>superior</i>	<i>inferior</i>
<i>comparative</i>	a form relative to others	fast	slow
<i>superlative</i>	the extreme form	faster	slower
		fastest [nothing is as fast]	slowest [nothing is as slow]

some **adjectives** can be used as **plural nouns**

an aged lecturer	(one in particular)	the aged	(aged people in general)
a sick person	(one in particular)	the sick	(sick people in general)

See: Comparative/superlative, Nouns used as adjectives/genitives, Intransitive verbs of incomplete predication

Administer/administrate

administer is correct

Adsorption

See: Absorption/adsorption/resorption

Advance/advancement

advance development or improvement

In the last decade there have been many **advances** in our knowledge of epididymal function

advancement the process of helping to promote a plan or cause

The American Society for the **Advancement** of Science

ALERT Check that **advancement** is used correctly

Wider application of this technique could lead to **advancements** in our treatment of patients
 ERROR *Syntax*: no plan or cause is mentioned
 CORRECT by replacing **advancement** by **advance**
 Wider application of this technique could lead to **advances** in our treatment of patients

Advance/progress

advance
 transitive verb with **object** Our studies have **advanced** our **knowledge** of the fertilisation process
 intransitive verb Knowledge of sperm structure **advanced** with the invention of the electron microscope

progress
 intransitive verb As time **progresses** the quality of microscope lenses improves

ALERT Check that **progress** is used correctly

Our studies have **progressed** our knowledge of the fertilisation process
 ERROR *Syntax*: progress is an **intransitive verb**, taking no object
 CORRECT by using a **transitive verb**
 Our studies have **advanced** our knowledge of the fertilisation process

Adverbs

describe (govern, qualify) all parts of speech **except** nouns, pronouns and interjections

verbs The sample was **centrifuged rapidly**
adjectives The results were **significantly higher** than the controls
adverbs The results were **statistically significantly** higher than the controls
entire clauses **Allegedly they used it to fund their research**
 He **disgracefully** allowed this sort of behaviour to continue
 which can be rearranged in the form
 It is ... that **It is alleged that** they used it to fund their research
 It is ... of ... to **It is disgraceful of** him to allow this sort of behaviour to continue

may be

<i>absolute, positive</i>	the basic form	<i>superior</i>	<i>inferior</i>
<i>comparative</i>	a form relative to others	well	badly
<i>superlative</i>	the extreme form	better	worse
		best [nothing is as good]	worst [nothing is as bad]

position of adverbs

Meaning can depend on the position in the sentence
 at the beginning of the sentence
Disgracefully, he failed every examination
 Disgracefully defines the **whole clause**
 [It was **disgraceful** that he failed every exam (even if only by a small margin)]

at the end of the sentence
 He failed every examination **disgracefully**
 Disgracefully defines the **verb** it follows
 [He **failed** every exam by a **disgracefully** wide margin]

ALERT Check that **adverbs** are positioned correctly

He affixed **firmly** the camera on the microscope
 STYLE *Word order*: adverbs defining verbs or verbal phrases come **before** the verb or **after** the object
 CHANGE by **moving** the **adverb**
before the **verb**
 He **firmly affixed** the camera on the microscope
after the **object**
 He affixed the **camera firmly** on the microscope

Some adverbs require inversion of the verb

See: Adverbs (also under individual entries), Comparative/superlative, Inversion of verbs, Split infinitive

Adverbial phrase

A preposition with noun or noun phrase acting as an **adverb** (describing a **verb**, adverb or adjective)
 The sample was **prepared in the fume-cupboard**
 some adverbial phrases require inversion of the verb

See: Adverbs, Inversion of verbs

Adverse/averse

adverse antagonistic, contrary, hostile, unfavourable
averse feeling repugnance for, feeling loathing for, opposing

Advice/advices

advice is correct
advice is a **singular** abstract uncountable noun that has no plural
 She was always there to give me practical **advice**
 for a **plural** use, use a **partitive** construction
 Before the interview she gave me **plenty of advice**

ALERT Check that **advice is not** used in the **plural**

He gave me some good **advices** on how to set up the microscope
ERROR *Syntax:* **advice** is an uncountable noun with **no plural**
CORRECT by **using the singular**
 He gave me some good **advice** on how to set up the microscope

Advice/advise

advice noun guidance or recommendations for prudent action
advise verb to offer suggestions for the best course of action

Aetiology

The cause, set of causes, or manner of causation of a disease or condition

ALERT Check that **aetiology is not** used with words **implying causes**

A condition such as oligozoospermia may be caused by many **aetiologies**
ERROR *Tautology:* **aetiology** means the **cause** of a disease
CORRECT by **replacing**
caused by have
 A condition such as oligozoospermia may **have** many **aetiologies**
aetiologies by **factors**
 A condition such as oligozoospermia may be **caused by** many **factors**

Affect/effect

affect verb to have some effect on
 less positive than **effect**, often used with **may**
 Smoking may **affect** your fertility
 to pretend, imitate, adopt a pose
 He **affects** a British accent in order to impress the Americans
effect verb to accomplish, to bring about, to make something happen
 more positive than **affect**
 The addition of quinine **effected** cell volume
 noun outcome, result
 We predicted the **effect** of adding quinine to spermatozoa

ALERT Check whether **effect** is the **intended word**

If you have previously asked us not to send you a list of available positions, your preference will not be **effected**
ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, both **affect** and **effect** could be used here, but with different meanings, so **this implies** that your previous preference will not be **effected** (not **brought into effect**, *i.e.* ignored)
 or
 your previous preference will not be **affected** (not **altered**, *i.e.* retained)
CORRECT [if your previous preference will be changed] by
being more specific
 If you have previously asked us not to send you a list of available positions, **that** preference will be **ignored**
CORRECT [if your previous preference will be retained] by
replacing effected by affected
 If you have previously asked us not to send you a list of available positions, your preference will not be **affected**
being more specific
 If you have previously asked us not to send you a list of available positions, **that** preference will be **retained**

See: Impact/impinge

Affected

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by **what was affected**

ALERT Check whether **affected** should be **replaced** by a **more informative word**

Removal of the membrane was **affected** by application of detergent
STYLE *Verbosity:* can be shortened
CHANGE by **explaining how it was affected**
 The membrane **was removed** by application of detergent
 The membrane **was removed** by detergent

After sedimentation by centrifugation

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **after centrifugation** [unless this is contrasted with sedimentation by another method]

After

during the period of time following an event

ALERT Check that **after is not** used with an **ordinal number**

ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, this gives the **unintended impression** there is a **first-leading** cause **after lung cancer**, making prostatic cancer the **third** in rank, so **this implies** that prostatic cancer is the **leading** cause of deaths **after** lung cancer
[is the **second** in rank]

or

prostatic cancer is the **third-leading** cause of deaths among men
[is the **third** in rank]

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

omitting second-

Prostatic cancer is the **leading** cause of cancer-related deaths among men, **after** lung cancer

omitting after lung cancer

Prostatic cancer is the **second-leading** cause of cancer-related deaths among men

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

omitting after lung cancer and **replacing second by third**

Prostatic cancer is the **third-leading** cause of cancer-related deaths in men

stating those cancers coming **before the prostate**

Prostatic cancer is the leading cause of deaths **after testicular and lung cancer**

See: First/second/third, Second

After/following

after

preposition

during the period of time following an event

requires no logical connection between the linked words

Members are invited take tea in the Common room **after** the meeting

[there is **no logical** connection between taking **tea** and the **meeting**]

Chemical costs have gone up **after** the fuel price increase

[there is a **hint** of cause and effect between **fuel prices** and the **cost** of shipping chemicals]

check that **after** is placed correctly

Animals were examined 14 days **after** treatment

[The examination was 14 days **after** the treatment ended:

the animals had 14 days **without** treatment]

Animals were examined **after** 14 days of treatment

[The examination was **after** 14 days **after the** treatment began:

the animals had 14 days **with** treatment]

following preposition

coming after or as a result of

requires a logical connection between the linked words

Chemical costs have gone up **following** the fuel price increase

[there is a **definite** cause and effect between **fuel prices** and the **cost** of shipping chemicals]

adjective

For the **following** reasons I have decided to cancel the Saturday lecture...

noun

The **following** are my reasons: it is too expensive, too time-consuming and will not provide sufficient information

ALERT Ensure that **after does not** introduce **confusion** with a superlative

Semen analysis is regarded as the best predictor of germ cell toxicity **after** cancer therapy

ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, **it is unclear** what **after** refers to, so **this implies** that the prediction of germ cell toxicity after cancer therapy is regarded to be best assessed by semen analysis

or

before cancer therapy semen analysis is not regarded as the best predictor of germ cell toxicity

or

cancer therapy is a predictor of germ cell toxicity, but not as good as semen analysis

CORRECT [if the first is meant] by

replacing after by following

Semen analysis is regarded as the best predictor of germ cell toxicity **following** cancer therapy

CORRECT [if the second is meant] by

rewriting the sentence

Only after cancer therapy is semen analysis regarded as the best predictor of germ cell toxicity

CORRECT [if the third is meant] by

rewriting the sentence

Of the two predictors of germ cell toxicity, semen analysis is regarded as better than cancer therapy

ALERT Check that **following** joins clauses with a **logical connection**

Following incubation with primary antibodies, sections were counter-stained

ERROR *Syntax*: there is **no logical connection** between adding antibodies and counter-staining

CORRECT by **replacing *following* by *after***

After incubation with primary antibodies, sections were counter-stained

See: Following, Following/by following, Second, That clauses

After/subsequent to

after preposition

subsequent to **is not** a compound preposition

ALERT Check that **subsequent to is not** used as a **preposition**

Chromatin compaction occurs **subsequent to** the post-meiotic peak of phosphorylation

ERROR *Syntax*: **subsequent to is not** a **preposition** and **cannot** introduce an adverbial phrase

CORRECT by

using a *preposition*

Chromatin compaction occurs **after** the post-meiotic peak of phosphorylation

rewriting the sentence with an ***adverb***

The post-meiotic peak of cell phosphorylation occurs first; chromatin compaction occurs **subsequently**

See: Prior/subsequent, Subsequent/subsequently

After that/afterwards

after that prepositional phrase
in the time following an event or another period of time

Chamber A was filled with sperm suspension, and **after that** chamber B was filled with chemo-attractant

afterwards adverb

at a later or future time

Chamber A was filled with sperm suspension; chamber B was filled with chemo-attractant **afterwards**

equivalent grammatical constructions

Again

Once more

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that **again is not** used with words **implying repetitive action** (especially those containing the prefix **re**)

He repeated his advice **again**

ERROR *Tautology*: **repeat** implies repetitive action

CORRECT by **using *one or the other***, not both

He **repeated** his advice

He gave his advice **again**

Age/old/young

age Having lived or existed for a short time

old Having lived or existed for a long time; no longer young

young The length of time someone or something has lived or existed

Old people have a **high** age; **young** people for a **low** age

ALERT Check that **young** and **old** refer to people or things not to time

The **young age** of the recruits in this study should be noted

ERROR *Semantics*: confusion between **young** (having a low age) and **age** (the length of life)

CORRECT by **retaining**

age and **replacing *young* by *low***

The **low age** of the recruits in this study should be noted

young and **omitting *age***

The **young** recruits in this study should be noted

young and **rewriting the sentence**

That the recruits in this study were **young** should be noted

Aggravate

to make worse

The problems have been **aggravated** by neglect

does not mean to irritate, to annoy

Ago/since

ago at a **known time** before **now** (the present time)

with the **simple past** tense

I **started** my research 40 years **ago**

since in the intervening **period** between **now** and the time mentioned

with the **present perfect** tense

I **have done** research **since** 1970

ALERT Check whether you mean **ago** or **since**

I started my research **since** seven years

ERROR *Syntax*: **since** **requires a specific time**, not a duration

CORRECT by

replacing *since* by *ago*

I started my research seven years **ago**

omitting *since* and providing the *date*

I started my research **in 2000**

retaining *since* and using the *present perfect tense* with the *date*

I **have done** my research **since 2000**

See: Because, Before/earlier/previously, Before/in advance of/prior to, For/since, Since

Agree about/on/to/with

about something plural

They agreed **about** the methods to be employed

on something singular

They agreed **on** a research plan

to something

He agreed **to** the substitution of ethanol by ether

with someone

I agree **with** his views **on** separating abnormal spermatozoa

[**agree** applies **only** to people]

ALERT Check that **agree with** refers to a subject **capable of agreeing**

The high abundance of GlcNAc in the acrosomal ridge **agrees with** a role for GlcNAc in capacitation

ERROR *Anthropomorphism*: an **abundance** is **inanimate and cannot** agree to anything

CORRECT by **using** words that **imply agreement**

The high abundance of GlcNAc in the acrosomal ridge **is consistent with** a role for GlcNAc in capacitation

The high abundance of GlcNAc in the acrosomal ridge **supports** a role for GlcNAc in capacitation

The high abundance of GlcNAc in the acrosomal ridge **supports the view** that GlcNAc plays a role in capacitation

Agreement

Harmony or accordance in opinion or feeling

[**agrees** applies **only** to people]

ALERT Check that **in agreement with** refers to a subject **capable of agreeing**

The high expression of EEAC1 protein in the initial segment is **in agreement with** the RT-PCR results of its mRNA

ERROR *Anthropomorphism*: an **expression** is **inanimate and cannot** be in agreement with anything

CORRECT by **replacing *in agreement* by *consistent***

The high expression of EEAC1 protein in the initial segment is **consistent with** the RT-PCR results of its mRNA

See: Accordance/agreement

Ahead

further forward in space or time, in the lead

ALERT Check that **ahead is not** used with words **implying the future**

Looking **ahead** to the **future**, I see that further advances are certain to come soon

ERROR *Tautology*: the **future** always **lies ahead**

CORRECT by **using *one or the other***, not both

Looking **ahead**, I see that further advances are certain to come soon

In the **future**, I see that further advances are certain to come soon

Aiming

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

See: Aiming/hoping/intending

Aiming/hoping/intending

hoping to weak certainty

aiming to medium certainty

intending to strong certainty

Alarmed

to be frightened, worried

[**alarm** applies **only** to people or animals]

does not mean to be fitted with an alarm

Albeit/although/though

albeit although, conceding the fact that, though
 Progress was being made, **albeit** rather slowly

although despite the fact that, even though, in spite of the fact that
 He wrote the paper in Nature format, **although** the chances of its acceptance were slim

though but, even if, however
 The doctor's name was Chulavatnatol, **though** everyone called him Chula
 despite the fact that
Though only 30, he already has testicular cancer
 nevertheless, however
 He did his duty, **though**

Interchangeable conjunctions

though is slightly less formal than **although**
 only **though** may end a sentence

See: If/though

Albumin/albumen

albumin serum protein synthesized in the liver
albumen the protein in egg white

Algorithm/algorhythm

algorithm is correct

Algorithm/paradigm

algorithm a process or set of rules used in calculations
paradigm a conceptual model underlying a theory

Aliquant/aliquot

aliquant a number **not** contained in a larger number an exact number of times
 Five is an **aliquant** of 49, seven is an **aliquant** of 50
 a portion of a larger sample
 A 5- μ l **aliquant** of eosin dye solution

aliquot a number contained in a larger number an **exact** number of times
 Five is an **aliquot** of 50, seven is an **aliquot** of 49
 a portion of a larger sample
 A 5- μ l **aliquot** of eosin dye solution

Aliquotted/aliquoted

aliquoted is correct
 aliquot is a **polysyllabic** word with a **short** vowel and emphasis on the **first** syllable
 the final consonant is **not doubled** when adding a suffix (unless it is L or R)

Aliquotting/aliquoting

aliquoting is correct
 aliquot is a **polysyllabic** word with a **short** vowel and emphasis on the **first** syllable
 the final consonant is **not doubled** when adding a suffix (unless it is L or R)

All

The whole quantity or extent of a particular item
Overused word: if all examples are listed, there is no need for **all** to be used

ALERT Check whether **all** is necessary

The proteins AK1, AK2, AK3 and AK4 were **all** expressed in the epididymis
 ERROR *Semantics:* as **every one of** the proteins discussed is listed, **all** is **superfluous**
 CORRECT by **omitting all**
 The proteins AK1, AK2, AK3 and AK4 were expressed in the epididymis

All/all of

all **All** the treatments were effective
all of **All of** the treatments were effective

interchangeable adjective and adjectival phrase
 Style: **all of** is **unnecessary**, **all** alone is **sufficient**

See: All/none of

All/each

all the whole quantity or extent of a particular item
All subjects signed an informed consent **form**
All subjects signed informed consent **forms**

each every one (of a plural group) considered individually
Each subject signed an informed consent **form**
 [each subject signed **one** form]
Each subject signed informed consent **forms**
 [each subject signed **more than one** form]

ALERT Check that the use of **all does not** cause confusion

All subjects signed an informed consent **form**
ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, **this implies** that
every subject signed **one** form
 [the **same** form for all subjects]
 or
each subject signed **one** form
 [an **individual** form for each subject]

CORRECT [if the former is the case] by
being specific

Each subject signed **the same** informed consent form

CORRECT [if the latter is the case] by

being specific

Each subject signed **an individual** informed consent form

All subjects signed informed consent **forms**
ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, **this implies** that
every subject signed **many** forms
 or

every subject signed an **individual** form

CORRECT [if the former is the case] by

being specific

Each subject signed **several** informed consent forms

CORRECT [if the latter is the case] by

being specific

Each subject signed **an individual** informed consent form

All/none of

all of for **positive** contexts

All of the patients **have** cryptorchidism

none of for **negative** contexts

None of the patients **have** cryptorchidism

ALERT Check that **all is not** used in a **negative context**

All of the drugs were ineffective

STYLE *Word usage:* **all is not** used with a **negative adjective**

CHANGE by **using none of** and a **positive** adjective

None of the drugs were **effective**

All of the patients **have no** cryptorchidism

STYLE *Word usage:* **all is not** used with a **negative verb**

CHANGE by **replacing all of** by **none of** and **using a positive verb**

None of the patients **have** cryptorchidism

All results for pregnancy rate comparisons **did not change** when adjusted for sperm motility

STYLE *Word usage:* **all is not** used with a **negative verb**

CHANGE by **replacing all** by **none of** and **using a positive verb**

None of the results for pregnancy rate comparisons **changed** when adjusted for sperm motility

See: All/all of, None of ... is/are

All/the

all The whole quantity or extent of a particular item

All the isoforms were present

the definite article indicating certain items referred to before

The three isoforms were present

ALERT Check whether **all** is necessary

Positive results were obtained for Dvl by using a pair of common primers for **all the three** isoforms of Dvl1-3

ERROR *Tautology:* **all the** and **the three** both refer to the total number of isoforms

CORRECT by **using one or the other**, not both

Positive results were obtained for Dvl by using a pair of common primers for **all the** isoforms of Dvl1-3

Positive results were obtained for Dvl by using a pair of common primers for **the three** isoforms of Dvl1-3

See: All

All ... is/are

- is* when **all** refers to **several** objects or people considered **collectively** as a **group**, use the **singular**
All hope **is** lost
- are* when **all** refers to members of a **plural** group considered **individually**, use the **plural**
All spermatozoa **are** motile

All is/are

- is* when **all** refers to the whole of something **singular**, use the **singular**
 Regarding the syllabus **all is** taught in the first year
- are* when **all** refers to every member of a **plural group** considered **individually**, use the **plural**
 Of the immotile spermatozoa **all are** dead

All is not/not all is ...

- all is not ...* **not** negates ...
 All is **not well** [Everything is **not well**, nothing is well]
 All items **are not** on sale [Everything is **not on sale**, nothing is on sale]
- not all is ...* **not** negates **all**
Not all is well
 [Not **everything** is well, but some things are]
Not all items are on sale
 [Not **everything** is on sale, but some items are]

All of ... is/are

- is* when **all of** refers to something **singular**, use the **singular**
All of the syllabus **is** taught in the first year
All of the semen **was** collected in the vessel
- are* when **all of** refers to something **plural**, use the **plural**
All of the spermatozoa **were** acrosome-reacted

All ready/already

- all ready* adjective prepared
 The solutions are **all ready** to be used
 [All the solutions are **ready** to be used]
- already* adverb before, by now, by the time in question
 I can't believe you have done it **already**

usually placed **before** the main verb, not after it

ALERT Check that **already** is necessary

Studies revealed a significant reduction in the expression of IS-specific genes **already** at 21 days pp

ERROR *Tautology*: **already** refers to the time in question but the **time is given**

CORRECT by

omitting *already*

Studies revealed a significant reduction in the expression of IS-specific genes at 21 days pp

rewriting the sentence with **already** in a separate clause from the time

Studies revealed that by 21 days pp the expression of IS-specific genes had **already** been significantly reduced

ALERT Check that **already** is positioned correctly

Some safety aspects should be **already** considered

STYLE *Word order*: **already** is placed **after the main verb**

CHANGE by **moving *already***

after the *auxiliary verb*

Some safety aspects **should already** be considered

after the *main verb*

Some safety aspects should **be considered already**

All right/alright

- all right* is correct
 adequate, permissible, satisfactory
 The buffet after the seminar was **all right**

All together/altogether

- all together* collectively
 We worked **all together** on the manuscript
 [We **all** worked **together** on the manuscript]
- altogether* completely, entirely, totally
 We were **altogether** too tired to finish the manuscript

Allegedly

adverb used to describe a whole clause

placed at the **beginning** of the sentence

Allegedly, she plagiarised her supervisor's thesis
[It is **alleged** that she plagiarised her supervisor's thesis]

Alleviate/ameliorate

alleviate to ease, lessen, make less severe, reduce
The drug helped to **alleviate** his pain

ameliorate to make or become better
The team worked to **ameliorate** the effects of the infection

Allow/allow for

allow is correct
to give the necessary time or opportunity for
The computer program **allows** measurements of head size to be made

allow for as the meaning of **allow** implies a **preposition (for)**, it **needs no** additional **preposition (for)** to follow it

ALERT Check that **allow is not** used with a **preposition**

These culture conditions **allow for** basal growth of the cells

ERROR *Syntax:* **allow** means providing the necessary conditions **for**, so no additional preposition is needed
CORRECT by **omitting for**

These culture conditions **allow** basal growth of the cells
replacing allow for by **permit**
These culture conditions **permit** basal growth of the cells

Allow/permit

allow To let someone do something
The students were **allowed** into the laboratory after the lecture ended

permit Officially to allow someone to do something
Only after putting on lab. coat, cap, face mask and gloves was he **permitted** into the sterile work area

Along the lines of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **like** or **such as**
See: Like/such as

Along with

In company with, at the same time as

ALERT Check that the verb agrees with the subject when **along with** is used

The professor, **along with** her student, **were** doing surgery in the hospital

ERROR *Syntax:* **with** is a preposition and **does not** govern a verb ; the subject (**professor**) is singular
CORRECT by **using the singular**
The professor, along with her student, **was** doing surgery in the hospital

Also

in addition, too
Overused word: often used unnecessarily

usually placed **before** the **main** or **auxiliary** verb, not after it

ALERT Check that **also** is positioned correctly

We showed **also** that protein secretion increased

STYLE *Word order:* **also** should be placed **before the main verb**
CHANGE by **moving also before the main verb**
We **also showed** that protein increased secretion

We were able to show **also** that protein increased secretion

STYLE *Word order:* **also** should be placed **before the auxiliary verb**
CHANGE by **moving also before the auxiliary verb**
We were **also able** to show that protein increased secretion

See: Also/in addition, Also/on the other hand

Also/in addition

also in addition to
in addition as an extra person or thing

ALERT Check that **also is not** used with words implying an additional option

In addition to its predictive potential, the technique may **also** be useful therapeutically

ERROR *Tautology:* **in addition** and **also** both imply additional information

CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both
In addition to its predictive potential, the technique may be useful therapeutically
 The technique, with its predictive potential, may **also** be used therapeutically

A **further** six men were **also** found to have testicular damage
 ERROR *Tautology*: **further** and **also** both imply additional information
 CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both
 A **further** six men were found to have testicular damage
 Six men were **also** found to have testicular damage

See: Also, Also/on the other hand, Repetition to avoid

Also/on the other hand

also in addition to
on the other hand as an alternative

ALERT Check that **on the other hand is not** used with words **implying an option**

On the one hand the epididymis provides sufficient H₂O₂ to allow optimal disulfide bridging, **on the other** it **also** provides scavengers to protect spermatozoa from ROS attack
 ERROR *Tautology*: **on the other hand** and **also** both provide an alternative
 CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both
 On the one hand the epididymis provides sufficient H₂O₂ to allow optimal disulfide bridging, **on the other** it provides scavengers to protect spermatozoa from ROS attack
 On the one hand the epididymis provides sufficient H₂O₂ to allow optimal disulfide bridging; it **also** provides scavengers to protect spermatozoa from ROS attack

See: Also, Also/in addition, Repetition to avoid

Altered

changed or caused to be changed in character or composition
Overused vague word: often used unnecessarily, replace by **how it was altered**

Alternate/alternative

alternate verb changing sequentially between two actions
 The doctor advised him to **alternate** between ice packs and hot compresses
 adjective every other, occurring by turns
 She took the medication on **alternate** days (Monday, Wednesday, Friday)
alternative adjective if one of **only two** possible choices, use the **definite** article
 Because the medicine did not work, they opted for **the alternative** treatment
 if one of **two or more** possible choices, use the **indefinite** article
 Because the medicine did not work, they opted for **an alternative** treatment
 for an uncountable noun, use no article
 The gene exhibited **alternative** splicing
 noun if one of **only two** options, use the **definite** article
 The evidence did not support the first hypothesis, so they opted for **the alternative**
 if one of **two or more** options, use the **indefinite** article
 The evidence did not support the first hypothesis, so they opted for **an alternative**

ALERT Check that **alternative** is the **intended word**

The seminar is cancelled; students will be informed when **alternative** arrangements have been made
 ERROR *Semantics*: **alternative** implies a **choice** but **no choice is mentioned**
 CORRECT by using words **not indicating a choice**
 The seminar is cancelled; students will be informed when **other** arrangements have been made
 The seminar is cancelled; students will be informed when **revised** arrangements have been made

As the first procedure did not work, they used an **alternate** method
 ERROR *Semantics*: alternate is a **verb not an adjective**
 CORRECT by using **an adjective**
 As the first procedure did not work, they used an **alternative** method

See: Alternative/choice/option/possibility, Or, Slash/solidus

Alternative/choice/option/possibility

alternative an option **other than** the original
choice choosing between **two or more** possibilities or options
option one of all courses of action (a possibility)
possibility one available course of action (an option)

The number of **alternatives** is **one less than** the number of **options**

See: Alternate/alternative

Alternatively/or

<i>or</i>	conjunction	links alternative grammatical equivalents
<i>alternatively</i>	adverb	as another option or possibility

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that **alternatively is not** used with words **implying an alternative**

He will **either** give the general talk **or alternatively** begin with the detailed lecture

ERROR *Tautology:* **either ... or** and **alternatively** both imply an alternative

CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both

He will **either** give the general talk **or** begin with the detailed lecture

He will give the general talk; **alternatively** he will begin with the detailed lecture

Although

See: *Albeit/although/though, Although/despite, Relative clause*

Although/despite

<i>although</i>	conjunction	even though, in spite of the fact that Although small, the lab. is well-equipped but, however He says he has a lab. coat, although I've never seen him wear it
<i>despite</i>	preposition	in spite of, without being affected by He remains active in science despite his age

ALERT Check whether **despite** is meant

Many protein bands were present in all regions **despite** a few bands were region-specific

ERROR *Syntax:* **despite** is a preposition being used as a conjunction

CORRECT by using a **conjunction**

Many protein bands were present in all regions **although** a few bands were region-specific

Although ... but

As both **although** and **but** are conjunctions, use **one or the other**, not both

See: *But, Conjunctions*

Although ... does not mean

The conjunction **although does not** introduce a noun clause

ALERT Ensure that an **although-clause does not** introduce a **noun clause**

Although no good argument has been put forward for it **does not mean** that it is not true

ERROR *Syntax:* the conjunction **although cannot** introduce a noun clause, so the verb **does not mean** has **no subject**

CORRECT by

replacing **although** by **the fact that** and using a **conjunctive phrase**

The fact that no good argument has been put forward for it **does not mean** that it is not true

subsequently **shortening** by **ellipsis** of **[the fact]**

That no good argument has been put forward for it **does not mean** that it is not true

adding a **demonstrative pronoun**

Although no good argument has been put forward for it **that does not mean** that it is not true

replacing **does not mean** by a **human element**

One should not think, although no good argument has been put forward for it, that it is not true

a.m./p.m.

<i>a.m.</i>	<i>ante meridiem</i> (Latin)	before noon
<i>p.m.</i>	<i>post meridiem</i> (Latin)	after noon

Noon and **midnight** are **neither a.m. nor p.m.**

[12 hours before noon is the same as 12 hours after noon]

Amaze/surprise

amaze to astonish, to surprise someone greatly

surprise to cause someone to feel astonishment or shock, to meet suddenly without warning

See: *Surprising/unanticipated/unexpected*

Ambiguous/ambivalent/equivocal

ambiguous having more than one meaning, open to different interpretations (equivocal)

ambivalent having mixed feelings

[**ambivalent** applies **only** to people]

equivocal having more than one meaning, open to different interpretations (ambiguous)

- ALERT** Check that **ambivalent** is the **intended word**
- The second experiment provided **ambivalent** results
- ERROR** *Syntax*: **experiments** are **inanimate and cannot** be ambivalent
- CORRECT** by using **ambiguous**
- The second experiments provide **ambiguous** results

Ameliorate

See: Alleviate/ameliorate

Amiable/amicable

- amiable** likable: for people and living things
He is an **amiable** fellow
- amicable** friendly, peaceable: for relationships, documents
We came to an **amicable** agreement

Amid/amidst

interchangeable variants

Amid/among

- amid** applies to uncountable objects
During the move, the doctor sat **amid** the chaos in his room
- among** within a group, applies to countable objects
There was no difference **among** the patients in their response to the drug
It is somewhere **among** the papers **amid** the mess on my desk

See: Among/amongst, Among/between/of

Among/amongst

interchangeable variants

See: Among/between/of

Among/between/of

- among** for relationships involving **three or more persons or things**
The prize money was divided **among** the **top five** presenters
for **one-to-many** relationships of **more than two groups** of persons or things **collectively, equally and vaguely**
There was little difference in response **among** the **monkeys** studied
- between** for relationships involving **two persons or things**
The prize money was divided **between** the **winner** and **runner up**
for **one-to-one** relationships of **more than two distinct** persons or things **individually and specifically**
Münster lies **between** Amsterdam, Düsseldorf and Hamburg
- of** referring to **one or more specific** items or groups
Of the flow cytometers tested, **one** stood out as superior
[**One of the** cytometers studied stood out as superior]
- ALERT** Check that **among is not** used with **specified items**
- Among the** numerous B lymphocytes, mast cells and T cells, cytotoxic T cells are predominant
- ERROR** *Syntax*: among **is not** used with specific items
- CORRECT** by replacing **among** by **of**
- Of the** numerous B lymphocytes, mast cells and T cells, cytotoxic T cells are predominant
[Cytotoxic T cells are the predominant cell type **of the** numerous B lymphocytes, mast cells and T cells present]

See: Amid/among

An

See: A/An, Articles

An order of magnitude

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **10 times**

Analysed

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

- ALERT** Check whether the use of **analysed** is necessary
- The epididymal segments **analysed** showed high activity
- ERROR** *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that
there were **unanalysed** segments
or
the segments **analysed in this study** are compared with those in another
- CORRECT** [if **no comparison** with other work is meant] by
omitting analysed
The epididymal segments showed high activity

CORRECT [if a **comparison** with other studies is intended] by
adding here
 The epididymal segments **analysed here** showed high activity

Analysis

Detailed examination of the elements or structure of something
 Semen **analysis** was performed as described in WHO (2010)

Overused vague word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**
 expression **analysis** the analysis done to measure the expression
 expression the measured extent of expression

ALERT Check that **analysis** is the **intended word**

The immuno-histochemical **analysis** showed that the basal cells were stained intensely
ERROR *Semantics:* the staining of the basal cells are **results** of the analysis, not the analysis itself
CORRECT by **replacing analysis** by

results
 The immuno-histochemical **results** showed that the basal cells were stained intensely
staining

The immuno-histochemical **staining** showed that the basal cells were intensely **positive**

Analysis/analysisation

analysis is correct

And

non-adversative, coordinating conjunction, linking similar grammatical equivalents
 introduces phrases or clauses that are **similar** with what has already been mentioned
 links grammatical equivalents

followed by the **plural**

Two **and** two **are** four

links grammatical equivalents

Dr Jones is clever **and** seems professional

[clause **and** clause]

clauses **of equal importance** joined by **and** are separated by a **comma**

The winners were given a cheque, **and** a certificate was awarded to the runners up

ALERT Check that **clauses of equal importance** joined by and are separated by a comma

The monkeys were given fresh fruit **and** chow was given to the rats
 [noun **and** noun]

ERROR *Semantics:* the reader **may initially think** that the **monkeys were given chow** and then realises that refers to the rats
CORRECT by

separating clauses of equal importance **with a comma**

The monkeys were given fresh fruit, **and** chow was given to the rats

[clause, **and** clause]

reversing the order of the second clause **with no comma**

The monkeys were given fresh fruit **and** the rats were given no water

[clause **and** clause]

ALERT Check the **meaning** when an adjective describes one of two nouns joined by **and**

Knockdown of the gene led to **decreased** nucleotide release **and** monocyte recruitment by apoptotic cells

ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, **it is unclear** if **decreased** applies only to nucleotide release or also to monocyte recruitment, so **this implies** that

there was decreased nucleotide release and decreased monocyte recruitment

or

only nucleotide release was decreased

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

repeating decreased

Knockdown of the gene led to **decreased** nucleotide release and **decreased** monocyte recruitment by apoptotic cells

using a noun and both

Knockdown of the gene led to **decreases** in **both** nucleotide release and monocyte recruitment by apoptotic cells

omitting led to and **using both**

Knockdown of the gene **decreased both** nucleotide release and monocyte recruitment by apoptotic cells

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

adding a comma and **to** so that **and to** joins phrases of equal importance

Knockdown of the gene led to **decreased** nucleotide release, **and to** monocyte recruitment by apoptotic cells

omitting led to and **adding a verb** so that **and** joins grammatically equivalent clauses

Knockdown of the gene **decreased** nucleotide release and **initiated** recruitment of monocytes by apoptotic cells

See: But, Conjunctions, Or, Relative clause

And/∧

<i>and</i>	coordinating conjunction for joining nouns, phrases and clauses
&	ampersand (conflation of and <i>per se</i> and) used to join closely linked words
	authors Cooper & Yeung (1982) usage depends on the journal style
	names of firms Marks & Spencer usage depends on the company

See: And

And/but

<i>and</i>	non-adversative coordinating conjunction, linking <i>similar</i> grammatical equivalents
<i>but</i>	adversative coordinating conjunction, linking <i>contrasting</i> grammatical equivalents

ALERT Check which **coordinating conjunction** is intended

It was **measured** in rats **and** not in mice
ERROR *Syntax:* as the clauses are contrasting, use an **adversative conjunction**
CORRECT by using **but**
 It was **measured** in rats **but** not in mice

See: And, But

And/or

<i>and</i>	non-adversative coordinating conjunction, linking <i>similar</i> grammatical equivalents for positive statements Eating and drinking are allowed in the social room Smoking, eating and drinking are allowed in the social room
<i>or</i>	non-adversative coordinating conjunction, linking <i>alternative</i> grammatical equivalents for negative statements Eating or drinking is not allowed in the laboratory Neither eating nor drinking is allowed in the laboratory Smoking, eating or drinking is not allowed in the laboratory

ALERT Check which **coordinating conjunction** is intended

Many of the proteins, such as albumin, transferrin **or** testicular clusterin are reabsorbed in the efferent ducts
ERROR *Semantics:* as each of the proteins individually is reabsorbed, they should be **linked** with a conjunction linking **similar** things
CORRECT by **replacing or** by **and**
 Many of the proteins, such as albumin, transferrin **and** testicular clusterin are reabsorbed in the efferent ducts
 Of those in epididymal fluid, GPI-anchored proteins **or** those with hydrophobic properties are transferred to spermatozoa
ERROR *Semantics:* as each of the protein groups individually is transferred, they should be **linked** with a conjunction linking **similar** things
CORRECT by **replacing or** with **and**
 Of those in epididymal fluid, GPI-anchored proteins **and** those with hydrophobic properties are transferred to spermatozoa

See: And, "And/or", Or, Slash

"And/or"

difficult to pronounce, shorthand, ugly to look at
Discourteous: requires the reader to make a decision he is unable to make

Ambiguous: as the slash here implies **or**, "and/or" means "**and or or**"
 if it is **unknown** whether the objects joined by the conjunctions occur alone (**or**) or together (**and**), use **or**
 since **and** (all together) precludes **or** (alternatives)
 but **or** (any one happening) does not preclude **and** (all happening)

ALERT Check how **and/or** can be replaced by a **more appropriate terms**

The treatment could lead to the upregulation of mRNA **and/or** protein expression
ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, the slash here means **or**, so **this implies** that
 ... **both** to the upregulation of **mRNA** expression **and** to the upregulation of **protein** expression
 or
 ... **either** to the upregulation of **mRNA** expression **or** to the upregulation of **protein** expression
 which itself could mean
 ... the upregulation of **mRNA** expression **but not** the upregulation of protein expression
 or
 ... the upregulation of **protein** expression **but not** the upregulation of mRNA expression
CORRECT by using **or** and adding **or both**
 The treatment could lead to the upregulation of mRNA **or** protein expression **or both**

Male factor infertility (concentration $<10 \times 10^6$ /ml **and/or** motility $<30\%$ **and/or** normal morphology $<4\%$)

- ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, if the slash means **or**, only one, at least two or all conditions have to be met, so **this implies**
 ... (concentration <10x10⁶/ml **and** motility <30% **and** normal morphology <4%)
 or
 ... (concentration <10x10⁶/ml **and** motility <30%)
 or
 ... (concentration <10x10⁶/ml **and** normal morphology <4%)
 or
 ... (motility <30% **and** normal morphology <4%)
 or
 ... (concentration <10x10⁶/ml)
 or
 ... (motility <30%)
 or
 ... (normal morphology <4%)
- CORRECT [if all conditions have to be met] by
using and
 ...concentration <10x10⁶/ml **and** motility <30% **and** normal morphology <4%)
- CORRECT [if only one condition has to be met] by
using or
 ...concentration <10x10⁶/ml **or** motility <30% **or** normal morphology <4%)
- CORRECT [if combinations of conditions have to be met] by
using or and adding or combinations
 ...concentration <10x10⁶/ml **or** motility <30% **or** normal morphology <4%) **or combinations** of two

See: Conjunctions, Slash

And/with

- and* a coordinating conjunction, which can govern a verb
singular subjects linked by **and** take the **plural**
 The student **and** his mother **are** holding up the ceremony
- with* a preposition, which does not govern a verb
singular subjects described by **with** takes the **singular**
 The student **with** his mother **is** holding up the ceremony

See: Conjunctions, Prepositions

And moreover/moreover

- moreover* is correct
 within a sentence
 It was a foolish suggestion; **moreover**, it would cause offence
- and moreover* as **moreover** is a **conjunction**, it **needs no** additional **conjunction (and)** to precede it
 permissible for emphasis, if separated by a comma
 It was a foolish suggestion **and, moreover**, it would cause offence

And neither/neither

- neither* is correct
- and neither* as **neither** is a **conjunction**, it **needs no** additional **conjunction (and)** to precede it

And nor/nor

- nor* is correct
- and nor* as **nor** is a **conjunction**, it **needs no** additional **conjunction (and)** to precede it

And so/hence/therefore

- and so* informal as a result or consequence, for that reason, with the result that
- hence* formal as a result or consequence, for that reason, from here
- therefore* formal as a result or consequence, for that reason

interchangeable adverbs

- therefore is usually used before the verb **with commas**
 The sentences, **therefore**, can be expected to be severe
- it provides emphasis after the verb **without commas**
 The sentences can **therefore** be expected to be severe

See: And so/so/so that, Hence/whence

And so/so/so that

- and so* with the result that (as a consequence)
 They worked quickly, **and so** they could leave early
- so* therefore (as a result)
 Everyone else had gone; **so** he went home
- so that* in order that (for a purpose)
 They worked quickly, **so that** they could leave early

ALERT Check whether **so** alone conveys the **intended message**

ERROR They worked quickly, **so** they could leave early
Semantics: ambiguous, **this implies** that
 they worked quickly, for the purpose of leaving early
 or
 they worked quickly, and as a consequence they could leave early
 CORRECT [if the former is meant] by
replacing so by **so that**
 They worked quickly, **so that** they could leave early
 CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by
replacing so by **and so**
 They worked quickly, **and so** they could leave early

See: And so/hence/therefore

And so ... therefore

As both **and so** and **therefore** are conjunctions, use **one or the other**, not both

And so forth

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **etc.**

And that

Almost always needs a parallel **that** preceding the **and**, since **and** is a coordinating conjunction linking grammatical equivalents
 The publication **that** was his third that year, **and that** was the longest to date, increased his Impact Factor

See: Relative clause, That clauses

And whatever

shorthand for **And whatever it may be**

ALERT Check whether **and whatever** should be **replaced** by a **more relevant term**

The monkeys were given vegetables, fruits **and whatever**
 ERROR *Semantics*: vague, **no information is given** on what the provisions were
 CORRECT by **avoiding shorthand** by
using and the like
 The monkeys were given vegetables, fruits **and the like**
being more specific
 The monkeys were given vegetables, fruits and **essential nutrients**

And which

Almost always needs a parallel **which** preceding the **and**, since **and** is a coordinate conjunction linking grammatical equivalents
 The publication, **which** was his third that year, **and which** was awarded a prize, was a citation classic

See: Relative clause

And who

Almost always needs a parallel **who** preceding the **and**, since **and** is a coordinating conjunction linking grammatical equivalents
 The student, **who** had the most publications, **and who** had the highest Impact Factor, also spoke well in public

See: Relative clause

Angry at/with

at something
 She was angry **at** the unfair treatment of students
with someone
 He was angry **with** the professors

Annex/annexate

annex is correct

Annex/annexe/annexation

annex verb to add, to appropriate
annexe noun an additional room
annexation noun the process of annexing something

Another

refers to an additional person or thing of
 the **same** sort
 Make **another** saline solution
 a **different** type
 Try **another** medium

ALERT Check that the use of **another does not** create **ambiguity**

- A droplet of sperm suspension was mixed with **another** droplet of medium
- ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **it is unclear** which meaning of **another** is meant, **it could mean** that the droplets are **similar (but they must differ**, since one has spermatozoa, the other not)
- or
- the sperm suspension had already been mixed with a droplet of medium, **and was diluted again**
- CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by
- omitting another**
- A droplet of sperm suspension was mixed with a droplet of medium
- replacing another by further**
- A droplet of sperm suspension was mixed with a **further** droplet of medium
- replacing another by a second**
- A droplet of sperm suspension was mixed with a **second** droplet of medium

Another/other

- another* used with the **singular**
- We presume that PRDX2 **is another** important **antioxidant**
- other* used with the **plural**
- We presume that PRDX2 and PRDX6 **are other** important **antioxidants**

Another important fact it is

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, **omit**

Answerable to/for

- to* **to** a person
- The student was **answerable to** his supervisor
- for* **for** an action
- The student was **answerable for** his poster

Anthropomorphic/anthropomorphism

- anthropomorphic* relating to or characterised by anthropomorphism
- having human characteristics
- anthropomorphism* the attribution of human characteristics or behaviour to animals or objects
- associating **human** concepts and actions with **inanimate** objects
- Tables, Figures, Graphs are **inanimate and cannot**
- display, present or show facts
- argue for, confirm, disprove or establish theories
- but the **data** or **results shown, displayed** or **presented** in them may
- provide **evidence** that can be **interpreted** (by a human)
- to argue for, confirm, disprove or establish theories

See: According to/agreement, Agree with/to, Argue, Confirm, Display, Disproves, Establishes, Lists, Presents

Anticipate/expect

- anticipate* to be aware of something in advance and act accordingly
- We **anticipated** aerosol formation, and so placed the vortex mixer in a fume cupboard
- expect* to regard as likely or assume as a future event
- We **expected** the antibody to precipitate the phosphorylated proteins

See: Surprising/unanticipated/unexpected

Antioxidant/anti-oxidative

- antioxidant* noun
- anti-oxidative* adjective

Antonym/synonym

- antonym* a word opposite in meaning to another
- | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| absence | & | presence |
| completely | & | partially |
| more | & | less, fewer |
| partly | & | wholly |
- synonym* a word that has the same meaning as another word
- | | | |
|------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| adequate | & | enough |
| allow | & | permit |
| attribute | & | characteristic |

Used to avoid repetition of words or meanings within sentences

See: Style, Synonym/s (also under individual entries)

Anxious/eager

- anxious* experiencing worry and unease (implies fear or concern)
- He was **anxious** about his forthcoming presentation at the congress
- eager* enthusiastic, full of keen desire

She admires the scientist and is **eager** to meet him

Any

indefinite pronoun one or some of a thing or several things

Any/some

any for **conditional** (subordinate) clauses
 If you have read **any** of his articles, you **would know** his style
 for **negative** contexts
 I **did not** find **any** hydrogen peroxide **or** pencils
 If there **aren't any**, he won't find them
 for negative answers
No I don't have **any** paperclips
 for negative agreement (with either)
 I don't want **any, either**
 for questions
 Do you have **any** scissors?
 [if there is **doubt** whether or not there are scissors]

some for **main** (coordinate) clauses
 You have read **some** of his articles and **know** his style
 for **positive** contexts
 She **found some** hydrogen peroxide **and** pencils
 If there **are some**, she'll find them
 for positive answers
Yes, I have **some** paperclips
 for positive agreement (with too)
 I want **some, too**
 for questions
May I borrow **some** paperclips?
 [if there is **no doubt** there are paper clips]

ALERT Check that **some is not** used with a **negative**

She **did not** find **some** gas cylinders in that cupboard

ERROR *Syntax:* **some is not** used with a **negative** verb

CORRECT by using **any**

She **did not** find **any** gas cylinders in that cupboard

Any ... is/are

is when **any** refers to something **singular**, use the **singular**
Any semen **sample is** as good as another for the practical test

are when **any** refers to something **plural**, use the **plural**
Any valid **methods are** acceptable

Any body/anybody

any body refers to one of a number of bodies considered **individually**
Any body can be dissected today

anybody refers to any of **several people** considered **collectively** as a **group**
Anybody can take part in the discussion

Any is/are

is when **any** refers to something **singular**, use the **singular**
 With regard to the semen **sample** for the practical, test **any is** as good as another

are when **any** refers to something **plural**, use the **plural**
 With regard to valid **methods**, **any are** acceptable

Any more/anymore

any more is correct

Any of ... is/are

are is correct
 as **any of** refers to something **plural**, use the **plural**
Any of these **answers are** acceptable

Any one/anyone

any one refers to **one of several objects** considered **individually**
 It could be due to **any one** of a number of causes

anyone refers to **one of several people** considered **individually**
Anyone is welcome to the party

Any one of ... is/are

is is correct
 as **any one of** refers to **one** of several objects considered **individually**, use the **singular**
Any one of a number of causes **is** possible

Any thing/anything

any thing refers to one of a number of objects **individually**

You can choose **any thing** you want from the second shelf

anything refers to **any one** of several objects considered **collectively** as a **group**

She was looking for **anything** that would keep the cells alive

Any way/anyway

any way adverb referring to a manner

You can do it in **any way** you like, as long as it gets done

anyway conjunction meaning nevertheless

I don't care what you say, I am going to do it **anyway**

Anybody

one of several people considered **individually**

See: Everybody, Nobody, Somebody

Anybody (and subsequent gender)

When the sex of the person is **male**, use **he, his**

Anybody is welcome to join provided that **he** pays **his** subscription

When the sex of the person is **female**, use **she, her**

Anybody is welcome to join provided that **she** pays **her** subscription

When the sex of the person is **unknown** or **unclear** (indefinite third person), use **he, his**

See: Indefinite third person

Anybody is/are

is is correct

as **anybody** refers to **any** of several people considered **individually**, use the **singular**

Anybody is welcome to join

Anyone

refers to **one** of several people considered **individually**

See: Everyone, No one, Someone

Anyone (and subsequent gender)

When the sex of the person is **male**, use **he, his**

Anyone is welcome to join provided that **he** pays **his** subscription

When the sex of the person is **female**, use **she, her**

Anyone is welcome to join provided that **she** pays **her** subscription

When the sex of the person is **unknown** or **unclear** (indefinite third person), use **he, his**

See: Indefinite third person

Anyone/someone

anyone **one** of a **specified** group of people

Please offer your seat to **anyone in need**

someone **one** of an **unspecified** group of people

At the end of the lecture **someone** should tidy the room

Anyone is/are

is is correct

as **anyone** refers to **one** of several people considered **individually**, use the **singular**

Anyone has the right to apply for membership

Anything

refers to **any one** of several objects considered **individually**

See: Everything, Nothing, Something

Anything is/are

is is correct

as **anything** refers to **any one** of several objects considered **individually**, use the **singular**

At this stage, **anything is** better than nothing

Apart from/except for/other than

apart from adverbial phrase as well as, in addition to

Apart from performing his research work, he is the chief editor of a journal

except for adverbial phrase except, with the exception of

We have no really expensive equipment, **except for** the flow cytometer

other than adjectival phrase except, with the exception of

There is no good microscope here, **other than** that in the culture room

ALERT Check that **other than is not** used **adverbially**

Other than that, I am quite satisfied

ERROR *Syntax*: other than is an **adjectival phrase** used here **adverbially** to describe **that**
CORRECT by **using an adverbial phrase**

Apart from that, I am quite satisfied

Except for that, I am quite satisfied

Apostrophes

indicate omission

of letters

a	I'm	(I am)	ha	I've	(I have)	i	He's	(he is)
o	Isn't	(is not)	u	Let's	(let us)			

in names O'Casey (of the)

of figures in dates

19	'68	(1968)
----	-----	--------

indicate possession

('s)

of singular nouns

John's book

of abbreviations upper case

The BBC's science programmes

lower case

The ldc's contribution to science

of names that end in an s sound

St. James's Palace

('s)

of plural nouns

The boys' hats

of names that end in an

iz sound

Bridges' score

eez sound

Archimedes' principal

uz sound

Confucius' disciples

('s)

of plural lower case abbreviations

The three ldc's' contributions to science

indicate plurals

('s)

of English words

What are the do's and don't's

No if's, and's and but's

of lower case abbreviations

There were three ldc's

of lower case letters

How many t's are there in targeting?

(**not** of borrowed words)

pros and cons

(**not** of upper case abbreviations)

He compared two CASAs

(**not** of upper case letters)

How many Bs are there in BBC?

Appear

to become visible, to come into sight

The FITC signal **appeared** when the filter was changed

to seem, to give the impression

He **appears** to be a hard-working student

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

may be **interpreted** as

avoiding making bold statements

introducing hesitation

implying a lack of confidence

ALERT Check that **appears is not** used to avoid making **bold statements**

It **appears** that sperm motility is inhibited by α -chlorohydrin

ERROR *Semantics*: a well-performed experiment will show either that **it is** or **is not** inhibited

CORRECT by **being definite**

Sperm motility **is** inhibited by α -chlorohydrin

Sperm motility **is not** inhibited by α -chlorohydrin

See: Appear/may

Appear/may

appear intransitive verb

It **appears** that his plane will be late

may auxiliary verb expressing possibility

He **may** be able to attend the lecture

ALERT Check that **appears is not** used with **words implying uncertainty**

It **appears that** the rate of sperm detection, as sample numbers increase, **may approach** an asymptotic limit

ERROR *Tautology*: **appears** and **may** both imply **uncertainty**

CORRECT by **using one or the other**, not both

It **appears that** the rate of sperm detection, as sample numbers increase, approaches an asymptotic limit

The rate of sperm detection, as sample numbers increase, **may approach** an asymptotic limit

Application of/applying

application of prepositional phrase, which can define a **verb**
 The results were **obtained** by **application of** the given formula
applying participle (verbal adjective), which can define a **noun, pronoun** and **noun phrase**
 I watched the **vet applying** the antibiotic
 gerund (verbal noun), which can define a **verb**
Applying the modified formula **improved** the predictive power of the test

ALERT Check that **applying** has a relevant noun to qualify

Applying the Woodward-Hoffman rules, the most likely **structure** was found to be X
ERROR *Semantics:* **applying** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **structure** is the nearest noun it can complement
 This gives the **unintended impression** that the **structure** applied the rules
CORRECT [if the application **was used** to determine the structure] by
retaining the **participle** and **adding a human agent**
Applying the Woodward-Hoffman rules, **I** found the most likely structure to be X
using a prepositional phrase and **adding a verb**
Application of the Woodward-Hoffman rules **led to** X as the most likely structure
using a gerund and **adding a verb**
Applying the Woodward-Hoffman rules **led to** X as the most likely structure

See: Dangling participles, Gerund/participle

Applying

See: Application of/applying

Appraise/apprise

appraise to assess the value or quality of
 We need to **appraise** our surgical techniques
apprise to inform, to tell someone
 We **apprised** the technician of the change in surgical technique

Appropriate/relevant

appropriate suitable or proper in the circumstances
relevant closely connected or appropriate to the matter in hand

Approximately/approximately equal to

approximately about (~)
 There was a an ~2-fold increase in motility
approximately equal to roughly (≈)
 1.96 SD ≈ 2 SD

Apt/likely

apt for general probabilities
 The monkeys are **apt** to get aggressive when given androgens
likely for specific probabilities
 It is **likely** that the increased motility was due to raised intracellular cAMP

Aq. dest. (Latin)

(aqua distillate)
 distilled water
 used only if the water was purified by **distillation**, not when by purified by reverse osmosis or ultra-filtration

See: Purified water

Are of the same opinion

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **agree**

Are such as to

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **can**

Argue

to exchange or express diverging or opposite views, typically in a heated or angry way
 They **argued** whether cytoplasmic droplet loss was a cause or a consequence of infertility
 to give reasons or cite evidence in support of an idea, action, or theory
 He **argued** that flagellar angulation in the female tract showed that droplet retention, not loss, was the cause of infertility
 [**argue** applies **only** to people]

ALERT Check that **argues** relates to someone **capable of arguing**

Table 1 **argues** that capacitation is bicarbonate-dependent
ERROR *Anthropomorphism:* a **Table** is **inanimate and cannot** argue anything
CORRECT by
considering that the **results** in the Table **may provide evidence** that could be used to argue something
 The **results** in Table 1 **provide evidence that argues** that capacitation is bicarbonate-dependent

subsequently shortening by ellipsis of [provide evidence that]
The **results** in Table 1 **argue** that capacitation is bicarbonate-dependent

Arguments

necessary use deductive reasoning
probabilistic use inductive reasoning

See: A priori/posteriori, Deductive/inductive, Empirical/theoretical

Arriving

participle (verbal adjective), which can define a **noun, pronoun** or **noun phrase**

I saw the **professor arriving** by bike

gerund (verbal noun), which can define a **verb**

Arriving by bike **is** healthy and reduces city pollution from cars

ALERT Check whether **arriving** is used as a gerund or a participle

There is no chance of the grant referees **arriving** on time

ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that there is **no chance of the referees**

CORRECT [if there is no chance of their timely arrival]

by **using** the **genitive** and a **gerund**

There is no chance of the **grant referees' arriving** on time

See: Gerund/participle

As

adverb describing a **verb**
I **came as** quickly as I could

conjunction joining two clauses

I came as quickly **as** I could

relative pronoun

meaning **such as**

In countries **as** China, scientific standards vary a lot

See: As/like, Like/such as

As/like

as relative pronoun

meaning **such as**

Techniques **as** electrocautery are used to stem bleeding

like adjective

meaning similar to, resembling

Ligation, **like** electrocautery, is used to stem bleeding

ALERT Check that **as** is close to the noun or pronoun it describes

As an epididymologist, one would expect the student to have examined the osmolality first

ERROR *Semantics*: the reader expects the introductory adjectival phrase to refer to the following pronoun (**one**), but later it becomes clear that the **student**, rather than the writer, is an epididymologist

CORRECT by

rewriting the sentence by **moving** the **adjectival phrase** closer to **student**

One would have expected **the student**, as an epididymologist, to have examined osmolality first

retaining the word order and **replacing** the **passive** by the **active**

As an epididymologist, **the student should have** examined the osmolality first

ALERT Check that **like is not** used as a **conjunction**

Like I said, he is an underrated scientist

ERROR *Syntax*: **like** is used here as a **conjunction** linking two clauses

CORRECT by **replacing like** by a **conjunction**

As I said, he is an underrated scientist

ALERT Check that **like** compares things of the **same category**

In countries **like** China, scientific standards vary with region

ERROR *Syntax*: as **like does not** mean identical to, this means countries **similar to** China, **but not** China itself

CORRECT [if China is **an example of (included in)** the countries where scientific standards vary with region] by **replacing like** by **words implying inclusion**

In countries **as** China, scientific standards vary with region

In countries **such as** China, scientific standards vary with region

See: As ... as, As if/like, Like, Like/such as

As/so far as it goes

equivalent phrases meaning bearing in mind its limitations

used to qualify praise of something

The review is useful **as far as it goes**

The review is useful **so far as it goes**

As/so long as

as long as in **positive** contexts
X **is as long as** Y

so long as in **negative** contexts
X **is not so long as** Y

As/when compared with

Style: **as/when** is **unnecessary**, **compared with** alone is **sufficient**

As/when ... by

as ... by generally applicable

when ... by limited to certain conditions

ALERT Check that the use of **when** conveys the **intended meaning**

Immuno-reactivity was localized to the acrosome **when** assessed **by** transmission electron-microscopy

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **it is unclear** whether **more than one method** was used and that the immuno-reactivity **was not revealed** by the others

CORRECT [if two methods were used with different results] by **adding only**

Immuno-reactivity was localized to the acrosome only **when** assessed **by** transmission electron-microscopy

CORRECT [if only one method was used] by

using a prepositional phrase

Immuno-reactivity was localized to the acrosome, **as assessed by** transmission electron-microscopy

As ... as

The second **as** is a conjunction

The noun or pronoun following the **second as** should be in the same case as the **first term** of the comparison

ALERT Check the case of pronouns when **using as ... as**

She works as well as **me** (us/him/her)

ERROR *Syntax*: the **cases do not match** - the **subject** of a sentence is **nominative**

CORRECT by **replacing the accusative** by the **nominative** and **repeating the verb**

She works as well as **I** work (we work, he/she works)

She works as well as **I** do (we do, he/she does)

She employed **someone** as dexterous as **I** (we/he/she)

ERROR *Syntax*: the **cases do not match** - the **object** of a sentence is **accusative**

CORRECT by **replacing the nominative** by the **accusative**

She employed **someone** as dexterous as **me** (us/him/her)

See: As far as ... is concerned, As far as/as far, As far as/as long as, As much as, As well as

As ... if not ... than

ALERT Check the prepositions when **using as ... if not ... than**

The conditions may be **as bad**, **if not worse than**, those before the renovation

ERROR *Syntax*: the comparative **worse** needs the preposition **than**, but **as bad** requires **as**

CORRECT by **adding** the missing **as**

The conditions may be as bad **as**, if not worse than, those before the renovation

As ... or

ALERT Check the meaning when using **as ... with or**

The treated spermatozoa are **as large or larger** than those of the controls

ERROR *Syntax*: the comparative **larger** needs the preposition **than**, but **as large** requires **as**

CORRECT by **adding** the missing **as**

The treated spermatozoa are as large **as** or larger than those of the controls

As ... so

as and **so** are conjunctions that introduce conditional clauses resolved in the main clause **without a** conjunction

ALERT Check the number of conjunctions when **using as ... so**

As its weight was restored in the castrate with androgens, **so** the epididymis is androgen-dependent

ERROR *Syntax*: **as** is a **conjunction**, so **needs no additional** conjunction (**so**) in the sentence

CORRECT by **using one or the other**, not both

As its weight was restored in the castrate with androgens, the epididymis is androgen-dependent
Its weight was restored in the castrate with androgens, **so** the epididymis is androgen-dependent

See: Because, Because ... therefore

As a consequence of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **because**

As a matter of fact

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **in fact (or avoid)**

As already stated

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, **avoid**

As and when

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, use either **as** or **when** alone, not both

As can be seen from

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, **avoid**

As compared with

Style: **as** is *unnecessary*, **compared with** alone is *sufficient*

As far as/as for

<i>as far as</i>	conjunction	with regard to
<i>as for</i>	preposition	with regard to

ALERT Check that **as far as** joins grammatical equivalents

As far as next season, it is too early to make forecasts

ERROR *Syntax*: **as far as** is a conjunction, which **should link two grammatical equivalents**, but here links a **phrase** with a **clause**

CORRECT by **retaining the conjunction** and **adding a verb**

As far as next season **goes**, it is too early to make forecasts

[**clause, clause**]

replacing the conjunction by a **preposition**

As for next season, it is too early to make forecasts

ALERT Check that the use of **as for** does not confuse

As for the TUNEL assay, coded frozen semen samples were shipped on dry ice

ERROR *Semantics*: unclear, **as for** could be a **preposition** or part of an **adjectival phrase**

CORRECT by **omitting as**

For the TUNEL assay, coded frozen semen samples were shipped on dry ice

replacing as for by an **adjectival clause**

As was done for the TUNEL assay, coded frozen semen samples were shipped in dry ice

As was the case for the TUNEL assay, coded frozen semen samples were shipped on dry ice

As far as/as long as

as far as to the extent of knowledge

As far as I know, he will not come this afternoon

with regard to

As far as the theory goes, the results seem promising

as long as during the time that, for the period that

As long as it works, I shall use it

only if, provided that

He liked new software, **as long as** it was easy to install

As far as/insofar as

as far as with regard to

insofar as with regard to

equivalent conjunctions

As far as ... is concerned

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **with regard to ...**

As follows:-

Style: replace by **as follows**:

As for these experiments, they are

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **these experiments are**

See: As far as/as for

As how

Style: **as** is *unnecessary*, **how** alone is *sufficient*

As if/like

as if conjunction
preceded and followed by a **verb**
It **looks as if** the cells **are** undergoing apoptosis

like preposition
followed by a **noun**
It looks **like apoptosis**

ALERT Check that **like is not** used as a **conjunction**

It **sounds like** the centrifuge **needs** repairing
ERROR *Syntax*: **like** is used here as a **conjunction** joining two clauses
CORRECT by **replacing like** by a **conjunction**
It sounds **as if** the centrifuge needs repairing

He has suggested some good projects, but **it's** not **like we have** any commitment to fund them
ERROR *Syntax*: **like** is used here as a **conjunction** joining two clauses
CORRECT by **replacing like** by a **conjunction**
He has suggested some good projects, but it's not **that** we have any commitment to fund them
He has suggested some good projects, but it's not **as if** we have any commitment to fund them

ALERT Check the **meaning** when **as** is used

He treated his friend **like** an enemy
ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that
he treated his **friend** in the same way that he would treat a **enemy**
[compares **friend** with **enemy**]
or
he treated his friend in the same way as an **enemy** would treat his friend
[compares **he** with **enemy**]

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by
replacing like by **as if he were**
He treated his friend **as if he were** an enemy

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by
replacing like by **as** and **adding a verb**
He treated his friend **as** an enemy **would**
[**treat his friend**] elided

See: Ellipsis, If he is/were, Like, Look/look like

As if/though

as if The mouse acts **as if** it is sick
as though The animal acts **as though** it is sick

equivalent conjunctions

As is the case when

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **as happens when**

As judged by

See: Judged by/from

As judged from

See: Judged by/from

As many as/than

as many as is correct

As mentioned before

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, **omit**

As much as

The second **as** is a **conjunction** which could link a clause beginning with a **subject** or **object**

ALERT Check the **meaning** when **using as much as**

He teaches me **as much as** my sister
ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that
he teaches **me** as much as **my sister** teaches **me**
[sister as **subject**]
or

he teaches *me* as much as he teaches *my sister*

[sister as **object**]

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

adding a **verb** after the **subject**

He teaches me as much as **my sister does**

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

adding a **verb** before the **object**

He teaches me as much as he **does my sister**

See: Ellipsis, Repetition, Than

As of now

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **now** , **from now on**

As of this date

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **from today**

As it was mentioned above

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **as mentioned above (or avoid)**

As per/per

as per in accordance with

The assay was done **as per** the manufacturer's instructions

per for each, by means of

unnecessary for simple rates

use **a** or **an** *instead of per*

300 mg **a** day

25 µm **a** second

5 ml **an** hour

useful to avoid repetition for more complex rates or dosages

use **a** or **an** *as well as per*

300 mg **per** kg **a** day 50 µl **per** cm **a** minute

See: Concentration/dosage/dose, Slash

As regards/as regards to

as regards is correct

As regards publication costs, the lower rate will be charged

as regards to **as regards** contains a **preposition (as)**, so **needs no additional** preposition (**to**) after it

See: Concerning, In regard to/respect of, With reference/regard/respect to

As regards ... , it is

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by ... is

As that

Style: **as** is **unnecessary**, **that** alone is **sufficient**

As to

Style: **as** is **unnecessary**, **to** alone is **sufficient**

As to how

Style: **as to** is **unnecessary**, **how** alone is **sufficient**

Synonyms: about, with reference to

As to what

Style: **as to** is **unnecessary**, **what** alone is **sufficient**

As to when

Style: **as to** is **unnecessary**, **when** alone is **sufficient**

As to whether

Style: **as to** is **unnecessary**, **whether** alone is **sufficient**

As to who

Style: **as to** is **unnecessary**, **who** alone is **sufficient**

As was not the case/not as

as was not the case prepositional phrase

different from, dissimilar to

not as a conjunction

different from, dissimilar to

does not begin a sentence

ALERT Check that **not as does not** begin a sentence

Not as in their experiments, the sperm velocity here was increased

STYLE *Word usage:* **not as** is a conjunction that **should not begin a sentence**

CHANGE by

replacing **not as** by a **prepositional phrase**

As was not the case in their experiments, the sperm velocity here was increased

inverting **clauses** in the sentence

The sperm velocity here was increased, **not as in their experiments**

As was not the case/unlike

as was not the case prepositional phrase
unlike adjective

dissimilar to, different from
dissimilar to, different from

ALERT Check that **unlike is not** used with a **preposition**

But **unlike at** previous sessions of the conference, this time he kept to time

ERROR **Syntax**: **unlike** is used here as a **preposition**, so **needs no additional** preposition (**at**) after it

CORRECT by

omitting the **preposition**

But **unlike** previous sessions of the conference, this time he kept to time

replacing **unlike** by a **prepositional phrase**

As was not the case at previous sessions of the conference, this time he kept to time

As was the case/similar to

as was the case prepositional phrase similar to
similar to adjective like

See: Like/similar/similar to

As well as

conjunction and also, and in addition, and not only, to an equal degree
prepositional phrase in addition to

ALERT Check the agreement of verbs when using **as well as**

The nuclear shape, **as well as** the presence and size of its vacuoles, **were** examined

ERROR **Syntax**: the prepositional phrase **as well as does not** introduce the subject of the verb, which is nuclear shape (singular)

CORRECT by using the **singular**

The nuclear shape, as well as the presence and size of its vacuoles, **was** examined

ALERT Check for ambiguity when using **as well as**

Silvia does cell culture **as well as** Steffi

ERROR **Semantics**: ambiguous, **this implies** that

Silvia and Steffi **each** cultures cells

or

Silvia and Steffi **are equally good at** culturing cells

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

using **both**

Both Silvia and Steffi culture cells

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

adding a **verb**

Silvia does cell culture **as well as** Steffi **does**

ALERT Check that **as well as** joins grammatical equivalents when used as a conjunction

Their job is **to design** the primers as well as **validating** them

STYLE **Word usage**: the **clauses do not match**, the first contains an infinitive, the second a participle

CHANGE by using

two infinitives

Their job is **to design** the primers as well as **to validate** them

two gerunds

Their job is **designing** the primers as well as **validating** them

See: Ellipsis, Together with

As well/either

as well used in **positive** contexts
statement
response

I can see the cytoplasmic droplets, can you?

Yes, I can see them **as well**

either used in **negative** contexts
statement
response

I can't see the cytoplasmic droplets, can you?

No, I can't see them **either**

See: Any/some

As whether

Style: **as** is **unnecessary**, **whether** alone is **sufficient**

As yet

Style: **as** is **unnecessary**, **yet** alone is **sufficient**

Ascent/descent

ascent moving up
descent moving down

ALERT Check that **ascent** and **descent** refers to situations where direction is clear

After entry into the uterus, spermatozoa **ascend** the female tract
ERROR *Semantics*: an ascent **would depend on** the anatomy of a particular species and the animal's position
CORRECT by **using** verbs **not defining a direction**
 After entry into the uterus, spermatozoa **progress through** the female tract
 After entry into the uterus, spermatozoa **migrate through** the female tract
 After entry into the uterus, spermatozoa **move through** the female tract

There is a change in the compaction in their DNA as spermatozoa **descend** the epididymis
ERROR *Semantics*: a descent **would depend on** the anatomy of a particular species and the animal's position
CORRECT by **using** verbs **not defining a direction**
 There is a change in the compaction in their DNA as spermatozoa **progress through** the epididymis
 There is a change in the compaction in their DNA as spermatozoa **migrate through** the epididymis
 There is a change in the compaction in their DNA as spermatozoa **move through** the epididymis

Ascertain

to find out for certain
Synonyms: decide, establish, find out

Ascribed/ascribable

ascribed verb to regard as resulting from a specific cause
 He **ascribed** the decline in organ weight to the lack of androgens
 [**ascribed** applies **only** to people]
ascribable adjective resulting from a specific cause
 He considered the decline in organ weight **ascribable** to the low androgens

ALERT Check that **ascribed** refers to an object **capable of ascribing**

The upregulation of ESR1 in the knockout animals might be directly **ascribed** to the ablation of mature miRNAs
ERROR *Syntax*: only people can ascribe something but **no people** are mentioned
CORRECT by **using** an **adjective**
 The upregulation of ESR1 in the knockout animals might be directly **ascribable** to the ablation of mature miRNAs

Aspermia/azoospermia

aspermia no semen
 [WHO terminology]
azoospermia no spermatozoa in semen
 [WHO terminology]

Assist/assistance

assist verb to help
assistance noun help

Associated to/with

associated with is correct

Association/correlation

association a connection or link between values
correlation the interdependence of variable quantities; a measurement of the extent of association

Neither indicates a causal relationship between variables

Assume/presume

assume to consider to be true (in the absence of proof), to suppose
 It was **assumed** that the size of the population was 12,000
 to take responsibility
 She **assumed** responsibility for the project
presume to consider to be true (on the basis of some evidence)
 From these data the drug was **presumed** to inhibit ATP formation
 to be arrogant enough to do something
 The patient **presumed** to suggest he be included in the new drug trial

in their supposition sense, **assume that** and **presume that** are expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood

It has been **assumed that** these cells **are** capacitated
 It is **presumed that** capacitation **permits** the uptake of extra-cellular calcium

ALERT Check that the verb following **assume that** and **presume that** is in the **present indicative**

It has been **assumed that** oxidation of sperm DNA **could explain** the genetic abnormalities in the offspring
ERROR *Semantics:* **assume that** introduces concepts **considered to be true** but the conditional **could** implies a **condition**
CORRECT [if there is **sufficient** evidence] by
using the present indicative

It has been assumed that oxidation of sperm DNA **can explain** the genetic abnormalities in the offspring
 It has been assumed that oxidation of sperm DNA **explains** the genetic abnormalities in the offspring

CORRECT [to reflect **uncertainty**] by

omitting It has been assumed that

Oxidation of sperm DNA **could explain** the genetic abnormalities in the offspring

CORRECT [if there is a **condition**] by

retaining could and **providing the condition**

It has been **assumed that** oxidation of sperm DNA **could explain** the genetic abnormalities in the offspring **if leukocyte infiltration of the epididymis were considerable**

I **presume that** their next publication **may examine** the role of oncogenes

ERROR *Semantics:* **presume that** introduces concepts **almost certainly true** but **may examine** indicates **uncertainty**

CORRECT [if there is **sufficient** evidence] by

using the future indicative

I **presume** that their next publication **will examine** the role of oncogenes

CORRECT [to reflect **uncertainty**] by

omitting I presume that

Their next publication **may examine** the role of oncogenes

See: Believe, Certainty/uncertainty, Conditional/subjunctive moods, Indicative mood, Moods of a verb, Ought/should, Suppose/think

Assuming/by assuming

assuming

participle (verbal adjective), which can define a **noun, pronoun** and **noun phrase**

Assuming attendance of 90%, the **organizers** calculated the subscriptions

gerund (verbal noun), which can define a **verb**

Assuming he will arrive on time **is** not a good idea

by assuming

gerundial phrase, which can define a **verb**

The income from the meeting **was calculated by assuming** 90% attendance

ALERT Check the meaning if **assuming** follows a **passive verb**

The yield was **calculated assuming** equilibrium conditions

ERROR *Syntax:* **assuming** is a participle (verbal adjective), which should define a noun, but **here is used to qualify a verb**

CORRECT [if the requirement of the **calculations** was equilibrium conditions] by

using a gerundial phrase

The yield was calculated **by assuming** equilibrium conditions

using a prepositional phrase

The yield was calculated **on the assumption of** equilibrium conditions

retaining assuming and **providing a noun** for it to qualify

Assuming equilibrium conditions **we** calculated the yield

rewriting the sentence with a **human element**

We assumed equilibrium conditions for the calculation of yield

See: By assuming/on the assumption of

Assure/ensure/insure

assure

to instil confidence in a person

The doctor **assured** him he would feel better after taking the medicine

ensure

to make sure an action is taken

The use of an established writing style **ensures** consistency throughout a publication

insure

to arrange for compensation in the case of damage etc. by regular payments to an insurance company

The laboratory was **insured** against fire

At/by that time

at

the time when an event occurs

At that time (the late 1970s) he was still an undergraduate

by

the end of a particular period

By that time (1974) he was already a post-doctoral fellow

a deadline

You should have finished your first draft **by that time** (Wednesday week)

At/by the rate of

at

is followed by **the rate of** and then the **value** of the change

Graduate numbers are growing **at the rate of 20%** per year

by

is followed **directly** by the **extent** of the change

Graduate numbers are growing **by 20%** per year

At/in the end

at the end at the point where something stops
The Discussion is a bit weak **at the end**
in the end after a long time, eventually, finally,
In the end I obtained a visa to visit China

At /to the best of my knowledge

to is correct

At an earlier date

Pleonasm: as **earlier** implies a time, **date** is *superfluous*, use **earlier, previously**

At least/most

at least no less than, the minimum
at most no greater than, no more than, the maximum

See: Maximum/minimum

At some future time

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **later**

At the present

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **currently, now**

At the present moment

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **currently, now**

At the present moment in time

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **currently, now**

At this moment

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **currently, now**

At this point

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **currently, now**

At this point in time

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **currently, now**

At this time

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **currently, now**

Attach together

Pleonasm: as **attach** implies joining together, **together** is *superfluous*, use **attach**

Attain

To succeed in achieving something that has been worked for
He **attained** the position of head technician
To reach a specified age, date, amount
Prostatic weights of androgen-treated castrates **attained** those of the un-castrated controls

Overused word: replace by **what was attained**

ALERT Check whether **attained** should be **replaced** by a **more informative word**

After several weeks of training, improved cell culture results were **attained**

STYLE *Verbosity:* can be shortened

CHANGE by **explaining how it was attained**

After several weeks of training, cell culture **results improved**

Attempt

auxiliary verb followed by an **infinitive with** infinitive marker **to**
He attempted **to measure** sperm motility
[**attempt to** applies *only* to people]

See: Teleology

Attribute

Synonym: characteristic

Attribute/contribute

attribute to regard something as resulting from a specific cause

[**attribute** applies *only* to people]

contribute to give something (material, time, effort) in order to help achieve or provide something

ALERT Check that **attribute** is the **intended word**

The high abundance of miRNAs in the human epididymis may **attribute** to the rare incidence of malignancy

ERROR *Semantics*: **abundance** is **inanimate and cannot** attribute anything

CORRECT by replacing **attribute** by

contribute

The high abundance of miRNAs in the human epididymis may **contribute** to the rare incidence of malignancy

attributable

The high abundance of miRNAs in the human epididymis may **be attributable** to the rare incidence of malignancy

See: Attributed/attributable

Attributed/attributable

attributed

verb to regard as resulting from a specific cause

He **attributed** the swelling to the low osmolality

[**attributed** applies *only* to people]

attributable

adjective regarding as resulting from a specific cause

He considered the swelling to be **attributable to** the low osmolality

Auto-radiography/radio-autography

auto-radiography (radiography)

from **auto** (self) and **radiography** (photography of images externally irradiated)

a **negative** photographic image of an object absorbing radiation from an external source

e.g. an X-ray image of a bone or tooth

radio-autography

from **radio** (radiation) and **autography** (self photography)

a **positive** photographic image of an object emitting radiation (containing a radiation source)

e.g. tissue sections labelled with radioactive tracer, western/northern/Southern blots

Auxiliary verbs

Helping verbs used with other **verb forms (participles, infinitives)** to create sequential verbs

used for customs, duty, expectation, habits, interrogatives, moods, negatives, obligation, permission, tenses, voices

Only one of sequential verbs need be in the past tense

ALERT Check with **should** used as an auxiliary verb, that only **one verb** is in the **past tense**

I **should have** liked **to have** seen it

ERROR *Syntax*: both **auxiliary** and **infinitive** are in the perfect tense but **only one needs to be**

CORRECT by using the **perfect form** of the **one or the other**, not both

I should like **to have seen** it

I **should have liked** to see it

See: Auxiliary verb (also under individual entries), Can/could, May/might, Ought/should, Shall/will, Shall/should, To be, To do, To have, To let, Used to, Will/would

Averse

See: Adverse/averse

Aversion/averting

aversion noun

strong dislike or disinclination

He had an **aversion** to working with mice

averting verb

turning away

She **averted** her eyes while we made the incision

preventing or warding off undesirable occurrences

It acts by **averting** proliferation and angiogenesis

ALERT Check that **aversion** is the intended word

This may be attributable to: destruction of tumours, promotion of dormancy and **aversion** of proliferation

ERROR *Syntax*: an **action to prevent** proliferation is intended, not a feeling

CORRECT by replacing **aversion** by **averting**

This may be attributable to: destruction of tumours, promotion of dormancy and **averting** proliferation

Avoid

auxiliary verb followed by a **gerund not an infinitive**

I deliberately avoid **meeting** her at every seminar

Avoid/prevent

avoid

to keep away from something that may exist or happen

To **avoid** contamination the samples were prepared in a sterile work bench

prevent to stop something from existing or happening
To **prevent** contamination the sterile work bench has a micro-filter fitted and non-recycled air flow

Axis

an imaginary line about which something rotates
The Earth's **axis**
a fixed reference line for the measurement of coordinates
The x-**axis**, the y-**axis**
a physiological regulatory connection between organs
The brain-pituitary-gonadal **axis**

See: Abscissa/ordinate, Rotate/revolve

Back

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that **back is not** used with words **implying going back** (e.g. words containing the Latin prefix **re**)

The student **repaid back** the loan money provided
I had to **refer back** to my notes
I returned back the exam papers
After the holidays our workload **reverted back** to normal

ERROR *Pleonasm:* as words containing **re** express the notion of going back, **back** is **superfluous**
CORRECT by **omitting back**

The student **repaid** the loan money provided
I had to **refer** to my notes
I **returned** the exam papers
After the holidays our workload **reverted** to normal

Back slash

See: Slash/solidus

Backward/backwards

backward adjective facing the rear
The decision was a **backward** step
backwards adverb facing the rear
The swollen spermatozoa were swimming **backwards**

Bad/worse

bad the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjective
used with comparative prepositional phrases
The values were **bad compared with** those of the control
The values were **bad in comparison with** those of the control
worse the **comparative** form of the adjective bad
used with the conjunction **than**
The treatment values were **worse than** those of the control

Basal/basally

basal adjective in the base or bottom layer
Basal cells are located on the basement membrane
unstimulated activity
Basal activity was increased three-fold by androgens
basally adverb towards the base or bottom layer
The enzyme was secreted apically into the culture insert and **basally** into the 6-well plate

ALERT Check whether **basal** or **basally** is required

Secretion to the interstitium is possible *in vivo* from the **basal** secretion detected in confluent monolayer cultures

ERROR *Semantics:* this gives the **unintended impression** that cultured secretions **have access to the interstitium in vivo**

CORRECT [if a **conclusion** were drawn about interstitial secretion *in vivo* from evidence observed in culture] by **rewriting the sentence by using a conjunction** and an **adverb**

Secretion to the interstitium **may occur in vivo because basally-directed** secretion **was** detected in confluent monolayer cultures

Basal lamina/basement membrane

basal lamina visible in an **electron** microscope
secreted by epithelial cells connected to reticular lamina secreted by other cells
basement membrane visible in a **light** microscope
stained structure anchoring epithelial or endothelial cells

Based on/on the basis of

based on participle (verbal adjective), which can define a **noun**, **pronoun** and **noun phrase**
The administration sent a **document based on** your suggestion
[You suggested the **content** of the document]

- The second editor will be able to reach a **decision based on** the advice of a reviewer
 [The reviewer's advice provides the **basis of the decision**]
 on the basis of prepositional phrase, which can define a **verb**
 The administration **sent** a document **on the basis of** your suggestion
 [You suggested **sending** the document]
 The second editor will be able **to reach** a decision **on the basis of** the advice of a reviewer
 [The reviewer's advice will help the editor decide]
- ALERT** Check that **based on** has a relevant noun to qualify
- Based on** the MALDI-TOF results, testicular proteins **were given** a unified nomenclature
- ERROR** *Semantics:* **based on** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **proteins** is the nearest noun it can complement
 This gives the **unintended impression** that the **testicular proteins** were based on the MALDI-TOF results
- CORRECT** [if the **nomenclature** was based on MALDI-TOF results] by
replacing based on by on the basis of
On the basis of the MALDI-TOF results, testicular proteins **were given** a unified nomenclature
- Based on** these criteria, the abstracts **should be ranked** for their eligibility for the poster session
- ERROR** *Semantics:* **based on** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **abstracts** is the nearest noun it can complement
 This gives the **unintended impression** that the **abstracts** were based on the criteria
- CORRECT** [if the **ranking** was to be based on the criteria] by
replacing based on by on the basis of
On the basis of these criteria, the abstracts **should be ranked** for their eligibility for the poster session
- replacing based on by a preposition**
From these criteria, the abstracts **should be ranked** for their eligibility for the poster session
- We **isolated** stem cells in the human prostate **based on** their cell surface markers
- ERROR** *Semantics:* **based on** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **prostate** is the nearest noun it can complement
 This gives the **unintended impression** that the **stem cells** were based on cell surface markers
- CORRECT** [if their **isolation** was based on cell surface markers] by
replacing based on by on the basis of
 We **isolated** stem cells in the human prostate **on the basis of** their cell surface markers
- rewriting the sentence by retaining based on and adding a noun** for the participle to describe
 The **isolation** of stem cells in the human prostate was **based on** their cell surface markers
- Based on** changes in their immuno-cytochemical expression, the function of Sertoli cells **developed** in the neonate
- ERROR** *Semantics:* **based on** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **function** is the nearest noun it can complement
 This gives the **unintended impression** that a **function** expresses antigens
- CORRECT** [if the **development** of function **was concluded** from changes in Sertoli cell antigen expression] by
replacing based on by on the basis of and using an auxiliary verb
On the basis of the changes in the immuno-cytochemical expression of Sertoli cells, their function **was judged** to develop in the neonate
- replacing based on by on the basis of and using a human element**
On the basis of the changes in the immuno-cytochemical expression of Sertoli cells, **we concluded** that their function **developed** in the neonate
- rewriting the sentence by an adjectival phrase and an auxiliary verb**
 The function of Sertoli cells, **assessed from their immuno-cytochemical expression**, **was judged** to develop in the neonate
- ALERT** Check the meaning if **based on** follows a **passive verb**
- The experiments **were designed based on** our previous results
- ERROR** *Syntax:* **based on** is a participle (verbal adjective) but is used as an adverb to describe a verb (**designed**)
Semantics: **it is unclear** what is **based on** the previous results, the **design** or their **experiments**
- CORRECT** [if the former is meant] by
replacing based on by on the basis of
 The experiments **were designed on the basis of** our previous experiments
- retaining based on and adding a noun** and for the participle to describe
 The **design** of the experiments was **based on** our previous results
- CORRECT** [if the latter is meant] by
retaining based on and using design as an adjective
 The experiments **designed** were **based on** our previous results
- omitting designed**
 The experiments were **based on** our previous results
- Two pairs of primers (FP1/RP1, FP2/RP2) **were synthesised based on** the sequences of these two fragments
- ERROR** *Syntax:* **based on** is a participle (verbal adjective) but is used as an adverb to describe a verb (**synthesised**)
Semantics: ambiguous, **it is unclear** what is **based on** the sequences, the **synthesis** or the **primers**
- CORRECT** [if the former is meant] by
replacing based on by on the basis of
 Two pairs of primers (FP1/RP1, FP2/RP2) **were synthesised on the basis of** the sequences of these two fragments
- retaining based on and adding a noun** for it to describe
 The **synthesis** of two pairs of primers (FP1/RP1, FP2/RP2) was **based on** the sequences of these two fragments
- CORRECT** [if the latter is meant] by
retaining based on, using synthesise as an adjective, and adding the definite article

The two pairs of primers (FP1/RP1, FP2/RP2) **synthesised** were **based on** the sequences of these two fragments **omitting synthesised** and using the **definite article**

The two pairs of primers (FP1/RP1, FP2/RP2) were **based on** the sequences of these two fragments

ALERT Check the meaning when **on the basis of** begins a sentence

On the basis of the sequences of these two fragments, two pairs of primers (FP1/RP1, FP2/RP2) **were synthesised**

ERROR *Style:* the subordinate clause coming **before** the main clause requires the reader to memorise a lot before the verb is reached
CORRECT by **inverting the sentence**

Two pairs of primers (FP1/RP1, FP2/RP2) **were synthesised on the basis of** the sequences of these two fragments

See: Dangling participles

Based on the fact that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **because**

Basic

Fundamental, at a deep level

do not use when no comparison with a higher level is mentioned

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that an alternative exists when **basic** is used

The **basic** cause is the low pH

ERROR *Syntax:* **basic** is **superfluous**, as no alternative cause or reason is given

CORRECT by **omitting basic**

The cause is the low pH

Basic fundamentals

Pleonasm: as **fundamentals** are by definition basic, **basic** is **superfluous**, use **fundamentals**

Basically

Fundamentally, at the deepest level

use only when a comparison with a higher level is mentioned

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

Basis

the underlying support or justification for an idea or argument

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check whether a shorter alternative is available for **basis**

Dry ice is available on a monthly (temporary/weekly/yearly) **basis**

STYLE *Verbosity:* can be shortened

CHANGE by **omitting basis** and using an **adverb**

Dry ice is available monthly (temporarily/weekly/yearly)

Because

conjunction for the reason that

ALERT Check that **because** applies to objects **capable of reasoning**

Androgens control secretion of the protein **because** its levels decline markedly after castration

ERROR *Teleology:* this gives **the unintended impression** that the **secretory process responds deliberately** to post-castration changes in protein levels

CORRECT [if androgen-dependence was **concluded** from the post-castration decline in protein levels] by

replacing because by a **participial phrase**

Androgens control secretion of the protein **as judged by** the marked decline in its levels after castration

replacing because by a **gerundial phrase**

Androgens control secretion of the protein, **judging from** the marked decline in its levels after castration

using an auxiliary verb and preposition

Androgens were **judged** to control secretion of the protein **from** the marked decline in levels after castration

rewriting the sentence and **adding a human element**

From the marked decline in protein levels after castration **we concluded** that androgens control protein secretion

rewriting the sentence and **using the passive**

From the marked decline in protein levels after castration **it was concluded** that androgens control protein secretion

Synonyms: as, for, since

See: Relative clause

Because ... does not mean

The conjunction **because does not** introduce a noun clause

ALERT Ensure that a because-clause *does not* introduce a noun clause

Because the drug had no effect on sperm motility **does not mean** that it was inactive
 ERROR *Syntax*: the conjunction **because cannot** introduce a noun clause, so the verb **does not mean** has **no subject**
 CORRECT by using a **conjunctive phrase**
The fact that the drug had no effect on sperm motility **does not mean** that it was inactive
 subsequently **shortening** by **ellipsis** of **[the fact]**
That the drug had no effect on sperm motility **does not mean** that it was inactive
 adding a **demonstrative pronoun**
Because the drug had no effect on sperm motility **that does not mean** that it was inactive
 replacing **does not mean** by a **human element**
One should not believe, because the drug had no effect on sperm motility, that it was inactive

Because ... therefore

Conjunctions that introduce **conditional clauses** resolved in the main clause **without a conjunction**

ALERT Check the meaning when using **because** or **therefore**

Because its weight was restored in the castrate with androgens, **therefore** the epididymis is androgen-dependent
 ERROR *Syntax*: **because** is a **conjunction**, so **needs no additional** conjunction (**therefore**) in the sentence
 CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both
Because its weight was restored in the castrate with androgens, the epididymis is androgen-dependent
 Its weight was restored in the castrate with androgens and **therefore** the epididymis is androgen-dependent

See: As ... so, Since ... therefore

Because of the fact that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **because**

Before/earlier/previously

before at some **unknown time** before **now** (the present time)
 She's worked here **before**
 [some time before now]
 at a **known time** before **then** (a past time)
 When we met he told me he had started his research ten years **before**
 [ten years before we met]
earlier at a **known time** before **then** (a past time)
 Two years ago she told me she had moved to Milan five years **earlier**
 [five years before two years ago]
previously at a **known time** before **then** (a past time)
 At the conference they said they had visited Münster three years **previously**
 [three years before the conference]

equivalent adverbs

See: Ago/since

Before/in advance of/prior to

before preposition
prior to **is not** a prepositional phrase
in advance of **is not** a prepositional phrase

ALERT Check that **prior to is not** used as a preposition

Prior to centrifugation, the samples were homogenized
 ERROR *Syntax*: prior to **is not a preposition** and **cannot** introduce an adverbial phrase
 CORRECT by using a **preposition**
Before centrifugation, the samples were homogenized

ALERT Check that **in advance of is not** used as a preposition

Being able to determine sperm presence and location **in advance of** egg retrieval is important
 ERROR *Syntax*: in advance of **is not a preposition** and **cannot** introduce an adverbial phrase
 CORRECT by using a **preposition**
 Being able to determine sperm presence and location **before** egg retrieval is important

See: Ago/since, Before/earlier/previously

Beg the question

To assume the truth of an argument or proposition to be proved, even though it may not be true
 The idea of developing a male contraceptive **begs the question** that men would be willing to take it
 To raise a point that has not been dealt with; to invite an obvious question
 Some reference values **beg the question** of what constitutes normal semen quality
does not mean

to ask the question
to avoid the question

Behaviour/behaviours

behaviour is correct
behaviour is a *singular* abstract uncountable noun that has no plural
The **behaviour** of the animals *is* quite complicated
for a **plural** use, use a *partitive* construction
These **sorts of behaviour were** abnormal

Behove/behooove

behove is correct
necessary or contingent
It behoves someone to do something
does not mean becomes

ALERT Check that the **usage of behove** is correct

The results **behoove** us to conclude that his hypothesis is correct

STYLE *Syntax*: incorrect usage

CHANGE by **rewriting the sentence** and **supplying it behoves**

From the results, **it behoves** us to conclude that his hypothesis is correct

Being

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check whether **being** is used as a *gerund* or a *participle*

I understand **them being** upset by my findings

ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that **you understand them**

CORRECT [if you understand **why they were upset**] by

using the *genitive* and a *gerund*

I understand **their being** upset by my findings

He concealed **me being** in debt from my parents

ERROR *Semantics*: **being** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **me** is the nearest noun it can complement

This gives the **unintended impression** that **I** was being concealed

CORRECT [if **my debt** was being concealed] by

using the *genitive* and a *gerund*

He concealed **my being** in debt from my parents

ALERT Check that **being** has a relevant noun to define

Being irreproducible, he threw the results away

ERROR *Semantics*: **being** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **he** is the nearest noun it can complement

This gives the **unintended impression** that **he** was irreproducible

CORRECT [if the **results** were irreproducible] by

changing the *active* to the *passive* voice

Being irreproducible, the **results were thrown** away

turning the *phrase* into a *clause* by **adding a verb**, and **using a pronoun**

Because the results **were** irreproducible, he threw **them** away

using a *phrasal clause* and a *pronoun*

The results being irreproducible he threw **them** away

See: Absolute/non-absolute verbal constructions, Adjectival phrase/phrasal clause, Gerund/participle, Phrasal clause, Phrase

Being so/the case

equivalent **phrasal clauses** (absolute verbal constructions)

Elided gerundial phrases meaning [**Because this is**] **so/the case**

This being so he left the Discussion to be written by his professor

This being the case we doubled the detergent concentration

See: Ellipsis

Believe

to consider to be true (usually without evidence)

He **believed** it was the human epididymis

See: Assume/presume, Certainty/uncertainty, Ought/should, Suppose/think

Believe that

used when there is **insufficient evidence** for a conclusion to be drawn

expressed by the following verb in the *present indicative* mood

It has been **believed** for a long time that hyperactivated cells **are** capacitated

ALERT Check that the verb following **believed that** is in the **present indicative**

It is **believed that** hypoxic conditions **could induce** upregulation of glycolytic enzymes

ERROR *Semantics*: **believed that** introduces concepts **considered to be true** but the conditional **could** implies a **condition**

CORRECT [if there is **sufficient** evidence] by

using the **present indicative**

It is **believed that** hypoxic conditions **induce** upregulation of glycolytic enzymes

CORRECT [to reflect **uncertainty**] by

omitting **It is believed**

Hypoxic conditions **could induce** upregulation of glycolytic enzymes

CORRECT [if there is a **condition**] by

retaining **could** and providing the **condition**

It is **believed that** hypoxic conditions **could induce** upregulation of glycolytic enzymes **if hypoxia is transient**

See: Certainty/uncertainty, Conditional/subjunctive moods, Explain, Indicative mood, Moods of a verb, Quotations

Beneficial/useful

beneficial favourable or advantageous, resulting in good

useful able to be used for a practical purpose or in several ways

ALERT Check that **beneficial** is the **intended word**

The avian system is a **beneficial** model for studying the role of sperm proteasomes

ERROR *Syntax*: whom the model benefits is not stated

CORRECT by

replacing **beneficial** by **useful**

The avian system is a **useful** model for studying the role of sperm proteasomes

retaining **beneficial** and adding an **object** for it to define

The avian system is **beneficial to those** studying the role of sperm proteasomes

Beneficial for/to

for for a process

It would be **beneficial for** her to start dieting

to to someone or something

The diet was **beneficial to** her

Beside/besides

beside preposition by the side of, next to

Her desk was **beside** mine in the laboratory

besides preposition also, as well, in addition to, apart from

Besides my daytime research, I teach English in the evenings

adverb as well, in addition

I am working on her thesis, and many more **besides**

ALERT Check that **besides is not** used with words **implying additional**

Besides these, 18 novel miRNA candidates were **also** revealed

ERROR *Tautology*: **besides** and **also** mean the same thing

CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both

Besides these, 18 novel miRNA candidates were revealed

Eighteen novel miRNA candidates were **also** revealed

ALERT Check the meaning when using **beside**

Beside these two major GPx, the epididymal epithelium expresses at lower levels the cytosolic GPx

ERROR *Semantics*: this implies that the epithelium is adjacent to the major GPx

CORRECT by using **besides**

Besides these two major GPx, the epididymal epithelium expresses at lower levels the cytosolic GPx

ALERT Check that **besides** has a complementary noun

Besides, corpus and cauda epididymidal spermatozoa were stained strongly

ERROR *Syntax*: besides **requires a noun** to complement

CORRECT by adding a **noun**

Besides caput epididymidal spermatozoa, corpus and cauda spermatozoa were stained strongly

See: Besides/other than

Besides/other than

besides adverb as well, in addition

preposition also, as well, in addition to, apart from

other than prepositional phrase alternatively, apart from, except

ALERT Check the meaning when using **besides**

The wound must have been formed by something **besides** the cage floor

ERROR *Semantics:* **besides** means also, so this means that the **wound had at least two causes** (the cage floor and something else)

CORRECT [if the cage floor did not wound the animal] by

replacing *besides* by *other than*

The wound must have been formed by something **other than** the cage floor

See: Beside/besides

Best

best superlative of good [nothing is better]

See: Comparative/superlative, One of the best, Second

Beta/eszett

beta β, second letter of the Greek alphabet

β-mercapto-ethanol was used as reducing agent

eszett ß, German **sharp S** (double S, ss)

The poster winner is Paul Gaßner

Better

verb to improve

To **better** her chances in the exam, she spent the evening studying

adverb in an improved manner

This work was done to understand **better** the causes of male infertility

See: Split infinitive

Better/good

better the **comparative** form of the adjective good, used with conjunction **than**

The results were **better than** those before

good the absolute (positive) form of the adjective, used with *comparative prepositional phrases*

The results were **good compared with** those before

The results were **good in comparison with** those before

Between/during

between in the period separating two points in time

This review was started **between** June and September 2011

during throughout the duration of

The manuscript was completed **during** the winter of 2011

ALERT Check the **range of figures** when using **between ... and ...**

Research was done **between** 1988 **and** 1989

ERROR *Semantics:* there is **no time** between Dec. 31st 1988 and Jan 1st 1989

CORRECT by using **during**

Research was done **during** 1988 **and** 1989

See: Between ... and ... /from ... to ..., Interval/range

Between/in between

between preposition

at/into/across the space/period/interval separating **two** objects, regions or points in time or on a scale

He commutes every day **between** Hong Kong Island and the New Territories

in between adverb

in or along the space/period separating **two** objects or regions, or points in time or on a scale

The cells are cultured in agar gels of different density with a layer of medium **in between**

See: Among/between/of, Between ... and ... /from ... to ..., Between/during

Between ... and ... /from ... to ...

between ... and ... used for a **range**

excludes the end figures of an **interval**

between 5 **and** 10

includes **four** figures (6,7,8,9)

[from **6 to 9 inclusive**]

Young published **between** 1929 **and** 1933

includes three years (1930, 1931, 1932)

[from **1930 to 1932 inclusive**]

Progressive motility lay **between** 30 **and** 60%

includes **28** percentage points (31, 32 ... 58, 59)

[from **31 to 59% inclusive**]

and cannot be replaced by a short (En) dash

avoid, use

Twice a week **or** Every two weeks (every fortnight, fortnightly)

Bind/bind to

bind to join something to something else
The antibody **binds** receptors together, mimicking the action of their ligand

bind to to join itself to something else
The hormone **binds to** its receptor

ALERT Check whether **bind** needs a preposition

In one mechanism extracellular signalling molecules **bind** membrane receptors of target cells

ERROR *Semantics:* it **is not** stated what the signalling molecules bind the receptors to

CORRECT by using a **preposition**
In one mechanism extracellular signalling molecules **bind to** membrane receptors of target cells

Bisect/dissect

bisect to cut or divide into two (usually equal) parts

dissect to cut apart or separate

Bisector/dissector/disector

bisector something that bisects (that divides into two parts)

dissector someone who dissects (an anatomist)

disector as in **optical disector** (specialist term derived from **di** [two] and **sector** [section])

Blind/blinded/blindly/blind to

blind adjective unable to see

blinded adjective made blind

blindly adverb unseeingly, without being able to see
unthinkingly, without understanding or using judgement

blind to adjective unaware of sample status

ALERT Check **the meaning** when using **blind**, **blinded** or **blindly**

The slides were assessed by **blind/blinded** technicians

ERROR *Semantics:* blind or blinded technicians **are unable to see** anything

CORRECT by using **blind to**

The slides were assessed by technicians **blind to** the treatments

unaware of
The slides were assessed by technicians **unaware of** the treatments

The slides were assessed in a **blind** manner

ERROR *Semantics:* a **manner** is **inanimate and cannot** be blind

CORRECT by **adding a human** element and **blind to**

The slides were assessed by **technicians blind to** the treatments

unaware of
The slides were assessed by **technicians unaware of** the treatments

Quality control was performed by having slides assessed **blindly** by the technicians

ERROR *Semantics:* it is unlikely that the technicians made the assessments **without thinking (blindly)**

CORRECT [if the assessment was made **without knowledge**] by **omitting blindly** and **indicating how the treatments were not accessible**

Quality control was performed by having **coded** slides assessed by the technicians

Quality control was performed by having slides **with covered labels** assessed by the technicians

Quality control was performed by having slides **with hidden labels** assessed by the technicians

See: Double-/single-blind

Blood/plasma/serum

blood Blood cell-containing fluid circulating in the blood vessels (arterial and venous)

plasma Blood cell-free fluid obtained by centrifuging anticoagulant-treated blood (contains fibrinogen)

serum Blood cell- and clot-free fluid obtained by centrifuging clotted blood: contains no fibrinogen (present in the removed clot)

See: Plasma

Blood-epididymis/-epididymal barrier

blood-epididymis is correct
Blood-epididymis is a hyphenated **noun** used as an adjective
[A barrier between the **blood** (noun) and the **epididymis** (noun)]

blood-epididymal this means a barrier between the **blood** (noun) and the **epididymal** (adjective)

The **blood-epididymis** barrier is an *epididymal* barrier
[a barrier **of** the epididymis]

Blood-testis/-testicular barrier

blood-testis is correct
Blood-testis is a hyphenated **noun** used as an adjective
[A barrier between the **blood** (noun) and the **testis** (noun)]
blood-testicular this means a barrier between the **blood** (noun) and the **testicular** (adjective)

The **blood-testis** barrier is a *testicular* barrier
[a barrier **of** the testis]

Blood-vas deferens/-vas deferential barrier

blood-vas deferens is correct
Blood-vas deferens is a hyphenated **noun** used as an adjective
[A barrier between the **blood** (noun) and the **vas deferens** (noun)]
blood-vas deferential this means a barrier between the **blood** (noun) and the **vas deferential** (adjective)

The **blood-vas deferens** barrier is a *vas deferential* barrier
[a barrier **of** the vas deferens]

Blots

Southern gel separation of DNA probed by specific RNA sequences
with an initial **capital letter** (a proper noun, a man's name)
northern gel separation of RNA probed by specific DNA sequences
with **no** initial capital letter (not a proper noun, created by analogy with the points of the compass)
western gel separation of proteins probed with specific antibodies
with **no** initial capital letter (not a proper noun, created by analogy with the points of the compass)

Bona fide (Latin)

genuine, real
Only **bona fide** members of the department may use the logo

ALERT Check that **bona fide** is the **intended expression**

This indicates that the **bona fide** protease that functions during fertilisation is not acrosin
ERROR *Semantics:* **bona fide** refers to a recognised item but the protease in question is not known
CORRECT by **replacing bona fide by actual**
This indicates that the **actual** protease that functions during fertilisation is not acrosin

Born/borne

born adjective given birth to
She was **born** on March 1, 1979
borne verb to bear children
She has **borne** you another son
to carry items
The body was **borne** from the room on a stretcher
to support ideas
His concept was **borne** out by this experiment
adjective carried by
air-**borne** pollutants
water-**borne** diseases

ALERT Check whether **an adjective is required** when **born** is used

One form of epi-genetic information is sperm **born** RNA
ERROR *Syntax:* RNA carried by spermatozoa is **borne** by it
CORRECT by **using borne** in a **hyphenated adjective**
One form of epi-genetic information is **sperm-borne** RNA

Both

adverb applying equally well to each of two choices
pronoun people or things, regarded and identified together

Both/both of

both for emphasising each of **two** people or objects together
Both his **parents** are teachers (two parents)
for emphasising lists of **two** groups
He insulted **both** his **teachers** and **headmaster** (several teachers, one headmaster)
both of for emphasising each of **two** people or objects together
Both of his **parents** are teachers (two parents)
for emphasising a group of **two individuals**
He insulted **both of** his **teachers** and **headmaster** (two teachers, one headmaster)

for emphasising possessives

The opinions of **both of** them

(**not both of** their opinions)

interchangeable conjunctions

Style: **both of** is *unnecessary*, **both** alone is *sufficient*

ALERT Check that **both is not** used with words **implying additional**

The ruling will affect **both** clinicians **as well as** researchers

ERROR *Tautology*: **both** and **as well as** mean the same thing

CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both

The ruling will affect **both** clinicians **and** researchers

The ruling will affect clinicians **as well as** researchers

ALERT Check that the position of **both does not** cause ambiguity

The report indicated the existence of PRDX in **both** spermatozoa and seminal plasma

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that there were only **two** spermatozoa

CORRECT [if there were more than two spermatozoa] by

moving both and **adding a preposition**

The report indicated the existence of PRDX **both** in spermatozoa and **in** seminal plasma

omitting both and **adding a preposition**

The report indicated the existence of PRDX in spermatozoa and **in** seminal plasma

See: As well as

Both/each

both the one as well as the other of **two** objects or people
takes the **plural**

Both students **were** awarded a prize

each each one of **two or more** objects or people
takes the **singular**

Each student **was** awarded a prize

ALERT Check the **meaning** when **both** is used

We were **both** awarded a poster prize

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that
we each received one prize
[there were two prizes]

or

we shared one prize

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

using each ... a

We were **each** awarded a poster prize

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

using jointly ... the

We were **jointly** awarded **the** prize

There is a laboratory on **both** sides of the corridor

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that
one laboratory straddles the corridor

or

there two laboratories, one on each side of the corridor

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

using each with the **singular**

There **is** a laboratory on **each** side of the corridor

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

using both with the **plural**

There **are** laboratories on **both** sides of the corridor

See: All/each

Both/each of

both of each one of **two** people or objects, considered **together**
takes the **plural**

Both of the methods **are** equally valid

each of every one of **two or more** objects or people, considered **separately**
takes the **singular**

Each of the methods **is** equally valid

ALERT Check the **meaning** when **both** is used

- He insulted **both** his supervisors and his colleagues
- ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that he insulted his supervisors and his colleagues
[the numbers of neither group being given]
or
he had two supervisors and he insulted them both, and also insulted an unspecified number of colleagues
- CORRECT [if the former is meant] by
omitting both
He insulted his supervisors and his colleagues
- CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by
using both of
He insulted **both of** his supervisors and his colleagues
- CORRECT [if he has two or more supervisors] by
using each of
He insulted **each of** his supervisors and his colleagues

Both/either/neither

- both* **positive** usage
It **affects both** of them
Sperm motility **was affected** by **both** quinine **and** verapamil
- either* **negative** usage
It **does not affect either** of them
Sperm motility **was not affected** by **either** quinine **or** verapamil
- neither* **negative** usage after a **positive** verb
It **affects neither** of them
Sperm motility **was affected** by **neither** quinine **nor** verapamil

ALERT Check the **meaning** when **both** is used

- Both** solutions were **not** hot
- ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that both solutions were cold

or
one solution was cold

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by
negating the subject, not the **adjective**
Neither solution was hot

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by
rewriting the sentence
One of the solutions was hot

See: Either ... or, Either ... or/neither ... nor, Neither ... nor

Both ... and

a discontinuous correlative conjunction linking grammatical equivalents

ALERT Check that **grammatical equivalents are linked** by **both ... and**

- You should **both** inform the Chief Editor **and** your Institute Director
- ERROR *Syntax*: **and** is a coordinating conjunction, which **should link grammatical equivalents**, but here links a **clause** with a **noun**
- CORRECT by **moving both** after the **verb**, so that nouns are compared
You should **inform both** the Chief Editor **and** your Institute Director

Both ... is/are

are is correct
as **both** refers to **two** people or objects, use the **plural**
Both hypotheses **are** valid

Both is/are

are is correct
as **both** refers to **two** people or objects, use the **plural**
Regarding the hypotheses, **both are** valid

Both of ... is/are

are is correct
as **both of** refers to **two** people or objects, use the **plural**
Both of the hypotheses **are** valid

Brackets

round brackets () (parentheses)
enclose descriptions that can be omitted without loss of meaning
The level of sperm proteins studied (HSSPA5, AKR7A2 and CTSB) was related to the extent of sperm motility
(The level of sperm proteins studied was related to the extent of sperm motility)
may be replaced by dashes

The level of sperm proteins studied—HSSPA5, AKR7A2 and CTSB—was related to the extent of sperm motility
 The level of sperm proteins studied - HSSPA5, AKR7A2 and CTSB - was related to the extent of sperm motility
 square brackets [] enclose material inserted by an editor

for **clarification**

His previous work [Jones 1986] suggested that this was so

to denote a **concentration**

The [Na⁺]/[K⁺] ratios differ between blood and epididymal fluid

to indicate **ellipsis**

She writes English as well as I [do]

to indicate **an error**

Spermatozoa are stored in the cauda epididymis [sic]

ALERT Check that it is clear what **bracketed** words refer to

Non-finite verbs are verb forms that **are not** finite (infinitives, participles, gerunds)

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, as the brackets come immediately after **finite**, this implies that the bracketed words are examples of the **finite verbs** from which non-finite verbs should be distinguished

CORRECT [if the **non-finite** verbs are being described] by

moving the bracketed words after **non-finite verbs**

Non-finite verbs (infinitives, participles, gerunds) are verb forms that **are not** finite

See: Dash/hyphen/minus, Ellipsis, Sic

Brackets and full stops

If the bracketed statement **ends** a sentence, the **full stop** goes **outside** the brackets

He was found out. He admitted the cheating (but not the plagiarism).

If the bracketed statement **is** a whole sentence, the **full stop** lies **inside** the brackets

He was found out. (He admitted the cheating, but not the plagiarism.)

A bracketed reference to Tables and Figures may appear

in a **short** sentence, with a **full stop outside** the brackets of **that** sentence

The epididymal weight was androgen-dependent (Table 2, Figure 3).

after a **long** sentence, with a **full stop inside** the brackets of **a new** sentence

The epididymal weight was androgen-dependent, as was sperm motility. (See Table 2, Figure 3.)

Break down/breakdown

<i>break down</i>	verb	to cease to function to decompose, to undergo decomposition
<i>breakdown</i>	noun	a failure in a system degradation or decomposition

Breeding/mating

<i>breeding</i>	selective rearing of the offspring of a mating refers to a mating leading to pregnancy (both sexes are fertile) Homozygous knockout males were derived by breeding heterozygous males and females
<i>mating</i>	placing a male and female together for reproduction (cohabitation) mating may not lead to pregnancy (if one sex or the other is, or both sexes are, infertile) To determine their fertility, ornidazole-treated male rats were allowed to mate with two virgin females

Brief/short

<i>brief</i>	of short duration of time only	a brief speech
<i>short</i>	of short duration of time of space	a short sleep a short description, a short walk

Bring/take

<i>bring</i>	towards (from the point of view of) the receiver Surgeon, upstairs, to me: Please, bring me my instruments I, downstairs: Yes, I shall bring them when I come up
<i>take</i>	away from (from the point of view of) the bringer Nurse, downstairs, to me: Please take the doctor's instruments to him I, downstairs: Yes, I shall take them with me when I go upstairs

Broadly

adjective means in summary **and** a regional accent

ALERT Check **which meaning** of **broadly** is **intended**

Broadly **speaking**, the lecturer said that his hypothesis was new

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that the **overall content** of what the lecturer said was that his hypothesis was new
[summarising]

or

he spoke with a **broad** (difficult to understand, regional) **accent**

[pronunciation]

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

rewriting *the sentence* with a **phrase**

In **summary** the lecturer said that his hypothesis was new

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

rewriting *the sentence* with a **noun**

With an **accent** that was difficult to understand, the lecturer said that his hypothesis was new

Bulk/majority/most

bulk most of refers to **uncountable** objects, **mass** and **volume**

majority the greater number refers to **countable** objects, **numbers**

most the greater or larger part of refers to **countable** and **uncountable** objects, **quantity** and **numbers**

All are vague: be more exact and state the mass, volume, number, area, quantity, proportions or percentages

Bulk is/are

is is correct

as **bulk of** is only used for **uncountable** objects, use the **singular**

Of the work the **bulk is** over

Of the fluid the **bulk is** frozen

Bulk of ... is/are

is is correct

as **bulk of** is only used for **uncountable** objects, use the **singular**

for **mass**

The **bulk of** the work **is** over

for volume

The **bulk of** the fluid **is** frozen

But

coordinating, adversative conjunction

introduces phrases or clauses that **contrast** with what has already been mentioned

links grammatical equivalents

The method is time-consuming **but** cheap

[adjective **but** adjective]

Dr Jones is clever **but** he is not conceited

[clause **but** clause]

The cleaners sweep the floors the **but** scientists sterilise the bench tops

clauses of **equal importance** contrasted by **but** are separated by a **comma**

The winners were given a certificate, **but** no money was awarded to the runners up

preposition

apart from, except, other than

used with the **accusative**

Everyone **but him** had arrived

[Everyone (except **him**) had arrived]

Nobody knew **but her**

[Nobody (except **her**) knew]

ALERT Check that clauses of equal importance contrasted by **but** are **separated by a comma**

The monkeys were given fresh fruit **but** no water was given to the rats

[noun **but** noun]

ERROR *Syntax:* the reader **may initially think** that the **monkeys received no water** and then realises that that refers to the rats

CORRECT by

separating clauses of equal importance **with a comma**

The monkeys were given fresh fruit, **but** no water was given to the rats

[clause, **but** clause]

reversing the order of the second clause **with no comma**

The monkeys were given fresh fruit **but** the rats were given no water

[clause **but** clause]

ALERT Check that **but is not** used for clearly **contrasting items**

It was **only measured** in rats **but** not in mice

ERROR *Tautology:* as **only** indicates that the clauses are contrasted, the use of **but** (implying a contrast) is **unnecessary**

CORRECT by

using one or the other, not both

It was **only** measured in rats, not mice

It was measured in rats **but** not in mice

omitting mention of mice

It was only measured in **rats**

See: Conjunctions, Relative clause

But/however

<i>but</i>	conjunction	contrasting two grammatical equivalents
<i>however</i>	adverb	no matter how
	conjunction	introducing a contrasting statement

ALERT Check that **but is not** used with words **implying a contrast**

The Director is unpleasant **but** the technicians, **however**, are always hard-working
ERROR *Tautology*: **but** and **however** are both conjunctions and both indicate a change or contrast
CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both
 The Director is unpleasant **but** the technicians are always hard-working
 The Director is unpleasant; the technicians, **however**, are always hard-working
 The Director is unpleasant; **however**, the technicians are always hard-working

See: How ever/however

But nevertheless/nevertheless

<i>nevertheless</i>	is correct
<i>but nevertheless</i>	usually unnecessary, but permissible for emphasis

ALERT Check whether two conjunctions are necessary with **nevertheless**

It was a good experiment **but nevertheless** would cost too much
ERROR *Tautology*: nevertheless is a **conjunction**, so **needs no additional** conjunction (**but**) before it
CORRECT [if no emphasis is required] by
replacing but by a semicolon
 It was a good experiment; **nevertheless** it would cost too much
CORRECT [if emphasis is required] by
retaining but and adding commas
 It was a good experiment, **but nevertheless**, would cost too much

But nor/nor

<i>nor</i>	is correct
	nor is a conjunction meaning and not, so needs no additional conjunction (but) before it

See: Nor

But that

Almost always needs a parallel **that** preceding the **but**, since **but** is a coordinating conjunction linking grammatical equivalents
 The publication **that** was his third that year, **but that** was the longest to date, increased his Impact Factor

See: Relative clause, That clauses

But that/that

<i>but that</i>	There is no question but that the theory is correct There is no conclusion other than the theory is correct [the theory is correct]
<i>that</i>	There is no question that the theory is correct It is out of the question that the theory is correct [the theory is incorrect]

See: That

But which

Almost always needs a parallel **which** preceding the **but**, since **but** is a coordinate conjunction linking grammatical equivalents
 The publication, **which** was his third that year, **but which** was not awarded a prize, was a citation classic

See: Relative clause

But who

Almost always needs a parallel **who** preceding the **but**, since **but** is a coordinate conjunction linking grammatical equivalents
 The student, **who** was in his third year, **but who** was thought to be leaving the University, decided to stay

See: Relative clause, Who/whom

By

See: At/by that time, At/by the rate of, By/by the use of, By using/using, Using

By/by the use of

<i>by</i>	preposition
<i>by the use of</i>	prepositional phrase

ALERT Check that **by** relates to objects **capable of performing** some action

The *post hoc* statistical comparisons were done **by** the Holm-Sidak method
 ERROR *Anthropomorphism*: the **Holm-Sidak method** is **inanimate and cannot** perform a test
 CORRECT by **using** a
preposition

The *post hoc* statistical comparisons were done **with** the Holm-Sidak method
prepositional phrase

The *post hoc* statistical comparisons were made **by the use of** the Holm-Sidak test
gerundial phrase

The *post hoc* statistical comparisons were done **by using** the Holm-Sidak method

See: By/by using, Ad/post hoc, Using

By/in contrast

each is correct

By/of

by used for a mediator/donor
 Eggs are fertilised **by** spermatozoa

of used for a recipient
 Spermatozoa are responsible for the fertilisation **of** eggs

ALERT Check that **of** is the **intended preposition**

Acrosin is essential for the penetration **of** spermatozoa
 ERROR *Semantics*: this implies that spermatozoa are penetrated
 CORRECT [if the spermatozoa are mediating penetration] by

adding an *object*
 Acrosin is essential for the penetration **of eggs by** spermatozoa
adding the *penetrated object* as an *adjective*

Acrosin is essential for **egg** penetration **by** spermatozoa

By/until

by relates to a **specific** time
 The proofs are required **by Sunday**

until relates to a **period** of time, a duration
 You have **until Sunday** to hand in the proofs

See: Till/'til/'till/until, Until/up to now

By/with the use of

by the use of a **method**
 The slides were examined **by the use of *microscopy***

with the use of **equipment**
 The slides were examined **with the use of a *microscope***

By assuming/on the assumption of

by assuming gerundial phrase, which can define a **verb**
 The income from the meeting **was calculated by assuming** 90% attendance

on the assumption of prepositional phrase, which can define a **verb**
 The subscriptions **were calculated on the assumption of** 90% attendance

ALERT Check the meaning if **assuming** follows a **passive verb**

The subscriptions **were calculated assuming** 90% attendance
 ERROR *Syntax*: **assuming** is a participle (verbal adjective), which should define a noun, but here is used to define a **verb**

CORRECT [if 90% attendance **was assumed** for the subscriptions to be **calculated**] by
using a *gerundial phrase*

The subscriptions were calculated **by assuming** 90% attendance
using a *prepositional phrase*

The subscriptions were calculated **on the assumption of** 90% attendance
retaining *assuming* and providing a *noun* for it to define

Assuming 90% attendance **we** calculated the subscriptions
rewriting the sentence with a *human element*

We assumed 90% attendance for calculation of the subscriptions

See: Assuming/by assuming

By following/following

following preposition
requires a logical connection between the linked words

The testes were removed **following** sterilisation of the scrotal skin
 [a definite sequence of organ removal *after* sterilisation]

by following gerundial phrase, which can define a **verb**

The animals were **killed by following** the guidelines for the ethical treatment of animals

ALERT Ensure that **following does not** introduce confusion

The animals were killed **following** the guidelines for the ethical treatment of animals

ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, **following** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **animals** is the nearest noun it can complement
This gives the **unintended impression** that the **animals** were following the guidelines

CORRECT [if the **killing procedure** was performed according to the guidelines] by **using a gerundial phrase**

The animals were killed **by following** the guidelines for the ethical treatment of animals

See: After/following, Following

By means of

Synonyms: by, via, with

By that time

See: At/by that time

By the rate of

See: At/by the rate of

By using/using

by using gerundial phrase, which can define a **verb**

The students **observed** the monkeys **by using** video-cameras

using participle (verbal adjective) which can define a **noun, pronoun** and **noun phrase**
Using video-cameras, the **students** observed the monkeys

ALERT Check the meaning if **using** follows a **noun**

The students observed the **monkeys using** video-cameras

ERROR *Semantics:* **using** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **monkeys** is the nearest noun it can complement
This gives the **unintended impression** that the **monkeys** were using video-cameras

CORRECT [if the **students** were using video-cameras] by **using a gerundial phrase**

The students observed the monkeys **by using** video-cameras

using a prepositional phrase

The students observed the monkeys **by the use of** video-cameras

ALERT Check the meaning if **using** follows a **passive verb**

The monkeys **were observed using** video-cameras

ERROR *Semantics:* **using** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **monkeys** is the nearest noun it can complement
This gives the **unintended meaning** that the **monkeys** were using video-cameras

CORRECT [if the **observers** were using video-cameras] by **using a gerundial phrase**

The monkeys were observed **by using** video-cameras

using a prepositional phrase

The monkeys were observed **by the use of** video-cameras

See: By/by the use of, By/with the use of, Using

By way of/via (Latin)

by way of travelling to a place *en route* to another

They came to Hong Kong from Germany **by way of** Nanjing

via by way of

They came to Hong Kong from Germany **via** Nanjing

by means of

He sent the file **via** electronic mail

c./ca./circa (Latin)

Synonyms: about, approximately

Calculate

Synonyms: to decide, to work out

Calculations of the yield were performed

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **the yield was calculated**

Can/could

can **indicative** mood, present tense

auxiliary verb (with an **infinitive without** the infinitive marker **to**)

the capability of doing something

all persons, singular/plural

- I **can do** it today, tomorrow
As I am director now, I **can hire** you
- could* **indicative** mood, the past tense
auxiliary verb (with an **infinitive without** the infinitive marker **to**)
the capability of doing something
all persons, singular/plural
I **could do** it yesterday
As I was director then, I **could hire** you
- conditional** mood of can
in the **[Main]** (consequence, results) clause of **conditional sentences** that **may be untrue**
If I were director [I **could hire** you]
- ALERT** Check that **could** provides the **intended meaning**
- After the injections we **could measure** a higher secretion than before them
- ERROR** *Semantics*: this states that you **were capable of measuring** secretions but the increase detected implies that you **did**
As secretions **were** measured, it is **unnecessary** to state the ability to do so, unless it was dependent on conditions
- CORRECT** [if the conditions were not important] by
omitting the auxiliary verb
After the injections we **measured** a higher secretion than before them
- CORRECT** [if the conditions were important] by
stating the conditions
After the injections we **could measure** a higher secretion than before them **only with a sensitive assay**
- After two days PRDX6 **could suppress** cell injury and **repair** skin cells
- ERROR** *Syntax*: **could** is the conditional mood could but the relevant conditions are not provided
- CORRECT** [if the conditions were not important] by
replacing the conditional by the **present indicative**
After two days PRDX6 **suppressed** cell injury and **repaired** skin cells
- CORRECT** [if the conditional were important] by
retaining the conditional and **supplying the conditions**
After two days PRDX6 **could suppress** cell injury and repair skin cells **only when the animals were provided with vitamin C**

See: Able, Able to/capable of, Certainty/uncertainty, Could/might, Moods of a verb

Can/may

- can* expresses ability
He **can** inject the animals to increase hormone concentrations
(He **is able to** inject the animals to increase hormone concentrations)
[whether he did so or not]
- may* expresses permission
He **may not** inject the animals to increase hormone concentrations
(He **is not permitted to** inject hormones)
[since he has no licence]

Can not/cannot

- cannot* more common
She **cannot** be held responsible for the failure of her supervisor
- can not* less common; used for emphasis
No, she **can not** be held responsible for the failure of her supervisor
occurs when used with **not only ... but also ...**
He **can not only** perform surgery **but also** design computer programs

Canonical/conventional

- canonical* accepted as being accurate, authentic and authoritative; generally accepted means
This miRNA interferes with the **canonical** Wnt/ β -catenin signalling pathway
does not mean conventional, anticipated
- conventional* based on, or in accordance with, what is generally done or believed

Capacitation/capacitated/capacitate

- capacitation* noun a **specific** process referred to **in general**, requiring **no** article
Capacitation was assumed to have occurred after a three hour incubation
noun used as an **adjective** in a compound noun
a **specific** process requiring the **definite** article
The **capacitation** process
[a process **occurring to** spermatozoa]
- capacitated* adjective the state of spermatozoa **after** capacitation
Capacitated spermatozoa were assessed by fluorescence microscopy
- capacitate* capacitate **is not** a verb

ALERT Check that **capacitate is not** used as a verb

The zona-free hamster egg penetration assay is a bio-assay that evaluates the ability of spermatozoa **to capacitate**

ERROR *Syntax*: capacitate is neither a transitive nor intransitive verb

CORRECT by **stating** that spermatozoa undergo a process of capacitation
The zona free hamster egg penetration assay is a bio-assay that evaluates the ability of spermatozoa **to undergo capacitation**

See: A/the/^\

Caput/corpus/cauda (Latin singular)

<i>caput</i>	head	caput epididymidis	(head of the epididymis)
<i>corpus</i>	body	corpus epididymidis	(body of the epididymis)
<i>cauda</i>	tail	cauda epididymidis	(tail of the epididymis)

do not mix English with Latin

ALERT Check that only **one language** is used in a phrase

Most spermatozoa were recovered from the **caput of the epididymis**

ERROR Syntax: caput is *Latin*, of the epididymis is *English*

CORRECT by

replacing caput by head

Most spermatozoa were recovered from the **head of the epididymis**

retaining caput with the **Latin** singular genitive declension of epididymis

Most spermatozoa were recovered from the **caput epididymidis**

See: Epididymis/epididymidis

Capita/corpora/caudae (Latin plural)

<i>capita</i>	heads	capita epididymidum	(heads of the epididymides)
<i>corpora</i>	bodies	corpora epididymidum	(bodies of the epididymides)
<i>caudae</i>	tails	caudae epididymidum	(tails of the epididymides)

See: Epididymis/epididymidis

Cardinal number

Synonyms: integer, whole number

See: Number/numeral, Numbers

Carelessly

adverb used to describe

verbs or verbal phrases

placed **after** the **verb**

She **picked up** the surgical instruments **carelessly**

[The manner in which she picked them up (in a careless fashion)] is described]

whole clauses

placed at the **beginning** of the sentence or **before** the **verb**

Carelessly, she **picked up** the surgical instruments

She **carelessly picked up** the surgical instruments

[It was **careless of her** to pick up the surgical instruments at all]

Carried out

Overused words: replace by **what was carried out**

ALERT Check whether **carried out** should be **replaced** by a **more relevant word**

Lamp alignment **checks** were **carried out** on the spectrophotometer

STYLE *Verbosity*: can be shortened

CHANGE by **replacing** the **noun** with a **verb**

The spectrophotometer **was checked** for lamp alignment

Case

Overused word: use a more specific word explaining **what the case is** (animals, experiments, observations, patients)

Castrate/castrated

castrate noun (a castrated animal)

castrated adjective

ALERT Check that **castrate is not** used as an **adjective**

Testosterone was injected into the **castrate** males

ERROR *Syntax*: castrate is a **noun not** an **adjective**

CORRECT by **using**

an adjective

Testosterone was injected into the **castrated** males

a noun

Testosterone was injected into the **castrates**

Castrate/castration-resistant

castration-resistant is correct
being resistant to the effects of **castration**
castrate-resistant this means being resistant to a **castrate** (a castrated male)

Categorical/categorically/categorical

categorical adjective not hypothetical, not conditional
He made a **categorical** denial of the accusation of plagiarism
categorically adverb without provisos or reservations
He **categorically** denied the accusation of plagiarism
categorical adjective relating to categories
A **categorical** distinction is made when items are assigned to categories

Category

Synonyms: group, population

Causality/causation

causality the relationship between cause and effect
A strong relationship is not proof of **causality**
causation the process of causing something
The role of ROS in the **causation** of cancer is unclear

Cease

to desist, to end, to finish, to refrain from, to stop
does not mean quit

See: Quit/stop

Centile/percentile

centile is correct
one of the 100 equal divisions into which a population can be divided
the **value** of the centile **below which** a certain **percentage** of observations fall
5% of values fall below the **5th centile**
a **range** of centiles that **includes** a certain **percentage** of observations
The interval between the **5th** and **95th centiles** includes **90%** of the data
percentile confusion with **percentage**

See: Interval/range, Quantile

Centre/middle

<i>centre</i>	of space only	in the centre of the floor	[exactly midway between its ends]
<i>middle</i>	of space	in the middle of the floor	(somewhere around the centre)
	of time	in the middle of the night	(somewhere around the middle)

Centrifugal/centripetal force

centrifugal force the force acting **away** from the centre of rotation
centripetal force the opposite of centrifugal force acting **towards** the centre of rotation

See: RCF/rpm

Centrifugation of semen was performed

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **the semen was centrifuged**

Centrifuged/centrifugated

centrifuged is correct

Centrifuging

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check that **centrifuging** has a **relevant noun** to qualify

After **centrifuging**, the supernatants were concentrated

ERROR *Semantics:* **centrifuging** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **supernatants** is the nearest noun it can complement
This gives the **unintended impression** that the **supernatants** operated the centrifuge

CORRECT [if a **technician** operated the centrifuge] by

adding what was centrifuged and using a **noun**

After **sample centrifugation**, the supernatants were concentrated

adding what was centrifuged and using a **passive verb**

After the **samples were centrifuged**, the supernatants were concentrated

Certainty/uncertainty

certainty is **implied** when the evidence is
strong, as indicated by verbs such as
demonstrated, determined, established, indicated, revealed, showed

sufficient for a conclusion to be drawn from it, as indicated by such verbs as conceive, conclude, consider, hypothesise, postulate, propose, speculate, surmise
uncertainty is **implied** when the evidence is **weak**, as indicated by verbs such as assumed, believed, hinted, may, might, possible, probable, proposed, suggested

both are groups of verbs are followed by a verb in the **present indicative** mood
 It has been **demonstrated that** the cells **are** androgen-dependent
 It is **surmised that** the cells **swell** in this medium
 It is **assumed that** these cells **are** dead

ALERT Check that possible *is not* used with words reflecting uncertainty

It is **possible** that she **may** decide to attend the seminar
ERROR *Tautology*: **possible** and **may** both imply **uncertainty**
CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both
 It is **possible** that she will decide to attend the seminar
 She **may** decide to attend the seminar

See: Assumed that, Hypothesis/theory, Indicative mood

Cf. (confer) (Latin)

compare with

These results are similar to those obtained by different techniques (*cf.* Jones 1976; Hinton 1989)
 usually omitted in scientific publications

Change

make or become different

Overused vague word: often used unnecessarily, replace by **what type of change** is meant (**or avoid**)

ALERT Check whether **change** should be **replaced** by a **more relevant word**

A **change** in sperm motility was observed after the treatment
STYLE *Verbosity*: can be shortened, **uninformative** as the nature of the change is not given
CHANGE by using an **intransitive verb**
 Sperm motility **changed** after treatment
being more specific
 Sperm motility **increased** after treatment

Characteristic for/of

characteristic of is correct

Check/confirm/validate

check to examine something to determine the presence of something or its characteristics

His idea was **checked** by incubating the cells with quinine

confirm to establish the correctness of something believed or suspected to be the case

This study **confirms** the results of the earlier study

validate to check, to demonstrate or to prove the correctness or truth of something on a sound or authoritative basis

All analytical methods should be **validated** for accuracy

ALERT Check that **validate** is used correctly

Nine up-regulated proteins were identified and all were **validated** in western blots to be increased in the aged epididymis
ERROR *Syntax*: the western blot results **agree** with those of another method, but **do not** prove they are true

CORRECT by using **confirmed**

Nine up-regulated proteins were identified and all were **confirmed** in western blots to be increased in the aged epididymis

ALERT Check that **confirm** is used correctly

To **confirm** this hypothesis spermatozoa were incubated with the egg membrane
ERROR *Semantics*: a **hypothesis** is a supposition that can be supported by evidence, not a truth to be confirmed
CORRECT by replacing **confirm** with **check**

To **check** this hypothesis spermatozoa were incubated with the egg membrane

Chemotherapeutic agent

Synonym: drug

Chi-square/-squared

Chi-squared is correct (χ^2)

Choice/dilemma

choice the act of choosing between **two or more** courses of action

dilemma a situation involving **two or more unsatisfactory** courses of action

See: Alternative/choice/option/possibility

Choose

Synonyms: to exclude, pick, reject, select

Choose/opt

choose to make a choice, select an option
opt to make a choice, especially to decide in favour of something

Chromosomal/chromosome

chromosomal adjective The **chromosomal** micro-deletions studied included AZF
chromosome noun The gene was located on **chromosome** number 11

ALERT Check that **chromosome is not** used as an **adjective**

Chromosome deletions were determined
ERROR *Syntax*: chromosome is a **noun not** an **adjective**
CORRECT by
 using an **adjective**

Chromosomal deletions were determined
rewriting the sentence and **retaining the noun**
 Deletions of the **chromosome** were determined

Chronic

See: Acute/chronic

Circa

See: c./ca./circa

Claim/demonstrate/establish/show

claim to state as being the case, without necessarily being able to provide proof
demonstrate to show something to be true, by reason and evidence
establish to prove something to be true, by reason and evidence
show to reveal something to be true, by reason and evidence

See: Certainty/uncertainty, Describe/report/state

Clarify/elucidate/explain

clarify to make something less confused and more comprehensible
elucidate to make something clear, to explain
explain to make a situation clear by describing it in detail or revealing relevant facts
 He **explained** the reason for altering the composition of the culture medium
 to be the cause or motivating factor for
 They concluded that the high numbers of immune cells **explain** the low cancer rate in adipose tissue

Classic/classical

classic typical
 The patient exhibited the **classic** symptoms of androgen-resistance
 of acknowledged excellence
 Benoit's **classic** work on the epididymis (1926)
classical of Ancient Greek or Latin art and literature
 The main entrance of the new building exhibited **classical** Greek columns

Clauses

Groups of words that contain a **subject** and **finite** form of a verb
 by themselves are simple sentences
 when joined by conjunctions, clauses are parts of
compound sentences (with **two or more** coordinate clauses)
complex sentences (with one **coordinate** and several **subordinate** clauses)
 clauses of equal rank
coordinate (main, principal) clauses
 separated by a **comma** if they are
 of equal importance and joined by the coordinating conjunctions **and**, **but** or **or**
 non-defining, **which** clauses
 clauses of unequal rank
coordinate (main, principal) clauses and **subordinate** clauses
 subordinate clauses
 noun clauses (acting as nouns)
 adverbial clauses (acting as adverbs)
 adjectival clauses (acting as adjectives)
not separated by a **comma**, if they are
 defining, **that** clauses (relative, subordinate adjectival clauses)
 phrasal clauses (absolute verbal constructions)

contain a **subject** and a **participle (non-finite form of verb)**
 used as subordinate clauses
 control the entire sentence

See: Absolute/non-absolute verbal constructions, Adjectival phrase/phrasal clause, And, But, Comma, Defining/non-defining clauses, Or, Phrases, Sentences, To claim that ... is/are

Clearly

in a manner that can be easily seen, heard or understood
Clearly understanding this is the first step to designing the project
 obviously, without doubt
Clearly, understanding this is the first step to designing the project

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**
 The use of **clearly** inserts an element of persuasion or pleading that invites scepticism about the results

ALERT Check whether the use of **clearly** is necessary

Fig. 5 **clearly** shows the androgen-dependence of organ weights
STYLE *Word usage:* if it is obvious, there is **no need** to point it out
CHANGE by **omitting clearly**
 Fig. 5 shows the androgen-dependence of organ weights

Cleavaged/cleaved

cleaved is correct

Close scrutiny

Pleonasm: as **scrutiny** involves close evaluation, **close** is **superfluous**, use **scrutiny**

Coincide

occurring at or during the same time
does not mean agree, confirm, support

ALERT Check whether a **coincide** is the **intended word**

These results **coincide** with reports of the absence of TMF from mature spermatozoa
ERROR *Syntax:* there are no simultaneous actions described
CORRECT by **replacing coincide with** by **agree with**
 These results **agree with** reports of the absence of TMF from mature spermatozoa
confirm
 These results **confirm** reports of the absence of TMF from mature spermatozoa

Collaborate together

Pleonasm: as **collaboration** involves working together, **together** is **superfluous**, use **collaborate**

Collaboration/collusion

collaboration working together for mutual benefit
 The scientists started a **collaboration** on the project
collusion working together for fraudulent ends
 The perfect agreement of the technicians' quality control results suggested **collusion**

Collect

to bring or gather together
 At the end of the day she **collects** all used Petri dishes for autoclaving
 to call for and take away, to fetch
 He **collects** the dirty lab coats once a week

ALERT Check that **collect** is the **intended word**

All semen specimens were **collected** by masturbation after 2—5 days abstinence
ERROR *Semantics:* this implies that the production of semen was aided by a third party
CORRECT by **replacing collected** by **obtained**
 All semen specimens were **provided** by masturbation after 2—5 days abstinence

See: Obtain/provide

Collected

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check whether the use of **collected** is necessary

The ejaculated spermatozoa **collected** were suspended in buffer
ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, **this implies** that

there were **uncollected** spermatozoa
 [unlikely but a grammatical possibility]
 or
 the spermatozoa **collected in this study** are compared with those in another
 CORRECT [if no comparison with other work is meant] by
omitting collected
 The ejaculated spermatozoa were suspended in buffer
 CORRECT [if a comparison with other studies is intended] by
adding here
 The ejaculated spermatozoa collected **here** were suspended in buffer

Collective nouns

See: Committee is/are, Couple is/are, Governing body is/are, Nouns, Staff is/are, Team is/are

Collusion

See: Collaboration/collusion

Colon

See: Colon/full stop/semicolon

Colon/full stop/semicolon

full stop **separates** sentences in a paragraph
 followed by a capital letter of the first word of the following sentence
 The epididymis is an important organ. It performs three main functions.
 separates ideas that are **not immediately** connected
 e.g. two separate ideas
 He was watching the microscope video-camera. The cultured cells were dividing rapidly.

semicolon

within compound sentences
 separates a general phrase or clause before it to a related one after it
 The treatment reduced sperm motility; sperm vitality was also affected.
 separates ideas that are **slightly** connected
 e.g. one idea linked to another
 He was watching the microscope video-camera; the cultured cells were dividing rapidly.

in lists

separates the contents of a list
 (Jones et al., 1981; Cooper 1982; Hinton et al., 1985)

colon

within compound sentences
 separates a general clause before it, to a more specific one after it
 the words before the colon should form **a complete statement** by themselves
 the first word after the colon **should not** have a capital letter
 the colon can be replaced by **, namely,**
 The treatment had an effect on sperm function: motility was increased
 [The treatment had an effect on sperm function, **namely,** motility was increased]
 separates ideas that are **closely** connected
 e.g. one idea a consequence of the other
 He was watching the microscope video-camera: the cultured cells were dividing rapidly
 in lists
 precedes the contents of the list
 The solution contained: 2 g glucose, 3 g NaCl, 4 g urea...
 indicates an equivalence
 Scale bar: 20 μ m

ALERT Check whether a **comma** is sufficient

The rule bans the use of non-accredited sources of chemicals, sterile culture and propagation of cell lines are to be by experienced technicians only

ERROR: *Semantics:* the reader is led to believe that sterile culture and propagation are banned, and then realises otherwise

CORRECT by **replacing the comma** by a **semicolon**, to separate connected but not equivalent ideas

The rule bans the use of non-accredited sources of chemicals; sterile culture and propagation of cell lines are to be by experienced technicians only

See: Brackets and full stops, Commas

Commas

separate

clauses of equal importance joined by coordinating conjunctions (**and, but, or**)
 On alternate weeks the microscopes are cleaned, **and** the incubators are disinfected#
 The floors are swept by the cleaners, **but** the bench tops are sterilised by the scientists
 Depending on the time available the microscopes are cleaned, **or** the incubators are disinfected
non-defining (descriptive) clauses
 That osmometer, which relies on vapour pressure depression, was bought with the DFG grant

- items in lists
separates the contents of the list
The solution contained: 2 g glucose, 3 g NaCl, 4 g urea...
- the addition of commas can change the meaning
of words
no comma
However he added the solution, a precipitate was formed
[used as an adverb, **however** means **in whatever way**]
with a comma
However, he added the solution, although warned not to
[used as a conjunction, **however** means **but**]
- of clauses
no comma: a **defining** clause
Androgens had no effect as the professor claimed
[The professor claimed that androgens would **have** an effect]
with a comma: a **non-defining** clause
Androgens had no effect, as the professor claimed
[The professor claimed that androgens would **have no effect**]
- ALERT** Check whether a **comma** is needed at all
- The evidence suggests that the two sperm ZP receptors are complexes, each requires coordinated action of several proteins
ERROR **Syntax:** the two clauses are **incorrectly joined** by a **comma**
CORRECT by
replacing the comma by a **colon** to **introduce an explanatory clause**
The evidence suggests that the two sperm ZP receptors are complexes: **each requires** coordinated action of several proteins
using a coordinating conjunction to join two clauses of equal importance, **separated by a comma**
The evidence suggests that the two sperm ZP receptors are complexes, **and** each requires coordinated action of several proteins
using an adjectival phrase, after the comma
The evidence suggests that the two sperm ZP receptors are complexes, **each requiring coordinated action of several proteins**
- ALERT** Check that **sufficient commas** are used to prevent ambiguity
- The immune system prevents the establishment of an inflammatory environment that facilitates tumorigenicity
by eliminating pathogens and by prompt resolution of inflammation
ERROR **Semantics:** ambiguous, **it is unclear** to what **by eliminating...** refers, so **this implies** that
the elimination of pathogens and prompt resolution of inflammation
prevent the establishment of an inflammatory environment (one that would facilitate tumorigenesis)
or
facilitate tumorigenesis (by preventing an inflammatory environment)
CORRECT [if the former is meant] by
starting the sentence with the non-defining clause
By eliminating pathogens and prompt resolution of inflammation, the immune system prevents the establishment of an
inflammatory environment that facilitates tumorigenicity
CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by
using a non-defining clause
The immune system prevents the establishment of an inflammatory environment, **which facilitates tumorigenicity**
by eliminating pathogens and by prompt resolution of inflammation
- Alterations to the complex may cause cell-adhesion defects and defects in cellular behaviour, **and function** in the progression
of malignancies
ERROR **Semantics:** **it is unclear** whether **function** is a noun or verb, so **this implies** that
the comma is incorrect, there is one clause, **function** is a **noun** linked by **and** to behaviour
so the alterations have one outcome
or
the comma is correct, there are two equivalent clauses, **function** is a **verb** (to promote malignancy progression)
so there are two outcomes
CORRECT [if the former is the case] by
rewriting the sentence by omitting the comma and **making a non-defining clause**
Alterations to the complex may cause defects in cellular adhesion, behaviour and function, **which lead to the progression of**
malignancies
CORRECT [if the latter is correct] by
rewriting the sentence by **retaining the comma** and **repeating may**
Alterations to the complex **may cause** defects in cellular adhesion and behaviour, and **may function** in malignancy progression
- See: And, But, Colon/full stop/semicolon, Defining/non-defining clauses

Commence

Synonyms: to begin, start

Commensurate/concomitant

commensurate corresponding in size or degree, in proportion
concomitant associated with, naturally accompanying

ALERT Check that **commensurate** is the **intended word**

Commensurate with the overall increase in the numbers, was a change in the types of laboratories

ERROR *Syntax*: this statement associates **numbers** with **categories**, which do not correspond

CORRECT [if the numbers and types of laboratory **changed in parallel**] by using **concomitant**

Concomitant with the overall increase in the numbers, was a change in the types of laboratories

Comment/commentate

comment to provide a comment
commentate to provide a commentary

Committee is/are

is when the **committee itself** is the subject, use the **singular**
The **committee is** now deciding on the outcome

are when what the **committee consists of** is the subject, use the **plural**
The **committee are** now taking their seats
which can be considered shortened by ellipsis of
Members of the **committee are** now taking their seats
[members of] elided

See: Ellipsis

Common/in common

common shared by, coming from or done by two or more people or groups
is followed by the preposition **to**
The protein subsets **common to** both proteomes were studied

in common in joint use or possession, shared
is followed by the preposition **with**
The protein subsets **in common with** the proteomes of spermatozoa and fluids were studied

Common/mutual/reciprocal

common of things shared in common by **two or more** people
a **common** admiration
[for a third party]

mutual a **reciprocal** relationship between **two** people
a **mutual** friendship
[between two friends]

reciprocal bearing on or binding **two parties** equally
a **reciprocal** relationship
[between two parties]

ALERT Check that **mutual is not** used with words **implying exchange**

A **mutual** exchange of ideas

ERROR *Pleonasm*: as an exchange must be **mutual**, **mutual** is **superfluous**

CORRECT by **omitting mutual**

An exchange of ideas

Comparable to/contrast with

comparable to emphasises the **similarities** between or among things
Survivors treated with cyclo-phosphamide had semen quality **comparable to** that of controls

contrast with highlights the **differences** between or among things
The results of chemotherapy **contrasted with** those of irradiation

Comparative/superlative

comparative of an **adjective** or **adverb**
in comparison of **more than two** equivalent items
expressing a **greater** degree of a quality
superior comparative when **above** the compared item
He was **older** than all the other people attending the meeting
inferior comparative when **below** the compared item
She was **younger** than all the other poster presenters

only in comparison of **two** items
expressing **the greatest** degree of a quality (with the **definite article**)
superior comparative when **above** the compared item
He was **the elder** of the twins
inferior comparative when **below** the compared item
She was **the younger** of the twin sisters

superlative there can be **many** items bearing the comparative
of an **adjective** or **adverb**
only in comparison of **more than two** equivalent items

expressing a quality **surpassing** all others (with the **definite article**)
superior superlative when **above** the compared item
 He was **the oldest** attending the meeting [no one is as old]
inferior superlative when **below** the compared item
 She was **the youngest** poster presenter [no one is as young]
 there can be only **one** item bearing a superlative (by definition, no other person or item is its equal)
 only used to compare equivalent groups

See: Adjectives, Adverbs, Comparisons, Elder/older, Eldest/oldest, One of the, One of the best, One of the most, Second

Comparatively

Overused vague word: **avoid**
 Only use when objects are compared

Compare/contrast

compare estimate, measure or note the similarity or dissimilarity between
contrast compare or appraise in respect of differences between

Compared with/in comparison with/than

compared with **comparative prepositional phrase** implying a comparison
 used with the **absolute (positive)** form of an adjective
 The results were **good compared with** those before
in comparison with **comparative prepositional phrase** implying a comparison
 used with the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjective
 The values were **bad in comparison with** those of the control
than conjunction
 used with the **comparative** form of adjectives
 The results were **better than** those before
 The results were **worse than** those before

Compared with/to

compared to to express the **similarity** between A and B, to liken A with B
 Her excellent thesis **was compared to** her supervisor's
 He **compared** the maturation of spermatozoa **to** a child's journey through puberty
compared with to describe the **differences** or **similarities** between A and B
 when **not known** if different (e.g. in the Methods)
 The serum LH values of the controls were **compared with** those of the treated males
 when **known** to be **different** or **the same** (e.g. in the Results)
Compared with that of the controls, the glutamate content of the cells was **low**
Compared with control spermatozoa, the treated cells swam **equally fast**

Comparisons

Comparisons are only valid among equivalent groups (those of the same rank)

ALERT Check that only **grammatical equivalents** are compared

Lymphocytes from treated patients were larger than untreated **patients**
 ERROR *Semantics*: this compares **lymphocyte size** with the **patients' size**
 CORRECT by
comparing the **size of lymphocytes** from treated patients with the **size of lymphocytes** from the untreated patients
Lymphocytes from treated patients were larger than **lymphocytes** from untreated patients
subsequently shortening by using a **demonstrative pronoun**
Lymphocytes from treated patients were larger than **those** from untreated patients

Growth in the treated group was similar to **controls**
 ERROR *Semantics*: this compares results (**growth**) with a group (**controls**)
 CORRECT by
comparing **growth** in the treated group with **growth** in the control groups
Growth was similar to the **growth** in controls
subsequently shortening by using a **demonstrative pronoun**
 Growth was similar to **that** in controls

See: Compared with/to, Compared with/in comparison with/than

Compensate for/by

compensate for is correct
 There was no change in sperm volume-regulating properties since AQP8 **compensated for** AQP7
 In the KO animals, the down-regulation of APQ7 was **compensated for by** an up-regulation of APQ8

Competence/competency

competence is correct

<i>Complement/compliment</i>	
<i>complement</i>	to be complementary to, to supplement The illustrations complement the text
<i>compliment</i>	to admire, praise, respect I complimented him on his number of publications
<i>Complemented by/with</i>	
<i>with</i>	is correct
<i>Complete/incomplete predication</i>	
<i>complete predication</i>	of verbs in complete sentences that make sense transitive verbs , which require and have an object LH stimulated serum testosterone linking intransitive verbs , which require and have a complement Sperm morphology is good The spermatozoa seem sluggish active intransitive verbs , which require no object Sperm concentration decreased Sperm motility increased
<i>incomplete predication</i>	of verbs in incomplete sentences that do not make sense transitive verbs , which require but have no object LH stimulated ... linking intransitive verbs , which require but have no complement Sperm morphology is ... The spermatozoa seem ...

See: Intransitive/transitive verbs, Intransitive verbs of incomplete predication

<i>Completely/wholly</i>	
<i>completely</i>	totally, utterly The fire completely destroyed the laboratory
<i>wholly</i>	entirely, fully The situation is not wholly clear

See: Antonym/synonym

Completely full
Pleonasm: as **full** implies complete filling, **completely** is *superfluous*, use **full**

Component
Synonym: part

<i>Compose/comprise/consist/constitute/include</i>	
<i>comprise</i>	to be composed of, to consist of The Report comprises three Tables and a Summary
<i>compose of</i>	to comprise, to consist of The Report is composed of three Table and a Summary
<i>consist of</i>	to comprise, to be composed of The Report consists of three Tables and a Summary
<i>compose</i>	to constitute, to form, to make up The Tables and Summary compose the Report
<i>constitute</i>	to compose, to form, to make up The Tables and Summary constitute the report
<i>include</i>	to contain as part of a whole The Report includes three Tables and a Summary

See: Represent

Compound
to combine
The cost of the reagents **compounds** the problem
does not mean to make worse

Comprise/comprise of
comprise is correct

See: Compose/comprise/consist/constitute/include

Con
See: Pros and cons

Conceed/concede
concede is correct
to admit something as a result of evidence

Conceive

to become pregnant with a child
 [conceive applies **only** to females]
 to form or devise a plan or idea in the mind
 used when there is **insufficient evidence** for a conclusion to be drawn
 expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood
 It is **conceivable** that the loss of cells **is** due to apoptosis

ALERT Check that **conceive** applies to females

Semen was obtained from men who had recently **conceived**

ERROR Semantics: only **women** can conceive

CORRECT by **mentioning** their **partners**

Semen was obtained from men **whose partners** had recently conceived

See: Certainty/uncertainty

Conceive that

used when there is **insufficient evidence** for a conclusion to be drawn
 expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood
 It is **conceivable that** cells **are** lost because of apoptosis

Consensus/consensus

consensus is correct
 a collective, common opinion

ALERT Check that **consensus is not** used with words **implying a common viewpoint**

The **consensus of opinion** was that longer cultures were required

ERROR *Tautology:* as a **consensus** is a common **opinion**, **one word** is **superfluous**

CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both

The **consensus** was that longer cultures were needed

The **common opinion** was that longer cultures were required

Concentration/content

<i>concentration</i>	The number of objects per unit volume	
	20 million spermatozoa per ml	(20x10 ⁶ spermatozoa/ml)
	4 mmol zinc per l	(4 μmol zinc/ml)
	20 U α-glucosidase per l	(20 mU α-glucosidase/ml)
<i>content</i>	The total number of objects in the total volume , e.g. 3 ml of the above ejaculate contains	
	60 million spermatozoa	(60x10 ⁶ spermatozoa per ejaculate)
	12 μmol zinc	(12 μmol zinc per ejaculate)
	60 mU α-glucosidase	(60 mU α-glucosidase per ejaculate)

See: Concentration/dosage/dose, Count/number,

Concentration/dilution

<i>concentration</i>	of solids in liquids				
	quoted as	moles/l solution [M]	moles/kg solvent	% (w/v) [g/l solvent]	
	of liquids in liquids				
	quoted as	% (v/v) [ml/l solvent]			
	of gases in gases				
	quoted as	% (v/v) [% of the total]			
<i>dilution</i>	of solids or liquids in liquids				
	quoted as	1:1	1 to 1	1+1	1 in 2

increasing a solute **concentration**, decreases its **dilution**

increasing a solute **dilution**, decreases its **concentration**

ALERT Check the meaning when discussing **dilutions**

As no staining was observed at 1:50, the antibody **dilution** was **increased** to 1:5

ERROR *Semantics:* **increasing** an antibody dilution **decreases** its concentration

CORRECT by **retaining**

dilution and **replacing increased** by **decreased**

As no staining was observed at 1:50, the antibody **dilution** was **decreased** to 1:5

increased and **replacing dilution** by **concentration**

As no staining was observed at 1:50, the antibody **concentration** was **increased** 10-fold

See: Dilution, Molality/molarity/normality, Molality/osmolality

Concentration/dosage/dose

concentration an **amount** of a substance **per unit volume**

The anti-fertility agent (ornidazole, OZ) was made up as a stock solution of **500 mg OZ/ml**

<i>dose</i>	<p>an amount of substance given at one time</p> <p>for a fixed dose per animal, e.g. 50 mg OZ (present in 0.1 ml stock solution)</p> <p>Rat A (300 g) would receive a dose of 50 mg OZ (in 0.1 ml) at each injection</p> <p>for a dose related to body weight, e.g. 50 mg OZ per 100 g body weight</p> <p>Rat B (300 g) would receive a dose of 150 mg OZ (in 0.3 ml) at each injection</p>
<i>dosage</i>	<p>a dose given over a given period</p> <p>for a dosage of twice a day</p> <p>Rat A would receive a dosage of 100 mg OZ per day</p> <p>Rat B would receive a dosage of 300 mg OZ per day</p> <p>for a dosage of twice a day for two weeks (14 days)</p> <p>Rat A would receive a total dosage of 1.4 g OZ over the two weeks</p> <p>Rat B would receive a total dosage of 4.2 g OZ over the two weeks</p>

Concentration ($N \times 10^6 / \times 10^6$ per ml)

$N \times 10^6$ per ml	<p>is correct only in text</p> <p>The number (N) is multiplied by the factor 10⁶ to obtain the concentration N,000,000 per ml</p>
$N \times 10^6$ per ml	<p>is correct only in Table column headings and Graph axis labels</p> <p>The number (N) in the Table or Graph is a million times smaller ($\times 10^6$) than the value it represents</p> <p>The number (N) is multiplied by the factor 10⁶ to obtain the concentration N,000,000 per ml</p>

ALERT Check for sperm concentration and count that the **multipliers** are correct

The mean sperm concentration in the fathers was 60×10^6 /ml

ERROR *Semantics*: the number written in the text (60) is multiplied by $\times 10^6$ so the sperm concentration is **0.000060/ml**

CORRECT [if the concentration is 60 million per ml] by

changing the factor to $\times 10^6$

The mean sperm concentration in the fathers was 60×10^6 /ml

writing the number in full

The mean sperm concentration in the fathers was **60 million/ml**

writing the concentration in full

The mean sperm concentration in the fathers was **60,000,000 per ml**

See: Multipliers and units

Concept/idea/tenet

<i>concept</i>	hypothesis, idea, intention, paradigm
<i>idea</i>	belief, concept, impression, opinion, principal, suggestion, tenet, thought
<i>tenet</i>	belief, principle

equivalent nouns

Concerning

with reference to, alarming, worrying

does not mean involved with

there is usually no confusion of meaning **when used with inanimate objects**

He wrote a thesis **concerning** the action of hormones on protein secretion

there is a possible source of confusion **when used with people**

[only **people** can **be concerned**]

ALERT Check that **concerning does not** mean **involving**

Schematic representation of disulphide bridging **concerning** thiol groups present on a unique protein

ERROR *Syntax*: the bridging **involves** thiol groups but concerning **does not** mean involving

CORRECT by **replacing concerning** by **in relation to**

Schematic representation of disulphide bridging events **in relation to** thiol groups present on a unique protein

ALERT Check **the meaning** when **concerning** is used with people

He made a statement **concerning** Dr Albert

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that

he said something **about** Dr Albert to someone

[with reference to]

or

he said something that made Dr Albert **concerned**

[worried, alarmed]

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

replacing concerning by **about**

He made a statement **about** Dr Albert

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

replacing concerning by **that worried**

He made a statement **that worried** Dr Albert

replacing concerning by **of concern to**

He made a statement **of concern to** Dr Albert

Concerning this effect

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, **omit**

Conclude that

used when there is **sufficient evidence** for a conclusion to be drawn

expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood

From the decline observed we **conclude that** the proteins **are** secreted in an androgen-dependent manner

See: Certainty/uncertainty

Concomitant

See: Commensurate/concomitant

Concurrent/contemporary/contemporaneous/simultaneous

concurrent existing, happening or done at the same time

contemporary living or occurring at the same time

contemporaneous existing at, or occurring in, the same period of time

simultaneous occurring, operating, or done at the same time

interchangeable adjectives

Condensation/evaporation/sublimation

condensation phase change from **vapour to liquid** by cold

Distilled water was obtained by **condensation** of steam by cold running water

evaporation phase change from **liquid to vapour** by heat

The washed sperm suspensions on slides were air-dried by **evaporation** at room temperature

sublimation phase change from **solid to vapour** by heat, or **vapour to solid** by cold, without the intermediary of a liquid

Proteins were obtained by **sublimation** of ammonium chloride during freeze-drying

See: Evaporation/vapourisation, Freezing/melting/thawing, Gas/vapour, Liquefaction/solidification

Conditio sine qua non (Latin)

an indispensable or essential condition

often abbreviated to **sine qua non**

The attack on the internet was the **sine non qua** of our failure to meet the deadline for abstract submission

Conditional/indicative/subjunctive moods

conditional I/we **would** [do it] ...

You/she/he/it/they **should** [do it] ...

subjunctive ... if I/we **could**...

... if you/he/she/it/they **could**...

indicative ... but I/we **can't**

... but you/he/she/it/they **can't**

See: Conditional/subjunctive moods, Indicative mood

Conditional/subjunctive moods

conditional for conditional statements

in the **[Main]** (consequence, results) clause of **conditional** sentences

in statements that **are not true**

If he were to apply [they **should** accept him]

If I were Director [I **could** hire you]

In statements that **cannot be true**

If Darwin were alive [he **could** explain it in more detail]

If I were you [I **would** apply for the position immediately]

subjunctive for conditional statements

in the **[Subordinate]** (conditional) clause of **conditional** sentences

of Conditions/Demands/Requests

She is allowed in the culture room [on condition that she **wear** a mask]

in statements that **may be true**

[If he **were** alive] he would be very old

[If I **were** honest] he would fail the examine

in statements that **are not true**

[If he **were** to apply] they should accept him

[If I **were** Director] I could hire you

in statements that **cannot be true**

[If Darwin **were** alive] he could explain it in more detail

[If I **were** you] I would apply for the position immediately

Conducted

Overused word: replace by **what was conducted**

ALERT Check whether **conducted** should be **replaced** by a **more relevant word**

Functional checks were **conducted** on the centrifuge
 STYLE *Verbosity*: can be shortened
 CHANGE by **replacing** the *noun* with a *verb*
 The centrifuge **was checked** for function
 The function of the centrifuge **was checked**

Confirm

to examine something to determine the presence of something or its characteristics

ALERT Check that **confirm** refers to an object **capable of confirming something**

The gas chromatogram **confirms** the view that *myo*-inositol is formed from glucose
 ERROR *Anthropomorphism*: a **chromatogram** is **inanimate and cannot** confirm anything
 CORRECT by **accepting** that the data the chromatogram reveals **provides evidence that** may confirm something
 The **data** in the gas chromatogram **provide evidence that confirms** the view that *myo*-inositol is formed from glucose
subsequently shortening by *ellipsis* of [**provide evidence that**]
 The **data** in the gas chromatogram **confirm** the view that *myo*-inositol is formed from glucose
 The gas chromatographic **data confirm** the view that *myo*-inositol is formed from glucose

See: Check/confirm/validate, Corroboration

Congruent

in agreement
does not mean in parallel, simultaneously

Conjunctions

coordinating conjunctions

link grammatical equivalents
 non-adversative
 link **similar** grammatical equivalents
and then
 link **alternative** grammatical equivalents
or nor
 adversative
 link **contrasting** grammatical equivalents
but yet

discontinuous correlative conjunctions

link **related** grammatical equivalents
 link **similar** grammatical equivalents
as far as ... both ... and ... if ... then ... not only ... but also
 link **alternative** grammatical equivalents
either ... or neither ... nor on the one hand ... on the other whether ... or

subordinating conjunctions

introduce a part of the sentence **subordinate** to another
 with an **adverbial** sense
after (time)
although (concession)
as, because, for, so, so that (reason)
if, whether (conditions)
than (comparison)
whereas (alternative)
who, why (interrogative)
 introduce **noun clauses**
 indirect questions
whether who why
 indirect statements
that
do not introduce noun clauses
although because if whereas

See: Although ... does not mean, And so/so/so that, Because ... does not mean, If ... does not mean, Whereas ... does not mean

Connect together

Pleonasm: as **connect** implies bringing together, **together** is *superfluous*, use **connect**

Consequent/subsequent

consequent following as a result of
 The irradiation and **consequent** testicular dysfunction
subsequent occurring after
 The return of fluid production and **subsequent** reappearance of spermatogenesis

ALERT Check that only **consequent** or **subsequent** is used

This may trigger a feed-forward loop to enhance the expression of β -catenin target genes and **subsequent consequences**

ERROR *Tautology*: as **consequences** must be **subsequent** to (follow) some event, **subsequent** is *unnecessary*

CORRECT by

replacing subsequent by a *pronoun*

This may trigger a feed-forward loop to enhance the expression of β -catenin target genes and **its** consequences

retaining subsequent and **replacing consequences** by *effects*

This may trigger a feed-forward loop to enhance the expression of β -catenin target genes and subsequent **effects**

See: After/following, After/subsequent to, Prior/subsequent, Subsequent/subsequently

Consequential/consequently

consequential adjective following as a result of

The high demand for graduates led to their **consequential** increase in potential salaries

consequently adverb as a result

Recent graduates are in high demand and **consequently** can earn high salaries

Synonyms: so, therefore

Consider that

used when there is some evidence for a conclusion to be drawn

expressed by the following verb in the *present indicative* mood

It is **considered** possible **that** cells **are** lost because of apoptosis

See: Certainty/uncertainty

Considerable amount of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **much**

Considerable number of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **many**

Considerable proportion of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **most**

Consideration has been given to the fact that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **it is considered that**

Considering

gerund (verbal noun)

thinking about

His **considering** the consequences of their actions was not appreciated by the others

participle (verbal adjective which can define a *noun*, *pronoun* and *noun phrase*)

taking into consideration

Considering our expenses, **we** decided against purchasing a new microscope

preposition

in view of

Considering the severity of the surgery, the infertility is not unexpected

Consistent/constant

consistent

unchanging in quality, attitude behaviour with time

The new method provided **consistent** cell cultures

compatible or in agreement

Our results are **consistent** with those of Jones

not containing logical contradictions

His was a **consistent** explanation of the facts

constant

occurring continuously over a period of time

The plate mixer provided a **constant** speed

See: Continual/continuous

Constant

Synonym: unchanging

See: Consistent/constant

Constitute/represent

constitute

to form, to make up a complete group

represent

to amount to

The value in the gonadotrophin-treated samples **represents** a 50% increase in androgen secretion to be an example or specimen of, to typify, a larger category

Twenty young volunteers were selected to **represent** a cross section of the student population

does not mean is

ALERT Check that **represent** indicates a subgroup

Peroxiredoxins **represent** a superfamily of Se-independent peroxidases

ERROR *Semantics*: **represent** implies **part** of a larger category, whereas peroxiredoxins are **all** the Se-independent family
 CORRECT [if all the Se-independent peroxidases are meant] by
 replacing **represent** by **constitute**
 Peroxiredoxins **constitute** a superfamily of Se-independent peroxidases
 CORRECT [if a part of all peroxidases is meant] by
 omitting **Se-independent**
 Peroxiredoxins **represent** a superfamily of peroxidases

See: Compose/comprise/consist/constitute/include

Construe

Synonym: to interpret

Containing/filled with

containing controlling or restraining oneself
 He had difficulty **containing** his giggles during the seminar
 having or holding something within, with room for more contents
 Documents **containing** both text and graphs are accepted
filled with to put in as much as can be held, with no room for more contents
 The volumetric flask was **filled** to the mark **with** solvent

ALERT Check **the meaning** when using **filled**

Cells were plated in Petri dishes **filled with** sterile PBS
 ERROR *Semantics*: if the dishes were filled with PBS there **would be no room** for the cells
 CORRECT by replacing **filled with** by **containing**
 Cells were plated in Petri dishes **containing** sterile PBS

Contamination/contaminations

contamination is correct
contamination is a *singular* abstract uncountable noun that has no plural
 With this method extra-tubular **contamination is** reduced
 for a **plural** use, use a *partitive* construction
 With this method extra-tubular **sources of contamination are** reduced

Content

See: Concentration/content

Continual/continuous

continual recurring at intervals intermittent, repeated
continuous constantly without stopping incessant, uninterrupted

Continuous work is impossible with **continual** interruption

Continuous/solid/unbroken line

continuous is correct
unbroken is correct
solid incorrect for 2D graphs; a solid line is three-dimensional

Continuously/ininitely variable

continuously variable variable between finite limits
ininitely variable variable between infinite limits

Contra-/ipsi-lateral

contra- on the opposite side
 Testicular torsion affects spermatogenesis in the **contra**-lateral organ
ipsi- on the same side
 Ovulation enhances sperm migration in the **ipsi**-lateral oviduct

Contraction

See: Abbreviation/acronym/contraction

Contradicting/contradictory/contrary

contradicting participle denying the truth of a statement by asserting the opposite
 During the seminar she was **contradicting** her supervisor
contradictory adjective mutually opposed or inconsistent
 The studies came to **contradictory** conclusions
contrary adjective opposite in direction, nature or meaning
 He ignored **contrary** advice and submitted the paper to Nature

Contrari-/like-wise

contrariwise in the opposite way
Contrariwise, enhanced expression of E-cadherin suppresses metastatic potential
likewise in the same way, also

The new guidelines come into force next year; **likewise** the new ISO standards
 in a like manner, similarly
 I used the highlighting function to indicate errors in the manuscript, the student did **likewise**

Contrast

See: Compare/contrast

Contribute

See: Attribute/contribute

Control

to govern, to maintain or to limit a variable
does not mean to count, to examine, to inspect or to observe

Conventional

See: Canonical/conventional

Convince/persuade

convince to cause someone **to believe in** something
persuade to cause someone **to do** something [though they may not believe in it]

Co-operation/co-operations

cooperation is correct
co-operation is a *singular* abstract uncountable noun that has no plural
 Their main **co-operation** **was** on epididymal research
 for a **plural** use, use a **partitive** construction
Areas of co-operation included sperm volume and morphological measurements

Correct/correctly

correct adjective placed **before** the **noun**
 He did the **correct thing**
correctly adverb placed **after** the **verb**
 He **added up** the figures **correctly**
 placed **before** the **verb**
 The figures are **correctly calculated**

See: Right/rightly, Wrong/wrongly

Correlation

See: Association/correlation

Corrigendum

See: Addendum/corrigendum/erratum

Corroboration

evidence that confirms or supports a statement, theory or finding

Synonym: confirmation

Cost/expensive/price

cost noun the amount of money required in payment
price noun the amount of money required in payment
expensive adjective costing a lot of money, of a high price or cost

ALERT Check that both **expensive** and **price** are not used in the same sentence

That centrifuge had an **expensive price**

ERROR *Pleonasm*: **expensive** means of high price or cost

CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both

That centrifuge had a high **price**

That centrifuge was **expensive**

Cotemporaneous

See: Concurrent/contemporary/contemporaneous/simultaneous

Cotemporaneous in age

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **the same age**

Cotemporary

See: Concurrent/contemporary/contemporaneous/simultaneous

Could/might

past tenses of can/may

See: Can/could, Can/may, Certainty/uncertainty

Council/counsel

<i>council</i>	noun	an assembly of people
<i>counsel</i>	noun	advice
	verb	to advise, to give advice

Councillor/counsellor

<i>councillor</i>		a member of a council
<i>counsellor</i>		one who gives advice [one who counsels]

Count/number

<i>count</i>	the number determined by counting
	The noun used as a genitive is singular although what is counted is plural
	A head count revealed that about 40 people attended the lecture
	His sperm count was high (120 million spermatozoa per ejaculate)
	His seminal leukocyte count was normal
<i>number</i>	an arithmetical value representing a particular quantity
	About 40 people attended the lecture
	He had 120 million spermatozoa per ejaculate

See: Concentration/count, Digit/figure, Number/numeral, Numbers

Couple/couple of

<i>couple</i>	noun	two people or things of the same sort considered together as a unit
		Of the new students there is a couple worth considering for the position
<i>couple of</i>	measure words	
		A couple of students applied for the post

Couple of ... is/are

<i>are</i>	is correct
	as what couple of refers to (a plural group) is the subject, use the plural
	A couple of posters were presented at the meeting

Couple is/are

<i>is</i>	is correct
	as couple is a singular collective noun, use the singular
	The couple is known to work in the same laboratory

Created the possibility that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **allowed** (an action), **enabled** (a person), **made possible**

Credible/credible

<i>credible</i>	believable, convincing
	He gave a credible talk
<i>credible</i>	deserving acknowledgment and praise
	Her thesis was a credible piece of work

Credible/credulous

<i>credible</i>	believable, convincing
	He was a credible speaker
<i>credulous</i>	believing too readily
	His credulous acceptance of every argument made him a poor student

Credibility/credulity

<i>credibility</i>	the quality of being credible
	His credibility declined after being charged with plagiarism
<i>credulity</i>	the quality of being credulous
	Her credulity made her unlikely to be a critical student

Criteria/criterion (Greek)

<i>criteria</i>	plural
<i>criterion</i>	singular

Criticise/critique

<i>criticise</i>	verb	to point out faults
<i>critique</i>	noun	a detailed analysis and assessment

ALERT Check that **critique is not** used as a **verb**

This commentary is **to critique** the WHO semen analysis manual

ERROR *Syntax*: critique is a noun **not a verb**

CORRECT by **using**

critique as a **noun** with a **verb**

This commentary is **to present** a **critique** of the revised WHO semen analysis manual
 the adverb **critically** with a **verb**

This commentary is **to review critically** the revised WHO semen analysis manual

Crucial/necessary

crucial decisive or critical, especially in the success or failure of something
 Obtaining grant funding is **crucial** for the research

necessary needed to be done achieved or present
 He was given the **necessary** permission from the Ethics Committee
 determined, existing or happening by natural laws; inevitable
 A **necessary** consequence of hypotonicity is cell swelling

Cull/kill

kill to deprive a living thing of life
 The rats were **killed** by an overdose of ether

cull to reduce the size of a herd of animals by removing specific individuals
 Herds were **culled** to increase genetic diversity
does not mean kill

Herds are **culled** by **killing** animals

See: Euphemism

Current

See: Actual/current/present

Currently

at the present time

ALERT Check that **currently is not** used with words **implying the present time**

Currently such methods are popular **today**

ERROR *Tautology*: both **currently** and **today** mean at the present time

CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both

Currently such methods are popular

Such methods are popular **today**

Customarily

as a matter of routine or common practice

ALERT Check that **customarily is not** used with words **reflecting normality**

Customarily such cuts are **usually** imposed at the end of the fiscal year

ERROR *Tautology*: **customarily** and **usually** both mean as a matter of routine

CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both

Customarily such cuts are imposed at the end of the fiscal year

Such cuts are **usually** imposed at the end of the fiscal year

Synonyms: normally, typically, usually

See: Certainty/uncertainty, Quotations, Typically, Usually

Cyto-meter/metric/metry

cytometer noun an instrument for counting or assessing cells
 Sperm concentration was assessed in a large volume **cytometer**

cytometric adjective relating to a cytometer
 A **cytometric** study of sperm proteins

cytometry noun the use of a cytometer
 Sperm volume was measured by flow **cytometry**

Cytoplasmatic/cytoplasmic droplet

cytoplasmic is correct

cytoplasmatic confusion with **French, Italian**

Damage/damages

damage noun physical harm that impairs the value, function or usefulness of something
damage is a **singular** noun that has no plural
 Severe **damage** to the testis **was** done by efferent duct ligation
 for a **plural** use, use a **partitive** construction
Signs of damage were seen into several organs after the operation

damages noun financial compensation claimed or awarded for loss or injury
 verb third person singular of the verb **to damage**

Dangling participles (hanging, unattached participles)

participles with **no (unattached)** or an **irrelevant (dangling, hanging)** noun, pronoun or noun phrase to modify

makes the first part of a sentence seem not belong to the following clause
produces an incorrect (but often amusing) meaning

present participles

After **standing** in the incubator overnight, **we** removed the attached cells
[implies that **we**, not the cells, had been in the incubator overnight]

Dozing in the library, **it** seemed that summer had arrived
[**who** was dozing in the library?]

past participles

If properly **installed**, **you** should not be able to open the door without first pressing the release button
[implies that **you**, not the new equipment, were properly installed]

Administered initially by the Max Planck Society, **it** was not until the 1980s that the University took over
[**what** was initially administered by the MPS?]

Often unintentional: check that participles have relevant words to qualify

See: Applying, Assuming, Based on/on the basis of, By using/using, By/by the use of, Driving, Having, Hurrying, In recognition of/recognising, Indicating, Resulting, Seeing, Sitting, Staining, Stripped, Taking, Unattached gerunds, Washing

Dash/hyphen/minus

dash represents a **pause**

long dash (twice the length of the short dash)

Em dash/Em rule

Space as wide as an **upper case M** (**M** for **Mutton**)

no space between letter and dash

can be used—very effectively—to emphasise the enclosed words

[see alternative form with the **En dash/En rule** below]

short dash (half the length of the long dash)

En dash/En rule

Space as wide as a **lower case N** (**n** for **nut**)

no space between letters, figures and dash

separates groups of

words Red–green dichroism

red **to** green dichroism

The London–Brighton race

the London **to** Brighton race

letters S–H bond

sulphur **to** hydrogen bond

figures 250–300°C

from 250 **to** 300 degrees

65–75% yield

from 65 **to** 75% yield

with a space between letter and En dash

[the alternative form of the **EM dash/Em rule**]

can be used – as here – to emphasise the enclosed words

hyphen represents **no pause**

Space as wide as a **lower case F** (**f**)

no space between letter, figures and hyphen

for spelling out words in letters

E–P–I–D–I–D–Y–M–I–S

for writing cardinal and ordinal numbers in words

sixty-three sixty-third

for merging two concepts into a new one to form a hyphenated adjective

words End-point titration (neither an **end** nor a **point**)

Blue-green colour (between **blue** and **green**)

Ethyl acetate-soluble solute (ethyl acetate-soluble **defines** solute)

Head-to-head agglutination (head-to-head **defines** agglutination)

figures A 20-µl aliquot (20-µl **defines** aliquot)

in a 20-µm-deep chamber (20-µm-deep **defines** chamber)

a 20-day-old monkey (20-day-old **defines** monkey)

for demarcating prefixes

extra-tubular intra-ocular pro-angiogenic

for indicating prefixes that join a common word

pro- and anti-apoptotic pathways (pro-apoptotic, anti-apoptotic)

for aiding pronunciation when confusion is possible

co-operation co-opt

for showing permissible word-breaks at the end of a line

extra-neous (not extran-eous)

minus represents **no pause**

Space as wide as an **upper case M** but with line occupying only part of it

no space between the minus and number

for negative numbers –70°C (minus seventy degrees Celsius)

with a space between the minus and number

for subtraction 94 – 90 = 4 (ninety-four minus ninety equals four)

See: Adjectives

Data/readings

readings the raw values obtained by measurement or observation, facts

data (Latin) the raw values after processing (averaging, transforming, statistics etc.)

Data, **not** readings, can be used to support an argument

Data is/are

are is correct
data is a **plural** word (singular **datum**)

Dative (indirect object) case

shows **inflection** of possessive pronouns with gender and number
used for the indirect object (recipient) of an action

to whom something is done
You gave a book **to me (him/her/us/them)**
You gave **me (him/her/us/them)** a book

for whom something is done
You bought a book **for me (him/her/us/them)**
You bought **me (him/her/us/them)** a book

Day-old/days old

day-old attributive adjective
(hyphenated, **before** the noun it defines)
day-old means one-day-old

day-old	seven day-old chicks	(seven chicks, one day of age)
one-day-old	one-day-old rats	(several rats, one day of age)
seven-day-old	five seven-day-old mice	(five mice, seven days of age)

days old predicative adjective
(**not** hyphenated, **after** the noun it defines)

one day old	ten embryos one day old	(ten embryos, one day of age)
six days old	five animals six days old	(five animals, six days of age)

Day's time

Pleonasm: as **day** implies time, **time** is *superfluous*, use **days**

Dearth/plethora

dearth scarcity
plethora a large or excessive amount, too many, too much

Debate

to argue about a topic in a formal manner with opposing arguments

ALERT Check sentence structure when using debated

I **debated** my Professor
ERROR *Syntax*: only a **subject**, **not** an **adversary**, can be debated
CORRECT by **relating the topic** that was debated
I debated **the merits** of using non-parametric statistics
adding with before my Professor, with or without the topic debated
I debated **with** my Professor

See: Argue

Decide

auxiliary verb followed by an the **infinitive with** the infinitive marker **to**
I decided **to take** it

Decidedly/decisively

decidedly definitely, clearly
It was a **decidedly** obvious attempt at committing fraud

decisively making decisions quickly
As soon as he learnt of the fraud, he acted **decisively** to cut off funding

Decimal places/significant figures

decimal places

The position of a digit counted to the right of the decimal point

0.5	1 decimal place	(1 significant figure)
0.006	3 decimal places	(1 significant figure)
0.324	3 decimal places	(3 significant figures)

significant figures

The number of non-zero digits displayed

5900	2 significant figures	(no decimal place)
5426.58	6 significant figures	(2 decimal places)
0.00456	3 significant figures	(5 decimal places)

See: Decimals, Decimal points, Rounding of decimals

Decimal points

internationally recognized as a full stop **7.65**
 some countries use a comma **7,65**
 use of . or , is dictated by journal format

See: Decimal places/significant figures, Decimals, Numbers, Rounding of decimals

Decimals

decimal numbers express a value less than one
 always preceded by
 a figure **1.2**
 zero if necessary **0.4**
 take a **singular** noun and verb
 0.5% of the male **population is** infertile

See: Decimal places/significant figures, Decimal points, Numbers, Percent of ... is/are, Rounding of decimals

Decimate

to reduce **by** one tenth
does not mean
 to reduce **to** one tenth
 to reduce by a large amount

Decision

a resolution in the mind as a result of deliberation
 [**decide** applies **only** to people]

ALERT Check that **decide** applies to people

Despite much research, the signalling molecules that mediate the **decision** of spermatogonia to differentiate remain unknown

ERROR Syntax: **spermatogonia** are **inanimate and cannot** decide anything

CORRECT by

replacing decision by **fate** and **omitting to differentiate**

Despite much research, the signalling molecules that mediate the **fate** of spermatogonia remain unknown

replacing the **object** of the verb to mediate by a **genitive noun**

Despite much research, the signalling molecules that mediate **spermatogonial differentiation** remain unknown

Declarative/interrogative

declarative for statements
 normal word order: **subject** before **verb**
You did sterilise the work bench last night

interrogative for questions
 inverted word order: **verb** before **subject**
Did you sterilise the workbench last night?

See: Inversion of verbs, To do

Decreased

indicates a causal relationship, with time or after some manipulation

transitive verb with **object** to **make** smaller in extent or number

active Treatment with hypertonic medium **decreases cell size**
 Busulphan treatment **decreased** testicular tubule **diameters**

passive Cell size is **decreased by** hypertonic medium
 Testicular tubule **diameters** were **decreased by** busulphan treatment

intransitive verb to **become** smaller in extent or number
 In hypertonic medium cell size **decreases**
 During busulphan treatment testicular tubule diameters **decrease**

ALERT Check that **decreased is not** used for direct **comparisons**

The cell volume of niflumic acid-treated samples was **decreased compared with** controls

The cell volume of niflumic acid-treated samples was **decreased in comparison with** controls

ERROR Syntax: participles **are not** used for direct comparisons

CORRECT by

retaining decreased as an intransitive verb and **stating** the **sequence of events**

The cell volume **decreased after treatment** with niflumic acid

retaining decreased as a participle and **stating** the **cause of the decrease**

The cell volume **was decreased by niflumic acid**

omitting decreased and **stating** what the cell volume **was below**

The cell volume of niflumic acid-treated samples was **below** that of the untreated controls

The cell volume of niflumic acid-treated samples was **lower than** that of the untreated controls

retaining the **comparative prepositional phrase** and **using** the **absolute (positive) form** of the adjective

The cell volume of niflumic acid-treated samples was **low compared with** that of uncapacitated cells

The cell volume of niflumic acid-treated samples was **low in comparison with** that of uncapacitated cells

*Decreased/lower**decreased*

as a participle (verbal adjective)
followed by the preposition **by** and a causative agent
Sperm motility **was decreased by** centrifugation

lower

comparative form of the adjective **low**
followed by the preposition **after** and a causative agent and the conjunction **than**
Sperm motility was **lower after** centrifugation **than** before

Decreased number of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **fewer**

Decreased relative to

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **less than** or **lower than**

Deduce/deduct

deduce to arrive at a fact or conclusion by reasoning (noun **deduction**)
deduct subtract or take away a part from the total (noun **deduction, subtraction**)

See: Deductive/inductive

Deductive/inductive

deductive reasoning by the inference of **particular** instances from a **general law**
the conclusion **must** be correct if the premises are true
described by the
verbs

conclude demonstrate determine establish
indicate prove reveal show

inductive reasoning by the inference of **general laws** from **particular instances**
the conclusion is **probably** true if the premises are true
described by the
verbs

assume believe conceive consider hypothesise postulate
presume propose speculate suggest surmise
adjectives
likely possible probable reasonable

See: A priori/posteriori, Arguments, Empirical/theoretical

Deem

Synonyms: to consider, treat as

Defective/deficient

defective imperfect, faulty, not working properly
The weighing scales were **defective**

deficient incomplete, not having enough of some quality, parts missing
The diet was **deficient** in vitamin C

xxx

*Defining/non-defining clauses**defining*

restrictive, limiting, essential, non-descriptive, relative subordinate adjectival, that clauses
may be introduced by **that, which, who**
need no comma

The microscope **that has a broken lens** needs to be repaired

limits the meaning of *microscope* to (**defines it** as) the one **with a broken lens**

implies one thing: **only** the broken microscope needs to be repaired

Student dislike professors **who show favouritism**

limits the meaning of *professors* to (**defines them** as) those **who show favouritism**

implies one thing: students dislike **only** the professors who show favouritism

Technicians dislike animals **which bite**

limits the meaning of *animals* to (**defines them** as) those **which bite**

implies one thing: technicians dislike **only** the animals which bite

need **not be** introduced by **that, which, who**

needs no comma

Androgens had no effect as the doctor claimed

limits the meaning of *doctor* to (**defines him** as) the one **claiming androgens have an effect**

implies one thing: **no confirmation** of what the doctor claimed (androgens **have an effect**)

non-defining

non-restrictive, non-limiting, non-essential, non-descriptive, relative coordinate main, which clauses
may be introduced by **which, who**
need a comma

The microscope, **which has a broken lens**, needs to be repaired

The phrase within the commas **can be omitted** without a change in meaning

The microscope needs to be repaired

provides two statements

The microscope **needs to be repaired**

The microscope **has a broken lens**
 Students dislike professors, **who show favouritism**
 The phrase after the comma **can be omitted** without a change in meaning
 Students dislike professors
provides two statements
 Students **dislike professors**
 Professors **show favouritism**
 need **not be** introduced by **which, who**
 need a comma
Androgens had no effect, as the doctor claimed
 The phrase after the comma **can be omitted** without a change in meaning
 Androgens had no effect
provides two statements
 Confirmation of what the doctor said (Androgens **have no effect**)
 The doctor claimed that androgens **would not have an effect**

ALERT Check that it is clear what **which** refers to

Unless hypoxia sets in, the VBC complex keeps HIF inactive and hence suppresses any upregulation of glycolysis **which** favours tumour cell metabolism

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **it is unclear** whether **which** refers to glycolytic **upregulation** or **suppression**, so **this implies** that tumour cell division is favoured by the upregulation of glycolysis
 or
 suppression of the upregulation of glycolysis

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

stressing upregulation

Unless hypoxia sets in, the VBC complex keeps HIF inactive and hence suppresses any up-regulation of glycolysis: **such upregulation would favour** tumour cell metabolism

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

stressing suppression

Unless hypoxia sets in, the VBC complex keeps HIF inactive and hence suppresses any up-regulation of glycolysis: **such suppression would favour** tumour cell metabolism

See: As/when ... by, That clauses

Definite/definitive

definite exact, precise, unambiguous

definitive conclusive, final

Definite article

See: A/an, Articles

Definitely proved

Pleonasm: as **proved** implies a definitive state, **definitely** is *superfluous*, use **proved**

Defuse/diffuse

defuse to remove a fuse

diffuse to spread widely, to soften

Degradate/degrade

degrade is correct

Degree/extent/rate

degree the **relative** intensity or amount

The **degree** of spermatogenetic damage was dependent on the dose of busulphan administered

extent the **absolute** range, magnitude or distance over which something extends

The **extent** of spermatogenetic damage reached 60% of all tubule cross sections

rate the measure, quantity or frequency **measured against a similar measure**, quantity or frequency in **different** samples

There was no difference in the **rate** of fertility in women given different infertility treatments

See: Frequency/rate

Deplete/reduce

deplete made smaller, usually with an injurious connotation

The monkey population was **depleted** by sickness

reduce made smaller

The monkey population was **reduced** by administrative order

Demi/hemi/semi/sesqui

demi (Latin, French)

half

demi-semi-quaver

half-size

demigod

hemi (Greek)

half	hemi -castration, hemi -zona
<i>semi</i> (Latin)	
half	semi -circle
partly	semi -conscious
penultimate	semi -final
<i>sesqui</i> (Latin)	
half again [one and a half]	sesqui -centennial (150 th anniversary)

Demonstrate

Synonyms: to show, to report

See: Claim/demonstrate/establish/show

Demonstrate that

used when there is **sufficient evidence** for a conclusion to be drawn

expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood

Here we have **demonstrated that** cells **are** lost because of apoptosis

ALERT Check that the verb following **demonstrate that** is in the **present indicative**

We have **demonstrated that** the enzyme **could act** as a true ROS scavenger

ERROR *Semantics:* **demonstrate that** reflects **certainty** but the conditional **could** implies a **condition**

CORRECT [if there is **sufficient evidence**] by

retaining *demonstrated that* and using the *present indicative*

We have **demonstrated that** the enzyme **acts** as a true ROS scavenger

CORRECT [to emphasise **uncertainty**] by

omitting *We have demonstrated that*

The enzyme **could act** as a true ROS scavenger

CORRECT [if there is a **condition**] by

retaining *could* and providing the *condition*

We have **demonstrated that** the enzyme **could act** as a true ROS scavenger ***if leukocytes are the source of ROS***

See: Certainty/uncertainty, Conditional/subjunctive moods, Indicative mood, Moods of a verb, Quotations

Denatured/denaturated

denatured is correct

Denominate numbers

See: Numbers

Deny/refute

deny to **say** that something is not so

refute to **prove** that something is not so

Dependence/dependency

dependence contingent on, determined by

dependency a country or province controlled by another

ALERT Check that **dependency** refers to geography

These studies confirmed the androgen-**dependency** of the prostate gland

ERROR *Semantics:* the prostate **is not a country or province**

CORRECT by **replacing *dependency* by *dependence***

These studies confirmed the androgen-**dependence** of the prostate gland

Dependant/dependent

dependant noun someone who depends on another for support

The father collects tax-relief on expenditure to support his **dependants**

dependent adjective expresses a relationship between items or people

The rate of relief is **dependent** on income

Depict

to show or represent by a drawing

This suggests that the pathway operates in the epididymis, as **depicted** in Fig. 1

to portray in words, to describe

The EMT **depicts** well the interaction between E-cadherin and β -catenin

Deprecate/depreciate

deprecate to express disapproval of

depreciate to lessen in value

Deproteiniate/deproteinise

deproteinise is correct

Deregulated/unregulated

deregulated formerly regulated, but now no longer: regulations have been removed
unregulated not regulated

Descent

See: Ascent/descent

Describe/report/state

describe to give a detailed spoken or written account of methods (what was done) or observations (what was found)
report to give a detailed spoken or written account of something specific (what was found)
state to express definitely and clearly in speech or writing (what was done or what was found)

ALERT Check whether **described** is the **best word** to convey your message

Irwin has **described** that addition of A23187 to spermatozoa induces hyperactivation

ERROR *Semantics:* **describe does not** introduce something specific

CORRECT by

replacing *described* by *reported*

Irwin has **reported** that addition of A23187 to spermatozoa induces hyperactivation

replacing *described* by *stated*

Irwin has **stated** that addition of A23187 to spermatozoa induces hyperactivation

retaining *described* with general details of *what was done and observed*

Irwin has **described** how sperm motility **increased when A23187 was added**

See: Claim/demonstrate/show

Descriptive/prescriptive/proscriptive grammar

descriptive describes the structure of a language as it is actually used by speakers and writers
prescriptive describes the structure of a language restricted by rules
proscriptive lists forbidden or condemned English usage

Despite/in spite of

interchangeable prepositions

See: Although/despite

Despite the fact that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **although, despite**

Destroyed/destroyed

destroyed is correct

Detect/examine/inspect

detect to discover or identify the presence or existence of something
 Ciliary tufts were **discovered in** the semen of the men with partial ductal occlusion
examine to inspect something thoroughly in order to determine the nature or condition of it
 Sperm motility was **examined** for evidence of hyperactivation
inspect to look closely, typically to assess the condition, discover a shortcoming or to ensure something reaches an official standard
 The microscope was **inspected** to see if the lenses were scratched

ALERT Check that **detect** is the **intended word**

The pelleted spermatozoa were **detected by** indirect immuno-fluorescence

ERROR *Semantics:* **it is unclear** whether the **presence** or **pattern** of immuno-fluorescent signals is of importance

CORRECT [if the by immuno-fluorescence is used to indicate the **presence** of spermatozoa among other cells] by

replacing *by* with *from*

The pelleted spermatozoa were **detected from** their immuno-fluorescent signals

CORRECT [if the **pattern** of immuno-fluorescent signals is important for indicating the state of the cells] by

replacing *detected* by *examined for*

The pelleted spermatozoa were **examined for** the acrosomal location of the indirect immuno-fluorescence

Determine

to ascertain or establish exactly by research or calculation

Synonyms: to ascertain, to decide, to establish, to find out

Determined that

used when there is **sufficient evidence** for a conclusion to be drawn
 expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood
 These results have **determined that** cells **are** lost because of apoptosis

ALERT Check that the verb following **determined that** is in the **present indicative**

We have **determined that** the changes in movement **may be** associated with chemotaxis

ERROR *Semantics*: **determine that** reflects *certainty* but **may be** indicates *uncertainty*

CORRECT [if there is **sufficient** evidence] by retaining **determined that** and using the **present indicative**

We have **determined that** the changes in movement **are** associated with chemotaxis

CORRECT [to emphasise **uncertainty**] by

omitting **We have determined that**

The changes in movement **may be** associated with chemotaxis

See: Certainty/uncertainty, Indicative mood, Quotations

Development/production

development the process of modifying something that exists

production the process of making something that does not exist

ALERT Check whether **development** is the **best word** to convey your message

The agent that stimulates sperm motility could be used in the **development** of more two-cell embryos

ERROR *Semantics*: this means that the agent acts to develop already-existing two-cell embryos

CORRECT [if the greater **sperm motility** increases fertilisation, which **leads to** more embryos] by

replacing **development** by **production**

The agent that stimulates sperm motility could be used in the **production** of more two-cell embryos

Device/devise

device noun

devise verb

Diagnosis/prognosis

diagnosis identification and definition of a disease

applies to **conditions not** people (verb to **diagnose**)

prognosis prediction of the course and outcome of a disease

applies to **people not** conditions (verb to **prognosticate**)

Dictate/necessitate/urge

dictate to control or decisively effect, to determine

The results **dictate** a caution interpretation

necessitate to make something necessary as a result or consequence

The large number of samples **necessitated** an automated assay

urge to try earnestly or persistently to persuade someone to do something

I **urge** caution in interpreting these results

[**urge** applies **only** to people]

ALERT Check that **urge** applies to people

The lack of data on SHBG variations **urges** caution against generalization of our assumption

ERROR Syntax: **data** are **inanimate and cannot** urge people to do anything

CORRECT by using **verbs** compatible with **inanimate objects**

The lack of data on SHBG variations **necessitates** caution against generalization of our assumption

The lack of data on SHBG variations **requires** cautionary generalization of our assumption

See: Convince/persuade

Die for/of

for someone, something

He was prepared to die **for** his anti-vivisection beliefs

of something

The rats died **of** starvation

Differ for/from/in/with

for The protocols **differ for** normo- and astheno-spermic semen

from The protocols for normo-zoospermia **differ from** those for astheno-spermia

Our results **differ from** theirs

in These samples **differ in** sperm morphology

with I **differ with** my supervisor on what experiments to do next

Difference/discrepancy

difference the quality or state of being different, distinct, separate, not the same

There was a significant **difference** in ROS production by leukocytes from treated and control groups

discrepancy the quality or state of being discrepant: a difference between things that should be the same

There was a **discrepancy** between the student's and the technician's accounts of the accident

ALERT Check that **discrepancy** is the **intended word**

There was a significant **discrepancy** in ROS production by leukocytes from treated and control groups

ERROR *Semantics*: this implies that similar ROS production by treated and control leukocytes was expected but not found

CORRECT [if there are no prior expectations] by

replacing **discrepancy** by **difference**

There was a significant **difference** in ROS production by leukocytes from treated and control groups

Difference/variation

difference

the quality or state of being different, distinct, separate, not the same, between objects

There was a significant **difference** in ROS production by leukocytes from treated and control groups

variation

the existence of small changes or slight differences in amount, conditions, levels, within or between objects

The high **variation** in testosterone concentrations during the day is well known

There is a large **variation** in semen quality among patients and fathers

Different

not the same as another or each other, distinct, separate, unlike in nature for or quality

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that **different** is needed

Optimal conditions were determined from comparison of the two **different** media

ERROR *Tautology*: they **must be different** or no comparison would be needed

CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both

Optimal conditions were determined from comparison of the **two** media

Optimal conditions were determined from comparison of the **different** media

More solid evidence is needed to prove epididymal CSCs exist by using **different** means other than the sphere-forming assay

ERROR *Tautology*: a means **other than** the sphere-forming assay is a **different** method

CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both

More solid evidence is needed to prove epididymal CSCs exist by using **different** means than the sphere-forming assay

More solid evidence is needed to prove epididymal CSCs exist by using means **other than** the sphere-forming assay

Different/differential/differing

different

adjective not the same as another or each other, distinct, separate, unlike in nature for or quality

The enzymes came from a **different** batch

differential

adjective constituting a specific difference, distinctive

These are the **differential** features between benign and malignant tumours

differing

participle differences that are not constant but change with time or conditions

With time into their theses the students had **differing** views on how to study the problem

ALERT Check that **differing** is in then **intended word**

Those using the recommended methods produced better results than those using **differing** techniques

ERROR *Syntax*: differing techniques are changing techniques

CORRECT by using **different**

Those using the recommended methods produced better results than those using **different** techniques

Different for/from/in

for

The protocols are **different for** normo- and astheno-zoospermic semen

from

The protocols for normo-zoospermia are **different from** that for astheno-zoospermia

in

These samples are **different in** morphology but not motility or vitality

See: Differ for/from/in/with

Difficulty

Synonyms: dilemma, doubt, perplexity, problem, quandary

Diffuse

See: Defuse/diffuse

Digit/figure

digit

any of the written Arabic numerals 0-9

A **four-digit** number has four digits (figures)

figure

any of the written Arabic numerals 0-9

A **four-figure** number has four figures (digits)

interchangeable nouns

See: Decimal points, Decimal places/significant figures, Number/numeral, Numbers

Dilate/dilation/dilatation

dilate

verb to make, be or become wider, larger or more open

dilation

noun being distended beyond normal dimensions

dilatation

noun the process of becoming dilated, the action of dilating a vessel or opening

ALERT Check that **dilatation** is the **intended word**

The epididymis of the H-*ras* transgenic mice exhibited tubular **dilatation**
 ERROR *Syntax*: this gives the **unintended impression** that the *epididymal tubule* was dilating something
 CORRECT [if the tubule itself **became dilated**] by
 replacing **dilatation** by **dilation**
 The epididymis of the H-*ras* transgenic mice exhibited tubular **dilation**

Dilemma

See: Choice/dilemma

Dilution

adding **solvent** alone to a solution of **solute** in solvent
to reduce solute concentration
 mixing **buffers** of the same concentration
 to alter pH **without changing solute concentration**

ALERT Note that a **1:4 (1 to 4)** dilution **is not** the same as a **1/4 (1 in 4)** dilution

A **1:1 (1 to 1)** dilution involves adding one part to one part (**1+1**), giving a total of 2 parts and a proportion of **1/2 (1 in 2)**

1:1	(1 to 1)	(1+1)	2	1/2	(1 in 2)
1:2	(1 to 2)	(1+2)	3	1/3	(1 in 3)
1:3	(1 to 3)	(1+3)	4	1/4	(1 in 4)
1:4	(1 to 4)	(1+4)	5	1/5	(1 in 5)
1:5	(1 to 5)	(1+5)	6	1/6	(1 in 6)

See: Concentration/dilution

Diminishment/diminution

diminution is correct

Direct/directly

direct adjective extending or moving in a straight line, by the shortest route, straightforward
 He was asked to report **direct** to the Director (to go straight there)
directly adverb at once, without delay
 He was asked to report **directly** to the Director (at once)

Di

See: Bi/bin/di/dis/dys

Disagree on/with

on something she disagreed **on** whether to work on Sunday
with someone she disagreed **with** the director

Disappear

To cease to appear (of a previously existing object)

ALERT Check that **disappear is not** used to mean **never appeared**

When the inhibitor blocked chemotactic cascade, the cells performing chemotactic behaviour **disappeared**
 ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that the chemotactic cells **were initially present** and then were no longer observed
 CORRECT [if the chemotactic cells **never appeared** at all in the medium with inhibitor] by
 replacing **disappeared** by **words describing absence**
 When the chemotactic cascade was inhibited, the cells performing chemotactic behaviour **were not present**
 When the chemotactic cascade was inhibited, the cells performing chemotactic behaviour **were never observed**

Disappointed in/with

in something He was disappointed **in** the results of the exam
with someone He was disappointed **with** the examiner's comments

Disc/disk

disc for recording (compact **disc**, video **disc**) and machinery (**disc** brakes)
disk for anatomy (slipped **disk**) and computer storage (hard **disk**)

Discreet/discrete

discreet careful behaviour in speech and conduct
 Patient's information is confidential so be **discreet** when talking in the reception area
discrete individually separate and distinct
 Subjects in the study were assigned randomly to **discrete** groups

Disconnect

Synonym: to cut off

Discontinue

Synonyms: to end, to stop

Discrepancy

See: Difference/discrepancy

Disgracefully

adverb used to describe

verbs or verbal phrases

placed **after** the **verb**

He **failed** every exam **disgracefully**

[The **manner in which he failed** each exam (by a wide margin) is described]

whole clauses

placed **at the beginning** of the sentence, before the **verb**

Disgracefully, he **failed** every exam

[**It was disgraceful** that he failed every exam, even if by a small margin]

Disingenuous

Not candid, honest or sincere; pretending to know more than one does

See: Ingenious/ingenuous

Disinterested/uninterested

disinterested

impartial, with no stake in the outcome

Medical staff are required to be **disinterested** when dealing with patients

uninterested

not interested, indifferent, unconcerned

Patients with depression are often **uninterested** in their surroundings

Disparate/desperate

disparate

contrasting, different, unequal, unlike

desperate

involving despair

Dispersion/precision

dispersion

the extent to which measured values are separated

for normally-distributed data

usually given as the **standard deviation (SD)**

SD is an estimate of the **dispersion** of the **data**

usually used for statistical comparisons

e.g. 4 SD include 96% of the data, 3.92 SD contain 95%

precision

how close together measured values are

for normally-distributed data

usually given as the **standard error of the mean (SEM)**

SEM is an estimate of the **precision** of the **mean**

usually listed when statistical comparisons have been made

Display

to put something in a prominent place so it can be seen

[**displays** applies **only** to people]

ALERT Check that **displays** relates to an object **capable of displaying something**

Figure 3 **displays** epididymal weight as a function of serum androgens

ERROR *Anthropomorphism*: a **Figure** is **inanimate and cannot** display anything

CORRECT by **changing the verb** from the **active** to **passive voice**

The epididymal weights as a function of serum androgens **are displayed** in Figure 3

The epididymal weights as a function of serum androgens **are presented** in Figure 3

Disproves

to prove that something is false

ALERT Check that **disproves** relates to an object **capable of disproving something**

Figure 5 **disproves** the theory that many androgen-receptor CAG repeats decrease androgen action

ERROR *Anthropomorphism*: a **Figure** is **inanimate and cannot** disprove anything

CORRECT by

accepting that **the data** in the Figure **present evidence** may be taken to disprove something

The **shape of curve** in Figure 5 **provides evidence that disproves** the theory that many androgen-receptor CAG repeats decrease androgen action

subsequently shortening by **ellipsis** of [**provides evidence that**]

The **shape of curve C** in Figure 5 **disproves** the theory that many androgen-receptor CAG repeats decrease androgen action

Dissatisfied/unsatisfied

dissatisfied

discontented, displeased

She was **dissatisfied** with the suggestion that she had to work on Sundays

unsatisfied

not satisfied

He was **unsatisfied** with the methods used in the study, which had several flaws

Dissect

See: Bisect/dissect

Dissector/disector

See: Bisector/dissector/disector

Dissociate/disassociate

dissociate is correct (the opposite of associate)

Dissolve/melt

dissolve of a solid, liquid or gas, to become or cause to become incorporated into a liquid so as to become a solution
melt of a solid, to become or make liquefied by heat

See: Condensation/evaporation/sublimation, Solution/suspension

Distinguish between/from

between distinguish **between a and b**
 She was a rare technician who could **distinguish between** grade a **and** grade b spermatozoa
from distinguish a **from b**
 Most technicians cannot **distinguish** grade a **from** grade b spermatozoa

Diverge

to move apart
does not mean a difference

Diverse/diversified

diverse very different, showing a great deal of variety
Diverse methods have been applied to this problem
diversified to have been made, or to have become, more diverse or varied
 During evolution the male tract **diversified** into those with and without an epididymis

Done

Overused vague word: replace by **what was done**

ALERT Check whether **done** should be **replaced** by a **more informative word**

Co-localization studies were **done** by confocal microscopy

STYLE *Verbosity*: can be shortened

CHANGE by **emphasizing what was done**
Proteins were *co-localised* by confocal microscopy

See: Overused words, Study, Using

Don't

do not
 Often used **incorrectly**

ALERT Check that the **main verb** is negated

I **don't** appear to be able to find it

ERROR *Semantics*: the **ability to find**, not the appearing, should be negated

CORRECT by

moving the position of **not**

I appear **not to be able** to find it

using unable

I appear to be **unable** to find it

subsequently shortening by *ellipsis* of **[to be]**

I appear **unable** to find it

omitting appear

I **am** unable to find it

I **don't** think these are your surgical instruments

ERROR *Semantics*: the **possession**, not the thinking, should be negated

CORRECT by

moving the position of **not**

I think these are **not** your surgical instruments

replacing think by **believe**

I **believe** these are **not** your surgical instruments

Dosage

See: Concentration/dosage/dose

Dose

See: Concentration/dosage/dose

Double/twice

<i>double</i>	adjective	two times of two parts	Double -strength medium Double bond
	adverb	two times as great	After treatment there were double the number of spermatozoa
	verb	to increase by a factor of two transitive	
		active	Hormone treatment doubled the sperm count
		passive	The sperm count was doubled by hormone treatment
		intransitive	The sperm count doubled after hormone treatment
<i>twice</i>	adverb	two times as great	After treatment there were twice as many spermatozoa
		on two occasions	The spermatozoa were washed twice

Double-/single-blind

<i>single-blind</i>	of a trial in which the subject is unaware of the treatment received
<i>double-blind</i>	of a trial in which both administrator and subject are unaware of the treatment given or received , respectively

ALERT Check that **double-blind** is used correctly

Progressive sperm motility was subjectively evaluated by one person in a **double-blind** manner

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, double-blind requires two people, but there is only one observer

CORRECT by replacing **double-blind** by

unaware of

Progressive sperm motility was subjectively evaluated by one person **unaware of** the sample treatments

blind to

Progressive sperm motility was subjectively evaluated by one person **blind to** the sample treatments

See: Blind/blinded/blindly/blind to

Double negatives

Legitimate	literary device giving a hint of reservation, politeness	
	The result was not unexpected , but it was disappointing	(The result was expected)
	It is not that we are ungrateful , but we can't attend	(We are grateful)

ALERT Check that **double negatives** are **intended**

In order to **rule out** the possibility that the signal was **not due to** contaminating leukocytes, sperm suspensions were treated with a leukocyte-specific agent

ERROR *Semantics*: if the possibility that the signal is **not due to** leukocytes is **ruled out**, the signal **is due to** leukocytes

CORRECT [if you intend to rule out the possibility that the signal **was due to** leukocytes] by

omitting not

In order to **rule out** the possibility that the signal was **due to** contaminating leukocytes, sperm suspensions were treated with a leukocyte-specific agent

I **shouldn't** be surprised if it **weren't** published

ERROR *Semantics*: if you are **not** surprised that it will **not** be published you think it **unworthy** of publication

CORRECT [if you think it **worthy** of publication] by

changing the second verb to the **positive**

I **shouldn't** be surprised if it **were** published

changing the first verb to the **positive**

I **should** be surprised if it **weren't** published

See: Hardly, Style

Doubt/question

See: No doubt/question/question but

Doubt if/that/whether

<i>doubt that</i>	for questions	Do you have any doubt that you added the bicarbonate?
	for negative statements	There is no doubt that I added the bicarbonate
<i>doubt if</i>	for negative statements	I doubt that it will rain
		I doubt if he will come
<i>doubt whether</i>	for negative statements	I doubt whether it will rain

See: If/whether/whether or not

Down-/up-regulation

<i>down-regulation</i>	a decrease in protein or gene expression as a response to an externally applied influence
<i>up-regulation</i>	an increase in protein or gene expression as a response to an externally applied influence

ALERT Check that **up-/down-**regulation refers to **changes** to external influences

Comparison of the newborn and adult organs indicated that the expression of 13 proteins was **up-regulated** and that of 21 proteins was **down-regulated** in the newborn group

ERROR *Semantics:* differences in age **are not** responses to **externally applied influences**

CORRECT by using **comparative** forms of adjectives

Comparison of the newborn and adult indicated a **higher** expression of 13 proteins, and **lower** expression of 21, in the newborn group

Dr/Dr.

See: Abbreviation/acronym/contraction

Drier/dryer

drier more dry: **superior comparative** of the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjective dry

dryer equipment for drying

Driving

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check that **driving** has a relevant noun to qualify

Driving to the university, the college clock-tower came into view

ERROR *Semantics:* **driving** is a participle (verbal adjective) and the college **clock-tower** is the closest noun it can define
This gives the **unintended impression** that the college **clock-tower** was driving to the university

CORRECT [if the **observer** was driving] by

retaining **driving** and **providing** a **noun** for it to define

Driving to the university, **we** saw the college clock-tower

rewriting the sentence

The college clock-tower came into view as **we were driving** to the university

See: Dangling participles

Dual (Latin)

consisting of two similar aspects, elements or parts

dual Nationality concurrent citizenship of two countries

dual-purpose serving two purposes or functions

Due/owing

<i>due</i>	adverb	directly, exactly	Travel due North
	noun	that which is owed	Give the man his due
	adjective	payable	The bill is now due
<i>owing</i>	adjective	due to be paid	A small sum is still owing

Due/owing to

due to adjective, can define a **noun, pronoun, noun phrase**
attributable to, caused by, resulting from, a result of
His **infertility** was **due to** azoospermia
[The **infertility** was **caused by** azoospermia]

owing to prepositional phrase can define a **verb**
as a result of, because of, on account of
His appointment was **cancelled owing to** staff illness
[The **cancellation** was **caused by** staff illness]

ALERT Check the meaning if **due to** follows a **passive verb**

The seminar **was cancelled due to** bad weather

ERROR *Semantics:* **due to** is an adjective and **seminar** is the nearest noun it can complement
This gives the **unintended impression** that the **seminar** was caused by bad weather

CORRECT [if the **cancellation** of the seminar was caused by bad weather] by

replacing **due to** by a **prepositional phrase**

The seminar was cancelled **owing to** bad weather

replacing **due to** by **because of**

The seminar was cancelled **because of** bad weather

retaining **due to** and providing a **noun** for it to define

The **cancellation** of the seminar was **due to** bad weather

replacing **due to** by **caused by** and **providing** a **noun** for it to define

The **cancellation** of the seminar was **caused by** bad weather

She **was sacked due to** incompetence

ERROR *Semantics:* **due to** is an adjective and **she** is the nearest noun it can complement
This gives the **unintended impression** that **she** was caused by incompetence

CORRECT [if **her incompetence** caused her to be sacked] by

replacing **due to** by a **prepositional phrase**

She was sacked **owing to** incompetence
 replacing **due to** by **because of**
 She was sacked **because of** incompetence
 retaining **due to** and providing a **noun** for it to define
 Her **sacking** was **due to** incompetence
 replacing **due to** by **caused by** and providing a **noun** for it to define
 Her **sacking** was **caused by** incompetence

ALERT Check the meaning when using **due to**

The cause of the fault was **due to** over-heating
 ERROR *Tautology*: **due to** means caused by so this means the **cause** of the fault was **caused by** over-heating
 CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both
 The **cause** of the fault was over-heating
 The fault was **due to** over-heating

Due to the fact that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **as, because, since, that**

Duplicate/triplicate/replicate

<i>duplicate</i>	verb	to repeat once (to double) Each measurement was duplicated
	noun	one of two replicates The mean value of each duplicate was calculated
	adjective	two Duplicate measurements were taken
<i>triplicate</i>	verb	to repeat twice (to triple) Each measurement was triplicated
	noun	one of three replicates The mean value of each triplicate was calculated
	adjective	three Triplicate measurements were taken
<i>replicate</i>	verb	to repeat several times Each measurement was replicated
	noun	one of several replicates The mean value of each replicate was calculated
	adjective	several Replicate measurements were taken

See: In duplicate/duplicates, In replicate/replicates, In triplicate/triplicates, Repetition

Duration/time

<i>duration</i>	the period of time over which an action continues The duration of incubation was 30 min Cells were examined after different durations of treatment
<i>time</i>	a moment, day, time or year as defined by a clock or calendar The incubation started at 14.00 and ended at 14.30 Cells were examined at different times from the beginning of treatment

During

See: Between/during

During/for

<i>during</i>	throughout the course or duration of an event The zinc assay was performed during the incubation of the glucosidase assay
<i>for</i>	refers to the duration of an event (a period of time) The glucosidase samples were incubated for 120 min

ALERT Check that **duration** refers to some action

The samples were incubated **during** 15 min
 ERROR *Syntax*: **during** needs an **event** but **none is given**, only a period of time
 CORRECT by
 replacing **during** by **for**
 The samples were incubated **for** 15 min
 retaining **during** and adding an **event**
 The samples were incubated **during** the 15 min in which the next **samples were centrifuged**

During the course of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **during** or **while**

During the time that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **while**

Dynamics is/are

is is correct
dynamics is a **plural noun** treated as **singular**
Dynamics is the study of the forces or properties that stimulate growth, development or change

Dynamics of ... is/are

is is correct
dynamics is a **plural noun** treated as **singular**
The dynamics of germ cell division **is** poorly understood

Dys

See: Dis/dys

Each is/are

is is correct
 as **each** means every **one** (of a plural group) considered **individually**, use the **singular**
 Of the new microscopes, **each is** in working order

Each ... is/are

is when **each precedes a singular subject**, use the **singular**
Each microscope is in working order
 [Of the microscopes, **each is** in working order]
are when **each follows a plural subject**, use the **plural**
We each were studying hard for the exams
 [**We (each of us together) were** studying hard for the exams]

See: Both/each, Both/each of, Both/each/either

Each (and subsequent number of nouns)

When **each follows the verb**, subsequent nouns and pronouns take the **singular**
 They **are each** subject to **a** registration **fee** of €5
 When **each precedes the verb**, subsequent nouns and pronouns take the **plural**
 They **each are** subject to registration **fees** of €5

Each (and subsequent gender)

When the sex of the person is **male**, use **his, him, himself**
Each student was busy with **his** work
Each student had a paper handed to **him**
Each student congratulated **himself**
 When the sex of the person is **female**, use **her, herself**
Each student was busy with **her** work
Each student had a paper handed to **her**
Each student congratulated **herself**
 When the sex of the person is **unknown** or **unclear** (indefinite third person) use **his, him, himself**

See: Indefinite third person

Each/either/neither

each for **positive** statements
 Ligation **affects each** parameter
either for **negative** statements
 Ligation **does not affect either** parameter
neither for **negative** statements
 Ligation **affects neither** parameter

Each/every

each Every one of **two or more** objects or people, considered **separately**
 If I had 1 HK\$ for **each** grammatical error I found, I would **be rich**
every Each one of **two or more** objects or people, considered **together**
 if I had 1 HK\$ for **every** grammatical error I found, I would only **have HK\$ 1**

Each and every

Tautology: as both **each** and **every** refer to more than one subject, use **one or the other**, not both

Each of

See: Both/each of

Each of ... is/are

is is correct
 as **each of** refers to every **one** (of a plural group) considered **individually**, use the **singular**
Each of us is studying hard for the exams

Each one is/are

is is correct
as **each** refers to every **one** (of a plural group) considered **individually**, use the **singular**
Each one is studying hard for the exams

Each one of... is/are
is is correct
as **each one of** refers to every **one** of (a plural group) considered **individually**, use the **singular**
Each one of us is studying hard for the exams

Each other/one another
each other of **two** persons or things
The **two** department heads liked **each other** and appreciated **each other's** efforts at fund-raising
one another of **three or more** persons or things
The epididymal researchers liked **one another** and compared **one another's** impact factor

Eager
See: Anxious/eager

Earlier
Comparative adjective, before some specified time
ALERT Check that **earlier** refers to a time point
Earlier reports indicated that 25% of infertile men had genital tract infections
ERROR *Tautology*: all reports referred to **must be earlier** than the time of writing
CORRECT by **omitting earlier** and using the **present tense** to indicate accepted knowledge
Reports **indicate** that 25% of infertile men **have** sperm dysfunction
retaining the past tense and mentioning a reference point
Reports **before 1985** indicated that 25% of infertile men **had** genital tract infections

Effect
to accomplish, to bring about, to make something happen
ALERT Check whether **effected** should be **replaced** by a **more informative word**
The experiments confirmed the **effect** of quinine on cell volume
STYLE *Word usage*: vague, uninformative
CHANGE by **being more specific**
The experiments confirmed that quinine **increased** cell volume
See: Affect/effect

Effected
Overused word: replace by **what was effected**
ALERT Check whether **effected** should be **replaced** by a **more informative word**
Measurement of sperm motility was next **effected**
STYLE *Verbosity*: can be shortened
CHANGE by **replacing the noun** with a **verb**
Sperm motility was next **measured**

Effective/efficiency/efficient
effective adjective having the power to produce a desired effect (efficient)
efficient adjective achieving maximum productivity with minimum effort or expense
efficiency noun being efficient/effective

Efficacious/efficacy
efficacious adjective having efficacy
efficacy noun the power to produce an effect

e.g./i.e. (Latin)
e.g. *exempli gratia*
for example
provides an example, some, but not all, of a complete listing
This research involved several species, **e.g.**, monkeys, mice and hamsters
[other species were used but not mentioned]
i.e. *id est*
namely, that is
provides clarification, a complete listing
This research involved several species **i.e.**, monkeys, mice, hamsters and rats
[no other species were used]

ALERT Check that **e.g. is not** used with words **introducing examples**

This research involved several species **such as, e.g.**, monkeys, mice, hamsters and rats

ERROR *Tautology*: **such as** and **e.g.** both imply that **examples will follow**

CORRECT by **using one or the other**, not both

The procedure involved several species, **e.g.** monkeys, mice, hamsters and rats

The procedure involved several species **such as** monkeys, mice, hamsters and rats

See: For example/such as, Like/such as

Either

either means **one or the other** (of two things)

ALERT Check the **meaning** when **either** is used

The monitors are **either** side of the microscope

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that

two monitors are together on one side of the microscope

or

one monitor is on one side, the other is on the other

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

using both and the **plural**

Both monitors **are** on **one** side of the microscope

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

using each and the **singular**

One monitor **is** on **each** side of the microscope

using two and the **plural**

The **two** monitors **are** on **both** sides of the microscope

See: As well/either, Both/each, Each/either/neither

Either/either of

one or other of two things

interchangeable expressions

Style: **either of** is **unnecessary**, **either** alone is **sufficient**

Either/too

either for agreement with a **negative**

I **don't want** any, **either**

too for agreement with a **positive**

I **want** some, **too**

Either is/are

is is correct

as **either** means **one or the other** (of two things), use the **singular**

Of the proposals, **either is** feasible

Either ... is/are

is is correct

as **either ...** means **one or the other ...** (of two things), use the **singular**

Either proposal **is** feasible

Either ... or

a discontinuous/correlative conjunction, which links **two** grammatical equivalents

when subjects are of **different number**

If **both subjects** are **singular**, use the **singular**

Either the **professor or the student was** to blame

If **both subjects** are **plural**, use the **plural**

Either the **professors or the students were** to blame

If **one of the subjects** is **plural**, use the **plural**

Either the **professors or the student were** to blame

the pronoun **closer to the verb** governs the **number**

Either he **or I am** to blame (either he is to blame **or** I am)

Either I **or he is** at fault (either I am at fault **or** he is)

Either she **or you are** at fault (either she is at fault **or** you are)

Either you **or she is** at fault (either you are at fault **or** she is)

ALERT Check that **either ... or** links **only two** grammatical equivalents

This stimulation could be due to **either** lowered O₂, raised CO₂ **or** lowered pH

ERROR *Syntax*: **either ... nor** joins **only two** items

CORRECT by **omitting either**

This stimulation could be due to lowered O₂, raised CO₂ **or** lowered pH

ALERT Check that **either ... or** links grammatical equivalents

He should **either** open the window **or** the door

ERROR *Syntax*: **either** here **does not** link grammatical equivalents
[**either** clause **or** noun]

CORRECT by

adding a verb, to compare clauses

He should **either** open the window **or open** the door
[**either** clause **or** clause]

removing the verb, to compare nouns

He should **open either** the window **or** the door
[**either** noun **or** noun]

He should **either** admit that he was right **or** that he was wrong

ERROR *Syntax*: **either** here **does not** link grammatical equivalents
[**either** clause **or** phrase]

CORRECT by

moving the verb, to compare phrases

He should **admit either** that he was right **or** that he was wrong
[**either** phrase **or** phrase]

adding a verb to the phrase to compare clauses

He should **either** admit that he was right **or confirm** that he was wrong
[**either** clause **or** clause]

See: Or two ... is/are

Either ... or/neither ... nor

either ... or for **positive** contexts

either means **one or the other**
or means **alternatively**

After this treatment the transport of **either** carnitine **or** inositol should change

neither ... nor for **negative** contexts

neither means **not one or the other**
nor means **and not**

After this treatment the transport of **neither** carnitine **nor** inositol was changed

See: Both/either/neither

Either of ... is/are

is is correct

as **either of** refers to **one or the other** of (two things), use the **singular**
Either of the hypotheses **is** feasible

Elder/older

elder superior comparative adjective
for a comparison of **two** items

He was the **elder** of the twins

older superior comparative adjective
for a comparison of **more than two** items

He was **older** than the rest of the committee members

Eldst/eldest

eldest superior superlative adjective
for a comparison of **more than two** items

He was the **eldest** of the committee members

oldest superior superlative adjective
for a comparison of **more than two** items

He was the **oldest** of the committee members

equivalent adjectives

Elevated

Synonyms: higher, more, raised

Elicit/illicit

elicit to draw out or evoke

It was hoped that showing photographs would **elicit** more of a response than talking

illicit unlawful, forbidden

He was warned about uploading to the web **illicit** recordings of the lecture

Elided

removed or unwritten but understood

See: Ellipsis

Ellipsis

The **omission** from speech or writing of a words that are superfluous can be **understood** from contextual clues

in **adverbial accusatives**

The books cost **[the sum of]** HK\$ 500
[the sum of] elided
 The books cost HK\$500

in the **future perfect tense**

When I **[shall] have** finished my work, I shall come to see you
[shall] elided
 When I **have** finished my work, I shall come to see you

in the **conditional mood** (with inversion of the verb and subject)

[If you] had sent me an email, I would have known
[if] elided
Had you sent me an email, I would have known earlier

in the **subjunctive mood**

She is allowed into the culture room on condition that she **[should] wear** a mask
[should] elided
 She **is** allowed into the culture room on condition that she **wear** a mask
 The treasurer demanded that he **[should] pay** his subscription
[should] elided
 The treasurer demanded that he **pay** his subscription
 The librarian requested that he **[should] keep** quiet
[should] elided
 The librarian requested that he **keep** quiet

instead of **prepositional phrases**

Osmolality was measured with **[the use of]** an osmometer
[the use of] elided
 Osmolality was measured with an osmometer

to **avoid repetition** of easily-remembered words closely following one another
definite articles

We dissected **the** testis and **[the]** epididymis
[the] elided
 We dissected **the** testis and epididymis

pronouns

I centrifuged the sample and **[I]** removed the supernatant
[I] elided
 I centrifuged the samples and removed the supernatant

verbs

one subject governing three verbs

The solution **was** heated, **[was]** filtered and **[was]** concentrated
[was] elided
 The solution **was** heated, filtered and concentrated

two subjects governing two verbs

The solution **was** concentrated, and the precipitate **[was]** removed
[was] elided
 The solution **was** concentrated, and the precipitate removed

three subjects governing three verbs

The solution **was** cooled, the precipitate **[was]** removed and the filtrate **[was]** dried
[was] elided
 The solution **was** cooled, the precipitate removed and the filtrate dried

to **omit prepositions**

Four **[of the]** clock
[of the] elided
 Four o'clock

ALERT Check that **ellipsis is not** used for subjects governing **two verbs** of different number

The solution was concentrated, and the crystals removed

ERROR *Syntax:* the first subject is **singular**, the second **plural**, and so implies that the **crystals was** removed
CORRECT by **omitting ellipsis** and **using one verb** for each subject

The solution **was** concentrated, and the crystals **were** removed

ALERT Check that **ellipsis is not** used for **two subjects** governing three verbs

The solution was cooled, the precipitate removed and dried

STYLE *Word usage:* a **noun is expected** for each verb, so **dried has no subject**
CHANGE by

using two verbs not **one**

The solution **was** cooled, the precipitate **was** removed and **[was]** dried
[was] elided

The solution was cooled, the precipitate was removed and dried

retaining one verb and **adding a conjunction** to join the participles sharing the elided verb

The solution **was** cooled **and** the precipitate [**was**] removed and [**was**] dried
 [was, was] elided
 The solution was cooled and the precipitate removed and dried

See: Style

Elucidate

See: Clarify/elucidate/explain

Embark

Synonyms: to begin, to commence, to initiate, to launch, to start

Empirical/theoretical

empirical based on, concerned with, verifiable by **observation** or **experience rather than** by **theory** or **logic**
theoretical based on or calculated through **theory** or **logic rather than** from **experience** or **observation**

See: Arguments, Deductive/inductive

Employ

Synonym: to use

En masse (French)

in a group, all together

Encounter

Synonyms: to come across, to meet

Encountered frequently

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **often**

Endeavour

Synonyms: to attempt, to try

Enhanced twofold

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **doubled**

See: Fold/folds

Enough/sufficient

<i>enough</i>	noun	an adequate amount, informal		
			after the verb	He has had enough of the stressful lecturing life
		adjective	an adequate amount	before the noun
			after the noun	He had grant money enough to travel to the conference as well
<i>sufficient</i>	noun	excessive		
			after the noun	We can publish, as there has been study enough
		an adequate amount, formal		
			after the verb	Regarding funds, the institute has sufficient for three years
adjective	an adequate amount		before the noun	He had sufficient money to buy the confocal microscope
			after the noun	He had money sufficient for the equipment
		thorough		before the noun

Ensure

See: Assure/ensure/insure

Entire

with no part left out, complete, whole

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that **entire is not** used with words **implying totality**

The product will bring **entire** elimination of the contamination

ERROR *Pleonasm*: elimination means **complete** removal

CORRECT by **omitting entire**

The product will bring **elimination** of the contamination

Envisage

Synonyms: to expect, to imagine

Epididymal/epididymis

epididymal adjectival form of the nominative **epididymis**
 [Acta Nomina Veterinaria terminology]
 for the entire organ

Epididymal structure was examined macro- and micro-scopically
epididymis noun, singular nominative (subject) case
 [Acta Nomina Veterinaria terminology]
 for the entire organ
 The **epididymis** is an understudied organ

ALERT Check that **epididymis is not** used as an **adjective**

Epididymis weights were lower after ligation of the efferent ducts

ERROR *Syntax:* epididymis is a **noun not an adjective**

CORRECT by

using an **adjective**

Epididymal weights were lower after ligation of the efferent ducts

retaining the noun and rewriting the sentence

The weights **of the epididymides** were lower after ligation of the efferent ducts

See: Blood-epididymis/-epididymal barrier, Epididymal/epididymidal, Epididymes/epididymides/epididymi

Epididymal/epididymidal

epididymal adjectival form of the nominative **epididymis**
 [Acta Nomina Veterinaria terminology]
 for the entire organ

Epididymal spermatozoa were examined by immuno-histocytochemistry

epididymidal adjectival form of the genitive **epididymidis**
 [Acta Nomina Veterinaria terminology]
 (of the epididymis)

of its different **regions** (e.g. caput, corpus, cauda)

Caput epididymidal spermatozoa were collected by mincing

Cauda epididymidal fluid was collected by cannulation

See: Epididymal/epididymis

Epididymes/Epididymides/epididymi (Greek)

epididymides is correct
 for the plural of epididymis

[Acta Nomina Veterinaria terminology]

Protein extracts were pooled from ten **epididymides**

See: Epididymides/epididymidum

Epididymides/epididymidum (Greek)

epididymides noun, plural nominative (subject) case
 [Acta Nomina Veterinaria terminology]
 for more than one **entire** organ

Both **epididymides** were fixed for histological examination

epididymidum noun, plural genitive (possessive) case
 [Acta Nomina Veterinaria terminology]
 [of the epididymides]

for different regions of more than one organ

Spermatozoa were obtained from both **capita epididymidum**

See: Caput/corpus/cauda, Capita/corpora/caudae, Epididymis/epididymidis

Epididymis/epididymidis (Greek)

epididymis noun, singular nominative (subject) case
 [Acta Nomina Veterinaria terminology]
 for the **entire** organ

Each **epididymis** was separated into caput, corpus and cauda regions

epididymidis noun, singular genitive (possessive) case
 [Acta Nomina Veterinaria terminology]
 (of the epididymis)

for the **entire** organ (e.g. ductus)

Spermatozoa were obtained from the **ductus epididymidis**

for its different **regions** (e.g. caput, corpus, cauda)

Fluid was obtained from the **corpus epididymidis**

Spermatozoa were obtained from the **cauda epididymidis**

See: Epididymides/epididymidum

Epifluorescence/fluorescence

fluorescence luminescence emitted at one wavelength after absorption of light of another

epifluorescence fluorescence improved to detect more excited than incident fluorescence
 achieved by locating the source above (**epi**) or below (in an inverted microscope) the sample

Equal/equals

- equal* being the same in quantity, size, degree, value
The two sums are **equal**
- equals* demonstrating equality
Two times two **equals** four
does not mean imply, indicate, is, mean, suggest

Equal with/to

- equal with* equivalence, identity, similarity
In this task men are **equal with** women
- equal to* capable of meeting the requirements
The graduate student was **equal to** the task

See: Equal/equals

Equally/equally as

- equally* is correct
in the same manner, to the same extent
Compared with the thesis of Jones, Hinton's is **equally** good

ALERT Check that **equally is not** used with a word **meaning the same**

The follow-up discussion is **equally as** important

STYLE *Tautology*: both **equally** and **as** mean to the same extent

CHANGE by using **one or the other**, not both

The follow-up discussion is **equally** important

The follow-up discussion is **as** important

ALERT Check that the **correct prepositions** are used with **equalities and comparatives**

A single FNA sample is **equally** or **more** informative **than** a testicular biopsy

ERROR *Syntax*: the equality (**equally**) requires the preposition **as** but the comparative (**more**) requires the conjunction **than**

CORRECT by

adding the missing preposition

A single FNA sample is **equally** informative **as**, or **more** informative **than**, a testicular biopsy

rewriting the sentence

A single FNA sample is **at least as** informative as a testicular biopsy

A single FNA sample is **no less** informative **than** a testicular biopsy

The assessment of vascularisation revealed either an **equal**, or a significantly **lower**, vessel density in some adenomatoid tumour regions **to** that in normal epididymal tissue

ERROR *Syntax*: the equality (**equal**) requires the preposition **to** but the comparative (**lower**) requires the conjunction **than**

CORRECT by **rewriting the sentence** and

adding the missing preposition and a **conjunction**

The assessment of vascularisation in some adenomatoid tumour regions revealed a vessel density either **equal to**, or significantly **lower than**, that in normal epididymal tissue

using no greater than

The assessment of vascularisation in some adenomatoid tumour regions revealed a vessel density **no greater than** that in normal epididymal tissue

See: At least/most

Equals

- demonstrates equality (the equals sign, =)
Data are given as mean \pm SEM, **N = 9**

ALERT Check that **equals is not** used in a **non-mathematical sense**

Scale bar = 50 μ m

ERROR *Syntax*: the **bar is not** equal to a distance; it is of a certain length

CORRECT by using a

comma

Scale bar, 50 μ m

colon

Scale bar: 50 μ m

description

The scale bar **is equivalent to** 50 μ m

ALERT Check that **equal is not** used in a non-mathematical sense

The presence of tumour stem cells in a neoplasm does not **equal** that they are derived from somatic stem cells

ERROR *Syntax*: equal **does not** mean imply or mean

CORRECT by **replacing equal** by words **denoting a relationship**

The presence of tumour stem cells in a neoplasm does not **imply** that they are derived from somatic stem cells

The presence of tumour stem cells in a neoplasm does not **mean** that they are derived from somatic stem cells

See: Equal with/to, Imply/infer, Indicate/suggest

Equivocal

unclear in meaning or intention; ambiguous

See: Ambiguous/ambivalent/equivocal

Erratum

See: Addendum/corrigendum/erratum

Erroneous

Synonyms: in error, incorrect, mistaken, wrong

Especially/specially

especially chiefly, particularly

usually placed **before** the **adjective** or **noun** it defines

Marmosets were **especially difficult** to work with

She disliked working with animals, **especially marmosets**
at the beginning of a sentence, **after** the **noun** it defines

Marmosets especially were difficult for her to work with

specially for a special purpose

placed **before** or **after** the **verb** it defines

The respirator was made **specially** for small animals

The cytometer was **specially** calibrated for spermatozoa

Essential to/for

essential to the **to** is part of the infinitive marker of the following verb

It is **essential to keep** up-to-date with the literature

essential for the preposition **for** is used with subjects

Vitamins are **essential for** animals that cannot make them

It is **essential for** clinicians to understand how to interpret results of the semen analysis

Establish

Synonyms: to create, to form, to setup

See: Claim/demonstrate/establish/show

Establish that

used when there is **sufficient evidence** for a conclusion to be drawn

expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood

This work has **established that** the epididymis **secretes** proteins lacking signal sequences

ALERT Check that **establishes** relates to an object **capable of establishing**

The 2D gel **establishes** that the proteins are phosphorylated during capacitation

ERROR *Anthropomorphism*: a gel is **inanimate and cannot** establish anything

CORRECT by

accepting the idea that the bands observed in the 2D gel **provide evidence** that could be used to establish something

The **bands** in the 2D gels **provide evidence that establishes** that the proteins are phosphorylated during capacitation

subsequently shortening by *ellipsis* of [**provide evidence that establishes**]

The **bands** in the 2D gels **establish** that the proteins are phosphorylated during capacitation

See: Certainty/uncertainty

Estimated at/at about

estimated at is correct

ALERT Check that **estimated is not** used with words **implying approximation**

The number of attendees was **estimated at about** 50

ERROR *Tautology*: **estimated** and **about** both imply an **approximation**

CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both

The number of attendees was **estimated at** 50

The number of attendees was **about** 50

Et al. (Latin)

et alia and other things

et alibi and other places

et alii and other male persons

et aliae and other female persons

The human epididymal proteome has been published by Li **et al.** (2010)

Etc. (Latin)

et cetera and similar things

The technician prepared the dissection instruments: scissors, scalpels, forceps, **etc.**

Ethics is/are

is is correct

ethics is a **plural** noun treated as **singular**

Medical **ethics is** an increasingly important area in reproductive medicine

Ethics of ... is/are

is is correct

ethics is the subject of the sentence

The **ethics of** the proposal **needs** careful deliberation

Etymology

The branch of grammar dealing with the classification, inflexion and origin of words

Euphemism

a mild or less direct word substituted for one that is harsh or blunt
used especially when referring to something unpleasant or embarrassing

avoid in reporting science: be accurate, use

killing (**not** culling, euthanising, sacrificing) (for individual animals)

kill (**not** cull, euthanise, sacrifice) (for individual animals)

sex (**not** gender) (when referring to biological males or females)

See: Cull/kill, Euthanasia/killing, Gender/sex

Euthanasia/killing

euthanasia noun the **humane** killing of a **human being**
the **painless** killing of a **non-human animal**

is not a verb

killing noun depriving a living thing of life

verb to kill

ALERT Check that **euthanasia is not** used as a **verb**

The animals were **euthanized**

ERROR *Syntax*: euthanasia is a **noun**, **not** a **verb**

CORRECT by **using** a **verb**

The animals were **killed** painlessly

Evaporation/vapourisation

evaporation natural change from the liquid to vapour state, losing moisture or solvent as vapour

vapourisation forced conversion of a liquid into its vapour state

See: Condensation/evaporation/sublimation, Gas/vapour

Even

adds emphasis to statements referring to

a conditional

I'll finish if **even** if it takes me all night

an incongruity

She wears a coat **even** when it is hot

a negative

He didn't **even** attempt three questions

a positive

Even the cleaner agrees

a time

Even as he opened the door, it started raining

the position of **even** is important for its meaning

Even he wrote the preface

(he usually writes nothing)

He **even wrote** the preface

(wrote, not only discussed it)

He wrote **even the Preface**

(the Preface, as well as the Afterword)

Even I saw her at the seminar

(I am usually unobservant)

I **even saw** her at the seminar

(not only heard her)

I saw **even her** at the seminar

(as well as other people)

I saw her **even at** the seminar

(as well as at other places)

I saw her at **even the seminar**

(stressing surprise at her seminar appearance)

I saw her at the **seminar even**

(stressing surprise at her seminar appearance)

Even if ... does not imply

the conjunction if **does not** introduce a noun clause

ALERT Ensure that **even if does not** introduce a **noun clause**

Even if the hormone did not alter epididymal weight **does not imply** that there are not receptors present

ERROR *Syntax*: the conjunction **even if cannot** introduce a noun clause, so the verb **does not imply** has **no subject**

CORRECT by

replacing **even if** by a **conjunctive phrase**

The fact that the hormone did not alter epididymal weight does not imply that there are no receptors present

subsequently *shortening* by *ellipsis* of [the fact]

That the hormone did not alter epididymal weight does not imply that there are no receptors present
retaining **even if** and adding a **demonstrative pronoun**

Even if the hormone did not alter epididymal weight **that** does not imply that there are no receptors present
replacing **does not imply** by a **human element**

One should not think, even if the hormone did not alter epididymal weight, that there are no receptors present

Events

Overused word: replace by **the event itself**

ALERT Check whether **events** should be replaced by a **more informative word (or omitted)**

STYLE *Tautology*: **bridging** is an event, so the word **event** is **superfluous**

CHANGE by **omitting events**

The epididymis provides sufficient H₂O₂ to permit optimal disulphide bridging within spermatozoa

See: Redundancy/pleonasm/tautology

Eventually

occurring at the end of a process or period of time
inevitable

does not mean perhaps
not inevitable

Eventuate

Synonyms: to happen, to occur, to result

Ever

adds emphasis to interrogatives
How **ever** did you manage to get those results?

Every

See: Each/every

Every (and subsequent gender)

When the sex of the person is **male**, use **his, him, himself**

Every student was busy with **his** work

Every student had a paper handed to **him**

Every student congratulated **himself**

When the sex of the person is **female**, use **her, herself**

Every student was busy with **her** work

Every student had a paper handed to **her**

Every student congratulated **herself**

When the sex of the person is **unknown** or **unclear** (indefinite third person), use **his, him, himself**

See: Indefinite third person

Every ... is/are

is is correct

as **every ...** refers to **each** of several objects or people considered **separately**, use the **singular**

Every veterinary school **is** aware of the outbreak

See: Each/every, Each and Every

Every body/everybody

every body refers to individual bodies

Every body donated to the Medical School was eventually dissected by the students

everybody refers to **several people** considered **collectively** as a **group**, everyone

Everybody was invited to the poster party

Every day/everyday

every day adverb daily

He feeds the monkeys **every day**

everyday adjective commonplace

When not in the lab. he wears **everyday** clothes

Every one/everyone

every one refers to a number

Of the attendees **every one** was well-dressed

everyone refers to **several people** considered **collectively** as a **group**, everybody

Everyone was invited to the seminar

Every one of ... is/are

is is correct
 as **every one of ...** refers to **each** of several objects or people considered **collectively** as a **group**, use the **singular**
 Of the veterinary schools, **every one of** them in the region **is** alert to the outbreak

Every one of them (and subsequent gender)

When the sex of the person is **male**, use **his, him, himself**

Every one of them was busy with **his** work

Every one of them had a paper handed to **him**

Every one of them congratulated **himself**

When the sex of the person is **female**, use **her, herself**

Every one of them was busy with **her** work

Every one of them had a paper handed to **her**

Every one of them congratulated **herself**

When the sex of the person is **unknown** or **unclear** (indefinite third person) use **his, him, himself**

See: Indefinite third person

Every thing/everything

every thing refers to individual items

He liked **every thing** he saw

everything every item as a group

Everything was being done to publish it in time

Everybody

refers to **all** of several people considered **collectively** as a **group**

See: Anybody, Nobody, Somebody

Everybody is/are

is is correct

as **everybody** refers to **all** of several people considered **collectively** as a **group**, use the **singular**

Everybody is taking the exams

Everybody (and subsequent gender)

When the sex of the person is **male**, use **he, his**

Everybody is welcome to join provided that **he** pays **his** subscription

When the sex of the person is **female**, use **she, her**

Everybody is welcome to join provided that **she** pays **her** subscription

When the sex of the person is **unknown** or **unclear** (indefinite third person), use **he, his**

See: Indefinite third person

Everyone/no one

everyone for **positive** contexts

Everyone is requested to attend punctually

no one for **negative** contexts

No one is obliged to turn up on Saturday

ALERT Check that **everyone is not** used in a negative context

Everyone will not attend on Sunday

STYLE *Word usage:* **everyone is not** used with a **negative verb**

CHANGE by using **no one** and the **positive**

No one will attend on Sunday

Everyone

refers to **all** of several people considered **collectively** as a **group**

See: Anyone, No one, Someone

Everyone is/are

is is correct

as **everyone** refers to **all** of several people considered **collectively** as a **group**, use the **singular**

Everyone is welcome to attend the opening ceremony

Everyone (and subsequent gender)

When the sex of the person is **male**, use **he, his**

Everyone is welcome to join provided that **he** pays **his** subscription

When the sex of the person is **female**, use **she, her**

Everyone is welcome to join provided that **she** pays **her** subscription

When the sex of the person is **unknown** or **unclear** (indefinite third person), use **he, his**

See: Indefinite third person

Everything

refers to **all** of several items considered **collectively** as a **group**

See: Anything, Nothing, Something

Everything is/are

is is correct
as **everything** refers to **all** of several items considered **collectively** as a **group**, use the **singular**
Everything is in place

Evidence/evinced

evinced verb reveal the presence of, indicate
evidence noun the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid
is not a verb

ALERT Check that **evidence** is the correct word

Few human spermatozoa are capable of a chemotactic response without **evidencing** a change in movement

ERROR *Syntax:* evidence is a **noun** used as a **verbal adjective** (participle)

CORRECT by
using evidence as a **noun**

Few human spermatozoa are capable of a chemotactic response without **displaying evidence of** a change in movement

using evince

Few human spermatozoa are capable of a chemotactic response without **evinced** a change in movement

being more specific

Few human spermatozoa are capable of a chemotactic response without **changing** their movement

ALERT Check that **evidence is not** used with verbs of **reflecting uncertainty**

There is no **evidence** thus far to indicate that these tumours **might be** positive for PAX2

ERROR *Semantics:* **evidence** indicates facts **considered certain**, but **might be** indicates **uncertainty**

CORRECT by **replacing might be** by **are**

There is no **evidence** thus far to indicate that these tumours **are** positive for PAX2

See: Indicative, Suggest that

Evidence/evidences

evidence is correct
evidence is a **singular** abstract uncountable noun that has no plural
The **evidence** in the literature **supports** this view
for a **plural** use, use a **partitive** construction
Several **lines of evidence fit** well with the theory

Evidence/evidenced

evidence is correct
evidence is a **noun**, **not** a verb

ALERT Check that **evidence is not** used as a verb

The spermatozoa were capacitated **as evidenced by** their marked protein phosphorylation

ERROR *Syntax:* evidence is a **noun** used as a verb

CORRECT by **replacing as evidenced by** by
a participial phrase

The spermatozoa were capacitated, **as judged by** their marked protein phosphorylation

a gerundial phrase

The spermatozoa were capacitated, **judging from** their marked protein phosphorylation

an auxiliary verb and **preposition**

The spermatozoa were **judged to be capacitated from** their marked protein phosphorylation

See: Judged by/from, Judging by/from

Ex/in vivo

ex vivo taking place outside the living organism
short-term (24h) experiments on extirpated functional organs
in an artificial environment but with minimal alteration of in vivo conditions
in vivo taking place within a living organism
whole animal studies
e.g. drug administration or gene knockout studies

See: In silico/situ/vitro/vivo

Exact ... as/that

that is correct
when **exact** is used as an **adjective** defining a **noun**

He used the **exact words that** I had

See: Same ... as/that, Very ... as/that

Exactly true

Oxymoron: something is either **true** or **not**: use **true**

Examination of the patients was carried out

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **the patients were examined**

Examine

See: Detect/examine/inspect

Exceeded by a factor of x10

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **was 10 times greater**

Except/excepting

except governs in a **negative** sense
a noun

They were all present, **except** the vet
[the vet **was not** present]

an adverbial phrase

I always wear a lab. coat, **except** in summer
[in summer I **do not** wear a lab. coat]

a whole clause

I did very well, **except that** I only answered three questions
[I **did not** do that well]

excepting governs in a **positive** sense after **not**
a noun

They were all present **not excepting** the vet
[the vet **was** present]

an adverbial phrase

I always wear a lab. coat, **not excepting** in summer
[in summer I **do** wear a lab. coat]

Except

preposition with the exception of
use the **accusative**

Everyone **except him** had arrived
[Everyone (with the exception of **him**) had arrived]

Nobody knew **except her**
[Nobody (with the exception of **her**) knew]

conjunction with the exception of
use the **nominative**

Everyone **except he** had arrived
[Everyone had arrived (but **he** had not arrived)]

verb being made an exception
as a **participle**

Because of his illness, he was **excepted** from having to take the exams

See: Apart from/except for/other than

Except for

See: Apart from/except for/other than

Excluding

apart from, except, not taking something or someone into account

ALERT Check that **excluding is not** used with a **preposition**

He works throughout the summer, **excluding in** August

ERROR *Syntax*: **excluding** is a **preposition**, so **needs no additional** preposition (**in**) after it
CORRECT by **omitting in**

He works throughout the summer, **excluding** August

Exhibit

Synonyms: to reveal, to show

See: Find/reveal, Identify/show

Exhibited a significantly reduced ability to fertilise eggs

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **fertilised significantly fewer eggs**

Expect

See: Anticipate/expect, Never

Expedite

Synonyms: to allow, to hasten, to speed up

Expensive

See: Cost/expensive/price

Experience/experiment

experiment a scientific procedure undertaken to test a hypothesis
experience practical contact with and observation of facts or events
does not mean experiment (confusion with **French**)

Experienced

Overused vague word: replace by **what was experienced**

ALERT Check whether **experienced** should be **replaced** by a **more informative word**

Unusual **shrinkage** of the testicular interstitium was **experienced**

STYLE *Verbosity*: can be shortened

CHANGE by **converting** the **noun** to a **verb**
 The testicular interstitium **shrank** unusually

Experienced a colour change during storage

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **the colour changed during storage**

Expire

Synonyms: to end, to terminate

Explain

See: Clarify/elucidate/explain

Exposure/exposition

exposure being exposed to something
 Testicular volume decreased after **exposure** to irradiation
exposition a comprehensive description and explanation of an idea or theory, a large exhibition
does not mean being exposed (confusion with **French**)

ALERT Check that **exposition** is the **intended word**

Testicular size decreased after **exposition** to X-rays

ERROR *Semantics*: no comprehensive description is given

CORRECT by using **English**
 Testicular size decreased after **exposure** to X-rays

Expound/expound upon

expound is correct

Expression/expressions

expression when the **expression itself** is the subject, use the **singular**
 The **expression** of several proteins **was** altered by the treatment
expressions when several **expressions themselves** are the subject, use the **plural**
Expressions of interest **have come** from many laboratories

ALERT Check whether **expression** should be **singular** or **plural**

The **expressions** of PRDX2,3,4 and 5 **were** lower in spermatozoa from infertile men

ERROR *Syntax*: although several proteins are expressed, the **expression** of each protein (**singular**) is the subject

CORRECT by using the **singular**
 The **expression** of PRDX2,3,4 and 5 **was** lower in spermatozoa from infertile men

See: Analysis

Extant/extent

extant adjective still surviving
extent noun the range over which something extends

Extent

See: Degree/extent/rate

Extra/extra-

extra adjective added to an existing or usual amount or number
 adverb to a greater extent than usual, especially
extra- prefix outside, in addition to

- ALERT** Check that there is **no confusion** over the role of **extra**
- Gene over-expression results in the formation of **extra** retinal tissue
- ERROR** *Semantics:* ambiguous, **this implies** that **additional** retinal tissue is formed
or
tissue is formed **outside** the retina
- CORRECT** [if the former is meant] by **replacing extra by additional**
Gene over-expression results in the formation of **additional** retinal tissue
- CORRECT** [if the latter is meant] by **using a hyphenated adjective**
Gene over-expression results in the formation of **extra-retinal** tissue

Extreme condition of corrosion/swelling

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **badly corroded/greatly swollen**

Extremely

Overused word: **avoid**
Synonyms: highest possible, ultimate, utmost

Fabricate

Synonym: to make

Facilitate

Synonyms: to aid, to help

Facilitated

Overused word: replace by **what was facilitated**

Fact/ground

- fact* undisputed knowledge: a piece of information supported by **evidence**
The **facts** supported his hypothesis
- ground* a basis for **belief**, action or argument
The examiner had **ground** for believing that the student had cheated

Facultative/obligate

- facultative* occurring optionally in response to circumstances
capable of, but not restricted to, a particular function or mode of life
A **facultative** anaerobic bacterium
- obligate* restricted to a particular function or mode of life
An **obligate** intracellular parasite

Failing/failing that

- failing* gerund (verbal noun)
Failing his exams would put exclude him from taking the position
participle (verbal adjective)
The **failing** health of the animals led to their withdrawal from the study
- failing that* prepositional phrase meaning **if this fails, in the case that this fails**
If no effect is observed, the drug will be given for a longer period; **failing** that, its dose will be increased

Fairly

to a moderately high degree
Overused vague word: **avoid**

Fallacious/specious

- fallacious* obviously **false**
- specious* apparently convincing but incorrect, misleading, **unsound**

Fallopian/fallopian tube

Fallopian tube is correct
Names (proper nouns) take an initial capital letter

See: Nouns

Familiarity/familiarisation

- familiarity* close knowledge of something or someone
His **familiarity** with optics made him the best person to fix the microscope
- familiarisation* the process of making something better known or more easily understood
The company arranged a course of **familiarisation** with their microscopes

ALERT Check that **familiarisation** is the **intended word**

The first results were omitted to avoid errors resulting from the initial users' lack of **familiarisation** with the program
 ERROR *Semantics*: the initial users **lacked knowledge of the program** not of the process of becoming familiar with it
 CORRECT by using **familiarity**
 The first results were omitted to avoid errors resulting from the initial users' lack of **familiarity** with the program

Far/way

far adverb
way noun

ALERT Check that **way is not** used as an **adverb**

Their knowledge was **way** above mine
 ERROR *Syntax*: **way** is a **noun** used here as an **adverb** describing a preposition (**above**)
 CORRECT by
 using an **adverb**

Their knowledge was **far** above mine
 Their knowledge was **well** above mine
 retaining **way** as a noun with an **adjective**
 Their knowledge was a **long way** above mine

Farther/further

farther literal New York is **farther** from Sydney than from London
 Move **farther** down the car
further literal Move **further** down the car
 figurative I can take this plan no **further**
 His knowledge went **further** back than that

See: Further

Faster speed

Pleonasm: as **fast** means at high speed, **speed** is **superfluous**, use **faster**

Fauna/faunas

fauna is correct
fauna is a **singular** noun that has no plural
 The **fauna** of this ecosystem **is** unique
 for a **plural** use, use a **partitive** construction
 Several **types of fauna characterise** this region of the river

Feasible/unfeasible

feasible capable of being put into practice (practicable)
unfeasible can't be done, incapable of being put into practice (impracticable)

See: Practicable/practical, Impracticable/impractical

Feed/give a diet

give is correct

Diets are **given**
 Animals are **fed**

ALERT Check whether **diet** or **feeding** is meant

The animals were **fed** a **diet** enriched in cholesterol and fat
 ERROR *Syntax*: **animals** are **fed**, but **diets** are **given**
 CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both
 The animals were **given** a **diet** enriched in cholesterol and fat
 The animals were **fed** **chow** enriched in cholesterol and fat

Feet/foot

feet noun plural of foot
 The wall is six **feet** high
foot noun unit of measurement
 The post is one **foot** long
 noun used as a hyphenated adjective
 A nine-**foot**-long epididymal tubule

Fertile/fertility

fertile adjective **Fertile** patients
fertility noun The patient presented with reduced **fertility**

Fertilisable/fertilising

fertilisable able to be fertilised
 The freshly ovulated egg is potentially **fertilisable**

fertilising capable of fertilising
Mature spermatozoa from the cauda epididymidis are potentially **fertilising**

ALERT Check that **fertilisable** is the correct word

The potentially **fertilisable** spermatozoa are acrosome-reacted
ERROR *Semantics*: this implies that the **spermatozoa** can be fertilised
CORRECT by replacing **fertilisable** by **fertilising**
The potentially **fertilising** spermatozoa are acrosome-reacted

Fertilised oocyte/ovum
oocyte is correct

See: Oocyte/ovum

Few

See: A few/few

Few/fewer

few the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjective used with **comparative prepositional phrases**
fewer the **comparative** form of the adjective used with the conjunction **than**

ALERT Check that **compared with** *is not* used with words **implying a comparison**

There were **fewer** offspring **compared with** the control group
There were **fewer** offspring **in comparison with** the control group
ERROR *Tautology*: **fewer** is a **comparative** adjective and the prepositional phrases **imply a comparison**
CORRECT by **retaining** the **comparative** form of the adjective and **using** the conjunction **than**
There were **fewer** offspring **than** in the control group
prepositional phrase and **using** the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjective
There were **few** offspring **compared with** the control group
There were **few** offspring **in comparison with** the control group

Few/several

few a small number of, not many, some (fewer than several)
When the inhibitor was used **few** cells were killed
[emphasises the majority that **survived**]
several more than two or three, but not many (more than few)
When the inhibitor was used **several** cells were killed
[emphasises the minority that **died**]

ALERT Check that **several** *is not* used with only

In the presence of MG132 **only several** perforations were observed
ERROR *Syntax*: **only** (emphasising exclusivity) applies to extreme numbers
CORRECT by replacing **several** by **a few**
In the presence of MG132 **only a few** perforations were observed

See: A few/few, Many/numerous/several

Few ... is/are

are is correct
as what **few** refers to (a **plural** group) is the subject, use the **plural**
Few theses **are** so thick as his

Few in number

Tautology: as few implies number, replace by **few**

Few is/are

are is correct
as what **few** refers to (a **plural** group) is the subject, use the **plural**
Regarding the **theses**, **few are** so thick as this one

Few of ... is/are

are is correct
as what the **few of** refers to (a **plural** group) is the subject, use the **plural**
Few of the students **are** good enough to speak at the meeting

Fewer/less than a fraction

less than is correct
less is used with **measured quantities**
Less than a third of students got top marks

Fewer/less than N objects
fewer than

is correct
fewer is used with **countable objects (cardinal numbers)**
Fewer than 15 students attended the lecture

Fewer/less than N%
less than

is correct
less is used with **measured quantities (denominate numbers)**
Less than 50% of students attended the lecture

Fewer/less than one in N
less than

is correct
less is used with **fractions/proportions**
Less than one in four students are eligible

Fewer/less/more
fewer

inferior comparative of the adjective **few**
refers to **numbers: a smaller** number

countable objects

plural nouns

fewer

choices / spermatozoa

partitive constructions

fewer

samples of semen / **drops** of solution

cardinal numbers

fewer than

eight **items** / three **people**

less

inferior comparative of **little**
refers to **amount: a smaller** amount

non-countable objects

singular nouns

less

semen / solution / choice

fractions/proportions (taken as singular)

less than

a third / two-thirds / one in four

denominate numbers (taken as singular)

less than

3% / 8°C / 1.5 ml / €50 / 20 g / 10 sec / 2 cm / 15 [years old]

more

opposite of **less** and **fewer**
refers to **numbers: a larger** number

countable objects

plural nouns

more

choices / spermatozoa

partitive constructions

more

samples of semen / **drops** of solution

cardinal numbers

more than

eight **items** / three **people**

refers to **amount: a larger** amount

non-countable objects

singular nouns

more

semen / solution / choice

fractions/proportions (taken as singular)

more than

one third / two-thirds / one in four

denominate numbers (taken as singular)

more than

3% / 8°C / 1.5 ml / €50 / 20 g / 10 sec / 2 cm / 60 [years old]

ALERT

Check that only **one word** is used with words **reflecting low numbers**

There is an association between a **fewer number** of testicular biopsies and post-operative testosterone levels

ERROR

Pleonasm: **fewer** means a **lower number**

CORRECT

by **using one or the other**, not both

There is an association between **fewer** testicular biopsies and post-operative testosterone levels

There is an association between a **lower number** of testicular biopsies and post-operative testosterone levels

Fewer in number

Tautology: as fewer implies number, replace by **fewer**

Figure

See: Digit/figure, Number/numeral

Fill in/fill out

fill in to complete an outline or template or form

fill out to enlarge a sketch or extend or expound upon an idea

ALERT

Check that **fill in** and **fill out** are not confused

He **filled out** his application form

ERROR *Syntax*: forms are **fixed** in size and cannot be enlarged
 CORRECT by **replacing *filled out* by *filled in***
 He **filled in** this application form

Filled

See: Containing/filled with

Filled/solid symbols

filled is correct
solid incorrect for 2D-graphs; a solid symbol is three-dimensional

Filtered/filtrated

filtered is correct

Final conclusion

Pleonasm: as a **conclusion** is a final statement, **final** is *superfluous*, use **conclusion**

Finalise

Synonyms: to complete, to end

Find/reveal

find discover or perceive by chance or unexpectedly
 Small nodules were **found** in the efferent ducts of all the infertile males
 identify (something) as being present
 We **found** that androgen receptor expression declined distally in the epididymis

reveal to show
 The analysis **revealed** that androgen receptor expression declined distally in the epididymis
 to expose something hidden
 Removing the tunica **revealed** the tubules below which could be unravelled and cannulated

Find out

Synonym: to learn by study, observation or search

Finite/non-finite verbs

finite verbs change their forms with number, person and tense

transitive
 active voice Hypotonic medium **increased** the size of the cells
 passive voice Cell size **was increased** by hypotonic medium

intransitive
 active voice only
 Cell size **increased** in hypotonic medium

non-finite verbs do not change their form with number, person or tense

infinitives
with the infinitive marker **to**
 He wants me **to write** the manuscript this weekend
without the infinitive marker **to**
 I must **write** the manuscript before the weekend

gerunds (verbal nouns)
Writing manuscripts is difficult

participles (verbal adjectives)
present participles
 in **continuous tenses**
 He was **writing** a manuscript when I entered
 as **adjectives**
 The students were **writing** their manuscripts in the library

past participles
 in the **passive voice**
 The manuscript was **written** last week
 as **adjectives**
 The **written** manuscript was submitted last week

See: Active/passive verbs, Clauses, Gerund/participle, Intransitive/transitive finite verbs, Phrases, Split infinitive

First

ordinal number
 coming before all others in time or order, earliest

ALERT Check that **first is not** used with words implying **an initial event**

The plans were **first conceived** after a brainstorming session

ERROR *Pleonasm*: as things can be conceived only once, **first** is *superfluous*

CORRECT by **omitting first**

The plans were **conceived** after a brainstorming session

His ideas were **first introduced** at Epididymis IV

ERROR *Pleonasm*: as things can be introduced only once, **first** is **superfluous**

CORRECT by **omitting first**

His ideas were **introduced** at Epididymis IV

ALERT Check that the position of **first** does not cause ambiguity

We report **for the first time** the sperm motility of vitamin K-deficient rats

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that

it was the first time it has been done

or

it was the first time we had done it

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

omitting mention of **we**

This study reports for the first time the sperm motility of vitamin K-deficient rats

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

stressing our laboratory

This is the first time **that our laboratory** has reported the sperm motility of vitamin K-deficient rats

GRP78 was **first** identified in human spermatozoa in the lysate (Mitchell et al)

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that Mitchell et al. were the first to demonstrate GRP78

at all (in **any** cell type)

or

in spermatozoa (in this **cell type**)

or

in human spermatozoa (in spermatozoa in this **species**)

or

in human sperm lysates (in this sperm **fraction**)

CORRECT [if the first is meant] by

restricting what is attributed to Mitchell et al. to the **first** identification in **cells**

GRP78 was **first** identified in **cells** by Mitchell et al. using **human sperm cell lysates**

CORRECT [if the second is meant] by

restricting what is attributed to Mitchell et al. to the **first** identification in **spermatozoa**

GRP78 was **first** identified in **spermatozoa** by Mitchell et al. using **human cell lysates**

CORRECT [if the third is meant] by

restricting what is attributed to Mitchell et al. to the **first** identification in **human spermatozoa**

GRP78 was **first** identified in **human spermatozoa** by Mitchell et al. using **cell lysates**

CORRECT [if the fourth is meant] by

restricting what is attributed to Mitchell et al. to the **first** identification in **lysates of human spermatozoa**

GRP78 was **first** identified in **human sperm lysates** by Mitchell et al.

See: First/first of all, Numbers,

First/first of all

first The tubules were **first** separated

first of all **First of all** the tubules were separated

interchangeable ordinal number and adjectival phrase

Style: **first of all** is **unnecessary**, **first** alone is **sufficient**

First/firstly

first is correct

ALERT Check that only **first** is used as an ordinal number

Four healthy donors were asked **firstly** to provide three ejaculates on day 0, **secondly** to abstain from sexual activity for various periods, and **thirdly** to produce another three ejaculates after each period

ERROR *Syntax*: the first ordinal number is **first not** firstly

CORRECT by **using**

first, secondly, thirdly

Four healthy donors were asked **first** to provide three ejaculates on day 0, **secondly** to abstain from sexual activity for various periods, and **thirdly** to produce another three ejaculates after each period

first, second, third

Four healthy donors were asked **first** to provide three ejaculates on day 0, **second** to abstain from sexual activity for various periods, and **third** to produce another three ejaculates after each period

See: First/second/third

First-/last-mentioned

first-mentioned for the first-mentioned of **more than two** things

Of physiology, biochemistry and pharmacology, he preferred the **first-mentioned**

last-mentioned for the last-mentioned of **more than two** things
Of physiology, biochemistry and pharmacology, she preferred the **last-mentioned**

See: Former/latter

First-/last-named

first-named for the first-mentioned of **more than two** people
Yeung, Cooper and Barfield worked in Germany, but the **first-named** came from Hong Kong

last-named for the last-mentioned of **more than two** people
Although Cooper, Yeung and Barfield published in Germany, the **last-named** was an American

See: Former/latter

First/second/third

adjective occurring in position number one/two/three
This is his **first/second/third** publication on the epididymis

adverb occurring as action number one/two/three
He **first** wrote the Introduction, **second** the Methods and **third** the Discussion

Style: **secondly/thirdly** is **unnecessary**, **second/third** alone is **sufficient**

See: First, First/firstly, Numbers

First and foremost

Tautology: as both **first** and **foremost** mean the same thing, use **one or the other**, not both

Fixation

The procedure to preserve the structure of histological or cytological material

ALERT Check that **fixation is not** repeated in adjacent words

The epididymal tissues were **fixed** in Bouin's **fixative**

ERROR *Tautology*: as it is obvious that a **fixative** causes things to be **fixed**, there is **no need** to repeat the action in a verb (**fixed**)

CORRECT by **using one or the other**, not both

The epididymal tissues were **immersed** in Bouin's **fixative**

The epididymal tissues were **fixed** in Bouin's **solution**

See: Repetition to avoid

Fixed/fixated

fixed is correct (for preservation of biological material)

fixated to have developed an obsessive attachment to something or someone

Flagella/flagellar/flagellum

<i>flagellum</i>	singular noun	one flagellum
<i>flagella</i>	plural noun	two flagella
<i>flagella</i>	adjective	flagellar curvature

[curvature of the flagellum]

Flammable/inflamable/non-flammable

flammable current usage easily ignited

non-flammable current usage not easily ignited

inflamable **out-dated usage** easily ignited

[**confusing**: the prefix **in** sometimes means **not**]

Flora/floras

flora is correct

flora is a **singular** collective noun that has no plural

The **flora** of the region **is** exceptionally beautiful

for a **plural** use, use a **partitive** construction

Several **types of flora characterise** this region of the forest

Flout/flaunt

flout to break a rule, principle, agreement, convention deliberately

flaunt to show off by ostentatious display

Flow cytometer

See: Cyto-metry/meter/metric

Flourescence/fluorescence

fluorescence is correct

Fluorescence/fluorescent

fluorescence noun luminescence emitted at one wavelength after absorption of light of another

fluorescent adjective having or showing fluorescence
A **fluorescence** microscope operates on the principal of **fluorescence**
Fluorescent dyes are used to produce **fluorescent** sections

ALERT Check whether **fluorescent** or **fluorescence** is meant

The slides were examined in a **fluorescent** microscope
ERROR *Semantics*: this means that the **microscope was fluorescing**
CORRECT [if the **slides** examined were fluorescent] by
replacing the adjective by a **noun**
The slides were examined in a **fluorescence** microscope

See: Epifluorescence/fluorescence

Focused/focussed

focused is correct
focus is a **polysyllabic** word with a **short** vowel and emphasis on the **first** syllable
the final consonant is **not doubled** when adding a suffix (unless it is L or R)

Focusing/focussing

focusing is correct
focusing is a **polysyllabic** word with a **short** vowel and emphasis on the **first** syllable
the final consonant is **not doubled** when adding a suffix (unless it is L or R)

Fold/folds

fold is correct
suffix forming adjectives and adverbs from cardinal numbers
in an amount multiplied by
consisting of so many parts or facets
with **no hyphen** with **words**
We saw a **fivefold** increase in assays performed this year over last
[an increase making it five times larger than before]
with a **hyphen** with **numbers**
There was a **2.7-fold** decrease in expression after treatment
[a decrease making it 2.7 times smaller than before]

ALERT Check that **-fold** is accompanied by a **number**

TCF7L1 and TCF7L2 were up-regulated to different **folds**
ERROR *Syntax*: **fold** requires a cardinal number
CORRECT by
replacing folds by **extents**
TCF7L1 and TCF7L2 were up-regulated to different **extents**
using -fold and **providing the magnitude**
TCF7L1 and TCF7L2 were up-regulated **5-** and **7-fold**, respectively

ALERT Check that **-fold is not** preceded by a **preposition**

Nuclear β -catenin was up-regulated by **twofold**
ERROR *Syntax*: **fold** implies a preposition (multiplied **by**), so **needs no additional** preposition (**by**) before it
CORRECT by **omitting by**
Nuclear β -catenin was up-regulated twofold

Following

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

See: By following/following

Food chain/supply chain

food chain the **sequential events** of an animal being eaten as food by another animal that is subsequently eaten for food
[**food chain does not** apply to humans]
food supply chain the **series of process** by which food is grown or produced, sold and eventually consumed

ALERT Check that **food chain** is the **intended meaning**

Rapid government action at the supermarket prevented the contaminated meat from entering the **food chain**
ERROR *Semantics*: except in **cannibal societies**, humans **are not eaten as food**
CORRECT by **replacing chain** by **supply**
Rapid government action at the supermarket prevented the contaminated meat from entering the **food supply**

For

conjunction because, since
preposition used with
ordinal numbers

The experiments were repeated **for a third** time
denominate numbers
The incubation lasted **for 30 minutes**
is not used with cardinal numbers

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that **for is not** used with words **implying a preposition**

The experiments were repeated **for** four times
ERROR *Syntax:* **times** implies a preposition (**on** several occasions), so **needs no additional** preposition (**for**) before it
CORRECT by **omitting** the preposition **for**
The experiments were repeated four times
replacing for by **on** and **times** by **occasions**
The experiments were repeated **on** four **occasions**

See: Because, During/for, For free/nothing, For/since, Repetition

For/since

for refers to a duration, period of time
I lived in Germany **for** 24 years
since relates to a specific time
I lived in Germany **since** 1985

ALERT Check that **since** is used correctly

We have lived here **since** three years
ERROR *Syntax:* since requires a specific time **but none is given**
CORRECT by **replacing since** by **for**
We have lived here **for** three years
retaining since and giving the actual **date**
We have lived here **since 1984**

Since April the journal stopped charging for colour pages
ERROR *Semantics:* **since** implies a **continuing** action but the imperfect **stopped** indicates that the action is **complete**
CORRECT by **replacing since** by **in**
In April the journal stopped charging for colour pages
retaining since and **using** the **present perfect** to indicate continuity
Since April the journal **has stopped** charging for colour pages

See: During/for, Since

For example/such as

for example prepositional phrase
used to introduce
some items chosen as a **typical case**
some items of a complete listing
such as relative pronoun
compares **two or more** objects or people (included in a larger category)

ALERT Check that **for example is not** used with words that imply **incomplete listings**

Stem cell markers **such as** OCT3/4 and NANOG, **for example**, were examined in tissue sections
ERROR *Tautology:* **such as** and **for example** both imply that examples **will follow**
CORRECT by **using one or the other**, not both
Stem cell markers **such as** OCT3/4 and NANOG were examined in tissue sections
The stem cell markers OCT3/4 and NANOG, **for example**, were examined in tissue sections

The experiments involved methods **such as** cell culture, immuno-histochemistry and western blotting **for example**
ERROR *Tautology:* **such as** and **for example** both imply that examples **will follow**
CORRECT by **using one or the other**, not both
The experiments involved methods **such as** cell culture, immuno-histochemistry and western blotting
The experiments involved, **for example, the** methods **of** cell culture, immuno-histochemistry and western blotting

ALERT Check that **for example is not** used with words implying **explanation**

For example, in this regard, it has been demonstrated that sperm recovered after swim-up are highly motile
ERROR *Tautology:* **for example** and **in this regard** both indicate that what follows is **linked to a previous statement**
CORRECT by **using one or the other**, not both
For example, it has been demonstrated that sperm recovered after swim-up are highly motile

In this regard, it has been demonstrated that sperm recovered after swim-up are highly motile

See: E.g./i.e., Like/such as

For free/nothing

for nothing is correct
for free **free** means **without** cost or payment, so **needs no additional** preposition (**for**) to precede it

ALERT Check **which meaning of free is intended**

Download the program **for free**

ERROR *Syntax*: this means **for without** cost (two prepositions are unnecessary)

CORRECT by **using**

the **adverb alone**

Download the program **free**

a **prepositional phrase**

Download the program **for nothing**

See: Free/nothing, Gratis

For the duration of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **during, while**

For the purpose of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **for, to**

For the reason that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **as, because, since**

Forebear/forebear

forebear verb to avoid, refrain from
forebear noun an ancestor

Forbid/prohibit

forbid followed by **an infinitive** with the infinitive marker **to**
 I **forbid** you **to go** into the culture room
 She was **forbidden to go** into the culture room

prohibit followed by **from** and a **gerund**
 I **prohibit** you **from going** into the culture room
 He was **prohibited from going** into the culture room

followed by a **noun**
 The law **prohibits entry** into culture rooms without supervision

Forego/forgo

forego to go before, to proceed
 His winning the best presentation award was a **foregone** conclusion

forgo to do without, to give up
 Because I heard his seminar last week, I shall **forgo** his lecture tomorrow

Foreign words

italicised to indicate a foreign origin

e.g. *i.e.* *etc.* *en masse*
in vitro *in vivo* *vis-à-vis* *Macaca mulatta*

not italicised when accepted as English or in Greek/Latin or Latin/English combinations

caput epididymidis
 fertilisation in vitro

Italicisation depends on the journal style

Foreword/forward/forwards

foreword noun a preface to a book
 The **foreword** explains what the contributors were asked to discuss

forward adjective forward-looking
 I am looking **forward** to your reply

forwards adverb towards the front
 She walked **forwards** to the lectern to give her talk

Former/latter

former first, first-mentioned or first-named of **two** people or things
 Of the authors Yeung and Cooper, the **former** came from Hong Kong
 Of the topics anatomy and embryology, he preferred the **former**

latter last, last-mentioned or last-named of **two** people or things
 Cooper and Albert each presented posters, but only the **latter** won the poster prize
 We tried both electronic sizing and flow cytometry, but the **latter** is more reliable

See: First-/last-named

<i>Formula/molecular weight</i>			
<i>molecular weight</i>	MW	relative	Molecular Mass MM, M_r Molecular mass of a molecule of the compound relative to the mass of one atom of ^{12}C applicable only to covalent compounds , which are composed of molecules, e.g. $\text{C}_6\text{H}_{12}\text{O}_6$
<i>formula weight</i>	FW	relative	Formula Mass, FM The sum of the atomic masses (atomic weights) or the atomic species in the formula applicable to covalent compounds , which are composed of anhydrous molecules, e.g. $\text{C}_6\text{H}_{12}\text{O}_6$ hydrated molecules, e.g. $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ionic species , which have a crystal lattice rather than a molecule e.g. NaCl

Fortnightly

See: Biweekly/fortnightly/semi-weekly

Fortuitous/serendipitous

<i>fortuitous</i>	happening by chance rather than intention (not necessarily beneficial) The similarity between the manuscripts may not be simply fortuitous
<i>serendipitous</i>	occurring or discovered by chance in a beneficial way A serendipitous encounter at a seminar led to their future collaboration

Forward

Synonyms: to give, to send
See: Foreword/forward/forwards

Forward slash

See: Slash/solidus

Found to be

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **was**

Fraction/percentage/proportion

<i>fraction</i>	a ratio or proportion expressed as a numerator divided by a denominator Fifty out of a hundred as a fraction is 50/100
<i>percentage</i>	part of a whole expressed in hundredths Half of any amount expressed as a percentage is 50%
<i>proportion</i>	a part considered in relation to a whole Half of any amount expressed as a proportion is 0.5

Fraction is/are

<i>is</i>	when what fraction refers to is singular , use the singular for parts of a single object For this box a large fraction is painted blue for objects en masse (considered collectively as a group) Of these magnetic stirrers a small fraction is enough for the practical class
<i>are</i>	when what fraction refers to is plural , use the plural for portions (fractions) of a group (a number) Of these spatulas a large fraction are bent

Fraction of ... is/are

<i>is</i>	when what fraction of refers to is singular , use the singular for parts of a single object A small fraction of this box is painted blue for objects en masse (considered collectively as a group) A small fraction of these magnetic stirrers is enough for the practical class
<i>are</i>	when what fraction of refers to is plural , use the plural for portions (fractions) of a group (a number) A large fraction of the spermatozoa were acrosome-reacted

Free/freely

<i>free</i>	adjective	available at no cost, without charge The reprints are free
	adverb	without cost or payment He gave the samples away free
<i>freely</i>	adverb	willingly He freely spent his weekends helping her with English

See: For free/nothing

Free/nothing

<i>free</i>	adverb	without cost or payment The pamphlets are issued free
<i>nothing</i>	pronoun	no amount, nought All his efforts came to nothing

See: For free/nothing, Naught/nought

Freezing/melting/thawing

<i>freezing</i>	phase change from liquid to solid by cold (to below 0°C for water to ice) Semen diluted with cryoprotectant was frozen in liquid nitrogen vapour at -196°C
<i>melting</i>	phase change from solid to liquid by heat The solid agar gel was heated and when molten was transferred to Petri dishes
<i>thawing</i>	phase change from solid to liquid by heat (from below 0°C for water ice) The cryo-preserved semen was thawed in a water bath at 37°C

See: Condensation/evaporation/sublimation, Liquefaction/solidification

Freezing

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)
See: Freezing/melting/thawing, Frozen/thawed

Frequency/rate

<i>frequency</i>	the rate at which something occurs over a particular period or in a given sample The frequency of accidents decreased following the introduction of safety lectures the rate per second of a vibration 1 Herz (Hz) is the frequency of one vibration per second
<i>rate</i>	measure, quantity or frequency measured against another quantity in different samples The rate of spermatogenesis varies among mammals The rate of epididymal sperm transport depends on testicular sperm production

Frequently

Synonym: often

From/of

<i>from</i>	indicates an origin The testes were obtained from rats of different ages
<i>of</i>	indicates a description The rats were of different ages

Western blots **of** protein expression in testes **from** rats **of** different ages were examined

From ... to ...

See: Between ... and .../from ... to ...

From whence

Pleonasm: as **whence** means from where they came come, **from** is **superfluous**, use **whence**
See: Hence/whence

From the fact/on the ground

<i>from the fact</i>	involves an admission He concluded that capacitation had occurred from the fact that the cells were acrosome-reacted
<i>on the ground</i>	involves a supposition He excused himself from the seminar on the ground that the room would not be air-conditioned

See: Fact/ground

From the point of view of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **for**

From the point of view of cost

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by the **cheaper, cheapest, more or most expensive**

From the standpoint of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **according to** (authority, experience, instruction), **from** (data)
See: Perspective/viewpoint, Standpoint,

Frozen/thawed

<i>frozen</i>	previously liquid samples cooled to become solid (to below 0°C for water)
<i>thawed</i>	previously frozen samples warmed to become liquid (to above 0°C for water ice)
<i>frozen-thawed</i>	emphasises that samples have been frozen and then thawed

ALERT Check that the use of **frozen** makes sense

In other experiments oocytes were inseminated with **frozen** spermatozoa

ERROR *Semantics*: **frozen** spermatozoa are immotile and **cannot fertilise eggs**

CORRECT by using

thawed, which *implies* they had been frozen

In other experiments oocytes were inseminated with **thawed** spermatozoa

frozen-thawed, which *emphasises* the fact that *they had been frozen*

In other experiments oocytes were inseminated with **frozen-thawed** spermatozoa

frozen and thawed, which *emphasises* both the *freezing and the thawing*

In other experiments oocytes were inseminated by spermatozoa that had been **frozen and thawed**

Fulfil/fulfill

fulfil is correct

Function/functional/functionality

function noun an action that is natural to, or the purpose of, a position or thing
The **function** of the sperm tail is to propel the spermatozoon forwards
noun used as an adjective

functional adjective designed to be practical and useful A sperm **function** test [a test of sperm **function**]

A functional test [a test that functions]

functionality noun the quality or state of being functional
Before its introduction into the clinic the **functionality** of the test has to be proved

ALERT Check that **function** is the **intended word**

The transgenic animals displayed changes in sperm **functionality**

ERROR *Semantics*: the quality of being functional is assessed by monitoring **function**

CORRECT by replacing **functionality** by **function**

The transgenic animals displayed changes in sperm **function**

Sperm **functional** tests are today regarded as research tools

ERROR *Semantics*: **functional tests** indicate how the tests **perform**, **research tools** examine how the spermatozoa **function**

CORRECT by replacing **functional** by **function**

Sperm **function** tests are today regarded as research tools

Functional sperm tests are today regarded as research tools

ERROR *Semantics*: tests that are **non-functional** would never be used in research

CORRECT [if a test **that examines function** is meant] by

replacing **functional** by **function**

Sperm **function** tests are today regarded as research tools

Furnish

Synonyms: to give, to provide

Further

verb to develop, to extend
To further this career, he took a course in Bioinformatics

adverb to a greater degree or extent
To investigate the action of A23187 **further**, the concentration of Ca²⁺ was altered

ALERT Check if it is clear what **further** refers to

We **further** investigated the morphological integrity of the epithelium

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that investigations had been done and we were doing more

[the *investigation* was **furthered**]

or

the morphological investigations were new

[something **further** was done]

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

moving further after the *verb*

We *investigated further* the morphological integrity of the epithelium

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

moving further before the *subject*

Further, we investigated the morphological integrity of the epithelium

replacing **further** by **furthermore**

Furthermore, we investigated the morphological integrity of the epithelium

ALERT Check that **further is not** used with a word meaning **to develop, to extend, to further**

To **extend further** the analysis we examined hormone levels

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that

the analysis had been extended and was being extended again

[the **extended analysis** was **furthered**]

or

the extension of analysis was new

[something **further** was done]

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

moving further after the noun

To extend the **analysis further** we examined hormone levels

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

moving further to the beginning of the clause

Further, to extend the analysis we examined hormone levels

replacing further by furthermore

Furthermore, to extend the analysis we examined hormone levels

FZD6 has been **further** proved to be a marker of a rare cancer

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies**

FZD6 has been proved **before** to be such a marker and this confirms it

[the **previous proof** was **furthered**]

or

the proof that FZD6 is a cancer marker is something **additional**

[something **further** was done]

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

replacing further proved by confirmed

FZD6 has been **confirmed** to be a marker of a rare cancer

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

moving further to the beginning of the clause

Further, FZD6 has been proved to be a marker of a rare cancer

replacing further by furthermore

Furthermore, FZD6 has been proved to be a marker of a rare cancer

See: Also/in addition, Split infinitive

Future

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that **future is not** used with words implying **future events**

He refused to divulge his **future** research plans

ERROR *Pleonasm*: all plans **must be in the future**

CORRECT by **omitting future**

He refused to divulge his research plans

Future tense

the **present tense** of the auxiliary verb **shall** with the *infinitive* without the infinitive marker **to**

I/we **shall go** you/he/she/it/they **will go**

for emphasis, use

I/we **will go** you/he/she/it/they **shall go**

ellipsis is used in the **future perfect** tense

When I have finished my work, I shall come to see you

formed by ellipsis from

(When I **[shall]** have finished my work, I shall come to see you)

the first **[shall]** elided

reported speech uses the **past tense** of the auxiliary verbs **will, shall**

The verb agrees with the subject in the **reported**, not the original, statement

"I **shall** be retiring in 2009" is reported as He said that **he would** be retiring in 2009

"You **will** live to regret it" is reported as She said that **I should** live to regret it

See: Ellipsis, Quotations

Gain/provide

gain obtain or secure something wanted or valuable

provide equip or supply someone with something wanted or valuable

ALERT Check the meaning when **gain** is used

The data obtained here may **gain** further insight into the potential function of this histone modifier in male reproduction

ERROR *Semantics*: **data** are **inanimate and cannot** gain anything

CORRECT [if **humans** gain insight from the information] by

replacing gain by provide

The data obtained here may **provide** further insight into the potential function of this histone modifier in male reproduction

Gas/vapour

gas the physical state of a substance that expands freely to fill the space available
above the boiling point of a liquid or sublimation point of a solid

vapour physical state of a **gas in equilibrium** with its liquid or solid states

just below the boiling or sublimation point

See: Condensation/evaporation/sublimation

Gather together

Pleonasm: as **gather** implies bringing together, **together** is **superfluous**, use **gather**

Gender/sex

gender refers to cultural or social differences
sex refers to biological differences (the XX, XY chromosomal complement)

Transsexuals may be of one **sex** but of the other **gender**

Genetics of... is/are

is is correct
Genetics is a **plural** noun treated as **singular**
 The xeno-transplanted males are fertile but **the genetics of** their offspring **is** that of the donor

Genitive (possessive) case

indicates possession
 shows **inflection** of gender and number of

nouns	before the noun	John's book
	as a complement	The book is John's
pronouns	before the noun (an adjective)	My book
	as a complement (a substantive)	The book is mine

ALERT Check that personal pronoun **number does not change** within a sentence

The original cell may die, but **its** genetic constitution survives in the cells of **their** clones

ERROR Syntax: an object (**cell**) may not be both singular (**its**) and plural (**their**)

CORRECT by **using** the **singular**

The original cell may die, but **its** genetic constitution survives in the cells of **its** clones

See: Epididymis/epididymidis, Epididymal/epididymidal, Gerund, It/It's, Pronouns

Genus/species

genus is a **singular** noun (plural **genera**)
species is a both a **singular** and **plural** noun

Species is a subgroup of a **genus**

Callithrix jacchus (Marmoset monkey)

The **first letter** of the genus, not the species, is capitalised

Macaca mulatta (Rhesus monkey)

Species' Latin names are often **italicised**

Macaca fascicularis (Java monkey)

Italicisation depends on the journal style

See: Species is/are

Germane/pertinent/relevant

germane relevant to the topic under discussion
pertinent relevant or applicable to a particular matter, apposite
relevant closely connected or appropriate to the matter in hand

equivalent adjectives

Gerund

a verbal noun: a verb performing the function of a noun

may govern no other noun	I like writing
may govern another noun	I spend my free time correcting manuscripts
may govern indirect objects	I enjoy checking her manuscripts

takes the **genitive** for gerunds belonging to

countries	They were pleased by Britain's winning another gold medal
people	They objected to Dr Cooper's participating in the meeting
plural objects	The poor weather was responsible for the referees' arriving late
pronouns	They complained of his giggling during the lecture
inanimate objects	I am looking forward to its opening

may take **no genitive** with gerunds belonging to

inanimate objects	He looked forward to it happening
	This served as proof of something existing
	There is no chance of that happening
nationalities	He resents the French being called "frogs"
singular objects joined by and	The students objected to the dean and department head setting the rules

See: Dangling gerunds, Gerund/participle, Unattached gerund

Gerund/participle

- gerund** a verbal noun: a verb performing the function of a noun
 He rejected the possibility of a **theory's explaining** how osmolytes control volume regulation
 [The possibility of a **specific theory** (one which explains a role for osmolytes) is rejected]
- participle** a verbal adjective: a verb performing the function of an adjective
 He rejected the possibility of a **theory explaining** how osmolytes control volume regulation
 [The possibility of **any theory** is rejected altogether]

often confused because both are **-ing** words derived from verbs
 gerunds and participles can be **distinguished** by applying one of **three tests**

it is a **gerund** if

adding the words **the** and **of** either side of the **-ing verb** does not alter the grammar, meaning or sense

Developing cancers **is** dangerous

The developing of cancers **is** dangerous makes sense: **gerund**

Developing cancers **are** dangerous

The developing of cancers **are** dangerous ungrammatical: **participle**

it is a **participle** if

omitting the participle, gerund or participial phrase does not alter the grammar, meaning or sense

We passed the professor **cycling** up the hill

We passed the professor meaning unchanged: **participle**

Developing cancers **are** dangerous

Cancers **are** dangerous meaning unchanged: **participle**

Developing cancers **is** dangerous

Cancers **is** dangerous ungrammatical: **gerund**

changing the sentence, so that what governed the **-ing verb** becomes **the subject**, does not alter the meaning

I saw **her wearing** a lab-coat

She was seen **wearing** a lab-coat meaning unchanged: **participle**

We were surprised by **her wearing** a lab-coat

She surprised **us** wearing a lab-coat meaning changed: **gerund**

See: Dangling participles, Defining/non-defining clauses, Unattached gerunds

Get

to come to have, to receive
 to succeed in attaining, achieving or experiencing, to obtain

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that **get** is used correctly

The stock solution of 10 mM progesterone was diluted with medium to **get** a final concentration of 10 pM

STYLE *Word usage:* layman terminology

CHANGE by **replacing get** by words that **imply deliberate action**

The stock solution of 10 mM progesterone was diluted with medium to **achieve** a final concentration of 10 pM

The stock solution of 10 mM progesterone was diluted with medium to **obtain** a final concentration of 10 pM

Synonyms: be given, obtain, receive

Give

See: Feed/give a diet

Give rise to

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **activate, cause, induce, initiate**

Given

past participle of to give

He was **given** the Setchell Medal

part of an absolute verbal construction used as a **subordinate clause**

meaning

provided with the situation of a ...

it being the case that there was a ...

Given the lack of 22 gauge needles he had to use 25 gauge needles

ALERT Check that the **given** introduces the main clause satisfactorily

Given that a single FNA sample was more informative than a testicular biopsy, **this** led the way for the development of a procedure for sperm detection in azoospermic men

ERROR *Syntax:* ambiguous, **it is unclear** what **this** refers to, the antecedent **testicular biopsy** or the entire **subordinate clause**

CORRECT [if the **subordinate clause** is meant] by

moving the **subject** to the beginning of the main clause and **changing** its **verb**

Given that a single FNA sample was more informative than a testicular biopsy, **the development** of a procedure for sperm detection in azoospermic men **became** possible
replacing the **participle** by a **conjunctive phrase** and **changing** the **verb**
The fact that a single FNA sample was more informative than a testicular biopsy **prompted** the development of a procedure for sperm detection in azoospermic men
changing the **verb** in the main clause
Given that a single FNA sample was more informative than a testicular biopsy, **it was possible to develop** a procedure for sperm detection in azoospermic men

This is defined as the ability to conceive and have children **given** unprotected intercourse
 ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that the children had intercourse
 CORRECT [if the parents-to-be were having intercourse] by
adding a comma to introduce a conditional statement
 This is defined as the ability to conceive and have children, **given** unprotected intercourse

Glycocalix/glycocalyx
glycocalyx is correct

Go/going
go infinitive without the infinitive marker to
 I saw him **go** into the laboratory
 (I have visual evidence that he entered the laboratory)
 [answers the **specific** question whether or not he went into the laboratory]
going participle
 I saw him **going** into the laboratory
 (I merely saw him and at the time he was going into the laboratory)
 [answers the **general** question whether he was around at all]

Goes under the name of
 Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **is called**

Going
 A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)
 ALERT Check whether **going** is used as a **gerund** or a **participle**

The director did not approve of **me going** to the meeting
 ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that the director **did not approve of me**
 CORRECT [if **my attendance** at the meeting was not approved of] by
using the genitive and a **gerund**
 The director did not approve of **my going** to the meeting

See: Gerund/participle

Going forward
 Style: unjustifiable neologism, replace by **from now on, henceforth, in the future**

Gonadotrophin/trophin
gonadotrophin is correct

Good
 See: Better/good

Gossip about/with
about something She was gossiping **about** the recent fee increase
with someone He was gossiping **with** the technicians

Governing body is/are
is when the **governing body itself** is the subject, use the **singular**
 The governing body **is** making its decision
are when what the **governing body consists of** is the subject, use the **plural**
 The **governing body are** taking their seats in the conference hall
 can be considered shortened by ellipsis of
 Members of the **governing body are** taking their seats in the conference hall
 [members of] elided

See: Ellipsis

G-protein coupled/G protein-coupled
 G protein-coupled is correct
 the name of the protein is **G protein**
 The G protein is linked (**G protein-coupled**) to downstream cellular machinery

Grammar

The science of investigating words

The art of speaking and writing with accuracy and taste

consists of the branches of

Etymology	the origin of words
Orthography	the conventional spelling
Semantics	the meaning of a word, phrase, sentence or text
Syntax	the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences the rules governing sentence construction

See: Descriptive/prescriptive/prospective grammar, Solecism

Gratis (Latin)

free, without charge

The A4 mini-posters were available **gratis**

See: Free/freely, Free/nothing, For free/nothing

Great/greater

great the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjective, used with **comparative prepositional phrases**

The values were **great compared with** those of the control

The values were **great in comparison with** those of the controls

greater the **comparative** form of the adjective, used with the conjunction **than**

The values were **greater than** those of the control

ALERT Check that the **greater is not** used with **phrases implying comparison**

The values were **greater compared with** those of the controls

The values were **greater in comparison with** those of the controls

ERROR *Tautology:* **greater** is a **comparative** adjective and the prepositional phrases **imply a comparison**

CORRECT by **retaining** the

comparative form of the adjective and **using** the conjunction **than**

The values were **greater than** those of the control

comparative prepositional phrase and **using** the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjective

The values were **great compared with** those of the control

The values were **great in comparison with** those of the controls

Greater number of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **more**

Ground

See: Fact/ground

Guanylate/guanylyl cyclase

guanylyl cyclase

is correct

the **guanylyl (not guanylate)** functional group is cyclised

Half/half of

half **Half** the class came late for the exams

half of **Half of** the class came late for the exams

interchangeable adjective and adjectival phrase

Style: **half of** is **unnecessary**, **half** alone is **sufficient**

Half of ... is/are

is

when what **half of** refers to is a **singular**, use the **singular**

for parts of a **single object**

Half of this box **is** painted blue

for objects **en masse** (considered **collectively** as a **group**)

Half of these magnetic stirrers **is** enough for the practical class

are

when what **half of** refers to is **plural**, use the **plural**

for portions (fractions) of a **group** (a number)

Half of the spermatozoa **were** acrosome-reacted

Half is/are

is

when what **half** refers to is **singular**, use the **singular**

for parts of a **single object**

Of the pizza **half is** eaten

for objects **en masse** (considered **collectively** as a **group**)

From these magnetic stirrers **half is** enough for the practical class

are

when what **half** refers to is **plural**, use the **plural**

for portions (fractions) of a **group** (a number)

Of the pizzas **half are** already eaten

Of the motile the spermatozoa **half were** acrosome-reacted

Hanged/hung

- hanged* executed, for people
The murderer was **hanged** by the neck until dead
[**hanged** applies **only** to people]
- hung* displayed, for inanimate objects
The poster was **hung** on the poster-board

Hanging participles

See: Dangling participles

Hardly

- used to stress a point
At the beginning of a sentence, **hardly** is followed by an **inverted verb**
Hardly had I set up the cultures when the fire alarm rang and I had to leave the lab.
has a negative connotation

ALERT Check that **hardly is not** used with a **negative**

- There **wasn't hardly** any reaction upon addition of A23187
ERROR *Syntax*: **hardly** is a **negative** and needs no **negative** verb (**wasn't**) before it
CORRECT [if there was **no reaction**] by
using the **positive**
There **was hardly** any reaction upon addition of A23187
retaining the **negative** and **omitting hardly**
There **wasn't** any reaction upon addition of A23187

See: Double negatives, Inversion of verbs

Hardly ever

- used to stress a point
At the beginning of a sentence, **hardly ever** is followed by an **inverted verb**
Hardly ever have these cells been observed dividing

See: Inversion of verbs

Hardly ... when/than

- when* is correct

Hardly ... when/no sooner... than

- used to stress a point
At the beginning of a sentence, **hardly/no sooner** is followed by an **inverted verb**
Hardly had I woken up **when** I received a phone call
No sooner had I woken up **than** I received a phone call

ALERT Check that **hardly** is used with the **correct conjunction**

- Hardly** had I sent off the manuscript to JA **than** I received an invitation to write a review for AJA
ERROR *Syntax*: **hardly** is followed by the conjunction **when**
CORRECT by
replacing **than** by **when**
Hardly had I sent off the manuscript to JA **when** I received an invitation to write a review for AJA
retaining than and **replacing hardly** by **no sooner**
No sooner had I sent off the manuscript to JA **than** I received an invitation write a review for AJA

See: Inversion of verbs

Has a remarkable degree of ...

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **is remarkably ...**

Has been/is/was

- has been* (present perfect)
an action **done** in the past and completed but **still relevant** at the present time: **accepted wisdom**
used in the **Introduction** and **Discussion** for statements of accepted fact
The acrosome reaction **has been shown** to be stimulated by the ionophore A23187
Spermatozoa **have been known** to undergo maturation in the epididymis
- is* (simple present)
an action **done many times** with the same results: **accepted wisdom**
used in the **Introduction** and **Discussion** for statements of accepted fact
The acrosome reaction **is** stimulated by the ionophore A23187
Spermatozoa **are** matured in the epididymis
- was* (simple past)
an action **done once** in the past and **completed**

used in the **Methods** to describe what was done
 A23187 **was** added to the sperm suspension
 used in the **Results** to describe the results obtained
 Spermatozoa **were** acrosome-reacted after treatment with ionophore

Has been shown to

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **is**

Has the ability to cope with

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **can cope with**

Has the capability of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **can**

Have

Overused word: often used unnecessarily with the conditional should have/would have or had

ALERT Check when **have** is used as an auxiliary verb that only **one past tense** is used

I should **have** liked to **have** seen it

ERROR *Tautology*: as the **verb** is in the **past**, there is **no need** to repeat the **notion of the past** by putting the **infinitive** in the **past**
CORRECT by **using** the **present tense** of the **infinitive**

I should **have** liked **to see** it

auxiliary verb

I **should like** to **have** seen it

I had planned to **have** finished it yesterday

ERROR *Tautology*: as the **verb** is in the **past**, there is **no need** to repeat the **notion of the past** by putting the **infinitive** in the **past**
CORRECT by **using** the **perfect tense** of the **auxiliary verb**

I **had planned** to finish it yesterday

infinitive

I planned **to have finished** it yesterday

Have to/must

Auxiliary verbs followed by a **infinitive without** the infinitive marker **to**

We **must succeed**

He **has to do** it

for obligation/necessity

in the present or future use

must

The doctor says **I must** give up smoking

have to

The doctor says **I have to** give up smoking

in the past **only** use

have to

She **had** to stop smoking as she could not afford it

for certainty

in the present or future use

must

He **must** be the best orator at the meeting

have to

He **has to** be the best orator at the meeting

in the past **only** use

must

He **must** have been late, as I saw him miss the train

Having

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check that the **participle** has a **relevant noun** to complement

Having reached the campus, **the view** was splendid

ERROR *Semantics*: **having reached** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **the view** is the closest noun it can modify
 This gives the **unintended impression** that **the view** reached the campus

CORRECT [if the **viewer** reached the campus] by

introducing a human element

Having reached the campus, **we** had a splendid view

rewriting the sentence

There was a splendid view from the campus

See: Dangling participles

Having regard to

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **about**

Having said that

a participial phrase meaning **after making that statement**

Having said that I must admit that I find the thesis acceptable
[**having said that** applies *only* to people]

ALERT Check that **having said that** has a **relevant noun** to complement

Having said that, the hypothesis remains unproven

ERROR *Semantics*: **having said that** is participial phrase and **hypothesis** is the nearest noun it can complement
This gives the **unintended impression** that the **hypothesis** said something

CORRECT [if the **speaker** said something] by

introducing a human element

Having said that, I **have to admit that** the hypothesis remains unproven

replacing having said that by a **prepositional phrase**

Despite that, the hypothesis remains unproven

replacing having said that by **that being said**

That being said, the hypothesis remains unproven

replacing having said that by **that said**

That said, the hypothesis remains unproven

“He/she”

difficult to pronounce, shorthand, ugly to look at

Discourteous: requires the reader to make a decision he is unable to make

Ambiguous: as the slash here implies **or**, “he/she” means “**he or she**”

if it is **unknown** whether the subject is female or male, use **he**

(*cf.* **man**, a human being in general, of either sex, mankind)

See: Human/man/Man/mankind/men, Indefinite third person (also under individual entries)

Headquarters is/are

is, are each is correct

headquarter is treated as a **singular and plural** noun

The **headquarters** of the company **is** in London

The **headquarters** of the company **are** in London

Heat/temperature

heat the quality of being hot, of high temperature

temperature the degree or intensity of heat present, especially expressed according to a comparative scale

Hot things have a **high** temperature; **cold** things have a **low** temperature

ALERT Check that **hotter** and **colder** refer to objects not to temperatures

The autoclave was set to the **hotter temperature** of 170°C for removing HIV

ERROR *Semantics*: **confusion** between **hot** (having a high temperature) and the intensity of **heat** (temperature)

CORRECT by **retaining**

temperature and **replacing hotter** by **higher**

The autoclave was set to the **higher** temperature of 170°C for removing HIV

hotter and **omitting the details**

The autoclave was made **hotter** for removing HIV

Heavy/weight

heavy adjective of great weight

weight noun the quality of being heavy

ALERT Check that both **weight** and **heavy** are not used in the same sentence

In the first subgroup, testicular **weights** were **heavier** than those in the controls

ERROR *Tautology*: **heavier** means of greater **weight**

CORRECT by **retaining**

weights and **replacing heavier** by **greater**

In the first subgroup, testicular **weights** were **greater** than those in the controls

heavier and **replacing testicular weights** by **testes**

In the first subgroup, **testes** were **heavier** than those in the controls

Hemi-

See: Demi/hemi/semi/sesqui

Hence/whence

hence from **here**
 as a result or consequence, for that reason, so, therefore
 The sperm motility was low, **hence** infertility was anticipated
 in the future
 There may be a different opinion two years **hence**

whence from **where**
 After its loan for the meeting, the projector was returned **whence** it came

ALERT Check that **hence is not** used with words **implying a logical connection**

From thousands of spermatozoa, only one will fertilise the oocyte, **hence it follows** there is stringent sperm selection
ERROR *Tautology*: **hence** and **it follows** both mean the same thing
CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both
 From thousands of spermatozoa, only one will fertilise the oocyte, **hence** there must be stringent sperm selection
 From thousands of spermatozoa, only one will fertilise the oocyte; **it follows** there must be stringent sperm selection

ALERT Check the grammar when **whence** is used

After the surgery the monkeys were returned **from whence** they came
ERROR *Tautology*: **whence** means **from where**, so **needs no additional** preposition (**from**) before it
CORRECT by **omitting from**
 After the surgery the monkeys were returned **whence** they came
replacing whence by **from where**
 After the surgery the monkeys were returned **from where** they came

See: And so/hence/therefore, And so/so/so that

Henceforth

Synonym: from now on

“Her/his”

difficult to pronounce, shorthand, ugly to look at
Discourteous: requires the reader to make a decision he is unable to make

Ambiguous: as the slash here implies **or**, “her/his” means “**her or his**”
 if it is **unknown** whether the subject is female or male, use **his**
 (*cf.* **man**, a human being in general, of either sex, mankind)

See: Indefinite third person (also under individual entries)

Her/his/their

personal pronouns

singular where the sex of the person is **male**, use **his**
 The student looked forward to finding out **his** exam results
 where the sex of the person is **female**, use **her**
 The student looked forward to finding out **her** exam results
 where the sex of the person is **unknown** or **unclear** (indefinite third person), use **his**

plural for both sexes, or either or unknown sex, use **their**
 All the students looked forward to finding out **their** exam results

See: Indefinite third person (also under individual entries)

Herein/therein

herein in **this** document
 The manufacturer does not accept responsibility for any information contained **herein**

therein in **that** document
 It is recognised that prolonged heating leads to testicular damage (Job et al., 2000 and references **therein**)

Heretofore

Synonyms: hitherto, previously, until now
See: Heretofore/theretofore, Hitherto/thitherto

Heretofore/theretofore

heretofore until **this** time, until **now**
 I am now retired; **heretofore** I was a scientist

theretofore until **that** time, until **then**
 In 1985 I moved to Germany; **theretofore** I had lived in England

Synonyms: hitherto, thitherto

See: Hitherto/thitherto

Herewith

Synonym: with this

Herself/himself/themselves

Reflexive form of personal pronouns

used for emphasis or clarification of the

singular where the person is **male**, use **himself**

Each student congratulated **himself**

where the person is **female**, use **herself**

Each student congratulated **herself**

where the sex of the person is **unknown** or **unclear** (indefinite third person), use **himself**

plural for both sexes, or either or unknown sex or, use **themselves**

All the students congratulated **themselves**

ALERT Check whether the use of **himself** can clarify the meaning

ERROR After reading his **student's** work, the **professor** said that **he** had not had enough time to finish it
Semantics: ambiguous, **it is unclear** whether **he** refers to the **professor** or the **student**, so **this implies** that the **professor** had not had enough time to finish reading it

or

the **student** had not had enough time to finish writing it

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

adding a reflexive pronoun

After reading his student's work, the professor said that he **himself** had not had enough time to finish it

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

moving and replacing student's by student

After reading the work, the professor said that **his student** had not had enough time to finish it

Heterogeneous/heterogenous

heterogeneous is correct

See: Homogeneous/homogenous

Heteronym/paronym

heteronym words having the same meaning as another, but from a different source

foreword is a heteronym of **preface**

paronym

a word that is a derivative of another from the same source, with a similar meaning

wisdom is a paronym of **wise**

See: Antonym/synonym, Homograph/homonym/homophone

High/higher

high the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjective used with **comparative prepositional phrases**

higher the **comparative** form of the adjective used with the conjunction **than**

ALERT Check that the **comparative is not** used with **phrases implying comparison**

The values were **higher compared with** those of the control

The values were **higher in comparison with** those of the control

ERROR *Tautology*: **higher** is a **comparative** adjective and the prepositional phrases **imply a comparison**

CORRECT by **retaining** the

comparative form of the adjective and **using** the conjunction **than**

The values were **higher than** those of the control

absolute (positive) form of the adjective and using a **comparative prepositional phrase**

The values were **high compared with** those of the control

The values were **high in comparison with** those of the control

Higher/increased

higher the **comparative** form of the adjective **high**

followed by the conjunction **than**

Sperm motility after addition of the drug was **higher than** before

followed by the preposition **after** with a causative agent

Sperm motility was **higher after** addition of the drug

increased a **participle** (verbal adjective)

followed by the preposition **by** with a causative agent

Sperm motility was **increased by** addition of the drug

Higher number of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **more**

Himself

See: Herself/himself/themselves

Hint

used when there is **insufficient evidence** for a conclusion to be drawn
 expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood
 These observations provide a **hint** that these cells **are** stem cell precursors

See: Certainty/uncertainty

His

See: "Her/his"

Historic/historical

historic famous or important in history
 The Origin of Species was a **historic** publication
historical of or concerning history (previously published results)
 Our results were compared with those of **historical** controls

Hither/thither

hither to **this** place
thither to **that** place

After drug treatment the mice ran **hither** and **thither**

See: Hitherto/thitherto

Hitherto

Synonyms: heretofore, previously, until now
 See: Hitherto/thitherto

Hitherto/thitherto

hitherto until **this** time, until **now**
 I am now retired; **hitherto** I was a scientist
thitherto until **that** time, until **then**
 In 1985 I moved to Germany; **thitherto** I had lived in England

Synonyms: heretofore, theretofore
 See: Heretofore/theretofore

Holding

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check whether **holding** is used as a **gerund** or a **participle**

The adjacent lab. staff complained of **us holding** noisy discussions
ERROR **Semantics:** this gives the **unintended impression** that the staff **complained of us**
CORRECT [if our **noisy discussions** were the source of complaint] by
using the **genitive** and a **gerund**
 The adjacent lab. staff complained of **our holding** noisy discussions

See: Gerund/participle

Homogeneous/homogenous

homogeneous of the same kind or nature
homogenous similar because of common evolutionary descent
 frequently used **instead of homogeneous**: confusion with **homogenised**

ALERT Check that **homogenous** is the **intended word**

The samples were aliquoted after they had been thoroughly mixed until they were **homogenous**
ERROR **Semantics:** **mixing** does not produce samples of common evolutionary descent
CORRECT by **replacing homogenous** by **homogeneous**
 The samples were aliquoted after they had been thoroughly mixed until they were **homogeneous**

Homogenised/homogenated

homogenised is correct

Homograph/homonym/homophone

homonym a word **spelt** like another word but with a **different meaning**, homograph
 often used **incorrectly** and ambiguously for homograph or homophone
homograph a word **spelt** like another word but with a **different meaning**, homonym
number (a value) **number** (more numb)
homophone a word **sounding** like another word but with a **different meaning**
to (preposition) **too** (adverb) **two** (a number)

Honourable/honorific

<i>honourable</i>	deserving of honour He was an honourable man
<i>honorific</i>	conferring or conveying honour He was given an honorific title

Hopeful/optimistic

<i>optimistic</i>	A habitual inclination to take the bright view
<i>hopeful</i>	A temporary inclination to take the bright view

ALERT Check that **hopeful** is used correctly

The committee is worried by the initial lack of support but is **optimistic** that the students will eventually accept the new rules
ERROR *Syntax*: the feeling of eventual acceptance is **temporary** (following the recent results) **not habitual**
CORRECT by using **hopeful**
 The committee is worried by the initial lack of support but is **hopeful** that the students will eventually accept the new rules

Hopefully

adverb used to describe
 verbs or verbal phrases
 placed **after** the **verb**
 He **went** to the examination **hopefully**
 [The manner in which he went (**hoping to pass**) is described]

whole clauses
 placed at the **beginning** of the sentence
 Hopefully, they'll wait for us at the station
 [**It is to be hoped/we hope that** they will wait for us at the station]

Hoping

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

See: Aiming/hoping/intending

Hormonal/hormone

<i>hormone</i>	noun	blood-borne regulatory substance
	noun used as an adjective	Hormone assays [assays of hormones]
<i>hormonal</i>	adjective	related to hormones Hormonal regulation [regulation by hormones]

ALERT Check that **hormonal** is the **intended word**

The data on the **hormonal** assays are reported in Table 1
ERROR *Syntax*: this gives the **unintended impression** that the assays **were related to** hormones
CORRECT [if the assays were used to **measure** hormones] by
 using a **noun** as an **adjective**
 The data on the **hormone** assays are reported in Table 1

How

See: As how/that/whether

How/how much

<i>how</i>	precedes a absolute (positive) form of the adjective The results show how bad treatment A was
<i>how much</i>	precedes a comparative form of the adjective The results show how much worse treatment B was

How/what/why

<i>how</i>	adverb	by what means, in what way or manner used in a question answered by providing a mechanism Did you see how I did it?
<i>what</i>	pronoun	a substitute of a noun used in a question answered by providing information Do you know what you have to do next?
<i>why</i>	adverb	for what cause or reason used in a question answered by providing a reason Do you know why I used that method?

ALERT Check that **how is not** confused with **what**

Only he could tell us **how** research **was like** in China at that time
ERROR *Syntax*: **how** is an **adverb** used here as a **pronoun**
CORRECT by
 replacing the **adverb** by a **pronoun**

Only he could tell us **what** research **was like** in China at that time
retaining the adverb and omitting like
 Only he could tell us **how** research **was** in China at that time

ALERT Check that **why does not** raise the issue of **purposes** or **reasons** for biological events

We are interested in knowing **why** the epididymis has so many β -defensins
ERROR *Anthropomorphism*: the **epididymis** is **inanimate and cannot** have a reason for doing anything
CORRECT by
using how and a **verb**
 We are interested in knowing **how** the epididymis **come to have** so many β -defensins
being more specific
 We are interested in **explaining the significance of** so many β -defensins in the epididymis

See: Reason, Teleology, What/which

How ever/however

how ever used to add emphasis to **ever**
How ever did he get such high marks?
however conjunction
 contrasting two situations
 in simple sentences
 at the beginning, followed by a comma
However, the results were unsatisfactory and ...
 in mid-sentence, enclosed by commas
 The results, **however**, were unsatisfactory and ...
 in compound sentences
 in mid-sentence, enclosed by semicolon and comma
 We were to go to seminar today; **however**, it was cancelled because of the typhoon
 adverb
 no matter how
 in compound sentences
 at the beginning not followed by a comma
However much time was wasted, they finished the job

See: But/however

Human/man/Man/mankind/men

Human/man/Man/mankind
 a human being in general, *Homo sapiens*, the human race, of either sex
 Epididymal transit of spermatozoa is more rapid in **humans** than in **monkeys**
 Epididymal transit of spermatozoa is more rapid in **the human** [species] than in **the monkey**
 Testicular size in **man** is less than that in promiscuous species
 Of all species **Man** is overpopulating the planet
man an adult human male (as opposed to **woman**, an adult human female)
men adult human males (as opposed to **women**, adult human females)

Humid/humidified

humid adjective marked by a relatively high level of water vapour in the atmosphere
 Slides were placed in a **humid** chamber to prevent their drying out
humidified participle made humid by evaporation of water
 The chamber was **humidified** by heating the water within it
 A **humid** chamber has been **humidified**

Hurriedly

adverb used to describe verbs or verbal phrases
 placed before or after the **verb**
 She **hurriedly sterilised** the instruments
 She **sterilised** the instruments **hurriedly**
 [The manner in which she sterilised the instruments (**rapidly**) is described]

Hurrying

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check that the **hurrying** is placed close to the **noun** it should modify

My **supervisor** was stopped by a **lecturer hurrying** on his way to the lecture
ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that
my supervisor was hurrying to the lecture
 or
the lecturer was hurrying to the lecture
CORRECT [if the former is meant] by
placing hurrying immediately **after supervisor**

My **supervisor, hurrying** on his way to the lecture, was stopped by a lecturer
 CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by
 placing **hurrying** immediately **after lecturer**
 My supervisor was stopped by a **lecturer, hurrying** on his way to the station

Hyper/hypo/iso

<i>hyper</i>	above, over	hyperglycaemia	blood glucose above the upper reference limit for normal
<i>iso</i>	normal, same as	isotonic saline	a saline solution causing no change in erythrocyte cell volume [of the same osmolality as that of erythrocyte cytoplasm]
<i>hypo</i>	below, under	hypo-natraemia	blood sodium below the lower reference limit for normal

Hyperactivated/hyperactivation

<i>hyperactivated</i>	adjective	in the state of hyperactivation requires no article Hyperactivated spermatozoa [spermatozoa displaying hyperactivation]
<i>hyperactivation</i>	noun	a specific process referred to in general requires no article Hyperactivation was assessed after induction with the calcium ionophore
	noun used as an adjective	a specific process requires the definite article The hyperactivation process [a process occurring to spermatozoa]

See: A/the/^

Hypernym/hyponym

<i>hypernym</i>	A word with a broad meaning constituting a category into which more specific words fall MAGI is a hypernym of prostatitis, prostate-vesiculitis and prostate-vesiculo-epididymitis
<i>hyponym</i>	A word of more specific meaning than a general category applicable to it Prostatitis is a hyponym of MAGI

Hyper-osmotic/hypertonic

<i>hyper-osmotic</i>	of a fluid with higher osmolality than another Liquefied human semen is hyper-osmotic to cervical mucus
<i>hypertonic</i>	of a fluid in which suspended cells shrink (of a higher osmolality than that of the cell's cytoplasm) Cauda epididymidal fluid is hypertonic for erythrocytes

Hyperplasia/hypertrophy

<i>hyperplasia</i>	the enlargement of an organ or tissue caused by an increase in the number of its cells
<i>hypertrophy</i>	the enlargement of an organ or tissue caused by an increase in the size of its cells

Hypertonic

See: Hyper-osmotic/-tonic

Hypertrophy

See: Hyper-plasia/-trophy

Hyphen

See: Dash/hyphen/minus

Hyphenated words

punctuation used for creating compound **adjectives**
 from **nouns**
alcohol-related diseases
 [diseases **related to/caused by alcohol**]
chemical-induced mutations
 [mutations **induced by chemicals**]
magnet-activated beads
 [beads **activated by magnets**]
phosphate-buffered saline
 [saline **buffered with phosphate**]
vitamin-deficient diets
 [diets **deficient in vitamins**]
X-ray-induced damage
 [damage **induced by X-rays**]
 not from **adverbs**
chemically-induced mutations
 [means **induced by chemically**]
 not from **adjectives**

academic-related staff
[means **related to academic**]
magnetic-activated beads
[means **activated by magnetic**]

ALERT Check that the necessary **hyphens** are used to prevent **ambiguity**

Ros interacts with and activates the SH2 domain **containing** tyrosine phosphatase SHP-2
ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **it is unclear** if the phosphatase contains an SH2 domain or *vice versa*
CORRECT [if the former is meant] by
adding a hyphen to create an adjective
Ros interacts with and activates the SH2 **domain-containing** tyrosine phosphatase SHP-2
CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by
adding which to create a non-defining clause
Ros interacts with and activates the SH2 domain, **which contains tyrosine phosphatase SHP-2**

See: Dash/hyphen/minus, Defining/non-defining clauses

Hypo

See: Hyper/hypo/iso

Hypo-osmotic/hypotonic

hypo-osmotic of a fluid with lower osmolality than another
 Human cervical mucus is **hypo-osmotic to** liquefied seminal plasma
hypotonic of a fluid in which suspended cells swell (of a lower osmolality than that of the cell's cytoplasm)
 Uterine fluid is **hypotonic for** cauda epididymidal spermatozoa

Hypoplasia/hypotrophy

hypoplasia the shrinkage of an organ or tissue caused by a decrease in the **number** of its cells
hypotrophy the shrinkage of an organ or tissue caused by a decrease the **size** of its cells

Hypothesis/theory

hypothesis a supposition made on the basis of **limited evidence** as a starting point for further investigation
theory a supposition or a system of ideas intended to explain **a considerable body** of facts

Each is followed by a verb in the **present indicative**, to indicate the **certainty** of the hypothesis
 We **hypothesise** that the tonicity of the medium **is** responsible for the cellular swelling observed
 Our **theory** is that the tonicity of the medium **controls** cell volume

Synonyms: concept, idea, postulate, speculation

See: Certainty/uncertainty

Hypothesise that

used when there is **insufficient evidence** for a conclusion to be drawn
 expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood
 We **hypothesise that** cells **are** lost because of apoptosis

ALERT Check that the verb following **hypothesise that** is in the **indicative**

We have **hypothesised that** the enzyme **could act** as a true ROS scavenger
ERROR *Semantics*: oxymoron, a **hypothesis** reflects **something considered certain** but the conditional **could** implies a **condition**
CORRECT [if there is **sufficient evidence**] by
retaining hypothesised that and using the present indicative
 We have **hypothesised that** the enzyme **acts** as a true ROS scavenger
CORRECT [to emphasise **uncertainty**] by
omitting We have hypothesised that
 The enzyme **could act** as a true ROS scavenger
CORRECT [if there is a **condition**] by
retaining could and providing the condition
 We have **hypothesised that** the enzyme **could act** as a true ROS scavenger **if ROS are generated from damaged sperm cells**

See: Certainty/uncertainty, Conditional/subjunctive moods, Indicative mood, Hypothesis/theory, Moods of a verb, Quotations

Hypotonic

See: Hypo-osmotic/hypotonic

Hypotrophy

See: Hypoplasia/hypotrophy

I/me

I nominative (subject) case
 in complements
 used with **intransitive verbs** of incomplete predication (link verbs, verbs of being)
 It **was I** who wrote that article

as subject

where **I** would be used on its own

I am attending the seminar

I is used together with plural subjects

My colleagues **and I** are attending the seminar

me accusative (object) case

as object

when **me** would be used on its own

The award was given to **me**

me is used together with plural objects

The award was given to my **colleagues and me**

for politeness, put your friends first when mentioned with others (we, us before I, me)

See: Complement/predicate, I/me, We/us

Idea

See: Concept/idea/tenet

Identical with/to

identical with is correct

Identify

to establish the identity of something

to recognize something or distinguish it from something similar

[**identify** applies *only* to people]

ALERT Check that **identify** relates to an object **capable of identifying**

PAX8 can correctly **identify** the tumour as one of Wolffian duct origin

ERROR *Anthropomorphism*: **PAX8** is **inanimate and cannot** identify anything

CORRECT by **implying a human element**

PAX8 **can be used** to identify correctly the tumour as one of Wolffian duct origin

Identify/show

identify to establish the identity of something

followed by the preposition **as**

The protein band was **identified as** PRDX6 by MALDI-TOF

show to allow, cause or reveal something to be visible

to reveal something to be true, by reason and evidence

followed by an **infinitive** with the infinitive marker **to**

The acrosome reaction was **shown to be** induced by A23187

ALERT Check that **identify** is the **intended word**

Many genes in different epididymal regions have been **identified to be** under the influence of androgens

STYLE *Word usage*: **identify is not** followed by an **infinitive**

CHANGE by

using a **gerundial phrase**

Many genes in different epididymal regions have been **identified as being** under the influence of androgens

retaining the infinitive and **using verbs** that are followed by **the infinitive**

Many genes in different epididymal regions have been **shown to be** under the influence of androgens

rewriting the sentence by using an **adjective**

Many genes in different epididymal regions have been **identified as androgen-dependent**

See: Claim/demonstrate/establish/show

i.e.

See: E.g./i.e.

If/though

if introduces a conditional clause

though despite the fact that

ALERT Ensure that the use of **if does not** introduce **ambiguity**

The research, **if** difficult, is rewarding

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that

the research is difficult but **despite that**, it is rewarding

or

only difficult research is rewarding

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

replacing if by though

The research, **though** difficult, is rewarding

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

retaining *if*

If the research is difficult, it is rewarding

The manuscript was good, **if** not excellent

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that the manuscript was good but **not excellent**

or

the manuscript was **more** than good

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

replacing *if* by *though*

The manuscript was good, **though** not excellent

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

using *more than*

The manuscript was **more than** good

See: *Albeit/although/though*

If/when

if conjunction

despite the possibility that, no matter whether

Even **if** it takes me a year, I shall finish it

in the event that, on the condition or supposition that

Differences were considered significant **if** $P < 0.05$

whenever, every time

If I go out, she gets annoyed

[a universal statement]

when conjunction

after which, and just then (suddenly)

He had just finished writing **when** the phone rang

although, whereas

He's telling you now **when** he should have said it long ago

at or during the time that

Differences were considered significant **when** $P < 0.05$

in view of the fact that, considering that

Why use a confocal microscope **when** the flow cytometer can do it quicker and with more precision?

adverb

at what time

When did you last see him?

how soon

When can I see you?

in what circumstances

When would that rule apply?

See: Universal statements

If/whether/whether or not

if

for **conditional** sentences

I don't know **if** the new student will arrive this weekend

[The new student **may not arrive** at all]

Phone me **if** you are going to the lab. on Saturday

[Call **only** if you intend to go on Saturday]

for **indirect questions** with a yes/no answer

She **asked if** I had read Cooper's monograph on the epididymis

whether

for **discrete** choices

with **explicit** alternatives

when **or** appears later in the sentence

I don't know **whether** the new student will arrive on Friday **or** Saturday.

[The new student **will definitely arrive** but on which day is unclear]

with **implicit** alternatives (indicated by an elided [**or not**])

after a **preposition**

There are doubts **about whether** the sterile bench is functioning properly

before an **infinitive**

He can't decide **whether to submit** it to the Asian Journal of Andrology

whether or not

for a **stressed alternative**

regardless of whether

She asked **whether or not** I had read Cooper's monograph on the epididymis

The manuscript, **whether or not** by Jones, is excellently written

I intend to come **whether** you like it **or not**

Call me **whether or not** you are going to the lab. on Saturday

[Call in either case]

ALERT Ensure that the use of **if does not** introduce **ambiguity**

If I **were** honest, he **would** fail the examine
must be used for statements that **cannot** be true
 If I **were** you, I **would** apply for the position immediately

See: Moods of a verb

If not

perhaps even
 (used to introduce a more extreme term than the first mentioned)
 Thousands, **if not** millions, of spermatozoa never reach the oviducts

See: As ... if not ... than

If this is not the case

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, : replace by **if not**

If this is the case

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **if so**

Illegal/illicit

illegal contrary to, or forbidden by, law; especially criminal law
illicit forbidden by customs, rules or law

See: Elicit/illicit

i.m.

intramuscularly into a muscle (of an injection)

Immiscible/insoluble

immiscible of **liquids** not forming a homogeneous solution when mixed together
insoluble of **solids** incapable of being dissolved in a particular solvent

Impact/impinge

impinge verb to have an effect upon, generally a negative effect
impact noun the effect of one object coming forcibly into contact with another
is not a verb

ALERT Check that a **impact is not** used as a **verb**

The growth of fibroblasts **impacted** epithelial cell growth

ERROR *Syntax*: **impact** is a **noun** used here **as a verb**

CORRECT by

using *impact* as a *noun* with a *verb*

The growth of fibroblasts **had** an **impact** on epithelial cell growth

replacing *impact* by a *verb*

The growth of fibroblasts **impinged** on epithelial cell growth

The growth of fibroblasts **affected** epithelial cell growth

being more specific

The growth of fibroblasts **reduced** epithelial cell growth

ALERT Check whether **impact** can be replaced by a **more relevant word**

However, the **impact** of age on sperm kinematic parameters has rarely been studied, especially in young fertile men

ERROR *Semantics*: an **overstatement**, since no collisions are involved

CORRECT by **using *effect***

However, the **effect** of age on sperm kinematic parameters has rarely been studied, especially in young fertile men

Impair

to damage, make worse, weaken something
does not mean to affect, to alter, to damage, to reduce

Impart

Synonyms: to give, to inform, to pass on, to tell

Imperative

adjective of vital importance
 To continue receiving funding, it is **imperative** that standards are maintained
 mood of a verb

See: Moods of a verb

Impermeable/impermeant

impermeable of a **membrane**, not allowing solutes to pass through
 An intact cell membranes is **impermeable** to propidium iodide

impermeant of a **solute**, unable to pass through a membrane
Propidium iodide is an **impermeant** solute

ALERT Check that **impermeable** refers to the potential barrier

The **impermeable** propidium iodide was used to assess membrane integrity

ERROR *Syntax:* **impermeable** refers to the properties of a **membrane**, but is used here to define a **solute**
CORRECT by using an **adjective** describing the properties of a **solute**
The **impermeant** propidium iodide was used to assess membrane integrity

Impinge

See: Impact/impinge

Implement

Synonyms: to carry out, to do

Implemented

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by **what was implemented**

Implicate/imply

implicate to show someone to be involved in something illegal
He **implicated** the dean in providing the pre-exam results
[**implicate** applies **only** to people]

imply to express indirectly, hint, insinuate rather than refer to explicitly
The EQC monitor **implied** that the technicians had colluded
[**imply** applies **only** to people]

ALERT Check that **implicate** is the **intended word**

Expression of WIF1 is high in the cells, which **implicates** a role for WIF-1 in cell junction regulation

ERROR *Semantics:* no illegal activity is mentioned

CORRECT by

replacing *implicate* by *imply*

Expression of WIF1 is high in the cells, which **implies** a role for WIF-1 in cell junction regulation

rewriting the sentence by using ***implicated***

WIF-1 has been **implicated** in cell junction regulation because its expression high in the cells

Implicated/involved

implicated being shown to be involved in something
Glycoproteins are **implicated** in ion transport across epithelia

involved having or included as a necessary or integral part
Glycoproteins are **involved** in ion transport across epithelia
complicated, difficult to understand
His **involved** theory was difficult to follow

Implication/inference

implication a conclusion drawn from something not explicitly stated
The EQC monitor's **implication** was that the technicians colluded in obtaining their results

inference a conclusion reached on the basis of evidence and reasoning
The director's **inference** that the technicians colluded led to changes in laboratory-reporting procedures

Imply/infer

imply to express indirectly, hint, insinuate rather than refer to explicitly
The EQC monitor **implied** that the technicians had colluded
[**imply** applies **only** to people]

infer to conclude or deduce something by reasoning rather than from explicit statements
The institute director **inferred** that the technicians had colluded
[**infer** applies **only** to people]

Imply/suggest

imply to express indirectly, hint, insinuate rather than refer to explicitly
The EQC monitor **implied** that the technicians had colluded
[**imply** applies **only** to people]

suggest to cause to think that something exists or is the case, a possibility, implies **uncertainty**
These results **suggest** that ROS production **is** related to capacitation
[the evidence is **equivocal**]

Imposing

adjective large, grand, impressive
An **imposing** Victorian college housed the seminar rooms

participle forcing an unwelcome decision or ruling on someone
The college is **imposing** a rent increase on its students

gerund the imposition of something on someone

The students objected to the College's **imposing** a higher rent

ALERT Check whether **imposing** is used as a **gerund** or a **participle**

The students objected to the **College imposing** a higher rent

ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that the students **object to the College**

CORRECT [if the **imposition** of a higher rent was the source of objection] by

using the **genitive** and a **gerund**

The students objected to the **College's imposing** a higher rent

See: Gerund/participle

Impracticable/Impractical

impractical not worth doing, unpractical
incapable person

impracticable can't be done, incapable of being put into practice, unfeasible

See: Feasible/unfeasible, Practicable/practical

Improvement

See: Betterment/improvement

In/into/in to

in presence or movement in one place
The centrifuge is **in** the laboratory
They moved the desk **in** the office

into movement from one place to another
He poured the solution **into** the culture dish
The transgene will integrate **into** the host genome
change from one form to another

in to each word (in, adverb; to, preposition) has a separate meaning
The stem cells can differentiate **into** epithelial cells
He passed his exam paper **in to** the invigilator

In/on the contrary

on the contrary is correct
in the contrary confusion with **in contrast**

See: On the contrary to, Contradicting/contradictory/contrary

In/on the opposite

in the opposite confusion with **in the other direction**
on the opposite confusion with **on the contrary**

In/on time

in time with enough time to spare, before the last moment
The animal would have died if it had not reached the hospital **in time**

on time at the planned time; neither late nor early
Stefan wants the meeting to start **on time**

In/to my opinion

in my opinion is correct
to my opinion confusion with **to my mind**

In/under no circumstances

under no circumstances is correct
used to stress a point when an action is required

At the beginning of a sentence, **under no circumstances** is followed by an **inverted verb**
Under no circumstances should you eat food in the laboratory

See: In/under the circumstances, Inversion of verbs

In/under the circumstances

in the circumstances indicates that a situation **exists**
In the circumstances, I began to feel worried that I would not finish the thesis in time

under the circumstances indicates that a situation **requires action**
Under the circumstances, I had no choice but to stop planning and start writing the thesis

In a considerable number of cases

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **in a number of cases, in some cases, often**

In a position to

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **can, may**

In accordance with

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **consistent with, in line with**

See: According to/in accordance with

In addition

Synonyms: also, additionally

See: Also/in addition

In advance of

See: Before/in advance of/prior to

In all cases

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **always**

In another word/in other words

in other words is correct

In between/inbetween

in between is correct

See: Between/in between

In case

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **if**

In close proximity

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **close, near**

In common

See: Common/in common

In conjunction with

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **with**

In connection with

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **about, concerning**

In consideration of the fact that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **as, because, since**

In contrast

See: By/In contrast

In depth

adverbial phrase which can define a verb
The aim was to study animal behaviour **in depth**

is not an adjective

ALERT Check that **in depth is not** used as an **adjective**

They made an **in depth** analysis

She made a more **in depth** analysis

ERROR *Syntax:* **in depth** is an **adverb** used here as an **adjective**

CORRECT by

using an **adjective**

They made a **thorough** analysis

She made a **more thorough** analysis

retaining in depth as an **adverb** defining the **verb**

They **made** an analysis **in depth**

She then **made** an analysis **in more depth**

In duplicate/duplicates

in duplicate is correct

See: Double/twice, Duplicate/triplicate/replicate, Repetition

In excess of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **above, more than**

In fact

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, **avoid**

In few cases

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **rarely, sometimes**

In lieu of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **instead of**

In many cases

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **often**

In many cases his ...

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **many of his ...**

In most cases

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **mostly, usually**

In no case

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **never**

In no way

used to stress a point when an action is needed

At the beginning of a sentence, **in no way** is followed by an **inverted verb**

In no way is it acceptable to wear a lab. coat in the social room

See: Inversion of verbs

In order that

See: And so/so/so that

In order to/to

For the reason of, with the purpose of doing something: implies **human** input
interchangeable prepositional phrase and preposition

Style: **in order to** is **unnecessary**, **to** alone is **sufficient**

used before an **infinitive** with the infinitive marker **to**

The semen samples were placed in the incubator **in order to speed up** liquefaction

often abbreviated by ellipsis of **[in order]**

The semen samples were placed in the incubator **to speed up** liquefaction

can create ambiguity if the **purpose phrase precedes** the principal clause

ALERT Check the meaning if **in order to** begins a sentence

In order to determine their suitability for the dissection course, the students underwent an aptitude test

ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that the students **wanted to take** an aptitude test

CORRECT [if the **instructors** required them to sit the test] by

inverting the order of the clauses

The students underwent an aptitude test **in order** to determine their suitability for the dissection course

In order to characterise protein functions, the proteins were distinguished by a step-wise classification

ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that the **proteins** characterised their own functions

CORRECT [if the step-wise **classification** was used to characterise the proteins] by

inverting the order of the clauses

Step-wise classification **of their function** was used **in order** to characterise the proteins

ALERT Check that in order to relates to objects capable of rational thought

In order to limit oxidative insults on maturing spermatozoa, the epididymis balances H₂O₂ production, for optimal disulphide bond bridging, and ROS removal by scavengers

ERROR *Teleology*: this gives the **unintended impression** that the **epididymis deliberately activates** certain cellular functions, in order to achieve a specific goal

CORRECT by **rewriting the sentence** to **explain the mechanisms involved**

Oxidative insults on maturing spermatozoa **are limited** by a balance between epididymal H₂O₂ production, for optimal disulphide bond bridging, with ROS removal by scavengers

Spermatozoa exploit ROS **in order** to trigger capacitation in the female genital tract

ERROR *Teleology*: this gives the **unintended impression** that the **spermatozoa deliberately activate** certain cellular functions, in order to achieve a specific goal

CORRECT by **rewriting the sentence** to **explain the mechanisms involved**

Spermatozoa **produce** ROS **that** trigger capacitation in the female tract

See: And so/so/so that, Teleology

In other words

See: In another word/in other words

In recognition of/recognising

in recognition of prepositional phrase
recognising A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check that **recognising** is used with something that is **capable of recognising** something

Recognising this caveat, numerous other studies used sperm counts as an index of male fertility

ERROR *Semantics:* **recognising** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **studies** is the nearest noun it can complement
 This gives the **unintended impression** that the **studies** recognised something

CORRECT by

retaining **recognising** and **adding a human element**

Recognising this caveat, **scientists have designed** studies to use sperm counts as an index of male fertility

replacing **recognising** by a **prepositional phrase** and the **passive**

In recognition of this caveat, numerous other studies **have been designed** to use sperm counts as an index of male fertility

In regard to

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **about, concerning, for, in, on, with**

See: In regard to/respect of

In regard to/respect of

in regard to

In regard to publication costs, the lower rate will be charged

in respect of

In respect of your claim, we have submitted your bills to the office for repayment

equivalent prepositional phrases

See: As regards/as regards to, Concerning, With reference/regard/respect to

In relation to

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **about, concerning, for, in, on, with**

In replicate/replicates

in replicate is correct

See: Duplicate/triplicate/replicate, Repetition

In respect of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **about, concerning, for, in, on, with**

In silico/situ/vitro/vivo

in silico performed or simulated in a computer

In situ in the original position (between *in vivo* and *in vitro*)

a cell within a tissue under perfusion

outside a living organism

e.g. epididymal tubule luminal perfusion of an excised epididymis supported in medium

inside a living organism

e.g. epididymal tubule luminal perfusion in an animal with its intact blood supply

in vitro taking place outside the living organism

taking place in a test tube, culture dish

e.g. isolated cells in culture

in vivo taking place within a living organism

whole animal studies

e.g. drug administration or gene knockout studies

are prepositional phrases, **not** adjectives

should appear **after, not before**, the noun they define

tests **in vitro** (**not in vitro** tests)

fertilisation **in vitro** (FIV) (**not in vitro** fertilisation [IVF])

See: Ex/in vivo

In some cases

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **sometimes**

In some cases this was the case

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, **avoid**

In some way

Style: verbosity, **avoid**

In spite of

See: Although/despite, Despite/in spite of

In terms of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **in**, or by what **in terms of** refers to

ALERT Check whether **in terms of** is necessary

The controls were suspended in saline whereas the treated samples were suspended in PVA, which is different **in terms of** conductivity and permittivity

STYLE *Verbosity*: can be shortened

CHANGE by **replacing in terms of** by **in**

The controls were suspended in saline whereas the treated samples were suspended in PVA, which is different **in** conductivity and permittivity

ALERT Check whether **in terms of** should be **replaced** by a **more relevant word**

The drug had an effect **in terms of** sperm motility

ERROR *Semantics*: vague, **no information is given** on what the effect was

CORRECT by **being more specific**

The drug **stimulated/inhibited** sperm motility

In that case

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **so**

In the above cases

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by the **examples themselves**

In the case of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **about, concerning, for, in, on, with**

In the case in question

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **this patient/situation**

In the context of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **about, concerning, for, in, on, with**

In the end

See: At/in the end

In the event that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **if, when**

In the eventuality of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **if, when**

In the frame of this study

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **in this study**

In the last/recent years

in recent years is correct

in the last years vague, the definite article requires a definite number

ALERT Check that **the last years** are specified

In the last years the number of publications on epididymal dysfunction has trebled

ERROR *Syntax*: the **definite** article requires a **specific** time, but none is given

CORRECT by

retaining last and **providing a number**

In the last five years the number of publications on epididymal dysfunction has trebled

replacing the last by the less definite **recent**

In recent years the number of publications on epididymal dysfunction has trebled

In the light of... we have demonstrated

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **we have demonstrated**

In the near future

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **soon**

In the possession of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **has, have**

In the present communication

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **here, in this paper**

In this case

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **here**

In this connection the statement may be made that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, **omit**

In this regard

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **here**

In triplicate/triplicates

in triplicate is correct

See: Duplicate/triplicate/replicate, Repetition, Thrice/treble/triple

In view of the fact that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **as, because, since**

Inadequate strength properties

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **not strong enough**

Inanimate objects

are **incapable** of performing human tasks

do not use with phrases that **apply only to people or animals**

See: Agree with/to, Alarmed, Ambiguous/ambivalent/equivocal, Argue, Ascribed/ascribable, Attempt, Attributed/attributable, Concerning, Decision, Dictate/necessitate/urge, Display, Having said that, Identify, Point of view, Regrettable/regretfully, Sensible/sensitive, Sensibility/sensitivity, Thankfully, Urge

Inasmuch as

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **as, because, for, in so far as, in that, to the extent that**

Incidence/incidence rate

incidence is correct
the incidence is a rate

Synonyms: how often, rate of occurrence

See: Incidence/prevalence

Incidence/prevalence

incidence the occurrence, rate or frequency of something undesirable
of a disease, the number of **new** cases in a defined population **in a given period**

prevalence the fact or condition of being prevalent, commonness
of a disease, the **total** number of cases in a defined population **at a specified time**

Include

See: Compose/comprise/consist/constitute/include

Including

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)
part of a greater whole

ALERT Check that **including**, used as a preposition, **is not** used with a **preposition**

He works throughout the summer, **including in** August

ERROR *Syntax:* including is used here as a **preposition**, so **needs no additional** preposition (*in*) after it
CORRECT by **omitting the preposition**

He works throughout the summer, **including** August

ALERT Check that **including does not** list all the included items

Frozen semen doses were obtained from **six** bulls of different breeds, **including three** Taurine and **three** Zebu

ERROR *Semantics:* **including** means part of a greater whole, whereas this describes **all six** bulls, **not** only **some of them**

CORRECT by **omitting including** and **adding a colon**

Frozen semen doses were obtained from **six** bulls of different breeds: **three** Taurine and **three** Zebu
the numbers of each breed

Frozen semen doses were obtained from **six** bulls of different breeds, **including** Taurine and Zebu

the total number of bulls

Frozen semen doses were obtained from bulls of different breeds, **including three** Taurine and **three** Zebu

Incomplete predication

See: Complete/incomplete predication

Incorrect/incorrectly
incorrect

adjective, defining
a **noun**, pronoun or phrase
He did the **incorrect thing**

incorrectly

adverb, defining
a **verb**
He **added up** the figures **incorrectly**
an **adjective**
The figures are **incorrectly calculated**

See: Right/wrong/wrongly

Increase

transitive verb with **object** to **make more, cause** to be larger
Treatment with hypotonic medium **increases cell size**
intransitive verb to **become** more in number or extent
During capacitation hyperactivated motility **increases**

Increase/increasing

increase noun
increasing a **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check whether increasing should be a participle or gerund

During maturation the sperm glycocalyx is modified **by increasing** its negative chargeERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that the **glycocalyx actively increases** its own charge
CORRECT by**using increasing** as a **participle** and **replacing modified** by **characterised**During maturation the sperm glycocalyx is characterised by **increasing** negative charge**using increasing** as a **noun**During maturation the sperm glycocalyx is modified **by an increase** in its negative charge**omitting modified** and **using increase** as an **intransitive verb**During maturation the sperm glycocalyx **increases in** negative charge*Increased*

indicates a causal relationship, with time or after some manipulation

transitive verb with **object** to **make** greater in extent or number
active Treatment with hypotonic medium **increased cell size**
passive **Cell size** was **increased** by incubation in hypotonic medium
intransitive verb to **become** greater in extent or number
In hypotonic medium cell size **increases**

ALERT Check that **increased is not** used for direct comparisonsThe extent of tyrosine phosphorylation was **increased compared with** that of uncapacitated cellsThe extent of tyrosine phosphorylation was **increased in comparison with** that of uncapacitated cellsERROR *Syntax*: participles **are not** used for direct comparisons

CORRECT by

retaining increased as an **intransitive verb** and **stating the sequence of events**The extent of tyrosine phosphorylation **increased after incubation** in capacitating conditions**retaining increased** as a **participle** and **stating the cause of the increase**The extent of tyrosine phosphorylation **was increased by capacitation****omitting increased** and **stating** what tyrosine phosphorylation **was above**The extent of tyrosine phosphorylation of capacitated cells was **above** that of the uncapacitated controlsThe extent of tyrosine phosphorylation of capacitated cells was **higher than** that of the uncapacitated controls**retaining the comparative prepositional phrase** and **using the absolute (positive)** form of the adjectiveThe extent of tyrosine phosphorylation of capacitated cells was **high compared with** that of uncapacitated cellsThe extent of tyrosine phosphorylation of capacitated cells was **high in comparison with** that of uncapacitated cells

See: Higher/increased

*Increased relative to*Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **more than***Incredible/incredulous*

incredible of things hard to believe, cannot be believed
incredulous of people not believing

Increment

Synonyms: increase, step

*Incubated during/for ... N min**incubated for* is correct

*Incumbent/recumbent**incumbent*

noun holder of office

The present **incumbent** will soon retire

adjective currently holding office

The **incumbent** Safety Officer will retire soon

necessary as a duty or responsibility

It is **incumbent upon** the Safety Officer to give yearly updates*recumbent*

adjective lying flat in any position in comfort

*Indeed**See:* Actually/indeed*Indefinite article**See:* A/an, Articles*Indefinite pronouns*pronouns that denote a **group of individuals**

all another any anybody anyone anything each everybody

everyone everything few many nobody none one

several some somebody someone something

may **take**

the singular

the plural

the singular or plural

may **refer to**

something singular

something plural

some **sound as if** they require the **plural**, but take the **singular**Many a [single item] **is****Many a scientist has** studied this problemMore than one [single item] **is****More than one** famous **scientist has** admitted plagiarismOne in ... [plural group] **is****One in nine students cheats** in exams[**One** student in nine **cheats**]*See:* Collective nouns, Partitive constructions*Indefinite third person*Where the sex of the person **is unknown** or **unclear**Use **he** rather than **he or she** (too long) or **he/she** (difficult to pronounce)Use **his** rather than **his or hers** (too long) or **his/hers** (difficult to pronounce)Use **himself** rather than **himself or herself** (too long) or **himself/herself** (difficult to pronounce)(cf. **man**, a human being in general, of either sex, mankind)**Anyone/anybody** is welcome provided **he** pays **his** subscription**Everyone/everybody** can come provided **he** pays for **his** own lunch**Each/every** student had a paper handed to **him****Each/every** person congratulated **himself****No one/nobody** can attend unless **he** pays **his** own fare**No one/nobody** pretends any more (if **he** ever did) that immuno-histochemistry is reproducible**No one/nobody** pretends any more (if **anyone** ever did) that immuno-histochemistry is reproducible**Someone/somebody** from your lab. can attend provided **he** pays for **his** own meals*See:* "He/she", "Her/his"*indexes/indices**indexes* plural of the index in a publicationHe compared the **indexes** of the five editions of the WHO manual*indices* plural of a calculated indexThe new WHO manual lists three **indices** relevant to sperm morphology: MAI, SDI, TZI*Indicate**Overused word:* often used unnecessarily, replace by **what was indicated***Indicate/suggest**indicate* point out, show, a definite assertion, implies **certainty**These results **indicate** that ROS production **is** related to capacitation[the evidence is **good**]*suggest* to cause to think that something exists or is the case, a possibility, implies **uncertainty**These results **suggest** that ROS production **is** related to capacitation[the evidence is **equivocal**]

See: Certainty/uncertainty, Imply/infer, Indicative mood

Indicate that

used when there is **sufficient evidence** for a conclusion to be drawn
expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood
These observations **indicate that** cells **are** lost because of apoptosis

ALERT Check that a verb following **indicates that** is in the **present indicative**

The increase in sperm volume **indicates that** potassium-sensitive channels **could be** involved in volume regulation

ERROR *Semantics:* **indicates** reflects **certainty** but the conditional **could** implies a **condition**

CORRECT [if there is **sufficient** evidence] by
retaining *indicates that* and **using the *present indicative***

The increase in sperm volume **indicates that** potassium-sensitive channels **are** involved in volume regulation

CORRECT [to emphasise **uncertainty**] by

omitting *indicates that*

The increase in sperm volume **could involve** potassium-sensitive channels

CORRECT [if there is a **condition**] by

retaining *could* and **providing the *condition***

The increase in sperm volume **indicates that** potassium-sensitive channels **could be** involved in volume regulation **if the ionic strength of the medium is kept low**

See: Certainty/uncertainty, Conditional/subjunctive moods, Indicative mood, Moods of a verb, Quotations

Indicating

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check that **indicating** has a **relevant noun** to modify

The **cells** were green, **indicating** that double-stranded DNA was present

ERROR *Semantics:* **indicating** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **cells** is the nearest noun it can complement

This gives the **unintended impression** that the **cells** were indicating something

CORRECT [if the cell **colour** was indicating something] by

adding a *human agent*

The cells were green, **indicating to us** that double-stranded DNA was present

adding a *noun* for the participle to define

The cells were green, **a fact indicating** that double-stranded DNA was present

making a *noun* the subject of the sentence

The **green colour** of the cells **indicated** that double-stranded DNA was present

Indicative mood

for factual statements and questions

in the **[Main]** (consequence, results) clause of **conditional** sentences
of Conditions/Demands/Requests

[She **is** allowed in the culture room] on condition that she wear a mask

in the **[Main]** (consequence, results) and **[Subordinate]**(conditional) clauses of **conditional sentences**

in statements **shown to be true**

[We **have demonstrated** that] [the enzyme **acts** as a true ROS scavenger]

in statements **thought to be true**

[We **speculate** that] [the enzyme **acts** as a true ROS scavenger]

in statements that **may be true**

[If she **uses** that culture medium] [the cells **will die**]

See: Assumed that, Believed that, Certainty/uncertainty, Conditional/indicative/subjunctive moods, Conditional/subjunctive moods, Demonstrated that, Determined that, Indicated that, Moods of a verb, Propose that, Quotations, Revealed that, Suggested that

Indignant with/at

with someone She was indignant **with** him for his treatment of her

at something She was indignant **at** his comment on his work

Indubitably/undoubtedly

Each means certainly

Inductive

See: Deductive/inductive

Ineffective/ineffectual

ineffective not forceful enough to achieve what is wanted

He was an **ineffective** group leader

ineffectual not producing any significant or desired the effect, futile

The fund-raising campaign was **ineffectual**

Infectious

See: Contagious/infectious

Infer

See: Imply/infer

Infertile/infertility

infertile adjective **Infertile** patients
infertility noun The patient presented with **infertility**

ALERT Check that **infertility is not** used as a **adjective**

The **infertility** patients were treated with antibiotics

ERROR *Syntax*: infertility is a **noun not** an **adjective**

CORRECT by

replacing the **noun** by an **adjective**

The **infertile** patients were treated with antibiotics

retaining **infertility** and **rewriting the sentence**

The patients **with infertility** were treated with antibiotics

Infinitely variable

See: Continuously/infinitely variable

Infinitive

A non-finite form of verb that is not declined by person or number

ALERT Check that **infinitives** relate to objects that are **capable of doing something**

We randomly selected 14 samples **to perform** RT-PCR

ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that the **samples** were to perform RT-PCR

CORRECT [if a **technician** was to perform RT-PCR] by

inserting a demonstrative pronoun

We randomly selected 14 samples **on which to perform** qRT-PCR

replacing the **verb** by a **preposition** and **adding a noun**

We randomly selected 14 samples **for** qRT-PCR **analysis**

To analyse gene expression, 42-day-old WT mice were used

ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that the **mice** were to analyse gene expression

CORRECT [if the mice were **to be analysed**] by

replacing the **infinitive** by a **prepositional phrase**

For the analysis of gene expression, 42-day-old WT mice were used

replacing the **infinitive** by the **past passive**

Gene expression **was analysed** in 42-day-old WT mice

See: Finite/non-finite verbs, In order to/to, Split infinitive, Teleology

Inflammable

See: Flammable/inflammable/non-flammable

Inflexion

A change in the form of verbs, nouns and personal pronouns with gender and number

See: Accusative (object) case, Dative (indirect object) case, Genitive (possessive) case, Plural/singular

Inform/know

inform to give facts or information

I have been **informed** of the rules by Safety Officer

know to be aware of through observation or information, to be certain

The Safety Officer **knows** the rules

Information/informations

information is correct

information is a **singular** abstract uncountable noun that has no plural

The **information** he gave **was** useful

for a **plural** use, use a **partitive** construction

The **sources of information** were unreliable

Infringe/infringe on

infringe is correct

Ingenious/ingenuous

ingenious clever, inventive

ingenuous innocent, unsophisticated

See: Disingenuous

Inimical/inimitable

inimical hostile
inimitable incapable of being imitated

Initial

Synonym: first

Initially conceived

Pleonasm: as things can be conceived only once, **initially** is *superfluous*, use **conceived**

Initiate

Synonyms: to begin, to start

Inoperable/inoperative

inoperable unable to be implemented, impractical
 The procedures were **inoperable**
 unable to be operated on
 He was suffering from **inoperable** cancer
 unable to be used
 The equipment was so rusty it was **inoperable**
inoperative not working or taking effect
 As the procedures were contrary to the new guidelines they were rendered **inoperative**

Inside/inside of

inside preposition
 Wait for me **inside** the foyer
inside of noun phrase
 the inner surface
 The **inside of** the building is more attractive than the outside

Insight in/into

into is correct

Insignificant/significant

insignificant unimportant or too small for consideration
 The taxi fare was **insignificant** compared with the cost of the flight
significant specifically used for statistical comparisons
 The difference in organs weights was **significant**

ALERT Check that insignificant *is not* used for statistical comparisons

The results were statistically **insignificant**

STYLE *Word usage:* the word **insignificant is not** used for statistics

CHANGE by **using**

not ... significant

The results were **not** statistically **significant**

non-significant

The results were statistically **non-significant**

Insofar as

See: As far as/insofar as

Insoluble

See: Immiscible/insoluble

Inspect

See: Detect/examine/inspect

Installation/instalment

installation the act of installing something or someone
instalment any of several parts of something which are made public in sequence at intervals
 a sum of money due as one of several equal payments spread over an agreed period of time

ALERT Check that **instalment** is the **intended word**

They were relieved after the long-delayed **instalment** of the new microscope

ERROR *Semantics:* a microscope cannot make payments

CORRECT by **replacing instalment** by **installation**

They were relieved after the long-delayed **installation** of the new microscope

Instant/minute/moment

instant vague, imprecise, short period of time **shorter** than a moment
moment vague, imprecise, short period of time **longer** than an instant
minute an **exact** period of 60 seconds

Instead

adverb as an alternative or substitute, in place of
Do not use testosterone but dihydro-testosterone **instead**

Instead of/rather than/rather ... than

instead of In those cases I would use swim up **instead of** density gradient centrifugation
rather than In those cases I would use swim up **rather than** density gradient centrifugation
rather ... than In those cases I would **rather** use swim up **than** density gradient centrifugation

Comparative and discontinuous conjunctions usually interchangeable

ALERT Check the meaning of **rather** when used with other **comparatives**

On my holiday, I felt **more** relaxed discussing with my supervisor about science in general **rather than** simply asking his advice
ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, **this implies** that the state of relaxation was related to what was being discussed
[I felt **more relaxed** discussing science in general and **less relaxed** when simply asking his advice]
or
the state of relaxation was related to when the conversation took place
[I felt **more relaxed** discussing with my supervisor on my holiday **than I had felt** when not on holiday]

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

replacing rather than by than when

On my holiday, I felt **more** relaxed discussing with my supervisor about science in general **than when** simply asking his advice

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

replacing rather than by instead of

On my holiday, I felt **more** relaxed discussing with my supervisor about science in general **instead of** simply asking his advice

Institute

Synonyms: to begin, to start

Insure

See: Assure/ensure/insure

Integer

Synonyms: cardinal number, whole number

See: Number/numeral, Numbers

Integration of X with Y may be performed

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **X may be integrated with Y**

Intending

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

See: Aiming/hoping/intending

Interface/interphase

interface a point, surface or place where two systems, subjects or organizations meet and interact
Non-vital spermatozoa were collected at the **interface** between the two density gradient layers
interphase period between the end of one meiotic or mitotic division and the beginning of another
The new histochemical stain enabled the cells to be examined at **interphase**

Interfere

prevent a process continuing or being carried out properly

ALERT Check that **interfere is not** used with words **implying negation**

The drug **interfered negatively** with ejaculation

ERROR *Tautology:* both **interfere** and **negatively** imply interruption

CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both

The drug **interfered** with ejaculation

The drug effected ejaculation **negatively**

See: Double negatives

Interphase

See: Interface/interphase

Interrogate/query/question

interrogate to ask someone questions aggressively, closely or formally; to obtain data from a file or database

question to ask someone a question; to feel or express doubt about; to raise objections to

query ask a question, especially in order to express one's doubts about it or to check its validity or accuracy

ALERT Check that **question** and **interrogate** are used correctly

- We **questioned** the impaired cell differentiation of the transgenic mice was due to reduced p63 expression
- ERROR *Semantics: differentiation is inanimate and cannot answer questions*
- CORRECT by adding **whether**
- We **questioned whether** the impaired cell differentiation of the transgenic mice was due to reduced p63 expression
- replacing **questioned** by **doubted that**
- We **doubted that** the impaired cell differentiation of the transgenic mice was due to reduced p63 expression
- replacing **questioned** by **query** and adding **what was being challenged**
- We **queried the concept** that the impaired cell differentiation of the transgenic mice was due to reduced p63 expression
- We **interrogated** the possibility of regulation of the p63 gene by the androgen receptor *in vitro*
- ERROR *Semantics: ambiguous, this implies that the research was done to check the possibility of androgenic regulation of p63*
- or
- the possibility of androgenic regulation itself was being questioned
- CORRECT [if the former is meant] by replacing **interrogated** by **investigated** and replacing **possibility** by **suggestion**
- We **investigated the suggestion** that the p63 gene was regulated by the androgen receptor *in vitro*
- CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by replacing **interrogated** by **doubted**
- We **doubted** the possibility of regulation of the p63 gene by the androgen receptor *in vitro*

Interrogative

See: Declarative/interrogative

Interval/range

- interval* the values limited by the upper and lower values of a *range* defined by the **upper** and **lower** limits: **two** numbers
- the **95% confidence interval**
- if **symmetrical** covers
- the **central 95%** range
(from the **2.5th** to the **97.5th** centile, inclusive)
- if asymmetrical extends
- if right-skewed
(from the **5th** to the **100th** centile, inclusive)
- if left-skewed
(from the **0th** to the **95th** centile, inclusive)
- range* the extent of variation **between the upper and lower limits** of an *interval* obtained by **subtraction** of the **lower** from the **upper** limit: **one** number
- the **95% confidence range** covers **95%** of the values whether
- symmetrical
- the **central 95%** range
(**97.5%** minus **2.5%**)
- asymmetrical
- and right-skewed
(**100%** minus **5%**)
- and left-skewed
(**95%** minus **0%**)

See: Between ... and/from ... to

Intransitive/transitive verbs

- intransitive verbs* of **complete predication**, in complete sentences
- active** intransitive verbs that **require no direct object**
- The spermatozoa **swim**
- The acrosome reaction **increased**
- linking** intransitive verbs that **require and have a complement**
- The testicular volume **is high**
- The cytoplasmic droplets **grew larger**
- of **incomplete predication**, in incomplete sentences
- linking** intransitive verbs that **require but have no complement**
- The testicular volume **is ...**
- The cytoplasmic droplets **grew ...**
- transitive verbs* of **complete predication**, in complete sentences
- transitive verbs that **require and have a direct object**
- A23187 stimulated the **acrosome reaction**
- of **incomplete predication**, in incomplete sentences
- transitive verbs that **require but have no object**
- A23187 **stimulated ...**

See: Complete/incomplete predication, Intransitive verbs of incomplete predication

Intransitive verbs of incomplete predication

link verbs, verbs of being

to appear, to be, to become, to seem

require a **complement**, which may be a many parts of speech

The spermatozoa **appeared abnormally active** (adjectival phrase)

His sperm morphology **was normal** (adjective)

Sperm motility **became rapid** upon treatment (noun)

Semen volume **seemed low** in this group (adjective)

other verbs that can be replaced by **to be**

to grow, to look, to prove, to turn

can take a **complement**

The mice **grew sleepy** after treatment (they **were** sleepy)

The sperm morphology **looked uniform** (it **was** uniform)

The experiments **proved successful** (they **were** successful)

The sperm heads **turned red** after PI addition (they **were** red)

passive verbs

from an auxiliary verb **to be** or **to have** and a **past participle**

form a **complement** of the participle

He was **appointed chairman**

She has been **made director**

complements take the nominative (subject) case

It was **I** who mended the fuse

[from: **I** mended the fuse]

It is **she** who told me how to do it

[from: **She** told me how to do it]

See: Nominative (subject) case

Invariable

Synonym: always

Invariably

Fixed, constant, not subject to change

Night **invariably** follows day

Inverse/invert/reverse

inverse opposite or contrary in position, direction, order, or effect

An **inverse** correlation

invert put upside down or in the opposite position, order or arrangement

After some adverbs the position of the subject and verb are **inverted**

reverse make the opposite of what it was, turn the other way round or up or inside out, move backwards in a direction opposite to that previously stated

After grant cuts, the number of publications moved in the **reverse** direction

ALERT Check that **reverse** is the **intended word**

There was a **reverse** correlation between testicular weight and the dose of irradiation given

ERROR *Semantics*: a correlation cannot move backwards

CORRECT by **replacing reverse** by **inverse**

There was an **inverse** correlation between testicular weight and the dose of irradiation given

See: Inversion of verbs

Inverse/obverse

inverse put upside down or in the opposite position, order or arrangement

obverse the opposite or counterpart of a fact or truth

Inversion of verbs

when the **verb** precedes **the subject**

occurs when certain adverbs or adverbial phrases begin a sentence

associated with

commands

On no account **should the UV light** be left on when cells are being cultured

emphasis

Seldom **have I seen** such good monolayers

negative statements or answers

Only when the cells are fully dispersed **should they** be plated out

occurs with

questions (the interrogative)

Was the culture bench sterilised last night?

ellipsis

Had they arrived yesterday, we could fix it today

(from: If **they had** arrived yesterday, we could fix it today)

[if] elided and inversion

See: Ellipsis, Hardly, Hardly ever, In no circumstances, In no way, Neither, Never, Never again, Never before, No sooner, Nor, Not only, Not since, Not until, Nowhere, On no account, Only by, Only rarely, Only then, Only when, Scarcely, Seldom, So, Under no circumstances

Investigation

Synonym: study

Involve

Synonyms: to affect, to entail, to necessitate, to participate, to require, to take part

Involved

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by **what was involved**

ALERT Check whether **involved** should be **replaced** by a **more informative word**

Preparation of the cells for morphological analysis **was involved**

STYLE *Verbosity*: can be shortened

CHANGE by **replacing the noun** with a **verb**

Cells were **prepared** for morphological analysis

See: Implicated/involved

Inward/inwards

inwards adverb towards what is inside

The culture room door opens **inwards**

inward adjective directed or proceeding to the inside

He felt an **inward** sense of satisfaction after winning the poster prize

Ion/ionic

ion noun a charged atom or molecule

The relative concentrations of sodium and potassium **ions** differ in serum and semen

noun used as an adjective

The sperm membrane is involved in **ion** transport (the transport **of ions**)

ionic adjective related to or using ions

The enzyme activity is mediated **ionic** changes in the substrate

ALERT Check that **ionic** is used as an adjective

Glycoproteins have been shown to activate **ionic** transport

ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that the transport **mechanism is ionic**

CORRECT [if **ions are transported** by the mechanism] by

using a noun

Glycoproteins have been shown to activate **ion** transport

i.p.

intra-peritoneally into the peritoneum (of an injection)

Ipsilateral

See: Contra-/ipsi-lateral

Irony/sarcasm/sardonicism

irony saying the opposite of what you mean

conveying a contradiction between the literal and intended meanings of words, written to amuse

“Oh, this is a good semen sample”

[when all the spermatozoa are dead]

sarcasm the use of irony to mock or convey contempt

“I pretend to work. They pretend to pay me”

[when salary is considered inadequate]

sardonicism the use of irony to mock or convey contempt, but more scornful than sarcasm

“She’s leaving early because of a headache, I suppose”

[repeating a frequent excuse]

Irradiation/radiation

radiation the emission of energy by means of electromagnetic waves

Spermatogenesis is damaged by the effects of X-**radiation** (X-rays)

irradiation the process of irradiating or being irradiated

Spermatogenesis was interrupted by X-**irradiation** of the testes

Irregardless/irrespective

irrespective is correct

Irrespective/regardless

irrespective adjective not taking something into account

Student grants are paid **irrespective** of their parent’s income

regardless adverb despite the prevailing circumstances
The allowance is made **regardless** of age

Is

See: If he is/were, Has been/is/was, Nominative (subject) case

Is defined as

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **is** [if not a specific definition]

Is in an extreme condition of decrepitude/degeneration

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **is extremely decrepit/degenerate**

Is likely to take place

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **is likely**

Is the procedure of choice from the point of view of cost

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **is the cheapest**

Iso

See: Hyper/hypo/iso

Isosmotic/isotonic

isosmotic of two fluids with the same osmolality
Human cervical mucus is **isosmotic with** unliquefied semen
isotonic of a fluid in which suspended cells neither shrink nor swell
Cauda epididymidal fluid is **isotonic for** cauda epididymidal spermatozoa

Issue

an important topic or problem for debate or discussion

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by **what the issue is (or avoid)**

fertility, fertility problems	(not fertility issues)
health, health problems	(not health issues)
sperm counts	(not the issue of sperm counts)

ALERT Check that **issue** provides information

He could not attend because of health **issues**

ERROR *Semantics:* vague, **no information is given** on what the issues are

CORRECT by **being specific**

He could not attend because of **poor** health

He could not attend because he **was ill**

It

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check whether the use of **it** is necessary

It is believed that carbon dating gives the most accurate results

STYLE *Verbosity:* can be shortened

CHANGE by **using the object** as a **subject**

Carbon dating is believed to give the most accurate results

It can be seen in Table 4 that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **Table 4 presents**

It has been observed by Green & White

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **Green & White observed**

It has been reported by Smith

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **Smith reported**

It has been reported in the past

Tautology: reports can only be in the past; replace by **It has been reported** or **In the past**

It has long been known that X ...

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **X ...**

It is apparent, therefore, that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **apparently**

It is clear that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **clearly**

It is doubtful that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **possibly**

It is known that X causes Y

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **X causes Y**

It is of interest to note that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **note, (or omit)**

It is often the case that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **often**

It is plainly demonstrable from the curves in Fig. 2 that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **Fig. 2 shows**

See: Plain/plainly

It is possible that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **possibly**

It is probable that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **probably**

It is reported in the literature that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **it is reported**

It is significant to note the fact that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **note that, (or omit)**

It is the case that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **it is true that**

It is this that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **this**

It is worth pointing out in this context that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **note that, (or omit)**

It may be borne in mind that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, **omit**

It may be said that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **possibly**

It may be that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **possibly**

It may, however, be noted that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **but, nevertheless**

It must not be forgotten that

Style: verbosity, **avoid**

It seems like/that

that is correct

that is a **conjunction** like is not

See: Conjunctions

It seems to the present writer

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **I think**

It should be borne in mind in this connection that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **note that, (or omit)**

It should be noted that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **note that, (or omit)**

It was considered by Mugurama that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **Murugama considered**

It will be seen upon examination of Table 5

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **Table 5 shows, as shown in Table 5**

It will be seen upon examination that X ...

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **X** ...

It would thus appear that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **apparently**

Iterate/reiterate

Both mean to repeat

do not mean confirm

See: Check/confirm/validate

It's/its

its personal pronoun, third person singular, genitive case
Its sensitivity is far higher than that of the older microscope
 may be used with gerunds

I am looking forward to **its** happening

it's personal pronoun, third person singular, nominative (subject) case
 short for **it is**

It's a good culture

[**it is** a good culture]

it has

It's been cultured for three days

[**it has** been cultured for three days]

ALERT Check that that **its** agrees in number with its complementary noun

The rat testis and epididymis can transport methyl-glucose and alpha-amino-isobutyric acid across **its** epithelia in vivo

ERROR Syntax: the **subject** (testis and epididymis) is **plural** but **its** is **singular**

CORRECT by using a **plural pronoun**

The rat testis and epididymis can transport methyl-glucose and alpha-amino-isobutyric acid across **their** epithelia in vivo

See: Gerund

It's he/him

it is he is correct

To be is an intransitive verb of incomplete predication

it requires a complement in the nominative (**he**) **not** accusative (**him**)

It's her/she

it is she is correct

To be is an intransitive verb of incomplete predication

it requires a complement in the nominative (**she**) **not** accusative (**her**)

It's I/me

it is I is correct

To be is an intransitive verb of incomplete predication

it requires a complement in the nominative (**I**) **not** accusative (**me**)

It's us/we

it is we is correct

To be is an intransitive verb of incomplete predication

it requires a complement in the nominative (**we**) **not** accusative (**us**)

i.v.

intra-venously into a vein (of an injection)

Jargon/layman terminology

jargon

technical words or expressions used by specialists in a field

Avoid if unlikely to be understandable by **laymen** or **specialists in another area**

Permissible in scientific papers aimed at a **specialist audience**

layman terminology

used by the non-specialist, general public

Avoid in scientific publications

Permissible in talks for the general public

See: Get, Language, Sperm/sperms, Spun down, Style

Join together

Pleonasm: as **join** implies bringing together, **together** is **superfluous**, use **join**

Jointly

with another person or people, together

See: Both/each

*Judged by/from*equivalent **participial phrases**Elided participial phrases meaning **[If we are to] judge by/from**The cells had been stimulated, **judged by** their greater speed**Judged from** their lower speed, the cells had been inhibited*See:* Absolute/non-absolute verbal constructions, Ellipsis*Judging by/from*equivalent **gerundial phrases**Elided gerundial phrases meaning **[If we are to] judge by/from**The cells had shrunk, **judging from** their smaller volume**Judging by** their smaller volume, the cells had shrunk*See:* Ellipsis*Just*

adds emphasis

Just because the drug had no effect on sperm motility, that does not mean that it was inactive*See:* Because ... does not mean*Just now/still**just now* **up to** the point in time or the event, until nowused with the **present perfect** (for something started in the past and already completed)We **have just now received** the primers[we had not received them **until now**]*still* **as far as** the point in time or the event, by now, yetused with the **present perfect** (for something started in the past and applicable currently)We **have still not received** the primers[we haven't received them **up to now**]*See:* Until/up to now*Kill**See:* Cull/kill, Euphemism*Killing*A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)*See:* Euthanasia/killing*Kind/kinds of**kinds of* requires the **plural**

after these, those

The university is familiar with **these kinds of complaints**The university is familiar with **those kinds of complaints***kind of* requires the **singular**after **this, that**The university is familiar with **this kind of complaint**The university is familiar with **that kind of complaint**before **this, that**, even after a **plural**The university is familiar with **complaints of this kind**The university is familiar with **complaints of that kind***Kindly/please**kindly* adverb used to describe

verbs and verbal phrases

the **manner** in which verb performs is describedplaced **after** the **verb** or verbal phraseShe **treated** the patient **kindly**

whole clauses

meaning **Please be so kind as to...**placed at the beginning of the *clause***Kindly** stay away from the demolition area*please* adverb used for polite requests or questionsFor your own safety **please** stay away from the demolition area**ALERT** Check that **kindly is not** used with **please****Please kindly** fill in the form and return it to us without delayERROR *Tautology:* as a clause modifier **kindly** implies the polite requestCORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both**Please** fill in the form and return it to us without delay**Kindly** fill in the form and return it to us without delay

*Kinematics/kinetics**kinetics*deals with the **movements** of, and the **forces** which can act on, bodies in motion and bodies at rest*kinematics*deals only with the **movement** of various bodiesCASA machines measure the **kinematic** parameters VCL, VAP, VSL, ALH, BCF, MAD, LIN, STR, WOB*Kinematics is/are**is*

is correct

Kinematics is a **plural** noun treated as *singular***Kinematics deals** with the study of movement of bodies*Kinetics is/are**is*

is correct

kinetics is a plural noun treated as *singular***Kinetics is** a branch of physics*Know*

to be certain of something

ALERT Check that **know** is used correctlyThe experiments were designed **to know** if intracellular calcium levels were raised**ERROR** *Semantics:* it is **impossible** to be certain of something before the experiments have been done**CORRECT** by **replacing know** by verbs that **relate to investigation**The experiments were designed **to ascertain/determine/find out** if intracellular calcium levels were raised

See: Inform/know

*Labelled/labeled**labelled*

is correct

Label is a **polysyllabic** word with a **short** vowel and emphasis on the **first** syllableThe final consonant is **doubled** when adding a suffix and the consonant is L (or R)*Labelling/labeling**labelling*

is correct

Label is a **polysyllabic** word with a **short** vowel and emphasis on the **first** syllableThe final consonant is **doubled** when adding a suffix and the consonant is L (or R)*Lacked the ability to*Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **couldn't***Lacking/missing**lacking*not having (or not having sufficient of) something that is needed, but which **may not exist**I am **lacking** a screwdriver*missing*having mislaid something **that exists**, absent, lostThe instruction sheet is **missing***Language**spoken*

formal, informal

informal (colloquial) speech may be acceptable although grammatically incorrect

e.g. sperm, sperms*written*

formal, informal

formal writing should not include colloquial speech

e.g. spermatozoon, spermatozoa

See: Jargon/layman terminology

*Large/larger**large*the *absolute (positive)* form of the adjective, used with comparative prepositional phrasesThe values were **large compared with** those of the controlThe values were **large in comparison with** those of the controls*larger*the *comparative* form of the adjective, used with the conjunction **than**The values were **larger than** those of the control**ALERT** Check that the **larger is not** used with phrases **implying a comparison**The values were **larger compared with** those of the controlsThe values were **larger in comparison with** those of the controls**ERROR** *Tautology:* **larger** is a **comparative** adjective and the prepositional phrases **imply a comparison****CORRECT** by **retaining** the**comparative** form of the adjective and **using** the conjunction **than**The values were **larger than** those of the control**comparative prepositional** phrase and **using** the *absolute (positive)* form of the adjectiveThe values were **large compared with** those of the controlThe values were **large in comparison with** those of the controls

Large numbers of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **many**, or give the actual numbers

Large percentage of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **most** or **much**, or give the actual percentage

Large proportion of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **most** or **much**, or give the actual proportion

Large in size

Pleonasm: as **large** implies size, **size** is *superfluous*, use **large**

Larger in size

Pleonasm: as **larger** implies size, **size** is *superfluous*, use **larger**

Last/latest

<i>last</i>	final or most recent
<i>latest</i>	most recent

ALERT Check whether **last** is the best word to use

Our paper was published in the **last** edition of the journal

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that the **final** edition of the journal
[which then ceased to publish]

or

the **most recent** edition of the journal
[the ultimate edition]

or

the **previous** edition of the journal
[the penultimate edition]

CORRECT [if the journal ceased to exist] by

using **final**

Our paper was published in the **final** edition of the journal

CORRECT [if the most recent issue is meant] by

using **latest**

Our paper was published in the **latest** edition of the journal

using **most recent**

Our paper was published in the **most recent** edition of the journal

CORRECT [if the penultimate issue is meant] by

using **previous**

Our paper was published in the **previous** edition of the journal

Last-mentioned

See: First-/last-mentioned

Last-named

See: First-/last-named

Latter

See: Former/latter

Lay/lie

<i>lay</i>	transitive verb	to put something somewhere
		I lay out the <i>instruments</i>
		simple past tense laid
		past participle laid

<i>lie</i>	intransitive verb	to be at rest
		I lie down
		simple past tense lay
		past participle lain

[**lie** applies *only* to people or animals]

See: Intransitive/transitive verbs

Leaving

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check whether **leaving** is used as a **gerund** or a **participle**

They tried to prevent **him** leaving

ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that they **tried to prevent him**

CORRECT [if his **attempt to leave** was prevented] by

using the **genitive** and a **gerund**

The tried to prevent **his leaving**

using a **prepositional phrase**

They tried to prevent him **from leaving**

See: Gerund/participle

Less

See: Fewer/less than a fraction, Fewer/less than N objects, Fewer/less than N%, Fewer/less than one in N, Fewer/less/more, Less/lesser, Less/little

Less/lesser

less adjective inferior comparative of **little**: not so great as the other
compares **two or more** items or groups
Of all patient groups, those with varicocoele had **little** secretion, those with vasectomy **less**
in hyphenated adjectives

She was placed in the group of **less-fecund** women

lesser adjective inferior comparative of **less** (double comparative): not so great as the other
compares **two** items or groups

Of patients and donors, the patients produced the **lesser** semen volume

adverb not so much

compares **two** items or groups

Of the articles reviewed, he wrote the **lesser** known publication

The poster prize winner receives €100, the runners up receive **lesser** amounts

ALERT Check whether **less** needs a hyphen

Less fecund couples remain in the pool of couples who have not achieved a pregnancy

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **it is unclear** what **less** refers to, the couples or the fecundity, **this could mean**
a lower number of couples

or

couples of lower fecundity

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

replacing **less** by **fewer**

Fewer fecund couples remain in the pool of couples who have not achieved a pregnancy

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

adding a **hyphen**

Less-fecund couples remain in the pool of couples who have not achieved a pregnancy

See: Fewer/less/more

Less/little

little the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjective little, used with **compared with** or **in comparison with**

less the **comparative** form of the adjective little, used with the conjunction **than**

ALERT Check that the **less is not** used with phrases **implying comparison**

There was **less** secretion **compared with** that in the control group

There was **less** secretion **in comparison with** that in control group

ERROR *Tautology*: **less** is a **comparative** adjective and the prepositional phrases **imply a comparison**

CORRECT by **retaining** the

comparative form of the adjective and **using** the conjunction **than**

There was **less** secretion **than** that in the control group

comparative prepositional phrase with the *absolute (positive)* form of the adjective

There was **little** secretion **compared with** that in the control group

There was **little** secretion **in comparison with** that in the control group

Lesser degree

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **less**

Lesser extent

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **less**

Level

A position on a scale of amount, extent, quality or quantity

Overused vague word: often used unnecessarily, replace by **what sort of level** is meant (**or avoid**)

use on its own the **noun** in the preceding **adjective**

low **expression** (**not** low expression **level**)

high **motility** (**not** high motility **level**)

high **permeability** (**not** high permeability **level**)

ALERT Check if **level** should be **replaced** by a **more informative word**

Testosterone **levels** were reduced by the anti-spermatogenic agent

ERROR *Semantics*: vague, **no information is given** on what level refers to

CORRECT by **replacing level** by a **more specific parameter**

concentration, for fluids

Serum testosterone **concentrations** were reduced by the anti-spermatogenic agent

content, for tissues

The **testicular** testosterone **content** was reduced by the anti-spermatogenic agent

ALERT Check whether **level** can be omitted

The gene expression **level** was initially **low** and **increased** during culture

ERROR *Semantics*: as a **level** is fixed, **it cannot vary**; but an expression is variable

CORRECT by **omitting level**

The gene **expression** was initially **low** and **increased** during culture

This work shows the **high level of complexity** of gene regulation in the organ

STYLE *Verbosity*: can be shortened

CHANGE by **omitting level**

This work shows the **high complexity** of gene regulation in the organ

Analysis indicated a **high expression level** of these genes

STYLE *Verbosity*: can be shortened

CHANGE by **omitting level**

Analysis indicated a **high expression** of these genes

ALERT Check that **levels** is used with a **singular** noun

Andrology laboratories should provide two **levels of investigations**: semen analysis and a relevant sperm function test

ERROR *Syntax*: there are **two** investigations, but each is **only at one level**

CORRECT by

retaining levels of and **making** investigation **singular**

Andrology laboratories should provide two **levels of investigation**: semen analysis and a relevant sperm function test

omitting levels of

Andrology laboratories should provide two **investigations**: semen analysis and a relevant sperm function test

Synonyms: activity, concentration, content, number, osmolality, percentage, proportion, volume

See: Nouns used as adjectives/genitives, Style

Liabile/prone to

liable likely to do or experience something

Patients with this gene defect are **liable** to become infertile

prone likely to suffer from or experience something unpleasant

The transgenic mice were **prone** to heart disease

Unlike the epididymis, the testis and prostate are cancer-**prone** organs

Licence/license

licence noun

license verb

Lie/lay

See: Lay/lie

Like

adjective similar to, resembling but not identical, characteristic of, having similar characteristics to another

Like the prostate gland, the epididymis is androgen-dependent

noun the object of a verb

His **likes** include ice-cream and chocolate

preposition in the manner of, in a similar way to, much the same as

He thinks **like** a scientist

verb to enjoy

I **like** correcting manuscripts

is not a conjunction

ALERT Check that **like**, used as an **adjective**, compares grammatical equivalents

Like her husband, Dr Yeung's scientific education was at Reading

ERROR *Syntax*: **like** compares Dr Yeung's **husband** with her scientific **education**

CORRECT by comparing grammatical equivalents by

making Dr Yeung a **subject** and **adding a verb**

Like her husband, **Dr Yeung had** a scientific education at Reading

making husband **genitive**

Like her **husband's**, Dr Yeung's scientific education was at Reading

ALERT Check that an **adjectival phrase** containing **like** is separated by commas

At the conference I met two people who **like** me worked on the epididymis

ERROR *Semantics:* the reader initially expects **like** to be a **verb** (people who **like** me) but find out later it is used as an adjective

CORRECT by **adding commas** to create an **adjectival phrase**

At the conference I met two people who, **like me**, worked on the epididymis

See: As/like, As if/like, Ellipsis, Look/look like

Like/similar/similar to

<i>like</i>	preposition	much the same as My computer is old, like hers
<i>similar</i>	adjective	much the same, resembling without being identical My computer is old, hers is similar
<i>similar to</i>	adjective	as is the case with My computer is blue, similar to hers

ALERT Check that **similar to** links grammatical equivalents

Similar to other observations, the telomere was histone-bound

ERROR *Semantics:* **similar to** is an adjective and **telomere** is the nearest noun it can complement

This gives the **unintended impression** that the **telomere was similar to** observations

CORRECT [if its **histone-bound state** was similar that found in other observations] by

replacing **similar to** by a **prepositional phrase**

As found by others, the telomere was histone-bound

As reported before, the telomere was histone-bound

Similar to our previous study, the reaction rate increased with higher temperatures

ERROR *Semantics:* **similar to** is an adjective and **reaction rate** is the closest noun it can complement

This gives the **unintended impression** that the reaction **rate was similar to** a study

CORRECT [if the **increase in reaction rate with temperature** was similar to that in our previous study] by

replacing **similar to** by a **prepositional phrase**

As found in our previous study, the reaction rate increased with higher temperatures

As we reported before, the reaction rate increased with higher temperature

Similar to AQP7, AQP8 was first identified through its cloning from testicular cDNA

ERROR *Semantics:* **similar to** is an adjective and **AQP8** is the nearest noun it can complement

This gives the **unintended impression** that **AQP8 was similar to** AQP7

CORRECT [if AQP8's **identification through** cloning was similar to that of AQP7's] by

replacing **similar to** by a **prepositional phrase**

As was the case for AQP7, AQP8 was first identified through its cloning from testicular cDNA

Similar to the results of Quick et al., we observed PAX2 staining in central prostatic zone

ERROR *Semantics:* **similar to** is an adjective and **we** is the nearest noun it can complement

This gives the **unintended impression** that **we were similar to** the results

CORRECT [if our **results** were similar to those of Quick et al] by

replacing **similar to** by **like** and **we** by **ours**

Like the results of Quick et al., **ours** demonstrated PAX2 staining in the central prostatic zone

Like/such as

<i>like</i>	as an adjective means similar to, resembling does not mean identical, characteristic of implies comparison compares two objects or people (items from the same category) Ligation, like electrocautery, is used to stem bleeding [likens two procedures] Dr Waites, like Dr Setchell, did research on testicular physiology [likens two scientists]
<i>such as</i>	relative pronoun implies inclusion compares two or more objects or people (items included in a larger category) the such as phrase may be separated by commas Surgical procedures, such as ligation and electro-cautery, are used to stop bleeding [Ligation and electro-cautery are two examples of [included in] all surgical procedures] Famous andrologists, such as Drs Waites and Setchell, founded the British Andrology Society [Drs Waites and Setchell are two examples of [included in] all famous andrologists] such as phrases with commas can be removed without changing the meaning Surgical procedures are used to stop bleeding Famous andrologists founded the British Andrology Society the such as phrase may have no comma His lab. book contains reports such as protocols and medium composition [Protocols and medium composition are two examples of [included in] the reports]

such as phrases without commas **cannot be removed** without changing the meaning

ALERT Check that **like** compares things of the **same category**

Since his arrival he has promoted new activities **like** journal club

ERROR *Syntax:* as **like does not** mean identical to, this means he promoted activities **similar to** journal club, **but not** journal club itself

CORRECT [if journal club is **an example of (included in)** the new activities he promoted] by

replacing like by words implying inclusion

Since his arrival he has promoted new activities **such as** journal club

Since his arrival he has promoted new activities, **for example** journal club

Since his arrival he has promoted new activities **including** journal club

CORRECT [if journal club was **the only** new activity he promoted] by

replacing like by namely

Since his arrival he has promoted a new activity, **namely** journal club

replacing like by i.e.

Since his arrival he has promoted a new activity, **i.e.** journal club

being more specific by using the definite article

Since his arrival he has promoted **the** new activity of journal club

The experiments involved accepted methods **like** immuno-histochemistry and western blotting

ERROR *Syntax:* as **like does not** mean identical to, this means the experiments involved accepted methods **similar to** immuno-histochemistry and western blotting, **but not** these methods themselves

CORRECT [if immuno-histochemistry and western blotting **are examples of (included in)** the validated methods used] by

replacing like by words implying inclusion

The experiments involved validated methods **such as** immuno-histochemistry and western blotting

The experiments involved validated methods, **for example** immuno-histochemistry and western blotting

The experiments involved validated methods **including** immuno-histochemistry and western blotting

CORRECT [if immuno-histochemistry and western blotting were **the only** validated methods used] by

replacing like by namely

The experiments involved validated methods, **namely** immuno-histochemistry and western blotting

replacing like by i.e.

The experiments involved validated methods, **i.e.** immuno-histochemistry and western blotting

being more specific by using the definite article

The experiments involved **the** validated methods **of** immuno-histochemistry and western blotting

Stem cell markers **like** OCT3/4 and NANOG were examined in tissue sections

ERROR *Syntax:* as **like does not** mean identical to, this means the stem cell markers examined were **similar to** OCT3/4 and NANOG, **but not** these markers themselves

CORRECT [if OCT4 and NANOG **are examples of (included in)** the stem cell markers used] by

replacing like by words implying inclusion

Stem cell markers **such as** OCT3/4 and NANOG were examined in tissue sections

Stem cell markers, **for example** OCT3/4 and NANOG, were examined in tissue sections

Stem cell markers **including** OCT3/4 and NANOG were examined in tissue sections

CORRECT [if OCT4 and NANOG were **the only** markers used] by

replacing like by namely

Stem cell markers, **namely** OCT3/4 and NANOG, were examined in tissue sections

replacing like by i.e.

Stem cell markers, **i.e.** OCT3/4 and NANOG, were examined in tissue sections

being more specific by using the definite article

The stem cell markers OCT3/4 and NANOG were examined in tissue sections

The grant funded equipment in certain laboratories **like** cell culture and cryopreservation

ERROR *Syntax:* as **like does not** mean identical to, this means that labs. funded were **similar to** cell culture and cryopreservation labs., **but not** these labs. themselves

CORRECT [if cell culture and cryo-preservation labs. are **examples of (included in)** those funded by the grant] by

adding a demonstrative pronoun and replacing like by words implying inclusion

The grant funded equipment in certain laboratories **such as those of** cell culture and cryopreservation

The grant funded equipment in certain laboratories, **for example those of** cell culture and cryopreservation

The grant funded equipment in certain laboratories **including those of** cell culture and cryopreservation

CORRECT [if cell culture and cryo-preservation labs. are **the only laboratories** those funded by the grant] by

replacing like by namely and adding a demonstrative pronoun

The grant funded equipment in certain laboratories, **namely those of** cell culture and cryopreservation

replacing like by i.e. and adding a demonstrative pronoun

The grant funded equipment in certain laboratories, **i.e. those of** cell culture and cryopreservation

being more specific by using the definite article

The grant funded equipment in **the** laboratories of cell culture and cryopreservation

See: As, As/like, Defining/non-defining clauses, E.g./i.e.

Like for example

Syntax: **like** compares objects of the **same rank**, whereas **for example** compares objects of **different rank** use **one or the other**, not both

See: As/like, Like/such as

Likely/may

likely adjective might well happen or be true, probable
may auxiliary verb expressing possibility

ALERT Check that **likely is not** used with words **indicating possibility**

It is **likely** that the individual cell types within the epithelium **may** perform separate functions

ERROR *Tautology*: likely and may both indicate a possibility

CORRECT by **using one or the other**, not both

It is **likely** that the individual cell types within the epithelium perform separate functions

The individual cell types within the epithelium **may** perform separate functions

See: Apt/likely, Certainty/uncertainty, Quotations

Likewise

See: Contrari-/like-wise

Limited

Overused vague word: often used unnecessarily, replace by a **more specific** term

Synonyms: dearth, inadequate, insufficient, little, meagre, restricted, scant, small

Limited amount of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **little**

Limited number of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **few**

Link together

Pleonasm: as **link** implies bringing together, **together** is *superfluous*, use **link**

Liquefies/liquifies

liquefies is correct

Liquefaction/liquification

liquefaction is correct

Liquefaction/solidification

liquefaction phase change from **solid to liquid** by any means

Semen was allowed **to liquefy** at room temperature for 30 min

solidification phase change from **liquid to solid** by any means

The molten agar gel was poured into Petri dishes and allowed **to solidify** at room temperature

See: Condensation/evaporation/sublimation, Freezing/melting/thawing

Liquefied/liquified

liquefied is correct

Lists

a number of connected items or names written or printed consecutively

ALERT Check that **lists** relates to an object **capable of making lists**

Table 2 **lists** the results

ERROR *Anthropomorphism*: a **Table** is **inanimate and cannot** list anything

CORRECT by **changing the verb** from the active to **passive voice**

The results **are listed** in Table 2

Literature/literatures

Literature is correct

literature is a **singular** noun that has no plural

A search of the relevant **literature** indicated few references on human epididymal ageing

Litotes

literary device used for emphasis by expressing something by the **negative** of its **opposite**

He's **no fool**

[He is **clever**]

She is **not a bad** scientist

[She is **quite a good** scientist]

The effect is by **no means negligible**

[The effect is **quite noticeable**]

Little

See: Less/little

Locate/localise

- locate** to discover a place where something is found (the location)
Immunofluorescent staining was **located** on the sperm head
- localise** to be restricted to a specific area (the localization)
Immunofluorescent staining was **localised** in the equatorial region

Look/look like

- look** transitive verb of complete predication, to observe
part of a **predicate**
I **looked at the poster**
- an intransitive verb of incomplete predication (link verb, verb of being)
takes a **complement**
She **looks happy**
- look like** to appear to be
to look, with the preposition **like**
followed by a **noun**
It **looks like** an **epididymis**
[It **appears to be** an **epididymis**]
- ALERT** Check that **like is not** used as a **conjunction**
- It **looks like** I shall have to work over the weekend again
- ERROR** *Syntax*: **like** is used here as a **conjunction** joining two clauses, not a preposition
- CORRECT** by **replacing like** by a **conjunction**
It looks **as if** I shall have to work over the weekend again

See: As if/like

Looking

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check that the **participle** has a **relevant noun** to complement

The most recent were studies in humans **looking** for possible associations between each of the anomalies

ERROR *Semantics*: **looking** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **humans** is the closest noun it can modify
This gives the **unintended impression** that the **humans** were looking for possible associations

CORRECT [if the **studies** were aimed at looking for possible associations] by
replacing in humans by **human** so that **looking** follows the **noun** it defines

The most recent were **human studies looking** for possible associations between each of the anomalies
replacing looking by **that looked**

The most recent were studies in humans **that looked** for possible associations between each of the anomalies

Loose/lose

- loose** verb to set free
adjective not tightly fitting
- lose** verb to be deprived of, cease to retain, mislay

ALERT Check that **loose** is used correctly

Once spermatozoa move out of the protective seminal plasma, they progressively **loose** protection against ROS

ERROR *Semantics*: protection cannot be tightly fitting

CORRECT by **replacing loose** by **lose**

Once spermatozoa move out of the protective seminal plasma, they progressively **lose** protection against ROS

Loth/loath/loathe

- loth/loath** adjective to be reluctant or unwilling to do something
He was **loth/loath** to admit that he attended the lecture during the students' strike
- loathe** verb to have a dislike of, or aversion to, something
He **loathed** mice

Lots is/are

- is** is correct
as **lots itself** is the subject, use the **singular**
There **is lots** to see in his laboratory

Lots of ... is/are

- are** is correct
as what **lots of** refers to (a **plural** group) is the subject, use the **plural**
There **are lots of methods** for measuring cell volume

Low/lower

- low** the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjective used with comparative prepositional phrases

lower the **comparative** form of the adjective used with the conjunction **than**

ALERT Check that the **comparative is not** used with phrases **implying comparison**

The values were **lower compared with** those of the controls

The values were **lower in comparison with** those of the controls

ERROR *Tautology*: **lower** is a **comparative** adjective and the prepositional phrases **imply a comparison**

CORRECT by **retaining** the

comparative form of the adjective and **using** the conjunction **than**

The values were **lower than** those of the control

absolute (positive) form of the adjective and using a **comparative prepositional phrase**

The values were **low compared with** those of the control

The values were **low in comparison with** those of the controls

Lower/decreased

lower the **comparative** form of the adjective **low**
followed by the conjunction **than**

Sperm motility after addition of the drug was **lower than** before

followed by the preposition **after** with a causative agent

Sperm motility was **lower after** addition of the drug **than** before

decreased a **participle** (verbal adjective)

followed by the preposition **by** with a causative agent

Sperm motility was **decreased by** addition of the drug

Lower/upper case

upper case capital Latin letters (A, B, C ... X, X, Z)

capital Roman numerals (I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X ...)

lower case non-capital Latin letters (a, b, c ... x, y, z)

non-capital Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii, viii, ix, x ...)

Lower number of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **fewer**

Lowered

indicates a causal relationship, with time or after some manipulation

transitive verb with **object** to make smaller in extent or number

active

Ornidazole **lowered** testicular tubule *diameters*

passive

Tubule *diameters* **were lowered** by ornidazole treatment

indicates a causal relationship, with time or after some manipulation

ALERT Check that **lowered is not** used for direct **comparisons**

Tubule diameters in the treated group were **lowered compared with** those of the controls

Tubule diameters in the treated group were **lowered in comparison with** those of the controls

ERROR *Syntax*: participles **are not** used for direct comparison

CORRECT by

retaining lowered as a participle and **stating the cause of the increase**

Tubule diameters in the treated group were **lowered by ornidazole**

retaining lowered and **stating** what it was **lowered below**

Tubule diameters in the treated group were **lowered below those of the untreated controls**

omitting lowered and **stating** what the tubule diameters **were below**

Tubule diameters in the treated group were **below** those of the untreated controls

omitting lowered and **stating** what the tubule diameters **were lower than**

Tubule diameters in the treated group were **lower than** those of the untreated controls

retaining the comparative prepositional phrase and **using the absolute (positive)** form of the adjective

Tubule diameters in the treated group were **low compared with** those of the control

Tubule diameters in the treated group were **low in comparison with** those of the control

See: Decreased/lower

Lumen/luminal

lumen noun the **lumen** of the epididymal tubule

luminal adjective epididymal **luminal** contents (spermatozoa, fluid)

Luminal/luminal

luminal is correct

Made

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by **what was made**

Made a count

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **counted**

Magnet/magnetic

magnet noun
magnetic adjective

ALERT Check that **magnetic is not** used as a **noun**

Separation was achieved by **magnetic-activated** cell sorting

ERROR *Semantics:* the hyphenated double adjective makes no sense [activated by **magnetic**]

CORRECT by **using nouns** in a hyphenated adjective

Cells were separated by **magnet-activated** cell sorting

[activated by **magnets**]

Cells were separated by **magnetic bead-activated** cell sorting

[activated by **magnetic beads**]

Major

Overused vague word: often used unnecessarily, replace by a **more specific** adjective

Synonyms: big, chief, greater, important, large, main, momentous, principal, prominent

Majority

The greater **number**

is not used for mass, quantity, volume

ALERT Check that **majority** only refers to numbers

After the pipe burst, the **majority** of the laboratory was affected by flooding

ERROR *Syntax:* **majority** is used for **numbers not for** areas

CORRECT by **using** words related to **areas**

After the pipe burst, the **greater part** of the laboratory was affected by flooding

After the pipe burst, a **large part** of the laboratory was affected by flooding

See: Bulk/majority/most

Majority ... is/are

is is correct

as the **majority itself** is the subject, use the **singular**

The **majority** for the motion **is** smaller than that last year

Majority of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **most of**

Majority of ... is/are

are is correct

as what the **majority of** refers to (a **plural** group) is the subject, use the **plural**

The majority of **spermatozoa are** acrosome-reacted

Majority is/are

is is correct

as the **majority itself** is the subject, use the **singular**

This year the **majority is** smaller than that last year

Make

to bring into being

She **made** a physiological saline solution

as auxiliary verb, to cause to act in a certain way

He was **made** to pay a fine for breaching the safety guidelines

ALERT Check that **make** does not introduce confusion

Gels were made **to identify** differential protein spots in the DIGE gels

ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, at first reading it seems that the gels were **forced to** identify protein spots

CORRECT by

adding in order

Gels were made **in order** to identify differential protein spots in DIGE gels

being more specific

Gels were made for **the purpose of identifying** the differential protein spots in DIGE gels

Man

See: Human/man/Man/mankind/men

Mankind

See: Human/man/Man/mankind/men

Manner

Synonym: way

Many/more

many the absolute (positive) form of the adjective many, used with compared with, in comparison with
more the **comparative** form of the adjective many, used with the conjunction **than**

ALERT Check that the **more is not** used with phrases **implying comparison**

There were **more** offspring **compared with** the control group
 There were **more** offspring **in comparison with** the control group

ERROR *Tautology*: **more** is a **comparative** adjective and the participial phrases **imply a comparison**
CORRECT by **retaining** the

comparative form of the adjective together with the conjunction **than**

There were **more** offspring **than** in the control group

comparative prepositional phrase and **using** the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjective

There were **many** offspring **compared with** the control group

There were **many** offspring **in comparison with** the control group

Many/much

many with countable objects, use the **plural**
Many students **were** present at the seminar

much with uncountable objects, use the **singular**
Much discussion **is** anticipated after the talk

Many/multiple/multi-

many a large but unspecified number
 She spoke **many** languages

multiple having or involving several parts, elements or members
 This unit specialises in **multiple** births

multi- abbreviation of multiple
 more than one, especially variegated, many, much
 used in compound hyphenated adjectives

multi-lingual (able to speak many languages)

multi-faceted (containing many different aspects, features, qualities)

ALERT Check whether **multiple** or **multi-** is required

Multiple studies have indicated that gonadotrophin treatment is effective in these cases

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that
 more than one study was done
 or

the studies involved several parts

CORRECT [if the former is the case] by

replacing multiple by **many**

Many studies have indicated that gonadotrophin treatment is effective in these cases

CORRECT [if the latter is the case] by

replacing multiple by **multi-part**

Multi-part studies have indicated that gonadotrophin treatment is effective in these cases

Many/numerous/several

many a large but unspecified number
 She spoke **many** languages

numerous a large number, many
 He has complained about the air-conditioning on **numerous** occasions

several more than two or three, but not a lot
 He has written **several** papers on that topic

See: Few/several, Many/multiple/multi-

Many ... is/are

are is correct
 as what **many** refers to (a **plural** group) is the subject, use the **plural**
Many studies have attempted to show a relationship between sperm tail length and their swimming speed

Many a ... is/are

is is correct
 as what **many a** refers to is the subject, use the **singular**
Many a scientist has tried to publish in Nature

Many is/are

are is correct
 as what **many** refers to (a **plural** group) is the subject, use the **plural**
 Of the foreign studies, **many have** shown a relationship between sperm tail length and their swimming speed

Many of ... is/are
are

is correct
as what **many of** refers to (a **plural** group) is the subject, use the **plural**
Many of the media were unable to support the cells in culture

Margin

The difference between two quantities
is not the range

The effect of quinine (a 5% increase) exceeds that of 4-AP (a 2% increase) by a **margin** of 3%
[5% minus 2%]

See: Interval/range

Marginal

near a lower or upper limit
does not mean small, slight

Marginally

Synonyms: barely, just, slightly

Masterful/masterly

masterful worthy of the master of a skill
masterly dominating

Materialised

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by **what materialised**
Synonyms: arrived, happened, occurred

Mating

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check that **mating** refers to the **intended word**

Homozygous offspring were born six weeks after **mating**
ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **mating** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **offspring** is the nearest noun it can complement
This gives the **unintended impression** that the **offspring** had been mating

CORRECT by

being more specific by mentioning their **parents**

Homozygous offspring were born **six weeks** after **the mating** of heterozygous males with wild-type females

omitting mating and **rewriting the sentence**

Heterozygous males were provided with two wild-type oestrous females and homozygous offspring were born **six weeks** later

See: Breeding/mating

Maturate/mature

mature is correct

Maximise

to increase to the utmost amount or degree
does not mean increase

Maximum/minimum

maximum The highest or largest value of a given variable
minimum The lowest or smallest value of a given variable

See: At least/most

Maximum of ... is/are

is is correct
as **maximum** refers to **one** number, use the **singular**
A **maximum of** 200 people **is** permitted in the lecture hall
to use the **plural**, omit maximum
Two hundred people **are** permitted in the lecture hall

May/might

may auxiliary verb (with an **infinitive without** the infinitive marker **to**)
for possibilities

I **may do** it today, tomorrow

for permission

May I have the keys?

might auxiliary verb (with an **infinitive without** the infinitive marker **to**)
for possibilities

I **might do** it today/tomorrow (less certain than may)
for permission

Might I have the keys (more hesitant than may)
 a conditional in the [Main] (consequence, results) clause of **conditional sentences** which **may be untrue**
 If it were possible [I **might try** it]

See: Appear/may, Can/may, Certainty/uncertainty, Likely/may, Moods of a verb, Possible/probable

May be/maybe

may be an **auxiliary** before a **main** verb
 This **may be done** if permission is first granted
maybe adverb it may be that, perhaps, possibly
 I am not sure, but **maybe** the technician can do it today

Me

See: I/me

Me/myself

me first person singular accusative (object) case
 They gave the prize to **me**
myself first person singular reflexive form
 used by a speaker to refer to himself as object of a verb or preposition
 I cut **myself** during the surgery
 I or me personally, for emphasis
 I wrote it **myself**

ALERT Check that **myself** is only used reflexively

The committee will consist of the Dean, the Director and **myself**

ERROR *Syntax*: myself has nothing to refer back to

CORRECT by **replacing myself** by **me**

The committee will consist of the Dean, the Director and **me**

Mean/median/mode

mean
 arithmetic mean (X-bar, average)
 The value obtained by dividing the sum of all values by the number of values
 geometric mean (G)
 The value obtained by taking the *n*th root of the product of the *n* numbers
 harmonic mean (H)
 The value obtained by taking the reciprocal of the arithmetic mean of the reciprocals of each value
 quadratic mean (Q)
median (50th centile)
 The value obtained by taking the square root of the arithmetic mean of the squares of the values
 The value situated in the middle of a series of numbers, with equal an number of values above and below it
 (if there is no middle value, the arithmetic mean of the two middle values)
mode
 The value in a series that occurs most often

See: Centile/percentile, Quantile

Meaningful

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by a **relevant alternative**

Measurement numbers

See: Numbers

Measurement/s of ... is/are performed

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by ... **is/are measured by** ...

Mechanic/mechanics

mechanic a skilled technician
mechanics the plural of mechanic

Mechanics a branch of physics

Mechanics is/are

is is correct
 mechanics is a *plural* noun treated as *singular*
Mechanics is a branch of physics

Media/medium/mediums

medium relating to news coverage (in papers, TV, internet)
 an incubation solution
 a mediator of spiritualism (a spiritualist)
media Latin plural of medium (news coverage, solution)

mediums English plural of medium (spiritualist)

Median

See: Mean/median/mode

Medium

See: Media/medium/mediums

Meet together

Pleonasm: as **meet** implies coming together, **together** is *superfluous*, use **meet**

Melt

See: Dissolve/melt

Melting

See: Freezing/melting/thawing

Men

See: Human/man/Man/mankind/men

Method/methodology

method a particular **procedure** for achieving something
She used a flow cytometric **method** for determining cell size

methodology the **study** or **system** of methods used in a field
His thesis began with a review of the **methodology** used for assessing sperm motility

ALERT Check whether **methodology** is the **intended word**

The **methodology** used in this study included western blots, immuno-cytochemistry and immuno-histochemistry

ERROR *Semantics*: methodology is **the study** of methods, **not** the methods themselves

CORRECT by **replacing methodology by methods**
The **methods** used in this study included western blots, immuno-cytochemistry and immuno-histochemistry

Meticulous/punctilious/scrupulous

meticulous over-careful

punctilious admirably careful of detail

scrupulous admirably careful of detail

mg is/are

was when the sample is added as a **single** aliquot (considered *en masse*), use the **singular**
8 mg RNA was directly added to the tube
which can be considered shortened by ellipsis of
A **total of 8 mg RNA was** directly added to the tube
[A total of] elided

were when the sample is added intermittently, use the **plural**
80 mg RNA were added to the tube in 2 mg aliquots

See: Aliquant/aliquot, Ellipsis, Numbers in words/figures

Micrometer/micrometre

micrometer a device for measuring length

micrometre a unit of length (μm) (10^{-6} m)

Microscope/microscopic/microscopical/microscopy

microscope noun an optical instrument for viewing small objects
Spermatozoa were examined with a **microscope**

microscopic adjective so small as to be visible only with a microscope
Spermatozoa are **microscopic**

microscopical adjective relating to, requiring a microscope
A **microscopical** study of sperm movement

microscopy noun a method, the use of a microscope
The acrosome reaction was assessed by light **microscopy**

ALERT Check that **microscopic** is the **intended word**

This thesis includes a **microscopic** study of sperm movement

ERROR *Semantics*: **this implies** that the **study** was **visible only** with a microscope

CORRECT [if the **sperm movement** required a microscope to be observed] by
replacing microscopic by microscopical
This thesis includes a **microscopical** study of sperm movement

Figure 1. Electron **microscopy** of dendritic cells in the epididymis

ERROR *Syntax*: **microscopy** is a **method** but the photographic **results** of it are presented

CORRECT by **using micrographs**

Figure 1. Electron **micrographs** of dendritic cells in the epididymis**Middle**

See: Centre/middle

Might

See: Could/might, May/might

Militate/mitigate**militate** proclaim against a conclusion or resultThe evidence **militated** against the manuscript's being authentic**mitigate** alleviate, lessen the severity of, moderate, softenPalliative treatment is intended to **mitigate** suffering of terminally ill patients**Mind**auxiliary verb followed by a **gerund not an infinitive**He doesn't mind **changing** the medium on Sunday**Mingle together****Pleonasm**: as **mingle** implies coming together, **together** is **superfluous**, use **mingle****Minimise**

To decrease to the smallest possible amount or degree

does not mean decrease, lessen, reduce**Minimum**

See: Maximum/minimum

Minimum of ... is/are**is** is correctas **minimum** refers to **one** number, use the **singular****A minimum of 12 people is** needed for a quorumto use the **plural**, omit minimum**Twelve people are** required for a quorum**Minority**The smaller **number****not** used for mass, quantity, volume**Minority ... is/are****is** is correctas the **minority itself** is the subject, use the **singular**The **minority** against the motion **is** smaller than that last year**Minority is/are****is** is correctas the **minority itself** is the subject, use the **singular**Regarding those against the motion the **minority is** smaller than that last year**Minority of****Style**: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **few of****Minority of ... is/are****are** is correctas what the **minority of** refers to (a **plural** group) is the subject, use the **plural**The **minority of spermatozoa were** immotile**Minus**

See: Dash/hyphen/minus

Minute

See: Instant/minute/moment

Minutiae (Latin)

Precise or trivial details

Minutiae is/are**are** is correctminutiae is a **plural** wordIn his thesis the **minutiae of** the methodology **were** copied exactly**Miss**auxiliary verb followed by a **gerund not an infinitive**

I **miss working** in the laboratory

Miss/miss out/miss out on

miss fail to hit/reach/come into contact with (something aimed for)
I **mised** the seminar

miss out to omit
I **mised out** the albumin from the buffer

miss out on as **out is a preposition**, so **needs no additional** preposition (**on**) after it

Missing

See: Lacking/missing

Mitigate

See: Militate/mitigate

Mix together

Pleonasm: as **mix** implies bringing together, **together** is *superfluous*, use **mix**

ml/mL

millilitre The Système Internationale (SI) unit is either **ml** or **mL**
L was introduced to prevent confusion of **l** (lower case **L**) with **l** (capital **i**) and the numeral **1 (one)**

Use of **l** or **L** is dictated by journal format

ml/ml of

ml Four **ml** 3% (v/v) H₂O₂ was added to 15 **ml** BWW buffer

ml of 15 **ml of** 3% (v/v) H₂O₂ was added to 15 **ml of** BWW buffer

interchangeable units

Style: **ml of** is *unnecessary*, **ml** alone is *sufficient*

ml is/are

ml was when the volume is added as a **single** aliquot (considered *en masse*), use the *singular*
8 ml water was directly added to the stock solution
which can be considered shortened by ellipsis of
A **total of 8 ml water was** directly added to the tube
[A total of] elided

ml were when the volume is added intermittently, use the *plural*
80 ml water were added in 2 ml aliquots, with mixing, to the stock solution

See: Aliquant/aliquot

mM/mmol

mM millimolar, a concentration

mmol millimoles, an amount

ALERT Check whether you mean **concentration** or **amount**

Graph ordinate label: Concentration (**mM/l**)

ERROR *Syntax*: **mM** is a concentration (moles per litre), which cannot be expressed **per litre**
CORRECT by

replacing mM by mmol

Concentration (**mmol/l**)

retaining mM and omitting litre

Concentration (**mM**)

Modality

A **particular mode** in which something exists, or is experienced or expressed

Overused word: **avoid**

Use on its own the **noun** used as, or associated with, the preceding *adjective*

Therapy (*not* Therapeutic modality)

Treatment (*not* Treatment modality)

Mode

A way or manner in which something occurs or is experienced, expressed or done

His preferred **mode** of travel to the campus was the Mass Transit Railway

An option allowing a change in the method of operation of a device

The camera was set in motion-detector **mode** to be triggered by spermatozoa entering the field

See: Mean/median/mode

Modulate/regulate

modulate exert a modifying or controlling influence upon

regulate control or maintain the rate or speed of a process

Modulated negatively/positively

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **inhibited/augmented**

Molality/molarity/normality

molality concentration of solute in moles per kg solvent (unit, mol/kg)

Solvent measured in a **measuring cylinder**

molarity (M) concentration of solute in moles per litre of solution (unit, mol/l)

Solution made up in a **volumetric flask**

normality (N) concentration of ion in equivalents per litre of solution [unit, Equ/l]

Solution made up in a **volumetric flask**
[out-dated terminology]

Molality/osmolality

molality concentration of solute in moles per kg solvent (unit, mol/kg)

prepared from known solute weights and solvent volumes

osmolality concentration of osmotically active solute in moles per kg solvent (unit, mol/kg; formerly osmol/kg)

measured by depression of vapour pressure or freezing point

Molar/molecular mass

molar mass M The mass of **one mole** of substance (unit, g/mol)

molecular mass m **absolute** molecular mass

The mass of **one molecule** in unified atomic mass units (units, u, Da)

Molecular mass/weight

molecular mass m **absolute** molecular mass

The mass of **one molecule** in unified atomic mass units (units, u, Da)

molecular weight MW **relative** molecular mass MM, *M*,

The **ratio** of the mass of one molecule to 1/12 the mass of ¹²C (dimensionless)

See: Formula/molecular weight

Moles/osmoles

moles number of molecules in solution (units, mol)
used in biology, chemistry, medicine, physics

osmoles number of osmotically active moles in solution (unit, mol, previously osmol)
used only in biology, medicine

Moment

See: Instant/minute/moment

Momentary/momentarily/momentous

momentous of great importance

It was a **momentous** decision to award the medal to him

momentary lasting only a moment

A **momentary** pause preceded the awards presentation

momentarily for a moment, temporarily

does not mean in a moment

The power was interrupted **momentarily** before the fuse was changed

Mono-/uni-

mono (Greek, Latin)

one **mono**-nuclear

uni (Latin)

one **uni**-lateral, **uni**-cellular

See: Bi-/bis-/di-/dis-/dys-, Bi-/uni-lateral,

Mono-/uni-lateral

unilateral is correct

See: Bi-/uni-lateral

Moods of a verb

indicative

for most text in main and subordinate clauses, and questions

Our future research **will examine** how the cells **recognise** their environment by applying the method **developed** by

Jones, who **has shown** that this procedure **produces** the cleanest membrane fractions

in the **[Main]** (consequence, results) clause of **Conditions/Demands/Requests**

[She **is** allowed in the culture room] on condition that she wear a mask

in the **[Subordinate]** (conditional) and **[Main]** (consequence, results) clauses of **Factual/likely conditional sentences**

[If she **took** that plane] [she **arrived** at 22.00]

imperative

not declined by person or number

but to an assumed second person [you]

for **commands** and **advice**

[You] **Keep** the culture room sterile!

[You] **Do not enter** the culture room when the UV light is on

for **instructions** and **methods**

[You] **Weigh** out 2 g NaCl, **dissolve** it in 50 ml water, **mix** well and **measure** the pH

[You] **Attach** the syringe to the cannula, **insert** the bevelled end into the severed vas deferens and **tie** it in place

conditional

in the **[Main]** (consequence, results) clause of **Counterfactual/unlikely conditional sentences**

If I were you [I **would** do this]

If he were to apply [they **should/I would** accept him]

If I were director [I **could** hire you]

subjunctive

in the **[Subordinate]** (conditional) clause of **Counterfactual/unlikely conditional sentences**

[If I **were** you] I would do this

[If he **were** to apply] they should/I would accept him

[If I **were** director] I could hire you

in the **[Subordinate]** (conditional) clause of **Conditions/Demands/Requests**

She is allowed in the culture room [on condition that she **wear** a mask]

He demanded that [she **recognise** his rights]

The librarian requested that [he **keep** quiet]

See: Can/could, Conditional/subjunctive moods, May/might, Shall/should, Should/would, Universal statements, Will/would

Moot/mute

<i>moot</i>	adjective	debatable, subject to debate, dispute and uncertainty The epididymal provision of osmolytes to maturing spermatozoa is currently a moot point
	verb	raise for discussion The topic was first mooted at the last meeting
<i>mute</i>	adjective	refraining from speech, silent
	noun	device for deadening the sound of an instrument, dumb person
	verb	to deaden

ALERT Check that **mute** is the **intended word**

The idea of using membrane transporters for contraception has been **muted**

ERROR *Semantics*: ideas cannot refrain from speech

CORRECT by **replacing mute** by **moot**

The idea of using membrane transporters for contraception has been **mooted**

More

a greater degree of	(the opposite of less)
a greater number of	(the opposite of fewer)

ALERT Check **which meaning** of **clear** is **intended**

More solid evidence is needed to prove the presence of stem cells in the epididymis

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that
a greater **amount** of solid evidence is needed
or

evidence of a greater **quality** is needed

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

adding a comma to separate adjectives of equal importance,

More, solid evidence is needed to prove the presence of stem cells in the epididymis

omitting solid

More evidence is needed to prove the presence of stem cells in the epididymis

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

replacing more solid by **higher quality**

Higher quality evidence is needed to prove the presence of stem cells in the epididymis

See: Fewer/less/more, Many/more

More than

adverb defining an adjective and an infinitive without the infinitive marker **to**
does not govern a finite verb

ALERT Check that **more than** governs **an infinitive**

He **more than** looked: he stared

ERROR *Syntax*: **more than** does not govern a finite verb

CORRECT by **using an infinitive** without the infinitive marker **to** with **did** for emphasis

He **did** more than **look**: he stared

Synonym: or more

See: Finite/non-finite verbs

More than one ... is/are

is is correct

as **more than one** refers to the **one**, use the **singular**

More than one scientist **has been** accused of fraud

Moreover

See: And moreover/moreover

Morphology

Overused word: often used **incorrectly** instead of normal morphology

ALERT Check that **morphology** is the **intended word**

Average sperm **morphology** was significantly lower in the latter era

ERROR *Semantics:* **morphology** can be normal or abnormal, so its average has no meaning

CORRECT by **being specific**

Average **normal sperm morphology** was significantly lower in the latter era

Morphology/morphometry

morphology a branch of Biology dealing with the form and structure of living things
the form and structure of living things

Assessment of sperm **morphology** includes the shape and relative size of the nucleus and acrosome

morphometry the process of measuring the shape and dimensions of objects
the precise study of anatomical structures by measurement

A computer-aided **morphometry** module was used to determine sperm head length and width

ALERT Check that **morphometry** is the **intended word**

The average sperm **morphometry** has declined in the last decade

ERROR *Semantics:* **morphometry** is a method and has no average

CORRECT [if **measurements** are meant] by

being specific

The average sperm **morphometric measurements** have declined in the last decade

CORRECT [if **form** is meant] by

being specific

The average **percentage normal sperm morphology** has declined in the last decade

Most

Superior **comparative form** of the adjectives

many (refers to numbers): the greatest number of countable objects

Most of the students took the exam

much (refers to quantity): the largest part of uncountable objects

Most of the laboratory space was used for the poster display

Synonym: majority

See: Bulk/majority/most

Most/mostly

most adverb in the highest degree

The lecture was **most** good

[it was excellent]

mostly adverb as regards the greater part or number, in large part, in the main

The lecture was **mostly** good

[some parts were poor]

Most ... is/are

are is correct

as **most** refers to a **plural** subject, use the **plural**

Most scientists **are** honest

Most is/are

is when a **quantity** is referred to (**uncountable** objects), use the **singular**

Of the **campus most is** empty

are when **numbers** are referred to (**countable** objects), use the **plural**

Of the old **laboratories most are** empty

Most of ... is/are

is when a **quantity** is referred to (**uncountable** objects), use the **singular**

Most of the **campus is** empty

are when **numbers** are referred to (**countable** objects), use the **plural**

Most of the old **laboratories are** empty

Mostly/most of which**mostly**

as regards the greater part or number, in large part, in the main

I **mostly** do research on the epididymis

generally, usually

I spend my weekends **mostly** listening to music**most of which**

the largest part of which

The inhibition was due these miRNAs, **most of which** are solely found in the epididymis**ALERT** Check the meaning with **mostly**

ERROR The inhibition was due these miRNAs, which are **mostly** found in the epididymis
Semantics: it is unclear which meaning on **mostly** is meant, so **this implies** that **all** of these miRNAs are found in the epididymis (but also found in other organs)

or

a **large number of** these miRNAs are exclusive to the epididymis**CORRECT** [if the former is meant] by**being specific**The inhibition was due to these miRNAs, **which** are not exclusive to the epididymis**CORRECT** [if the latter is meant] by**being specific**The inhibition was due these miRNAs, **most of which** are solely found in the epididymis**Moving forward***Style:* unjustifiable neologism, replace by **from now on, henceforth, in the future****Much**

A major part of uncountable objects, collective and mass nouns

Overused vague word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid***See:* Many/much**Much ... is/are****is**

is correct

as **much** refers to a major (**singular**) part, or **uncountable** object, use the **singular****Much** discussion **was** made about his resignation**Much is/are****is**

is correct

as **much** refers to a major (**singular**) part, or **uncountable** object, use the **singular**In the discussion **much was** made about his resignation**Much of ... is/are****is**

is correct

as **much of** is used for a major (**singular**) part, or **uncountable** object, use the **singular**for **collective** nouns**Much of** the electorate **has** yet to make up its mindfor **mass** nouns**Much of** a scientist's time **is** taken up writing grants**Much less**short for **Much less is it so**

[is it so] elided

often used incorrectly for much more

ALERT Check that the use of **much less** gives the **intended meaning**It is difficult to reduce, **much less** to eliminate, the amount of contamination

ERROR *Semantics:* this means it is **much less difficult** (*i.e. easier*) to eliminate than to reduce the amount of contamination, which is counter-intuitive

CORRECT [if it is **more difficult** (*i.e. harder*) to eliminate than to reduce the amount of contamination] by**replacing much less** by **much more**It is difficult to reduce, **much more** to eliminate, the amount of contamination*See:* Ellipsis, Style**Much more**short for **Much more is it so**

[is it so] elided

often used incorrectly for much less

ALERT Check that the use of **much more** gives the **intended meaning**It is easy to reduce, **much more** to prevent, the amount of contamination

ERROR *Semantics*: this means it is **much more easy** (*i.e. easier*) to prevent than to reduce the amount of contamination which is counter-intuitive

CORRECT [if it is **harder** (*i.e. less easy*) to prevent than to reduce the amount of contamination] by replacing **much more** by **much less**

It is easy to reduce, **much less** to prevent, the amount of contamination

See: Ellipsis, Style

Mucus/mucous

mucus noun a viscous fluid

mucous adjective covered with, producing, relating to, or the nature of, a mucus

A **mucous** membrane secretes **mucus**

Multi-

See: Many/multiple/multi-

Multiple

See: Many/multiple/multi-

Multipliers and units

Multipliers **follow** a figure, **head** Table columns and **label** Figure axes to avoid repetition of units

a list of **4, 5** and **6 million** may be written as **4, 5, 6** under the column heading/figure axis label **million** as **this implies** that the **numbers** written (4, 5, 6) have a **multiplier of million**
i.e. they represent **4 million 5 million 6 million**

a list of **4x10⁶, 5x10⁶** and **6x10⁶** may be written as **4, 5, 6** under the column heading/figure axis label **10⁶** as **this implies** that the **numbers** written (4, 5, 6) have a **multiplier of 10⁶**
i.e. they represent **4x10⁶ 5x10⁶ 6x10⁶**

a list of **4x10⁶, 5x10⁶** and **6x10⁶** may be written as **4, 5, 6** under the column heading/figure axis label **x10⁶** as **this implies** that the **numbers** written (4, 5, 6) are 1,000,000 times **smaller (10⁶)** than the **values** they represent, and so have a **multiplier of 10⁶**
i.e. they represent **4x10⁶ 5x10⁶ 6x10⁶**

a list of **4x10⁻⁶, 5x10⁻⁶** and **6x10⁻⁶** may be written as **4, 5, 6** under the column heading/figure axis label **x10⁻⁶** as **this implies** that the **numbers** written (4, 5, 6) are 1,000,000 times **larger (10⁶)** than the **values** they represent, and so have a **multiplier of 10⁻⁶**
i.e. they represent **4x10⁻⁶ 5x10⁻⁶ 6x10⁻⁶**

Multipliers **precede the unit** of the physical quantity
60x10⁶/ml (**not** 60/ml (x10⁶))

a list of **4, 5** and **6 ml** may be written as **4, 5, 6** under the column heading/figure axis label **ml** as **this implies** that the **numbers** written (4, 5, 6) have a **unit of ml**
i.e. they represent **4 ml 5 ml 6 ml**

a list of **40, 50** and **60 million/ml** may be written as **40, 50, 60** under the column heading/figure axis label **million/ml** as **this implies** that the **numbers** written (40, 50, 60) have a **unit of million/ml**
i.e. they represent **40 million/ml 50 million/ml 60 million/ml**

a list of **40, 50** and **60 million/ml** may be written as **40, 50, 60** under the column heading/figure axis label **10⁶/ml** as **this implies** that the **numbers** written (40, 50, 60) have a **unit of 10⁶/ml**
i.e. they represent **40x10⁶/ml 50x10⁶/ml 60x10⁶/ml**

a list of **40, 50** and **60 million/ml** may be written as **40, 50, 60** under the column heading/figure axis label **x10⁻⁶/ml** as **this implies** that the **numbers** written (40, 50, 60) are 1,000,000 times **smaller (10⁶)** than the **values** they represent, and so have a **unit of 10⁶/ml**
i.e. they represent **40x10⁶/ml 50x10⁶/ml 60x10⁶/ml**

a list of **400, 500** and **600 ml** may be written as **4, 5, 6** under the column heading/figure axis label **x10⁻² ml** as **this implies** that the **numbers** written (4, 5, 6) are 100 times **smaller (10²)** than the **values** they represent, and so have a **unit of 10² ml**
i.e. they represent **4x10² ml (400 ml) 5x10² ml (500 ml) 6x10² ml (600 ml)**

a list of **0.004, 0.005** and **0.006 ml** may be written as **4, 5, 6** under the column heading/figure axis label **x10⁻³ ml** as **this implies** that the **numbers** written (4, 5, 6) are 1,000 times **larger (10³)** than the **values** they represent, and so have a **unit of 10⁻³ ml**
i.e. they represent **4x10⁻³ ml (0.004 ml) 5x10⁻³ ml (0.005 ml) 6x10⁻³ ml (0.006 ml)**

See: Concentration (N x10⁶/x10⁶ per ml)

Must

See: Have to/must

Mute

See: Moot/mute

Mutual

See: Common/mutual/reciprocal

Naught/nought**naught** nothingHe failed: all his effort came to **naught****nought** zeroOne million: a one with six **noughts** after it**Necessary**

See: Crucial/necessary

Necessary prerequisite**Tautology:** **prerequisite** implies a need; replace by **prerequisite**

See: Prerequisite/perquisite

Necessitate**Synonyms:** to have to, to need, to require

See: Dictate/necessitate/urge

Need/require**need** to require (something) because it is essential or important rather than just desirableYou **need** to read this review before starting your work**require** to need for a particular purpose, especially for legal reasonsA licence is **required** before you can operate on animals**Needless/needless to say****needless** unnecessary because avoidable**needless to say** idiom**ALERT** Check that the **usage** of **needless** is correctNeedless to say **that** he got the first prize**STYLE** **Syntax:** incorrect usage**CHANGE** by**removing that** and **adding a comma**

Needless to say, he got the first prize

which can be considered shortened by ellipsis of

It is needless to say that he got the first prize**[it is]** and **[that]** elided**Style:** verbosity, often not needed to be said, **avoid**

See: Ellipsis

NegationIn long sentences there **may be ambiguity** ifthe **term of negation (never/not/no)** is **placed far from** the second verb[its meaning **may be forgotten** by the time the second verb is encountered]**ALERT** Check that the use of **negatives** does not create ambiguityIn the past year, the Department has **never** suffered a lack of funding, or failed to get jobs for its graduates**ERROR** **Semantics:** ambiguous, as **never** is distant from the second clause, **it is unclear** whether in the past year the department **failed** or **never failed** to get jobs for its graduates**CORRECT** [if the latter is meant] by**replacing or** by **nor**In the past year, the Department has **never** suffered a lack of funding, **nor** failed to get jobs for its graduatesLast year, the Department suffered **no** lack of travel grants, **or** failed to invite foreign speakers**ERROR** **Semantics:** ambiguous, as **no** is distant from the second clause, **it is unclear** whether last year the department **failed** or **did not fail** to invite foreign speakers**CORRECT** [if the latter is meant] by**replacing or** by **nor**Last year, the Department suffered **no** lack of travel grants, **nor** failed to invite foreign speakers

See: Nor

Negative

Consisting in or characterised by the absence, rather than the presence, of distinguishing features
Overused word: often used incorrectly and unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that the word **negative** makes sense

Other AK family members showed a **negative** signal in the testis

ERROR *Semantics:* a signal is either present or not; a negative signal makes no sense

CHANGE by

negating the *verb* not the *noun*

Other AK family members **did not show** a signal in the testis

Other AK family member signals **were not observed** in the testis

omitting *signal* and **using *absent***

Other AK family members were **absent from** the testis

Negative regulation

Negative assumes knowledge of the positive

ALERT Check whether **negatively** should be **replaced** by a **more informative word**

NLK can **negatively** regulate Wnt/ β -catenin signalling

ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, **it is unclear** what **negative regulation** entails, so **this implies** that NLK either decreases a **positive** regulation

[*i.e.* **decreases** signalling]

or

decreases a **negative** regulation

[*i.e.* **increases** signalling]

CORRECT by

being more specific

NLK can **decrease** the **positive regulation** of Wnt/ β -catenin signalling

NLK can **decrease** the **negative regulation** of Wnt/ β -catenin signalling

being less verbose

NLK can **decrease** Wnt/ β -catenin signalling

NLK can **increase** Wnt/ β -catenin signalling

See: All/none of, And/or, Any/some, As well/either, As/so long as, Both/either/neither, Double negatives, Doubt if/that/whether, Each/either/neither, Either ... or/neither ... nor, Everyone/no one, Except/excepting, Hardly, Interfere, Inversion of verbs, Litotes, Negation, Neither ... nor, No/yes in agreements, Nor, Scarcely, Split infinitive

Negatively/positively

negatively in a negative way

positively in a positive way, in particular

See: Negative regulation, Positive regulation

Negligent/negligible

negligent careless

negligible insignificant

Neither

When a **neither clause** follows **not** in a sentence, **neither** is followed by an **inverted verb**

The cells were **not** sterile and **neither was the medium**

See: And neither/neither, Both/either/neither, Each/either/neither, Inversion of verbs

Neither/neither of

not one or **other** of two things

interchangeable expressions

Style: **neither of** is **unnecessary**, **neither** alone is **sufficient**

Neither ... is/are

is is correct

as **neither** means **not one** or **the other** of two things, use the **singular**

Neither proposal *is* feasible

Neither ... nor

a discontinuous correlative conjunction, which links **two** grammatical equivalents

with subjects of **different number**

If **both** subjects are **singular**, use the **singular**

Neither the **professor** nor the **student was** to blame

if **both** subjects are **plural**, use the **plural**

Neither the **professors** nor the **students were** to blame

if **one** of the subjects is **plural**, use the **plural**

Neither the professor **nor** the *students were* to blame
Neither the *professors nor* the student *were* to blame

with pronouns the one **closer to the verb** governs the **number**

Neither he **nor** *I am* to blame (neither he is to blame **nor am I**)
Neither I **nor** *he is* at fault (neither I am at fault **nor is he**)
 Neither she **nor** *you are* at fault (neither she is at fault **nor are you**)
Neither you **nor** *she is* at fault (neither you are at fault **nor is she**)

ALERT Check that **neither ... nor is not** used with a **negative**

Immuno-histological features were **not** consistent **neither** with cutaneous adenomas **nor** with adenomas of the rete testis
ERROR *Syntax*: neither ... nor is a **negative**, so **needs no additional** negative (**not**) before it

CORRECT by
omitting not

Immuno-histological features were consistent **neither** with cutaneous adenomas **nor** with adenomas of the rete testis
retaining not and **using either ... or**

Immuno-histological features were **not** consistent **either** with cutaneous adenomas **or** with adenomas of the rete testis

ALERT Check that **neither ... nor** links **only two** grammatical equivalents

This was mentioned by **neither** Turner, Hinton **nor** Jones in their reviews

ERROR *Syntax*: **neither ... nor** joins **only two** items

CORRECT by **negating the verb** and **replacing nor** by **or**

This was **not** mentioned by Turner, Hinton **or** Jones in their reviews

ALERT Check that **neither ... nor** links grammatical equivalents

You should **neither** open the window **nor** the door

ERROR *Syntax*: **neither ... nor** here **does not** link grammatical equivalents
 [**neither** clause **nor** noun]

CORRECT by

moving the verb, to compare nouns

You should **open neither** the window **nor** the door

[**neither** noun **nor** noun]

adding a verb, to compare clauses

You should **neither** open the window **nor open** the door

[**neither** clause **nor** clause]

He should **neither** admit that he was right **nor** that he was wrong

ERROR *Syntax*: **neither ... nor** here **does not** link grammatical equivalents
 [**neither** clause **nor** phrase]

CORRECT by

moving the verb, to compare phrases

He should **admit neither** that he was right **nor** that he was wrong

[**neither** phrase **nor** phrase]

adding a verb, to compare clauses

He should **neither** admit that he was right **nor deny** that he was wrong

[**neither** clause **nor** clause]

See: Either ... or /neither ... nor

Neither of ... is/are

is

is correct

as **neither of** means **not one** or **the other** of two things, use the **singular**

Neither of the hypotheses *is* feasible

Neither is/are

is

when **neither** refers to something **singular**, use the **singular**

The **theory** may not be correct, but **neither is** any other

are

when **neither** refers to something **plural**, use the **plural**

The **theories** may not be true, but **neither are** any others

Neologisms

newly-coined words

are **justifiable** when they are more useful than an existing word

to download to input to upload

are **unjustifiable** when an existing word has the intended meaning

analysis (**not** analysisation)

continuing (**not** ongoing)

henceforth (**not** moving forward)

in the future (**not** going forward)

normality (**not** normalcy)

summary (not summarisation)
to review (not to critique)

Never

negates the verb it is placed before

I **never expected** to win the poster prize, but thought it possible
[The **expecting** is negated]

I expected **never to win** the poster prize, but be runner up
[The **winning** is negated]

used to stress a point

At the beginning of a sentence, **never** is followed by an **inverted verb**
Never have I seen such wonderful cultures

See: Inversion of verbs

Never/no/not

See: Negation

Never again

used to stress a point

At the beginning of a sentence, **never again** is followed by an **inverted verb**
Never again will I let lay people into the laboratory

See: Inversion of verbs

Never before

used to stress a point

At the beginning of a sentence, **never before** is followed by an **inverted verb**
Never before have I seen such beautiful monolayer cultures

See: Inversion of verbs

Nevertheless

Synonyms: even so, however, nonetheless, yet

See: But nevertheless/nevertheless

New/novel

new produced, introduced or discovered recently or now for the first time, not existing before
Confocal microscopy takes advantage of a **new** method for combining images
already existing but seen, experienced, or acquired recently or now for the first time

The **new** microscope will be used for research only

novel new and not resembling anything formerly known or used

Yeung et al. developed a **novel** method for quantifying sperm bound proteins

Nice

subtle, requiring care/discrimination/precision/tact

His work showed a **nice** distinction between form and function

agreeable, attractive

She had a **nice** camera

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by **what way it was nice**

She had a camera with an exceptionally high-power zoom lens

No

a negative response

as an answer

Did you do it? **No**, I did not.

not at all, to no extent

with the comparative

He was **no** more able to do it than I was

not any

with a singular noun, use the **singular**

No method **is** acceptable

with a plural noun, use the **plural**

No methods **are** available

not one

with singular noun, use the **singular**

No spermatozoon **was** observed

No scientist **has** yet entered the building

zero

to no extent

No growth occurs in the presence of the inhibitor

See: No ... is/are, Not any ... is/are, Not one ... is/are

No ... is/are

- is* when **no** means **not one**, use the **singular**
uncountable objects
 No **semen** *was* delivered
 a **singular** countable object
 No **spermatozoon** *was* observed
 No **patient** *has* cryptorchidism
- are* when **no** means **not any**, use the **plural**
several countable objects or people
 No **spermatozoa** *were* observed
 No **scientists** *have* applied for the post
 No **patients** *are* infertile

No./number/nr.

- no.* the abbreviation for an **ordinal** number
 Sample **no. 3** is the best sample
 Grant **no.** GF34564
- number* used for a **cardinal** number
 State the **number** of projects to be funded in grant application
- nr.* confusion with **French, German**

See: Number/numeral, Numbers

No/yes in agreements

- no* expressing **disagreement** with or **contradiction** of a **positive** statement
 Look, you can see they are motile. **No**, they are not!
 expressing **agreement with** or affirmation of a **negative statement**
No, they *would never come* under those conditions
 used in an answer (A) for **agreeing with** a **negative** question (Q)
 Q: You **won't be** coming will you? A: **No**, I *won't*
- yes* expressing **agreement** with a statement
 Epid V was a good meeting. **Yes**, it was
 Expressing **disagreement** with or **contradiction** of a **negative statement**
 You **don't want** to go. **Yes** I do!
 used in an answer (A) for **agreeing with** a **positive** question (Q)
 Q: **Are** you coming? A: **Yes**, I *am*
- ALERT** Check the **response** when answering in the negative
- A: **Yes**, I won't (to Q: You **won't be** coming will you?)
- ERROR** *Syntax*: agreeing with a negative can be interpreted as a positive (I **will** come)
- CORRECT** [if you are not coming] by
using the negative
No, I *won't* [be coming]
- CORRECT** [if you are coming] by
confirming the positive
Yes, I *shall be* coming

No doubt/question/question but

- no doubt* There is **no doubt** that he made up his results
 (That he made up his results **cannot be doubted**)
 [He **did** make up his the results]
- no question* There is **no question** that he made up his results
 (It is **out of the question** that he made up his results)
 [He **did not** make up his results]
- no question but* There is **no question but** that he made up his results
 (There is **no conclusion other than** that he made up his results)
 [He **did** make up his results]

See: But that/that

No more than

adverb defining an adjective and an infinitive without the infinitive marker **to**
does not govern a finite verb

ALERT Check that **no more than** governs an **infinitive**

He **no more than** looked: he did not check it

ERROR *Syntax*: **no more than** does not govern a finite verb

CORRECT by **using the infinitive** without the infinitive marker **to** with **did** for emphasis

He **did** no more than **look**: he did not check it

Synonym: or fewer, or less

See: At least/most

No one/noone

no one is correct

See: No one

No one/someone

no one for **negative** contexts

No one wants to do it

someone for **positive** contexts

Someone wants to do it

No one

refers to **not any** of several people considered **individually**

See: Anyone, Everyone, Someone

No one is/are

is is correct

as **no one** refers to **not any** of several people considered **individually**, use the **singular**

No one is permitted to enter the sterile area without permission

No one (and subsequent gender)

When the sex of the person is **unknown** or **unclear** (indefinite third person), use **he** or **anyone**

No one pretends any more, if **he** ever did, that immuno-histochemistry is reproducible

No one pretends any more, if **anyone** ever did, that immuno-histochemistry is reproducible

See: Indefinite third person

No sooner

used to stress a point

At the beginning of a sentence, **no sooner** is followed by an **inverted verb**

No sooner had I sent off the manuscript to JA than a similar report was published

See: Inversion of verbs

No sooner than/when

than is correct

No sooner than

See: Hardly ... when/no sooner ... than

Nobody

refers to **not any** of several people of several people considered **collectively** as a **group**

See: Anybody, Everybody, Somebody

Nobody is/are

is is correct

as **nobody** refers to not any of **several people** considered **collectively** as a **group**, use the **singular**

Nobody is permitted to smoke in the laboratory

Nobody (and subsequent gender)

When the sex of the person is **unknown** or **unclear** (indefinite third person), use **he** or **anyone**

Nobody pretends any more, if **he** ever did, that immuno-histochemistry is reproducible

Nobody pretends any more, if **anyone** ever did, that immuno-histochemistry is reproducible

See: Indefinite third person

Nomenclature/terminology

nomenclature the devising or choosing of names for things

We used the Linnean system of zoological **nomenclature**

Terminology terms used with a particular technical application

We employed standard **terminology** for variables measured by CASA systems

Nominal numbers

See: Numbers

Nominative (subject) case

used for the **subject** of a sentence

She is a good scientist

used in **apposition** to the subject

My wife, **a scientist**, works in my laboratory

used as a **complement** for intransitive verbs of incomplete predication (verbs of being, link verbs)

The scientist who write that highly discussed article was **she**

It was **I** who wrote the paper

See: Us/we

Non prefix not
used in hyphenated adjectives

- Non**-native speakers of English have difficulties with the language
(speakers for whom English **is not** their native tongue)
- Non**-defining clauses
(descriptive clauses that **do not** define the subject)
- Non**-finite verbs
(verb forms that **are not** finite)

See: Defining/non-defining clauses, Finite/non-finite verbs, Non sequitur

Non-defining clauses

See: Defining/non-defining clauses

Non-detectable

not able to be detected, discovered or identified

Overused word: often used incorrectly and unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that use of the word **non-detectable** makes sense

Other PRDX family members **showed** a non-detectable signal in the spermatozoa

ERROR *Semantics*: if a signal cannot be detected, it cannot be shown

CHANGE by

negating the **verb** not the **noun**

Other PRDX family members **did not show** a signal in the spermatozoa

Other PRDX family member signals **were not observed** in the spermatozoa

omitting signal and using **absent**

Other PRDX family members were **absent from** the spermatozoa

Non-finite verbs

See: Finite/non-finite verbs

Non-flammable

See: Flammable/inflammable/non-flammable

Non sequitur (Latin)

a conclusion or statement that does not logically follow from the previous argument or statement

The abstinence period was poorly controlled in studies whose subjects were pre-vasectomy subjects **who questioned the need for semen analysis**

None

not one by itself, singular

not any plural

See: None is/are, None of ... is/are, Not one ... is/are, Not one of ... is/are

None is/are

is when **none** means **not one**, use the **singular**

Of the patients, **none (not one) has** infertility

Of the treated spermatozoa, **none (not one) was** swollen

are when **none** means **not any**, use the **plural**

Of the motile spermatozoa, **none (not any) were** acrosome-reacted

See: Not any ... is/are

None of

not any with the preposition **of**
of an **uncountable** item, with **singular** verb

None of the semen **was** analysed

(**Not any of** the semen was analysed)

of a **singular** item, with **singular** verb

None of the **syllabus is** taught in English

(**Not any of** the syllabus is taught in English)

of a **plural** item, with **plural** verb

None of the **spermatozoa were** acrosome-reacted

(**Not any of** the spermatozoa were acrosome-reacted)

None of... is/are

is when what **none of** refers to is **singular**, use the **singular**
for **uncountable** objects
None of the semen was collected in the vessel
for **singular** countable objects
None of the syllabus is taught in the first year

are when what **none of** refers to is **plural**, use the **plural**
for **plural** countable objects
None of the spermatozoa were acrosome-reacted

See: All/none of, Not one of ... is/are

Nonetheless

Synonyms: even so, however, nevertheless, yet

Noon

See: a.m./p.m.

Nor

Coordinating, non-adversative conjunction
meaning **and not**

may be used

in **short** sentences **instead of or**

There was **no** flow cytometer **nor** osmometer

[There was no flow cytometer **or** osmometer]

must be used

in **neither ... nor** phrases

She was **neither** allowed to enter the hall **nor** to take the examination

in **long** sentences where the meaning of the **first negative may be forgotten** by the time
the second verb is encountered

In the past year, the Department has suffered **no** lack of funding, **nor** failed to get jobs for its graduates

when a **nor clause** follows **not** in a sentence, it is followed by an **inverted verb**

The media were not sterile nor **were the instruments**

See: And nor/nor, But nor/nor, Inversion of verbs, Negation

Normal

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, open to misinterpretation, replace by a **relevant adjective**

Normal saline

physiological saline: quote concentration (0.9%, w/v) or osmolality (290 mmol/kg)

Normal semen donor

normozoospermic donor; one with normozoospermic semen

Normal temperature

provide the **temperature**: room, ambient, body, scrotal or be precise (34°C)

A **normal** solution (1 equivalent/l, 1 N)

out-dated terminology for 1 molar solution (1 mole /l, 1 M)

See: Abnormal/normal/subnormal/supra-normal, Normalcy/normality

Normalcy/normality

normality is correct
the condition of being normal

See: Molality/molarity/normality, Neologisms

Normally

See: Redundancy/pleonasm/tautology, Typically

Normospermia/normozoospermia

normozoospermia is correct

[WHO terminology]

Sperm numbers per ejaculate and percentages of progressively motile and morphologically normal spermatozoa equal to or above the lower WHO reference limits

Not all

See: All is not/not all is

Not any ... is/are

is is correct
as **not any** refers to **one** countable object or person, use the **singular**
Not any method is acceptable
(**No** method is acceptable)
Not any scientist is able to do it
(**No** scientist is able to do it)

See: No, None of

Not any of ... is/are

- is* when what **not any of ...** refers to is **singular**, use the **singular** of an **uncountable** item
Not any of the semen *was* analysed
of a **singular** item
Not any of the syllabus *is* taught in English
- are* when what **not any of ...** refers to is **plural**, use the **plural** of a **plural** item
Not any of the spermatozoa *were* observed
Not any of the scientists *have* entered the building

See: None, None is/are, None of

Not as

See: As was not the case/not as

Not less/more than

- not less than* at least, or more
not more than at most, or fewer

See: At least/most

Not one ... is/are

- is* is correct
as **not one** refers to **one** countable object or person, use the **singular**
Not one spermatozoon **was** observed
Not one scientist **has** entered the building

See: No

Not one is/are

- is* is correct
as **not one** refers to **one** countable object or person, use the **singular**
Of the damaged spermatozoa, **not one was** observed
Of the students, **not one has** entered the building

Not one of ... is/are

- is* is correct
as **not one of** refers to **one** countable object or person [in a plural group], use the **singular**
Not one of the acrosome-reacted **spermatozoa was** observed
Not one of the **scientists has** entered the building

Not only

- used to stress a point
At the beginning of a sentence, **not only** is followed by an **inverted verb**
Not only have you forgotten the references but the Materials & Methods section is incomplete

See: Inversion of verbs

Not only ... but also

a discontinuous/correlative conjunction, which links **two** grammatical equivalents

ALERT Check that **not only ... but also** links grammatical equivalents

The birth rate **not only** varies among cities **but also** from area to area within the city

ERROR *Syntax:* **not only .. but also** here **does not** link grammatical equivalents
[**not only** clause **but also** phrase]

CORRECT by

moving the **verb**, to compare phrases

The birth rate **varies not only** among cities **but also** from area to area within the city
[**not only** phrase **but also** phrase]

adding a **verb**, to compare clauses

The birth rate **not only** varies among cities **but also differs** from area to area within the city
[**not only** clause **but also** clause]

Not since

- used to stress a point
At the beginning of a sentence, **not since** is followed by an **inverted verb**
Not since Olson's work **have I** seen such clear ultra-micrographs

See: Inversion of verbs

Not so much ... as/but

- as* is correct

He was **not so much** upset **as** angry that his paper was rejected

ALERT Check that **not so much** is followed by **as**

He was **not so much** a scientist **but** a comedian

ERROR *Syntax:* **not so much as is not** followed by **but**
CORRECT by

replacing **but** by **as**

He was **not so much** a scientist **as** a comedian

retaining **but** and omitting **so much**

He was **not** a scientist **but** a comedian

using more **a ... than**

He was **more** a comedian **than** a scientist

Not until

used to stress a point

At the beginning of a sentence, **not until** is followed by an **inverted verb**

Not until Thursday **shall we** know the results

See: Inversion of verbs

Notes for/of/on

notes for an **instruction**

Notes for guidance on the use of the spectrophotometer are in the drawer beneath it

notes of a **person**

These are the **notes of** another exchange student

notes on a **method**

Notes on the use of the spectrophotometer

Nothing

refers to **not one** of several objects considered **collectively** as a **group**

Nothing is/are

is is correct

as **nothing** refers to **not one** of several objects considered **collectively** as a **group**, use the **singular**

Nothing is known about the mechanism

See: For free/nothing

Notwithstanding

Synonyms: but, despite, even if, still, yet

Notwithstanding the fact that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **even though**

Nouns

abstract nouns

concepts, not physical objects

abstract **count** nouns by themselves can

take the **definite** article **the** action

take the **indefinite** article **an** action

be **plural** actions

abstract **mass** nouns require **partitive** constructions for

indefinite articles **a type of** behaviour

plurals **sorts of** behaviour

common nouns

material objects and substances

common **count** nouns by themselves can

take the **definite** article **the** microscope

take the **indefinite** article **a** microscope

be **plural** microscopes

common **mass** nouns require **partitive** constructions for

indefinite articles **a crystal of** salt

plurals **kinds of** salt

collective nouns

denote and used instead of **a group** of people or things

take the **singular** when the collective **noun itself** is the subject

The scientific **staff is** underpaid compared with other groups

take the **plural** when what the collective **noun consists of** are the subject

The scientific **staff are** underpaid compared with other groups

which can be considered shortened by ellipsis of

Members of the scientific **staff are** underpaid compared with other groups

[members of] elided

proper nouns

names of people used in terminology have an **initial capital letter**

degrees Celsius	Cowper's gland	degrees Fahrenheit
Fallopian tube	Gaussian curve	Leydig cell
Müllerian duct	Petri dish	Sertoli cell
Southern blot	Student's t-test	Wolffian duct

See: Ellipsis, Partitive constructions (also under individual entries)

Nouns used as adjectives/genitives

acrosome reaction	(a reaction of the acrosome)
fertility test	(a test of fertility)
literature survey	(a survey of the literature)
protein textbook	(a textbook about proteins)
semen volume/analysis	(the volume/analysis of semen)
sperm motility/morphology/viability	(the motility/morphology/viability of spermatozoa)
trial experiment	(an experiment done as a trial)

Overused words: avoid when **adjectival forms** are available

Chromosomal abnormalities	(not chromosome abnormality) for abnormalities of the chromosomes
Epididymal weight	(not epididymis weight) for the weight of the epididymis
Testicular tubules	(not testis tubules) for the tubules of the testis

the **number** of some **nouns** depends on the their grammatical form

plural when used as a **noun**

A protocol for reprogramming **stem cells**
 Thermally damaged skin of **mice** was analysed
 The family of **PRDX6 proteins** was examined
 We applied for a spectrophotometer costing 10,000 **dollars**
 A container holding 500 **millilitres** was used
 Agar was added to a Petri dish nine **centimetres** in diameter
 A culture plate with four **wells** was used

singular when used as an **adjective**

A protocol for **stem cell** reprogramming
 Thermally damaged **mouse** skin was analysed
 The **PRDX6 protein** family was examined
 We applied for a 10,000-**dollar** spectrophotometer
 A 500-**millilitre** container was used
 A 9-**centimetre** diameter Petri dish was used
 A 4-**well** culture plate was used

ALERT Check that **nouns used as adjectives** are singular

These depend on the changing **proteins** and **fluids compositions**

ERROR *Syntax:* this means **composition of protein** and the **composition of fluid**, so there are **two** levels of **one** composition

CORRECT by using a **singular composition** and **singular nouns** as

adjectives

These depend on the changing **protein** and **fluid composition**

nouns

These depend on the changing **composition of protein** and **fluid**

Compounds were examined at both the **proteins** and **RNAs levels**

ERROR *Syntax:* this means at the **level of the protein** and the **level of the RNA**, so there are **two** levels, each of **one** component

CORRECT by using a **plural level** and **singular nouns** as

adjectives

Compounds were examined at both the **protein** and **RNA levels**

nouns

Compounds were examined at the **levels** of both **protein** and **RNA**

See: Blood-epididymis/-epididymal barrier, Blood-testis/-testicular barrier, Blood-vas deferens/vas deferential barrier, Prostatic/prostate, Seminal vesicle/vesicular, Testicular/testis, Units

Novel

See: New/novel

Nowhere

used to stress a point

At the beginning of a sentence, **nowhere** is followed by an **inverted verb**

Nowhere is it apparent that the cells are dividing

See: Inversion of verbs

Nuisance/nuisances

nuisance is correct

nuisance is a **singular** noun that has no plural

It **was** a **nuisance** to have to type in the password every time
 for **plural** use, use a **partitive** construction
 Several **instances of nuisance were** exhibited by the new software

Number

See: Count/number

Number/numeral

numeral a conventional **symbol** that expresses a number

Arabic numerals	one case only	0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
Roman numerals	upper case	I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI ... C,D,L,M
	lower case	i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii, viii, ix, x, xi ...

number an abstract **concept**, may consist of

figures (digits)
 The **number** 237 comprises the Arabic **figures (digits)** 2-3-7

numerals
 The **year** MCMXCVIII (1998) comprises the Roman **numerals** M-C-X-VIII

figures and letters (nominal numbers)
 Grant number **CO/247-11/1**

See: Digit/figure

Number/percentage

number The raw data from which the percentage is calculated
Twenty spermatozoa are morphologically normal from a total of **200** counted

percentage Part of the whole expressed in hundredths
 The percentage of normal forms is (20/200)x100 or **10%**

Number is/are

is when the **number itself** is the subject, use the **singular**
 Of the experiments the **number is** growing

are when what the **number** refers to (a **plural** group) is the subject, use the **plural**
 Of the motile spermatozoa a **number were** acrosome reacted

Number of

Synonyms: several, some

Number of ... is/are

is when the **number itself** is the subject, use the **singular**
 The **number of** experiments to do **is** growing

are when what **number of** refers to (a **plural** group) is the subject, use the **plural**
 A **number of spermatozoa are** acrosome reacted

Numbers

cardinal numbers (whole numbers, integers)
 numbers without a decimal place, positive, negative or zero
 2 1 0 -1 -2

denominate numbers
 numbers with units
 4 μ m 37°C 50%

measurement numbers
 numbers containing a fraction
 1.4 3.5 3½ 4¼

nominal numbers
 numbers used as names (also with letters)
 Grant no. CO/247-11/1

ordinal numbers
 numbers designating rank, place or order
 1st 2nd 3rd 4th

function as both

adjectives
 The **second** poster (Poster **number 2 [no. 2]**)
 The **13th** chromosome (Chromosome **number 13 [no. 13]**)

adverbs
 He wrote the Introduction **first**, the Methods **second** and the Discussion **third**

when both **ordinal** and **cardinal** numbers are both used, the **ordinal comes first**
 Only the **first three** numbers are taken into consideration

international convention

there is **no space** between digits
 for numbers only with **four** digits to the left or right of the decimal point
 5123 (**not** 5 123)
 0.5876 (**not** 0.587 6)

there is a **single space** between groups of three digits

for numbers with **more than four** digits to the left or right of the decimal point

100 000 (**not** 100,000 or 100.000)

23.587 621 (**not** 23.587621)

use of spaces, commas or commas is dictated by journal style

See: Decimal places/significant figures, Fewer/less, Fraction, First/firstly, First/second/third, Units

Numbers in words/figures

in words for the numbers **0—9** (or 0—10, 0—12)

zero, one, two ... nine

for all cardinal numbers

beginning sentences

Two rats were placed in each cage

even if 10 (11, 13) or more

Twenty five attendees constitute a quorum

for large **rounded** numbers

There are **hundreds of** endangered species

(**not** 100s of)

Thousands of spermatozoa reach the oviduct

(**not** 1000s of)

in figures for the numbers **10** (or 11, 13) **and above**

10, 11, 12 ...

for denominate numbers

(**with units**)

He sold the book for **£15**

even if nine (10, 11) or less

The temperature was **5°C**

even at the beginning of a sentence

6% of spermatozoa were motile

Numbers written as **words** and **figures** **should not** be not combined

They showed that **12** out of **15** experiments were conclusive

(**not** **12** out of **fifteen** experiments)

Four out of **sixteen** males were infertile

(**not** **Four** out of **16** males)

Numeral

See: Number/numeral

Numerous

See: Many/multiple/multi-, Many/numerous/several

Objective case

See: Accusative (object) case

Oblige/obligate

oblige verb to be morally or legally bound to an action or course of action

auxiliary verb followed by an **infinitive with** the infinitive marker **to**

He is **obliged to tell** me what he did

obligate adjective restricted to a particular function or mode of like

An **obligate** intracellular parasite

See: Facultative/obligate

Oblivious

to be unaware of, unconcerned with

does not mean forgetful, unmindful

Oblivious to/of

of is correct

Observe

Notice or perceive something and register it as being significant

Overused word: replace by **what was observed**

ALERT Check whether **observed** should be **replaced** by a **more informative word**

An **increase** in the volume of spermatozoa was **observed**

STYLE *Verbosity*: can be shortened

CHANGE by **converting** the *noun* to a *verb*

The spermatozoa **increased** in volume

Observed/reference values

<i>observed</i>	A value of a particular parameter, obtained by measurement from a patient for comparison with reference values from a reference group
<i>reference</i>	A value of a particular parameter, obtained by measurement from a reference group for comparison with observed values from a patient

See: Reference

Obtain/provide

<i>obtain</i>	to acquire, to get, to receive implies no choice by the donor used in animal research Spermatozoa were obtained from the epididymides of rats Epididymal spermatozoa were obtained by cannulation
<i>provide</i>	to give implies willingness to donate used in human research Ejaculates were provided by volunteers after three days of sexual abstinence Semen samples were provided after two days abstinence

See: Provided that/with

Obtained

Got, acquired or secured something

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by **what was obtained**

ALERT Check that **obtained** is necessary

The results **obtained** revealed the presence of two glycoprotein bands

ERROR *Semantics:* this implies that some results were **not obtained**, but an emphasis on current results may be meant

CORRECT [if **no comparison** with other work is meant] by

omitting *obtained*

The results revealed the presence of two glycoprotein bands

CORRECT [if a **comparison** with other studies is intended] by

adding *here*

The results **obtained *here*** revealed the presence of two glycoprotein bands

Obtaining/obtention

<i>obtaining</i>	is correct
<i>obtention</i>	confusion with French

Obviate

to make unnecessary
does not mean to reduce or make acceptable

Occupies a juxta-nuclear position

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **is next to the nucleus**

Occur

to happen, to take place

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by **what occurred**

ALERT Check whether **occurred** should be **replaced** by a **more informative word**

A **change** in the colour of the crystals **occurred**

STYLE *Verbosity:* can be shortened

CHANGE by **converting** the **noun** to a **verb**

The crystals **changed** colour

After written informed consent was obtained, two pre-operative visits **occurred**

ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, **it is unclear** whether the visits occurred by chance or were planned

CORRECT [the the visits **were prompted** by consent being given] by

clarifying the **relationship** between the consent and the visits

After written informed consent was obtained, two pre-operative visits were **scheduled**

Occurred/occured/occurred

occurred is correct

Occur is a **polysyllabic** word with a **long** vowel and emphasis on the **last** syllable

The final consonant is **doubled** when adding a suffix and the consonant is **R** (or **L**)

*Occurring/occurring/occurring**occurring* is correctOccur is a **polysyllabic** word with a **long** vowel and emphasis on the **last** syllableThe final consonant is **doubled** when adding a suffix and the consonant is **R** (or L)*Of*

superfluous in prepositional phrases

Of is **unnecessary**, the accompanying [word alone] is **sufficient**all **of** [all]both **of** [both]either **of** [either]half **of** [half]ml **of** [ml]mg **of** [mg]neither **of** [neither]one **of** the [one]some **of** [some]

See: Among/between/of, By/of

*Of large size*Pleonasm: as **large** refers to size, **size** is **superfluous**, use **large***Of such ... that*Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **so ... that***Of the order of*Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **about***Officious/official**officious* interfering, meddlesome, over-zealous*official* properly-authorised*Offspring/offsprings**offspring*

is correct

Offspring is a **plural** noun that **has no singular**The **offspring** of the heterozygous mating **were** fertilefor **singular** use, use a **partitive** constructionThe **number** of offspring **was** reduced by the treatment*Older*

See: Elder/older

Oldest

See: Eldest/oldest

*Oligospermia/oligozoospermia**oligozoospermia*

is correct

[WHO terminology]

When the number of spermatozoa per ejaculate is below the lower reference limit

*On/onto/on to**on*

presence or movement on one surface

The culture dish is **on** the benchShe moved the culture dishes **on** the shelf

movement from one surface to another

She took the dish from the incubator and placed it **on** the bench*onto*

movement from one surface to another

She took the dish from the incubator and placed it **onto** the bench*on to*each word (**on**, adverb; **to**, preposition) has a separate meaningAfter 10 minutes, he moved **on to** the next topic*On/to the contrary*

each is correct

See: In/on the opposite

*On a continuing basis*Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **still***On a temporary basis*Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **temporarily***On a weekly basis*Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **weekly***On a yearly basis*Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **yearly***On account of*Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **because**

On behalf of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **for**

On no account

used to stress a point

At the beginning of a sentence, **on no account** is followed by an *inverted verb*

On no account should the UV light be left on when cells are being cultured

See: Inversion of verbs

On one hand ... on the other hand ...

a discontinuous correlative **conjunction** linking **alternative** grammatical equivalents

The second **hand** is often elided

On one **hand** ... , on the other **[hand]** ...

used to present factors which are opposed, or which support opposing views or opinions

On one hand, the results could reflect the maturity of the spermatozoa, **on the other**, they may merely reflect their age

See: Also/on the other hand, Ellipsis, Conjunctions, On the one hand ... on the other

On the assumption of

See: Assuming/by assuming, By assuming/on the assumption of

On the basis of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **as, because, by, from**

See: Based on/on the basis of

On the contrary to

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **unlike**

On the ground

See: From the fact/on the ground

On the ground that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **as, because, since**

On the one hand ... on the other hand

a discontinuous correlative **conjunction** linking **alternative** grammatical equivalents

The second **hand** is often elided

On the one **hand** ... , on the other **[hand]** ...

used to present factors which are opposed, or which support opposing views or opinions

On the one hand, the method would increase the yield of spermatozoa, **on the other** it would select a subpopulation of them

See: Also/on the other hand, Ellipsis, Conjunctions, On one hand ... on the other

On the opposite

See: In/on the opposite

On the part of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **among, by, for**

On time

See: In/on time

One

used instead of a noun preceding it

I have many A4 copies of my poster, please take **one** [one A4 copy of the poster]

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check if **one** should be **replaced** by a **pronoun**

Of the labelled lectin-binding proteins, the most prominent was **the** 34 kDa **one**

STYLE *Word usage*: unnatural, clumsy use of words

CHANGE by **using**

one of

Of the labelled lectin-binding proteins, the most prominent was **one of** 34 kDa

that of

Of the labelled lectin-binding proteins, the most prominent was **that of** 34 kDa

One another

See: Each other/one another

*One in ... is/are**is*

is correct

as the **one** governs the verb, use the **singular**Only **one in four** students **gets** the spelling of epididymides correct[Of the four students, only **one gets** the spelling of epididymides correct]*One of ... and/or**and*

is correct

When **one of** introduces a list, the last two members are joined by **and**Discuss the cause of infertility with reference to **one of** sperm count, motility, morphology **and** vitality*One of the ... if not the***one of the** refers to **one of a plural group****... if not the** refers to a **single object****ALERT** Check there **are not two grammatical structures** in one sentenceThe new laboratory is **one of** the better equipped, **if not the best**, buildings on the campus**ERROR** *Syntax*: the comparative (**better**) needs a plural (**buildings**), the superlative (**best**) requires the singular (**building**)**CORRECT** by**using both building and buildings**The new laboratory is **one of** the better equipped **buildings**, **if not the best building**, on campus**using buildings with of all**The new laboratory is **one of** the better equipped **buildings** on campus, **if not the best of all****rewriting the sentence with of the**The new laboratory is **one of** the better, **if not the best**, equipped **of the** buildings on campus*One of the ...***one of the** refers to **one of a plural group****ALERT** Check that **one of the ... is not** used with a term **implying only one**This is **one of the highest/lowest** grant rankings I have received**ERROR** *Semantics*: oxymoron, **one of the** implies there is **more than one** but there is **only one superlative** (nothing is its equal)**CORRECT** [if it is the highest/lowest ranking] by**omitting one of**These are **the highest/lowest** grant rankings I have received**CORRECT** [if it is not the highest/lowest ranking] by**retaining one of the** and **replacing the superlative** by the **comparative** adjectiveThis is **one of the higher/lower** grant rankings I have received**retaining one of the** and **replacing the superlative** by the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjectiveThis is **one of the high/low** grant rankings I have received

See: Comparative/superlative, One of the best, One of the most, One of the only, Second

*One of the ... is/are**are*

is correct

as what **one of the ...** refers to (a plural group) is the subject, use the **plural**It must be **one of the** more important **documents** that **have** ever been published[Of the **documents** that **have** ever been published, it is **one of the** more important]*One of the best**Oxymoron*: **one of the** refers to one of a **plural group** but **best** is a superlative (of which there is only **one**: nothing is its equal)**ALERT** Check whether **best** should be usedThis is **one of the best** reports I've read**ERROR** *Semantics*: oxymoron, **one of the** implies there is **more than one** but is **only one best****CORRECT** [if it is the best] by**omitting one of**This is **the best** report I've read**CORRECT** [if it is not the best] by**retaining one of the** and **replacing the superlative** by the **comparative** form of the adjective,This is **one of the better** reports I've read**retaining one of the** and **replacing the superlative** by the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjectiveThis is **one of the good** reports I've read

See: Comparative/superlative, One of the ..., One of the only

*One of the most**Oxymoron*: **one of the** refers to one of a **plural group** but **most** is a superlative (of which there is only **one**: nothing is its equal)**ALERT** Check whether **most** should be used

This is **one of the most expensive** microscopes we have
 ERROR *Semantics*: oxymoron, **one of the** implies more than one but there is **only one most**
 CORRECT [if it is the most expensive] by
omitting one of

This is **the most expensive** microscope we have
 CORRECT [if it is **not** the most expensive] by
retaining one of the and **replacing the superlative** by the **comparative** form of the adjective,
 This is **one of the more expensive** microscopes we have
retaining one of the and **replacing the superlative** by the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjective
 This is **one of the expensive** microscopes we have

See: Comparative/superlative, One of the ..., One of the only

One of the only

Oxymoron: **one of the** refers to one of a **plural group** but **only** implies there is just **one**

ALERT Check whether **only** should be used

This is **one of the only** high value prizes we have won
 ERROR *Semantics*: oxymoron, **one of the** implies **more than one** but **only** implies there is just **one**
 CORRECT [if it is **the only** high value prize] by
omitting one of

This is **the only** high value prize we have won
 CORRECT [if it is **one of many** prizes] by
retaining one of and **replacing the only** by **several**
 This is **one of several** high value prizes we have won

See: Only/solely

One of those ... is/are

are is correct
 as what **one of those ...** refers to (a **plural group**) is the subject, use the **plural**
 She was **one of those scientists** who **are** never satisfied with their Impact Factor
[Of those scientists who **are** never satisfied with their Impact Factor, she was **one]**

One or more ... is/are

are is correct
 as what **one or more ...** refers to (a **plural group**) is the subject, use the **plural**
 Inside each subdirectory **are one or more** methods for preparing media
[One or more methods for preparing media **are** in the subdirectory]

One single

Pleonasm: as there can be only **one** single item, **one** is **superfluous**, use **single**

Ongoing

Style: unjustifiable neologism, replace by **continuing, current**

Only/solely

solely	adverb	not involving anyone or anything else, exclusively, alone He is solely responsible for the report [He alone is responsible for the report]
only	adverb	and no one or nothing more besides, exclusively, solely There are only a few cannulae left no longer ago than These genes were discovered only last year no more than Following treatment the incidence of cancer has only declined by 10% not until The exam results reached him only on Jan 10th
	adjective	alone of its or their kind It was the only medal we have won
	conjunction	except that, but He is still a young lecturer, only he seems older

The position of **only** is important for its meaning

Only I saw her at the seminar	(no one else saw her)
I only saw her at the seminar	(I saw but did not speak)
I saw only her at the seminar	(I saw no one else)
I saw her only at the seminar	(I saw her nowhere else)
I saw her at only the seminar	(but not at some other function)
I saw her at the only seminar	(there was only one seminar)
I saw her at the seminar only	(I saw her nowhere else)

ALERT Check that **only** is positioned close to the word it belongs to

The noise can **only** be reduced by sound-proofing
ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, **this implies** that the noise was
only reduced
 [not eliminated]
 or
 reduced **only** by sound-proofing
 [by no other method]

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by
omitting only and **being more specific**
 The noise can be reduced, **but not eliminated**, by sound-proofing

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by
moving only closer to **sound-proofing**
 The noise can be reduced **only** by sound-proofing

See: One of the only

Only by

used to stress a point
 At the beginning of a sentence, **only by** is followed by an **inverted verb**
Only by the weekend **will the cells** be ready for passaging

See: Inversion of verbs

Only rarely

used to stress a point
 At the beginning of a sentence, **only rarely** is followed by an **inverted verb**
Only rarely is this sort of staining observed

See: Inversion of verbs

Only then

used to stress a point
 At the beginning of a sentence, **only then** is followed by an **inverted verb**
Only then may you attend the lectures

See: Inversion of verbs

Only when

used to stress a point
 At the beginning of a sentence, **only when** is followed by an **inverted verb**
Only when the cells are fully dispersed **should they** be plated out

See: Inversion of verbs

Oocyte/ovum

oocyte **diploid** female gamete within (or removed from) the follicle
 arrested at metaphase with the **first** (diploid) polar body
ovum **haploid** female gamete formed by the resumption of meiosis initiated by sperm penetration
 formed after expulsion of the **second** (haploid) polar body

ALERT Check whether **ova** or **oocyte** is intended

The swum-up spermatozoa were incubated with five **ova** per dish
ERROR *Semantics:* **ova** are only formed after fertilisation
CORRECT by **replacing ova** by **oocytes**
 The swum-up spermatozoa were incubated with five **oocytes** per dish

Operative

having effect
 The institute's safety rules are also **operative** within the social room
does not mean important

See: Inoperable/inoperative

Opinion

See: In/to my opinion

Opposite to/of

of is correct
 used with a **noun**
 The result was the **opposite of what** was expected

Opposite ... to/of

to is correct
used as an **adjective**
The Minister took the **opposite** view **to** that of his advisers

Opt

See: Choose/opt

Optical density

See: Absorption/absorbance/optical density

Optics is/are

is is correct
optics is a **plural** noun, treated as **singular**
Optics is the study of the behaviour of light

Optics of ... is/are

is is correct
optics is a **plural** noun treated as **singular**
The **optics of** the system **is** quite complicated

Optimistic

See: Hopeful/optimistic

Optimum/optimal

optimal adjective most favourable
optimum adjective most favourable
noun the most favourable conditions
does not mean best

Option

See: Alternative/choice/option/possibility

Or

Coordinating, non-adversative conjunction
introduces phrases or clauses that are **alternative** to what has already been mentioned
links grammatical equivalents

is followed by the **singular**
Either he **or** she **goes** to the seminar

links **alternative** grammatical equivalents
The reviews are published in journals **or** books
[noun **or** noun]

phrases or clauses **of equal importance** joined by **or** are separated by **a comma**
The winners were given a cheque, **or** a certificate was awarded to the runners up
used to introduce an **alternative nomenclature** (meaning **Otherwise known as, Also known as**)
The drug caused enlargement of the organ by an increase in cell number (**or** hyperplasia)

ALERT Check that the clauses of equal importance joined by **or** are separated by **a comma**

On alternate weekends, the monkeys were given fresh fruit **or** chow was given to the rats
[noun **or** noun]

ERROR *Semantics:* the reader **may initially think** that the **monkeys had a choice of diet** and then realises that that refers to the rats
CORRECT by

separating clauses of equal importance **with a comma**

On alternate weekends, the monkeys were given fresh fruit, **or** chow was given to the rats
[clause, **or** clause]

reversing the order of the second clause **with no comma**

On alternate weekends, **the monkeys** were given fresh fruit **or the rats** were given chow
[clause **or** clause]

Electromagnetic pollution: another risk factor for infertility **or** a red herring?

ERROR *Semantics:* as the conjunction **or** links two nouns (infertility, herring) after the preposition **for**, each is considered a risk factor
CORRECT [if **a red herring** is an **alternative to another risk factor**] by

separating phrases of equal importance **with a comma**

Electromagnetic pollution: another risk factor for infertility, **or** a red herring?

HIF is upregulated specifically by decreasing oxygen tension **or** hypoxia

ERROR *Semantics:* **hypoxia is** decreased oxygen so **needs no alternative**
CORRECT [if **hypoxia** is an **alternative name** for **decreased oxygen tension**] by
using brackets

HIF is upregulated specifically by decreasing oxygen (**or hypoxia**)
HIF is upregulated specifically by decreasing oxygen (**hypoxia**)

See: Alternatively/or, And, And/or, "And/or", But, Coordinating conjunctions, Slash/solidus

Or so/or two

- or so* approximately, an **unspecified** amount
I waited for 5 **or so** minutes before the office opened
- or two* approximately, a **specified** number
I had to wait for one **or two** minutes before the office opened

Or so ... is/are

- is* is correct
about, approximately
as or so *describes* a singular noun, use the *singular*
One drop **or so** of NaOH *is* normally enough to raise the pH to the required value
[About **one drop** of NaOH *is* normally enough to raise the pH to the required value]

Or two ... is/are

- are* is correct
a few
as what **or two** refers to (a **plural** group) is the subject, use the **plural**
One **drop or two** of NaOH *are* required to raise the pH to the required value
[One drop or **two drops** of NaOH *are* required to bring about precipitation]

See: Either ... or

Or whatever

shorthand for **Or whatever it may be**

ALERT Check whether **or whatever** should be **replaced** by something **less colloquial or more informative**

The change in motility may reflect intracellular ionic strength, pH **or whatever**

STYLE *Word usage:* **whatever** provides little information

CHANGE by

avoiding shorthand

The change in motility may reflect intracellular ionic strength, pH **or the like**

being more specific

The change in motility may reflect intracellular ionic strength, pH **or the concentration of Ca²⁺**

Oral/verbal/written

- oral* the spoken word, by word of mouth
Oral agreement/message a spoken agreement/message
- verbal* of words (not the method of communication)
Verbal confusion confusion of words
Verbal misunderstanding confusion about the meaning of words
- written* the written word
Written agreement/message an agreement/a message that is written down

Orders of magnitude

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|----------------|
| internationally recognized | no punctuation separates thousands | 100 000 |
| many journals require | commas | 100,000 |
| some countries use | full stops | 100.000 |

The punctuation used is dictated by journal format

See: Numbers

Ordinal numbers

See: Numbers

Ordinate

See: Abscissa/ordinate

Originally

from or in the beginning

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that *originally is not* used with words implying prior occurrence

The idea was **originally** conceived in 1972

ERROR *Pleonasm:* things can **only** be conceived once

CORRECT by

omitting originally

The idea was **conceived** in 1972

changing the verb

The idea **originated** in 1972

Organ/tissue

- organ* A differentiated structure with a specific function, consisting of cells and tissues
RNA was extracted from the following human **organs**: epididymides, testes, heart, liver and kidney
- tissue* The distinct components that comprise organs, consisting of specialised cells and their products
After the tunica albuginea was removed, RNA was extracted from testicular parenchymal **tissue**
The epithelium was stripped from the peritubular muscle and RNA was extracted from both **tissues**

Orthography

The branch of grammar dealing with the combination of letters into words, spelling

Osmolality

See: Molality/osmolality, Osmolality/osmolarity, Osmolality/tonicity

Osmolality/osmolarity

- osmolality* concentration of osmotically-active solutes in a solution
units mol/kg solvent [**formerly** osmol/kg solvent]
Solvent measured in a **measuring cylinder**
- osmolarity* concentration of osmotically-active solutes in a solution
units mol/l solution (mM)
Solution made up in a **volumetric flask**

Osmolality/tonicity

- osmolality* the **absolute** concentration of osmotically-active solutes in a fluid assessed by **measurement**
- tonicity* the **relative** concentration of osmotically-active solutes in a fluid assessed by **changes in size of a cell** placed in it

Osmolarity

See: Osmolality/osmolarity

Osmoles

See: Moles/osmoles

Other

- refers to a person who, or thing that, is different from one already mentioned or known
- adjective **Other** means of separation are needed in this case
- pronoun They developed a method unrelated to any **other**
- additional, further
- adjective Finally, he gave one **other** word of advice
- pronoun The lab. now has five members of staff, students and three **others**

ALERT Check that **other is not** used with words **implying an exception**

- Every **other** laboratory here **but** this one has a sterile workbench
- ERROR** *Tautology*: both **other** and **but** (meaning **except**) refer to an alternative
- CORRECT** by using **one or the other**, not both
- Every laboratory here **but** this one has a sterile workbench
- Every **other** laboratory has a sterile work bench

ALERT Check that the use of **other does not** create **ambiguity**

- A droplet of sperm suspension was mixed with the **other** droplet of medium
- ERROR** *Semantics*: the adjective implies that the droplets are **similar, but they must differ**, since one has spermatozoa, the other not
- CORRECT** by **omitting other**
- A droplet of sperm suspension was mixed with the droplet of medium

See: Another/other, Apart from/except for/other than, Other/otherwise

Other/otherwise

- other* adjective before the **noun**
He could see no **other solution** than to go by train
- after the **noun**
He could see no **solution other** than to go by train
- otherwise* adverb after the **verb**
He is unable **to act otherwise** than graciously

ALERT Check that **other is not** used as an **adverb**

- He is unable to act **other** than ungraciously
- ERROR** *Syntax*: **other** is an **adjective** used here as an **adverb** describing a verb (**to act**)
- CORRECT** by using an **adverb**
- He is unable to act **otherwise** than ungraciously

ALERT Check that **awkward sentences are not** created when replacing **other** by **otherwise**

He is unable to teach **otherwise than** in a way that encourages respect

STYLE *Word usage:* clumsy sentence, awkward to read

CHANGE by replacing **otherwise than** by **save**

He is unable to teach **save** in a way that encourages respect

The effect is not seen **otherwise than** when androgens are present

STYLE *Word usage:* clumsy sentence, awkward to read

CHANGE by replacing **otherwise than** by **except**

The effect is not seen **except** when androgens are present

Other/otherwise than

other than

adjectival phrase, describing a **noun**

apart from, except

He claims not to own **anything other than** his home

otherwise than

adverbial phrase, describing a **verb**

differently from

There is no suggestion that we **are to take** this **otherwise than** literally

ALERT Check that **other than is not** used as an **adverb**

They could not have succeeded **other than** by hard work

ERROR *Syntax:* **other than** is an **adjectival phrase** used here as an **adverbial phrase** defining a verb (**succeed**)

CORRECT by replacing **other than** by

an adverb

They could not have succeeded **otherwise than** by hard work

a preposition

They could not have succeeded **except** by hard work

See: Apart from/except for/other than, Besides/other than, Other/otherwise than

Other than

Synonym: except

See: Apart from/except for/other than, Besides/other than

Ought/should

ought

an auxiliary verb (used with an **infinitive with** the infinitive marker **to**)

for duty, obligation (all persons)

I **ought to go** home now

for expectation (all persons)

You **ought to finish** by lunch time

should

an auxiliary verb (used with the **infinitive without** the infinitive marker **to**)

for duty, obligation (all persons)

He **should go** home now

for expectation (all persons)

They **should finish** by lunch time

See: Auxiliary verbs, Suppose/think

Our own

Tautology: **our** is a genitive; replace by **our**

Outside/outside of

outside preposition

Wait for me **outside** the building

outside of noun phrase

the outer surface

The **outside of** the building is not as attractive as the inside

Outstanding

clearly noticeable

The all praised her **outstanding** thesis work

not yet resolved or dealt with

Much of the work is still **outstanding**

ALERT Check that the use of **outstanding** does not create ambiguity

Since this technique is still at an experimental stage, clinical data are **outstanding**

ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, **it is unclear** which meaning of **outstanding** is implied, so **this implies** that

although the technique is experimental, clinical data are **better than would be expected**

or

because the technique is experimental, **no** clinical data are **available**

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

replacing *since* by *although* and *outstanding* by *impressive*

Although this technique is still at an experimental stage, clinical data are *impressive*
CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

replacing *since* by *because* and *outstanding* by *unavailable*

Because this technique is still at an experimental stage, clinical data are *unavailable*

Outward/outwards

outwards adverb towards what is outside
The incubator door opens **outwards**

outward adjective directed or proceeding to the outside
He displayed **outward** satisfaction at having won the poster prize

Over all/overall

over all preposition, pronoun
He had authority **over all** of the others

overall adjective taking everything into account
The **overall** effect is impressive

adverb in all parts, taken as a whole
Overall, 60 students should be able to attend

Overlook/oversee/oversight

overlook verb to fail to notice
I **overlooked** the contamination in the culture medium over the weekend
to have a view from above
The social room **overlooks** the laboratories

oversee verb to supervise
The meeting confirmed that the director will **oversee** the completion of the new laboratory

oversight noun an unintentional failure to notice or do something
It was an **oversight** not to change the culture medium over the weekend

Overly

Synonyms: excessively, too

Oversee

See: Overlook/oversee/oversight

Oversight

See: Overlook/oversee/oversight

Overused words

vague words or unnecessary stock phrases
replace by fewer, more relevant or specific words

ALERT Check that **vague** words **do not** obscure the meaning

Protein co-localization **studies** were **done using** laser scanning confocal microscopy

STYLE *Word usage:* **studies, done** and **using** are all overused words

CHANGE by **converting** the **noun** to a **verb**
Proteins were **co-localised by** laser scanning confocal microscopy

See: Done, Studies, Synonyms (also under each entry), Using, Vague words (also under individual entries)

Owing

See: Due/owing

Owing to

See: Due/owing to

Owing to the fact that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **because** or **since**

Oxymoron

(plural oxymora)

the use of words, phrases, or statements with meanings that contradict each other

in a **random** order (random is by definition **not ordered**)
one of the best (**one of the** refers one of a plural group but **best** is a superlative, of which there is only one)
one of the only (**one of the** refers to one of a plural group but **only** implies there is only one)
some of the most (**some of the** refers to several but **most** is a superlative, of which there is only one)

sometimes an intentional contradiction for rhetorical effect

the silence was **deafening** (no sound **can deafen** anyone)
it was **organised** chaos (chaos is by definition **unorganized**)

See: Oxymoron (also under individual entries)

P </= 0.05

P < 0.05 if P = 0.05 **is not** considered significant
P ≤ 0.05 if P = 0.05 **is** considered significant

Pair of ... is/are

is is correct
 as **pair of** is a **singular** collective noun, use the **singular**
 The new **pair of** microscopes **is** on the bench in the culture room

ALERT Check that the singular is used with **pair**

A pair of microscopes **are** being used for teaching sperm morphology

ERROR *Syntax:* pair is a **singular** collective noun but **the verb is plural**

CORRECT by
 using the **singular**

A pair of microscopes **is** being used for teaching sperm morphology

retaining the plural and omitting the collective noun

Two microscopes **are** being used for teaching sperm morphology

Paradigm

See: Algorithm/paradigm

Parallel

adjective occurring or existing at the same time, or in a similar way
Parallel experiments at the protein level confirmed the up-regulation of the gene
verb to be similar to, to correspond to, to move in a similar way
 The increase in epididymal weight **paralleled** the rise in circulating testosterone

Parallel/parrael

parallel is correct

Paralleled/paralleled

paralleled is correct
 parallel is a **polysyllabic** word with a **short** vowel and emphasis on the **first** syllable
but parallel is an exception to the rule that
 the final consonant is **not doubled** when adding a suffix (**unless the consonant is L or R**)

Parallelling/paralleling

paralleling is correct
 paralleling is a **polysyllabic** word with a **short** vowel and emphasis on the **first** syllable
but parallel is an exception to the rule that
 the final consonant is **not doubled** when adding a suffix (**unless the consonant is L or R**)

Parameter

Synonyms: characteristic, criterion, factor, index, measure, variable

Parameter/value

parameter	a characteristic and variable element			
	semen volume	sperm concentration	sperm motility	sperm number
value	a measured quantity of a particular parameter			
	5 ml	20 000 000 /ml	56%	60 000 000

ALERT Check whether **parameters** should be **replaced** by a more appropriate word

His semen **parameters** were in the normal range

ERROR *Semantics:* **parameters** can be neither normal nor abnormal, but their **values** can

CORRECT by
 retaining **parameter** as an **adjective** and adding **values**

His semen **parameter values** were in the normal range

replacing parameters by characteristics

His semen **characteristics** were in the normal range

See: Quantity/value

Paramount/tantamount

paramount more important than anything else, supreme
 It is of **paramount** importance to sterilise the work bench after culture
tantamount in effect equivalent
 His withdrawing the paper is **tantamount** to admitting plagiarism

Paronym

See: Heteronym/paronym

Part is/are

- is* when **part** refers to something **singular**, use the **singular**
Of the **document** the first **part was** photocopied
- are* when **part** refers to something **plural**, use the **plural**
Of the shipments **part were** damaged

Part of ... is/are

- is* when **part of** refers to something **singular**, use the **singular**
The first **part of** the **document was** photocopied
- are* when **part of** refers to something **plural**, use the **plural**
Part of the **shipments were** damaged

Part with/from

- part with* something
I **parted with** all my books and reprints when I moved home
- part from* someone
I **parted from** my colleague at midnight

Participles

used as verbs

present participle

ends in **-ing**

for the continuous future, present, past tense

The professor **will be [is/was/has been/had been] cycling** to work

past participle

end sin **-d** (heard), **-ed** (learned), **-n** (broken), **-t** (bent)

for the past tense

The professor **has [had] cycled** in the past

used as adjectives (verbal adjectives)

present participle

I passed the Professor, **cycling** on his way to work

past participle

I replaced the **broken** thermometer**senry** participles**begin** a sentence

are separated from their noun, pronoun or noun phrase

often unwittingly left dangling

e.g. applying, provided, sitting, standing**advocate** participles**after** the main clause

demand a response from the reader

ensure the verb used is appropriate

e.g. indicating, suggesting, resulting

used as prepositions

according

barring

concerning

considering

depending

during

excepting

failing

following

given

granting

including

notwithstanding

owing

pending

regarding

respecting

seeing

touching

See: Applying/application of, Dangling participles, Gerund/participle, Participial phrases, Sitting*Partitive constructions*

used to make

singulars of plural nouns that lack a singular formThe **number of** offspring **is** ...**plurals of singular nouns that lack a plural form****Lines of** evidence **are** ...some **sound as if** they require the **singular**, but take the **plural****One of the [plural group] that/which/who are**This must be **one of the** more difficult **books** that **have been** published**[Of the** more difficult books that **have been** published, this must be **one]****One of those [plural group] that/which/who are**She is **one of those students** who **are** never satisfied with their results**[Of those** students who **are** never satisfied, she is **one]***See:* Advice/advice, Behaviour/behaviours, Collective nouns, Contamination/contaminations, Cooperation/co-operations, Damage/damages, Evidence/evidences, Fauna/faunas, Flora/floras, Indefinite pronouns, Information/informations, Offspring/offsprings, Nuisance/nuisances, Plural/singular, Refuse/refuses, Research/researches, Software/software, Staff/staffs, Work/works*Partly/partially**partly* in part, not completelyThe laboratory wall is **partly** stone and **partly** glass

partially incompletely, to some extent
After treatment the rats were **partially** paralysed

See: Antonym/synonym

Parts of speech

<i>adjectives</i>	1
<i>adverbs</i>	2
<i>articles</i>	3
<i>conjunction</i>	4
<i>nouns</i>	5
<i>prepositions</i>	6
<i>pronouns</i>	7
<i>verbs</i>	8

The (3) student (5) took (8) the (3) viscous (1) sample (5) and (4) centrifuged (8) it (7) rapidly (2) for (6) an (3) hour (5)

See: A/an, A/an/the/^, Adjectives, Adverbs, Conjunctions, Nouns, Prepositions, Pronouns, Verbs

Passive

See: Active/passive verbs

Past

Gone by in time and no longer existing

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that **past is not** used with words **implying past events**

His **past** publications showed the same effect in rabbits

ERROR *Pleonasm*: publications must have appeared in **the past**, so **past** is **superfluous**

CORRECT by **omitting past**

His publications showed the same effect in rabbits

Past achievements

Pleonasm: as all **achievements** occurred in the past, **past** is **superfluous**, use **achievements**

Past experience

Pleonasm: as **experience** can only be gained from past actions, **past** is **superfluous**, use **experience**

Past precedents

Pleonasm: as **precedents** can only be set in the past, **past** is **superfluous**, use **precedents**

Past records

Pleonasm: as **records** are necessarily made in the past, **past** is **superfluous**, use **records**

Patient

noun an ill person

Epididymides were obtained from prostatic carcinoma **patients** undergoing surgery

adjective having patience (tolerating inconvenience without becoming angry)

He was extremely **patient** with the foreign students' use of English
[**patience** applies **only** to people]

ALERT Check that the correct meaning of **patient** is implied

Patient blood was examined

ERROR *Semantics*: only people can show patience

CORRECT by

making patient **genitive**

Patients' blood was examined

using patient **as a noun**

Blood from **patients** was examined

Pattern/profile

pattern a regular and intelligible **form or sequence** discernible in results

The checkerboard **pattern** of staining resulted from the antibody staining of principal but not clear cells

The **pattern** of staining with lectin (on the midpiece) differed from that of the antibody (on the principal piece)

profile a **representation of information** relating to particular characteristics of something, recorded in quantified form

Longitudinal semen quality **profiles** for individuals were obtained over a period of two years

The **profile** of Wnt/ β -catenin signalling gene expression is presented in Table 1

Overused words: often used unnecessarily, define or **omit**

<i>Pelleted/pelleted</i> <i>pelleted</i>	is correct pellet is a polysyllabic word with a short vowel and emphasis on the first syllable the final consonant is not doubled when adding a suffix (unless it is L or R)
<i>Pelleting/pelleting</i> <i>pelleting</i>	is correct pellet is a polysyllabic word with a short vowel and emphasis on the first syllable the final consonant is not doubled when adding a suffix (unless it is L or R)
<i>Per</i>	<i>See:</i> As per/per, Slash/solidus
<i>Percent/percentage/percentage point</i> <i>percent</i>	a unit (out of one hundred) written as percent with written numbers , with a space between words Thirty percent % with figures , with no space between the number and % 30% used as a noun Sixty percent of the students passed the examination 60% of the students passed the examination adverb Forward motility reached fifty percent Forward motility reached 50% for concentrations, stipulate whether w/v for solids 4% (w/v) bovine serum albumin v/v for liquids, gases 5% (v/v) Triton X-100 5% (v/v) CO ₂ for ranges and dispersions, do not repeat the units 40—50% not 40%—55%, 40%—50 40 ± 5% not 40% ± 5% percent stained not percent stained (%) <i>percentage</i> a value (an extent, part of a whole expressed in hundredths) written as percentage (not %age) The semen parameters studied were sperm concentration and percentage motility The percentage of students studying physiology has decreased recently The percentage of motile cells was 50 <i>percentage point</i> one hundredth of the total the absolute extent of an increase A decrease in sperm motility from 20 to 10% is a decrease of 10 percentage points a 50% decrease a percentage decrease of 50 An increase in normal forms from 5 to 10% is an increase of 5 percentage points a 200% increase a percentage increase of 200 ALERT Check that percent is not confused with percentage No significant differences in the percent of BrdU-labelled mesenchymal cells were observed among these three groups ERROR <i>Semantics:</i> percent is a unit whereas a value (part of a whole) is intended CORRECT by replacing percent by percentage No significant differences in the percentage of BrdU-labelled mesenchymal cells were observed among these three groups <i>See:</i> Fraction/percentage/proportion, Number/percentage, Percentage/percentage point, Repetition to avoid, Units
<i>Percent is/are</i> <i>is</i>	when what percent refers to is singular , use the singular Of last year's graduate population 30% is unemployed 70% abnormal morphology is incredibly high for a father
<i>are</i>	when what percent refers to is plural , use the plural Of the motile spermatozoa 15% are motile
<i>Percent of ... is/are</i> <i>is</i>	when what percent of refers to is singular , use the singular for singular nouns 15% of the solution has decomposed for collective nouns

25% of the electorate *has* yet to make up its mind
 for **mass nouns**
35% of a scientist's time *is* taken up writing grants
 for **decimals**
0.5% of the male population *is* infertile
 when what **percent of** refers to is **plural**, use the **plural**
95% of the values *fall* within the 95% confidence limits

Percentage is/are

is when **percentage *itself*** is the subject, use the **singular**
 Of motile spermatozoa, the **percentage *was*** reduced by the treatment
are when what **percentage** refers to is **plural**, use the **plural**
 Of the basal cells, a large **percentage *were*** positive for p53

Percentage of ... is/are

is when **percentage of *itself*** is the subject, use the **singular**
 The **percentage of** motile spermatozoa ***was*** reduced by the treatment
are when what percentage of refers to is **plural**, use the **plural**
 A large **percentage of** basal ***cells were*** positive for p53

Percentile

See: Centile/percentile

Perceptive/percipient/perspicacious/perspicuous

perceptive understanding readily or intuitively
percipient rapidly perceptive
perspicacious understanding without explanation
perspicuous plain to see

Perform

to accomplish, carry out, fulfil

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by **what was performed**

ALERT Check whether **performed** should be **replaced** by a more informative verb

Measurements of sperm size were **performed**

STYLE *Verbosity:* can be shortened

CHANGE by **converting** the **noun** to a **verb**

Sperm size was **measured**

Separation of proteins by western blotting was **performed**

STYLE *Verbosity:* can be shortened

CHANGE by **converting** the **noun** to a **verb**

Proteins were **separated** by western blotting

Synonym: done

Performs a function analogous to

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **acts like**

Period

a length of time

ALERT Check that **period *is not*** used with words **implying time**

I shall do research here for a considerable **period of time**

ERROR *Tautology:* **time** implies a **period**

CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both

I shall do research here for a considerable **time**

I shall do research here for a considerable **period**

Period of time

Pleonasm: as **period** means a length of time, **time** is **superfluous**, use **period**

Perk

See: Prerequisite/perquisite

Permeable/permeant

permeable of a **membrane**, allowing solutes to pass through

permeant of a **solute**, able to pass through a membrane

ALERT Check that **permeable** refers to a membrane

The effects of the **permeable** cryoprotectant glycerol was studied
 ERROR *Syntax*: **permeable** refers the properties of a **membrane**, but is used here to define a **solute**
 CORRECT by **using** an adjective describing the properties **of a solute**
 The effects of the **permeant** cryoprotectant glycerol was studied

Permit

is not an auxiliary verb

ALERT Check that **permits** refers to an **object**

This observation **permits to conclude** that transcription factors are involved
 ERROR *Syntax*: **permits does not** govern an infinitive
 CORRECT by **retaining the infinitive** and **adding a human agent**
 This observation permits **us to conclude** that transcription factors are involved
adding a noun and **using the passive**
 This observation permits the **conclusion to be drawn** that transcription factors are involved

See: Allow/permit

Person/person/personnel/people

<i>person</i>	singular	precise, definite, formal One person can do the job
<i>personnel</i>	plural	members of a company or organisation All personnel require training
<i>persons</i>	plural of person	precise, definite, formal Entry for authorised persons only
<i>people</i>	plural of person	indefinite, less formal Many people came to the inaugural lecture

Perspective/viewpoint

<i>perspective</i>	a two-dimensional representation of three-dimensional objects	[literally]
<i>viewpoint</i>	a position from which things are viewed	[literally and figuratively]

ALERT Check that **perspective is not** used in figurative statements

From the patients' **perspective**, the increase in research funding will be welcomed
 ERROR *Syntax*: **perspective** is a representation of a three-dimensional structure
 CORRECT by **replacing perspective** by **viewpoint**
 From the patients' **viewpoint**, the increase in research funding will be welcomed
clarifying whose viewpoint it is
 From the **viewpoint** of **those concerned with patient care**, the increase in research funding will be welcomed
using shorter phrases
With regard to patient care, the increase in research funding will be welcomed
In its effect on patient care, the increase in research funding will be welcomed

Persuade

See: Convince/persuade

Pertaining to

Synonyms: about, on

Pertinent

See: Germane/pertinent/relevant

Peruse/pore/scrutinise

<i>peruse</i>	to examine carefully, to read, to study does not mean to look over casually
<i>pore</i>	to study or read intently, to be absorbed in reading or studying
<i>scrutinise</i>	to examine or inspect closely and thoroughly

See: Close scrutiny, Detect/examine/inspect

Petri/petri dish

Petri dish is correct
 Names (proper nouns) take an initial capital letter

See: Proper nouns

pH/Ph/PH/ph

pH is correct

for the logarithm of the hydrogen ion (proton, H⁺) concentration of a solution

Phenomena/phenomenon (Greek)

phenomena plural
phenomenon singular

Photoes/photos

photos is correct
photo is the abbreviation of **photograph** (singular)
photos is the abbreviation of **photographs** (plural)

Phrasal clause

See: Absolute/non-absolute verbal constructions, Adjectival phrase/phrasal clause

Phrasal verb

See: Phrases

Phrases

a group of words with **no subject** and a **non-finite** form of a verb (infinitive, gerund, participle)

simple phrases, used as

adjectives	adjectival phrases	I thank the people who supported my application
adverbs	adverbial phrases	These machines function in the same way
conjunctions	conjunctive phrases	The fact that they swim indicates that the cells are alive
nouns	noun phrases	That the hypothesis is untrue is supported by the facts
gerunds	gerundial phrase	Cells were separated by using a centrifuge
participles	participial phrases	These values are high compared with those of the controls
prepositions	prepositional phrases	The cultures are prepared in the fume cupboard

complex phrases

consist of **one or more** simple phrases

... a **rapidly progressing, morphologically normal** spermatozoon ...

phrasal clauses

phrases used as a clause with a **subject** and a **non-finite** verb form (participle)

The desired number of spermatozoa being reached the perfusion was stopped

phrasal verbs

idiomatic phrases consisting of a verb and another element

an **adverb**

The enzyme **breaks down** its substrate

a **preposition**

I shall **see to** it tomorrow

both

He **looked down on** the people below

See: Absolute/non-absolute verbal constructions, Adjectival phrase/phrasal clause, Clauses, Phrasal clause, Sentences

Pipette/pipette

pipette is correct

Pipetted/pipeted

pipetted is correct

Pipette is a **polysyllabic** word with a **short** vowel and emphasis on the **last** syllable

The final double consonant is **not changed** when adding a suffix (unless the consonant is L or R)

Pipetting/pipeting

pipetting is correct

Pipette is a **polysyllabic** word with a **short** vowel and emphasis on the **last** syllable

The final double consonant is **not changed** when adding a suffix (unless the consonant is L or R)

Plain/plainly

plain adjective not decorated or elaborate, simple or basic in character
plainly adverb clearly, obviously

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check whether the use of **plainly** is necessary

The bimodal distribution is **plainly** visible in Fig. 5

STYLE *Word usage:* if it is plain to see, there is **no need** to point it out

The use of **plainly** inserts an element of **persuasion** or **pleading** that invites **scepticism** about the claim

CHANGE by **omitting plainly**

The bimodal distribution is visible in Fig. 5

Plain English

See: Style

Plasma

A biological fluid from which cells have been removed, usually by centrifugation

Blood plasma, from whole blood	(free of erythrocytes and leukocytes)
Epididymal plasma, from epididymal luminal contents	(free of spermatozoa)
Seminal plasma, from whole semen	(free of spermatozoa)

See: Blood/plasma/serum

Please

See: Kindly/please

Pleiomorphic/pleiotropic (Greek)

pleiomorphic the occurrence of more than one distinct form of a natural object
Spermatozoa in human semen are **pleiomorphic**

pleiotropic the production by a single gene of two or more apparently unrelated effects
We review the **pleiomorphic** genetics of cancers

Plentiful

existing in or yielding large numbers, abundant

ALERT Check that **plentiful is not** used with words **implying large numbers**

Plentiful numbers of spermatozoa could be aspirated from the corpus epididymidis

ERROR *Tautology*: plentiful **means** in large numbers

CORRECT by

replacing plentiful by **large**

Large numbers of spermatozoa could be aspirated from the corpus epididymidis

omitting numbers of

Plentiful spermatozoa could be aspirated from the corpus epididymidis

Pleomorphic/pleotropic

See: Pleiomorphic/pleiotropic

Pleonasm

See: Pleonasm (also under individual entries), Redundancy/pleonasm/tautology

Plethora

See: Dearth/plethora

Plethora of ... is/are

is is correct

as **plethora of** is a **singular** collective noun, use the **singular**

A **plethora** of non-standard forms of English **is** presented to reviewers

Plural/singular

<i>singular</i>	with one person or thing	the man is		
	with singular nouns joined by or or nor	Either Hamilton or Fawcett has the prize this year		
	with collective nouns	Neither Hamilton nor Fawcett has the prize this year		
	some singular nouns are treated as plural	The committee has come to a decision		
	statistics			
	some singular nouns have no plural and need a partitive construction for use in the plural			
	advice	behaviour	contamination	co-operation
	damage	evidence	fauna	flora
	information	nuisance	refuse	research
	software	staff	work	
<i>plural</i>	with more than one person or thing	The men are		
	with singular nouns joined by and	Hamilton and Fawcett are still being cited		
	some plural nouns are treated as singular			
	acoustics	dynamics	ethics	genetics
	kinetics	kinematics	mechanics	optics
	some plural nouns have no singular and need a partitive construction for use in the singular			
	offspring			
	some nouns are both singular and plural			
	headquarters	species		

ALERT Check that the **subject and complement** of intransitive verbs agree **in number**

Another important **component** of the blood-epididymis barrier **are** the tight junctions

ERROR *Syntax*: the **verb** is **plural** but the **subject** of the sentence (**component**) is **singular**

CORRECT by

retaining the **singular subject** and **making** the verb and **complement singular**

Another important **component** of the blood-epididymis **is** the **tight junctional complex**

retaining the **plural verb** and making the **subject plural**

Other important **components** of the blood-epididymis barrier **are** the tight junctions

ALERT Check that the **singular is not** used **incorrectly** for the **plural**

Between- and within-subject variability **was** also evaluated

ERROR *Syntax:* **variability** is **singular** but the **subject** of the sentence (two **variabilities** joined by and) is **plural**
CORRECT by using the **plural**

Between- and within-subject variability **were** also evaluated

ALERT Check that the **plural is not** used **incorrectly** for the **singular**

The cost of housing these animals **are** rising

ERROR *Syntax:* the word **animals** is **plural** but the **subject** of the sentence (**the cost of housing**) is **singular**
CORRECT by using the **singular**

The cost of housing these animals **is** rising

ALERT Check that **pronouns** agree with the subject of the sentence

In this work the application of general characteristics is to those to whom **it** may not be applicable

ERROR *Syntax:* **application** is **singular** but it is the **characteristics (plural)** that are applied
CORRECT by replacing **it** by **they**

In this work the application of general characteristics is to those to whom **they** may not be applicable

See: Level, Nouns used as adjectives/genitives, Partitive constructions, Units

Plus

preposition with the addition of
 Spermatogenesis was blocked by administration of androgen **plus** progesterin
does not mean and, additionally
 takes the **singular**
 Two **plus** two **is** four

ALERT Check that **plus is not** used as a **conjunction**

I have the surgical instruments **plus** disinfectant

ERROR *Syntax:* **plus** is a **preposition** used here as a **conjunction**
CORRECT by using a **conjunction**

I have the surgical instruments **and** disinfectant

p.o. (Latin)

per os by mouth, orally

Point of view

a way of looking at a matter
 The student's **point of view** may be different from the examiner's
 [**point of view** applies only to people]

Overused words: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check whether **point of view** can be **replaced** by more **relevant words**

From the cell separation **point of view**, discontinuous gradient centrifugation is preferable to swim-up

ERROR *Semantics:* **separation** is **inanimate and cannot** have a point of view
CORRECT by **rewriting the sentence** by **omitting point of view**

Density gradient centrifugation **provides** better cellular **separation** than swim-up

Polemical

Synonym: controversial

Ponder/ponder on

ponder is correct
 ponder means to think **about**, so **needs no additional** preposition (**on**) after it

Pore over

See: Peruse/pore/scrutinise

Portion is/are

is when what the **portion** refers to is **singular**, use the **singular**
 for **singular** objects
 Of this culture medium a small **portion has been** used
 for **parts** of a single object
 Of this **review** a large **portion is** ungrammatical
 for subjects **en masse** (considered **collectively** as a **group**)

Of these **fruits** a small **portion** *is* enough for the rats
 when what the **portion** refers to is **plural**, use the **plural**
 for portions of a **group** considered **individually**
 Of the **bottles**, a portion **have been** washed

Portion of... *is/are*
is

when what the **portion of** refers to is **singular**, use the **singular**
 for **singular** objects
 A small portion of the culture **medium** **has been** used
 for **parts** of a single object
 A large **portion of** this **review** **is** ungrammatical
 for subjects **en masse** (considered **collectively** as a **group**)
 A small **portion of** these **fruits** **is** enough for the rats
 when what the **portion of** refers to is **plural**, use the **plural**
 for portions of a **group** considered **individually**
 A portion of the **bottles** **have been** washed

Position

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check whether the use of **position** should be **avoided**

They now find themselves in a **position** where they have to make a choice

STYLE *Verbosity*: can be shortened

CHANGE by **omitting find themselves in a position where they**
 They now have to make a choice

Position of adverbs

See: Adverbs, Split infinitive

Position of commas

See: Commas, Defining/non-defining clauses

Position of full stops

See: Brackets and full stops

Positive regulation

Positive assumes knowledge of the negative

ALERT Check whether **positively** should be **replaced** by a **more informative word**

Inhibitors of NLK can **positively** regulate Wnt/ β -catenin signalling

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **it is unclear** what **positive regulation** entails, so **this implies** that NLK inhibitors decrease a positive regulation
 [*i.e.* decreases signalling]
 or
 decrease a negative regulation
 [*i.e.* increases signalling]

CORRECT by
being more specific

Inhibitors of NLK can **decrease** the **positive regulation** of Wnt/ β -catenin signalling
 Inhibitors of NLK can **decrease** the **negative regulation** of Wnt/ β -catenin signalling

being less verbose

Inhibitors of NLK can **decrease** Wnt/ β -catenin signalling
 Inhibitors of NLK can **increase** Wnt/ β -catenin signalling

Possess

Synonyms: to have, own

Possessive case

See: Genitive (possessive) case

Possible/probable

possible can or may happen
probable more likely to happen than not

Possible that

able to be done or achieved, may exist or happen
 used when there is **insufficient evidence** for a conclusion to be drawn
 expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood
 It is **possible** that these cells **are** stem cell precursors

ALERT Check that **possible is not** used with words **reflecting uncertainty**

It is **possible** that it **could** happen
 ERROR *Tautology*: **possible** and **could** both imply **uncertainty**
 CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both
 It is **possible** that it **will** happen
 It **could** happen

See: Certainty/uncertainty, Quotations

Possibility

See: Alternative/choice/option/possibility

Post-

prefix meaning **after**
Post-operative recovery (Recovery occurring **after** an operation)

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that **post is not** used with words implying **after an event**

Fertility was regained in the **post-treatment** animals
 STYLE *Verbosity*: as **post-treatment** animals (animals after treatment) are **treated** animals, **post-** is **superfluous**
 CHANGE by **omitting post**
 Fertility was regained in the **treated** animals

See: Pre-

Post-thawed spermatozoa

Verbosity: as **post** means after, spermatozoa after thawing are thawed; **post** is **superfluous**, use **thawed**
 See: Frozen/thawed

Post hoc (Latin)

See: Ad/post hoc

Postulate that

suggest or assume the existence, fact or truth of something, as a basis for belief, discussion or reasoning
 used when there is **insufficient evidence** for a conclusion to be drawn
 expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood
 We **postulate that** the enzyme **is** activated by dietary zinc

See: Certainty/uncertainty

Potential

having or showing the capacity to develop into something in the future

ALERT Check that **potential is not** used with words **implying uncertainty**

These glycoproteins **could become potential** markers of sperm maturation
 ERROR *Tautology*: both **potential** and **could be** have the notion of uncertainty
 CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both
 These glycoproteins are **potential** markers of sperm maturation
 These glycoproteins **could become** markers of sperm maturation

Practicable/practical

practicable can be done, capable of being put into practice (feasible)
practical worth doing
 capable person

See: Feasible/unfeasible, Impracticable/impractical

Practice/practise

practice noun She used to have English **practice** every Tuesday
practise verb He used to **practise** pronunciation every Tuesday

Pre-

prefix meaning **before**
pre-operative anaesthesia (Anaesthesia **before** operative surgery)

Overused prefix: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that **pre is not** used with words implying **before an event**

Fertility was not returned to that in the **pre-treatment** animals
 STYLE *Verbosity*: as **pre-treatment** animals (animals before treatment) are **untreated** animals, **pre-** is **superfluous**
 CHANGE by **omitting pre**

Fertility was not returned to the level in the **untreated** animals

See: Post-

Pre-adsorbed antibodies

Semantics: as **pre** means before, the antibodies before adsorption would be **unadsorbed**; **pre** is *superfluous*, use **adsorbed**

Pre-coated plates

Semantics: as **pre** means before, the plates before coating would be **uncoated**; **pre** is *superfluous*, use **coated**

Pre-conditions

Semantics: **pre** means before, but conditions have to be met before an agreement; **pre** is *superfluous*, use **conditions**

Pre-conceived idea

An idea or opinion formed **before** having the evidence for its truth or usefulness

Pre-planning

Semantics: **pre** means before but planning, by definition, is done before the event; **pre** is *superfluous*, use **planning**

Pre-recorded tapes

Semantics: as **pre** means before, the tapes before recording would be **blank**; **pre** is *superfluous*, use **recorded**

Pre-requisite/perquisite

pre-requisite something needed as a **prior** condition for something else
perquisite special privilege as a result of one's position (a **perk**)

ALERT Check that **prerequisite is not** used in conjunction with words **implying a requirement**

Anchoring of PKA to AKAP **requires** dimerisation as a **prerequisite**
ERROR *Tautology:* prerequisite **means** it is required, so prerequisite is **unnecessary**
CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both
 Anchoring of PKA to AKAP **requires** dimerisation
 Dimerisation is a **prerequisite** for anchoring of PKA to AKAP

See: And/with, Prior/subsequent

Pre-selected samples

Semantics: as **pre** means before, the samples before selection would be **unselected**; **pre** is *superfluous*, use **selected**

Pre-thawed samples

Semantics: as **pre** means before, samples before thawing would be **frozen**; **pre** is *superfluous*, use **thawed**

See: Frozen/thawed

Pre-treatment samples

Semantics: as **pre** means before, samples before treatment would be **untreated**; **pre** is *superfluous*, use **untreated**

Preceding/preceding

preceding is correct

Precise

See: Accurate/precise

Precision

See: Accuracy/precision, Dispersion/precision

Predicate

See: Complement/predicate

Predominant/prominent

predominant prevailing, present as the main element
prominent standing out so as to be noticeable

Predominant mechanism

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **main way**

Prefer

to like better

ALERT Check that **prefer is not** used with words **implying a comparison**

I **prefer** this equipment **better**
ERROR *Tautology:* prefer **means** like better, so better is *superfluous*
CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both
 I **prefer** this equipment

I like this equipment **better**

Prefer ... to/over/than
prefer ... to is correct

Prefer to/rather than
prefer ... to for comparing **nouns**
She **prefers fine scissors to a scalpel**
prefer ... rather than when followed by
an **infinitive**
He always **preferred to travel** by bus **rather than** [to travel] by taxi
a **gerund**
She always **preferred travelling** by plane **rather than** [travelling] by train

ALERT Check whether it is less clumsy to use a **gerund** or **infinitive**

He **prefers to write rather than** to telephone

STYLE *Verbosity*: can be shortened

CHANGE by using **gerunds**

He **prefers writing to telephoning**

Would you **prefer** to present a poster **rather than** [to present] a talk?

STYLE *Verbosity*: can be shortened

CHANGE by using **rather ... than**

Would you **rather** present a poster **than** a talk?

Preference of/for
preference for is correct

Prepositions

govern nouns, pronouns and noun phrases by indicating the relationship between them, and other parts of speech, to produce a phrase
do not govern infinitives

used when changing a verb from the active to passive voice

The **surgeon** excised the **tumour** (active)

The **tumour** was excised **by the surgeon** (passive)

used in sentences that contain **two or more people** or **things**

She gave a **scalpel to her colleague**

to is omitted upon inversion of direct and indirect objects

She gave her **colleague a scalpel**

He borrowed a **book from his professor**

from is not omitted upon inversion of direct and indirect objects

He borrowed **from his professor a book**

ALERT Check that **in does not** govern an infinitive

To be jobless **in** London must be different in Münster and Reading

ERROR *Syntax*: infinitives **do not** govern prepositions (**in**)

CORRECT by using a **gerund**, which can govern a preposition

Being jobless **in** London must be different from that in Münster and Reading

Prepositional phrases

govern nouns, pronouns and noun phrases by indicating the relationship between them, and other parts of speech

after that	all of	application of	as found by/in	as assessed by
as is the case in	as is not the case in	as reported before	as well as	both of
by means of	by the use of	compared with	either of	ex vivo
failing that	for example	for nothing	for the analysis of	from leaving
in accordance with	in addition to	In comparison with	in order to	in recognition of
in regard to	in respect of	in silico	in situ	in the absence of
in vitro	in vivo	judged by/from	mg/ml of	neither of
on the assumption of	on the basis of	other than	owing to	some of
together with	with reference to	with regard to	with respect to	with the aid/use of

See: As regards/as regards to, Concerning, In regard to/respect of, Regarding/with regard to, With reference to, With reference/regard/respect to, With regard to, With respect to

Prescribe/proscribe

prescribe set down as a rule or guide

The doctor may **prescribe** contraceptives for fertile patients

proscribe to denounce or to prohibit

A doctor may **proscribe** smoking for infertile patients

Prescriptive

See: Descriptive/prescriptive/proscriptive grammar

Present/present with

present to show something for someone to consider
The student **presented** a summary of this thesis
[**presents** applies *only* to people]

present with to show symptoms of
The patient **presented with** infertility and diabetes
[clinical usage]

ALERT Check that **presents** relates to an object **capable of presenting**

Figure 6 **presents** the change of semen osmolality with time

ERROR *Anthropomorphism*: a **Figure** is **inanimate and cannot** present anything

CORRECT by **changing the verb** from the **active** to **passive** voice

The change in semen osmolality with time **is presented** in Figure 6

See: Actual/current/present

Presumably

adverb describing a whole clause
used to convey what is asserted is very likely but not known for certain
Placed at the **beginning** of the sentence
Presumably, she wanted to go to Berlin
[**It is to be presumed** that she wanted to go to Berlin]

Presume

See: Assume/presume

Pretend

behave so as to make it appear that something is the case when in fact it is not
auxiliary verb followed by an **infinitive with** the infinitive marker **to**
That supervisor pretends **to help** you

Prevalence

See: Incidence/prevalence

Prevaricate/procrastinate

prevaricate to speak or act evasively, to stray from the truth
procrastinate to put off doing something

Prevent

See: Avoid/prevent

Preventive/preventative

preventive is correct

Previous

Existing or occurring before in time or order

ALERT Check that **previous is not** used with words **implying an earlier time**

Previous work published by Li et al. is at variance with our results

ERROR *Tautology*: published data **can only be** of previous work and **must have appeared** before the current time

CORRECT by **using one or the other**, not both

Previous work by Li et al. is at variance with our results

Work **published** by Li et al. is at variance with our results

Price

See: Cost/expensive/price

Principal/principle

principle noun fundamental truth or proposition, rule governing behaviour
Separation of cells by density gradient centrifugation relies on the **principle** of buoyancy

principal adjective chief, first in order of importance, main
The epididymis contains apical, basal, clear, **principal** and narrow cells

Prior/subsequent

prior coming **before** in time, order or importance
He cannot attend the meeting because he has a **prior** appointment
no adverbial form

subsequent coming **after** in time, order or importance
The **subsequent** appearance of testosterone secretion induced epididymal growth
adverbial form, **subsequently**

ALERT Check that **prior is not** used with a word meaning **previously**

You do not need **prior** consent **before** entering the sterile area

ERROR *Tautology*: as **prior** implies a previous time, **before** is **superfluous**

CORRECT by **using one or the other**, not both by

You do not need consent **before entering** the sterile area

You do not need **prior** consent **to enter** the sterile area

Prior to

See: Before/in advance of/prior to, Prior/subsequent

Prior to that time

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **before that, then**

Prioritise

Synonym: to order, to place in order of priority, to rank

Pros & cons (from Latin)

pro (for) advantages

con (against) disadvantages

Probable

See: Possible/probable

Probable that

used when there is **insufficient evidence** for something being likely to happen or be the case expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood

It is **probable** that the cells **are** lost by apoptosis

ALERT Check that probable *is not* used with words reflecting uncertainty

It is **probable** that it **may** happen

ERROR *Tautology*: **probable** and **may** both imply **uncertainty**

CORRECT by **using one or the other**, not both

It is **probable** that it will happen

It **may** happen

See: Certainty/uncertainty, Quotations

Probably

adverb may be used to describe a whole clause

Placed at the **beginning** of the sentence

Probably, she learned that technique at Harvard

(It is **probable** that she learned that technique at Harvard)

[It is **more likely than not** that she learned that technique at Harvard]

Probably he expected her **to write first** to the Editor

(It is **probable** that he expected her to write first to the Editor)

[It is **more likely than not** that he expected her to write first to the Editor]

See: Split infinitive

Proband/test subject

test subject is correct

Proband confusion with **German**

Probe

verb to explore or examine manually with an instrument or chemical

The gels were **probed** with specific antibodies

noun a small blunt instrument or device for obtaining information

A closed-end cannula was used as **probe** to investigate the patency of the vas deferens

ALERT Check that **detect** is the **intended word**

The same gels were **detected** with the anti-ZP3 antibody

ERROR *Semantics*: **this implies** that **the gels** were detected

CORRECT [if the **proteins** in the gels were detected] by

replacing detected by **probed**

The same gels were **probed** with the anti-ZP3 antibody

retaining detected and referring to **proteins**

The **proteins** in the same gels were **detected** with the anti-ZP4 antibody

Probe/sample

sample is correct

Probe confusion with **German**

Problem

A matter or situation regarded as unwelcome or harmful and needing to be dealt with and overcome

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by what **the problem was (or avoid)**

Overweight/lethargic/smoking addiction (**not** health **problem**)
Hyperactive/inattentive/antisocial (**not** personality **problem**)

Process

a series of actions taken in order to achieve a particular end

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by what **the process was**

ALERT Check that the use of the word **process** is necessary

Several identified proteins are involved in **the** protein amino acid phosphorylation **process**

STYLE *Verbosity:* phosphorylation is a process, **can be shortened**

CHANGE by **omitting the process**

Several identified proteins are involved in protein amino acid phosphorylation

Procede/proceed

proceed is correct

Procrastinate

See: Prevaricate/procrastinate

Produce

Synonyms: to secrete, synthesise, transport

Produced a significant inhibitory/stimulatory effect

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **significantly inhibited/stimulated**

Produced a significant reduction in the percentage of fertilised eggs

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **significantly reduced fertilisation**

Production

See: Development/production of

Prof/Prof.

See: Abbreviation/acronym/contraction

Profile

See: Pattern/profile

Prognosis

See: Diagnosis/prognosis

Progress

See: Advance/progress

Prohibit

See: Forbid/prohibit

Prominent

See: Predominant/prominent

Prompt

adjective done without delay, immediate

Her **prompt** action prevented the fire spreading outside the culture room

noun an act of assistance or encouragement to a hesitant speaker

The supervisor gave **prompts** to the student only after prolonged hesitation

verb to cause or bring about an action (of an event or fact)

He used the images on his slides to **prompt** what he planned to say

ALERT Check which relevant part of speech function of **prompt** is required

This facilitates neoplasia by eliminating pathogens and **prompt** resolution of inflammation

ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, **it is unclear** what is eliminated, just the pathogens or also the resolution of inflammation, so **this implies** that neoplasia was being facilitated by

elimination of pathogens and elimination of the prompt (rather than a delayed) resolution of inflammation

or

elimination of pathogens (which in turn is responsible for the prompt resolution of inflammation)

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

adding both and the **definite article**

This facilitates neoplasia by eliminating **both** pathogens and **the** prompt resolution of inflammation
 CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

replacing the adjective by a **verb**

This facilitates neoplasia by eliminating pathogens and **prompting** resolution of inflammation

adding an adjectival clause

This facilitates neoplasia by eliminating pathogens, **which prompts** resolution of inflammation

Prone/prostrate/recumbent/repose/supine

<i>prone</i>	lying face down
<i>prostrate</i>	lying face down, throwing oneself down in submission or protection
<i>recumbent</i>	lying flat in any position in comfort
<i>repose</i>	lying flat in any position in comfort
<i>supine</i>	lying face up

Prone to

See: Liable/prone to

Pronouns

are substituted for nouns or noun phrases to prevent undue repetition
 the word substituted is the **antecedent**
 the person and number of nouns and pronouns must be consistent within a sentence

personal

Nominative case	I	you	he	she	it	we	you	they
Accusative case	me	you	him	her	it	us	you	them
Genitive case (substantive)	mine	yours	his	hers	its	ours	yours	theirs
(adjectival)	my	your	his	her	its	our	your	their
Reflexive forms	myself	yourself	himself	herself	itself	ourselves	yourselves	themselves

demonstrative

this	that	these	those	one	none
------	------	-------	-------	-----	------

relative

Nominative case	who	which	that
Accusative case	whom	which	that
Genitive case	whose	of which	of which

interrogative

Nominative case	Who?	What?
Accusative case	Whom?	What?
Genitive case	Whose?	

There may be **more than one meaningful** pronoun

The examiner reported the student to the dean because
he [the examiner] saw him [the student] copying from his neighbour
he [the student] was cheating
he [the dean] had the power to fail him [the student]

ALERT Check that the **person** does not change within a sentence

The **institute** will use all **our** resources to solve the problem

ERROR Syntax: there is a switch from **third person singular subject** to a **first person plural pronoun**
CORRECT by

retaining the **third person singular** throughout

The institute will use all **its** resources to solve the problem

retaining the **first person plural** throughout by **rewriting the sentence**

We shall use all **our** resources to solve the problem

ALERT Check that **pronouns** refer to the **antecedent** intended

The screening method involves taking cells from the embryo in which the chromosomes are counted; only **those** with the correct number are then implanted

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **it is unclear** what **those** (plural) refers to; the closest plural nouns are **chromosomes** and **cells**, but neither can be **implanted**

CORRECT [if the **embryo**, which can be implanted, is meant] by

rewriting the sentence and **moving embryos** closer to **those**

The screening method involves counting the chromosomes in cells taken from the **embryos**; only **those** with the correct number are then implanted

IDO has a dual action, both removing the amino acid tryptophan essential for immune cell survival, and converting it to products that are toxic to **them**

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **it is unclear** what **them** (plural) refers to; the closest plural noun is **products** (which are themselves toxic)

CORRECT [if the **immune cells** are meant] by

rewriting the sentence and **moving immune cells** closer to **them**

IDO has a dual action, both removing the amino acid tryptophan essential for **the survival of immune cells**, and converting it to products that are toxic to **them**

The epididymis expresses many of the above factors employed by tumour cells to evade immunological attack, but a pro-tumour role for **them** in the epididymis is not possible

ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, **it is unclear** what **them** (plural) refers to, the **factors** or the **tumour cells**; the nearest antecedent (**attack**) is singular

CORRECT [if the **factors** are meant] by

adding commas to enclose **tumour cells** in a non-defining **which** clause

The epididymis expresses many of the above factors, **which** are employed by tumour cells to evade immunological attack, but a pro-tumour role for **them** in the epididymis is not possible

The males detect their mates by **their** antennae

ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, **it is unclear** whether **their** refers to the males or the mates, so **this implies** that the males **use their own** antennae to detect the mates

or

the males **examine the antennae** of the mates for identification

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

adding own and **replacing by** with **by using**

The males detect their mates **by using** their **own** antennae

adding own and by **replacing by** by **by the use of**

The males detect their mates **by the use of** their **own** antennae

adding own and by **replacing by** by **with**

The males detect their mates **with** their **own** antennae

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

replacing by with **by recognising**

The males detect their mates **by recognising** their antennae

replacing by with **from the appearance of**

The males detect their mates **from the appearance of** their antennae

Apart from **its** involvement in cell division, it is known that the primary cilium coordinates cell signalling

ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, **it is unclear** whether **its** refers to

CORRECT [if the **cilium** is meant] by

inverting the clause and **moving cilium** closer to **its**

Apart from **its** involvement in cell division, the **primary cilium** is known to coordinate cell signalling

See: Defining and non-defining clauses, Repetition to avoid, Style, Whose/of which

Proper nouns

See: Nouns

Prophecy/prophesy

prophecy noun

prophesy verb

Proportion

Vague word: be more exact (**or avoid**)

See: Fraction/percentage/proportion

Proportion is/are

is when what the **proportion** refers to is **singular**, use the **singular** for **singular** objects

Of the stock **solution** a small **proportion has been** used up

for subjects **en masse** (considered as a **single** object)

Of these **magnetic stirrers** a small **proportion is** enough for the practical class

are when what the **proportion** refers to is **plural**, use the **plural**

for proportions of a **group** (members considered **individually**)

Of the motile **spermatozoa** a small **proportion were** acrosome-reacted

Proportion of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **some**

Proportion of ... is/are

is when what the **proportion of** refers to is **singular**, use the **singular** for **singular** objects

A **proportion of** the stock **solution has been** used up

for subjects **en masse** (considered as a **single** object)

A small **proportion of these** magnetic stirrers **is** enough for the practical class

are when what the **proportion of** refers to is **plural**, use the **plural**

for proportions of a **group** (members considered **individually**)

A small **proportion of the spermatozoa were** acrosome-reacted

Propose that

used when there is **insufficient evidence** for a conclusion to be drawn

expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood

We **propose that** cells **are** lost owing to apoptosis
[**propose** applies **only** to people]

ALERT Check that the verb following **proposed that** is in the **present indicative**

It has been **proposed that** this enzyme variant **could use** protamine cysteine residues as substrate

ERROR *Semantics*: **propose that** introduces concepts **thought to be true** but the conditional **could** implies a **condition**

CORRECT [if there is **sufficient** evidence] by

retaining *proposed that* and using the *present indicative*

It has been **proposed that** this enzyme variant **uses** protamine cysteine residues as substrate

CORRECT [to emphasise **uncertainty**] by

omitting *It has been proposed that*

This enzyme variant **could use** protamine cysteine residues as substrate

CORRECT [if there is a **condition**] by

retaining *could* and providing the *condition*

It has been **proposed that** this enzyme variant **could use** protamine cysteine residues as substrate **if it is on a membrane close to the chromatin coils**

ALERT Check that **propose** applies to people

Some trials **propose** that elevated cytokine levels have no relationship with semen quality

ERROR Syntax: trials are **inanimate and cannot** propose anything

CORRECT by **replacing *propose* by *indicate***

Some trials **indicate** that elevated cytokine levels have no relationship with semen quality

See: Certainty/uncertainty, Conditional/subjunctive moods, Indicative mood, Moods of a verb, Quotations

Proscribe

See: Prescribe/proscribe

Proscriptive

See: Descriptive/prescriptive/proscriptive grammar

Prostatic/prostate

prostate noun the organ

The **prostate** is a male secondary sexual organ

noun used as an adjective

Surrounding the urethra is the **prostate** gland

prostatic adjective **of the** prostate

Prostatic weight decreases after castration

Prostatic cancer occurs in old age

Prostrate

See: Prone/prostrate/recumbent/repose/supine

Proteasome/proteasome

proteasome is correct

Prove that

used when there is **sufficient evidence** for a conclusion to be drawn

expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood

Our observations **prove that** the proteins **are** secreted in an androgen-dependent manner

Proved/proven

proven adjective

The student has a **proven** ability to work hard

proved participle

The hypothesis has not yet **been proved** to be correct

See: Testify

Proved to be

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **were**

Provide

See: Gain/provide, Obtain/provide

Provide for/with

provide for to make adequate preparation for a possible event

The design of the new laboratories must be flexible enough to **provide for** changes in technology

provide with to make available for use, to supply

All students were **provided with** the instructions to operate the autoclave

Provided by

See: Obtained from/provided by

Provided that/with

provided that conjunctival phrase
 meaning if it were the case that, in the case that, on the condition that, with the understanding that
 He can do it, **provided that** the equipment is working

provided with participial phrase
 meaning if he were given
Provided with working equipment, he can do it

Proxy

a parameter that can be used to represent the quality
 Semen quality is often used as a **proxy** for fecundity

a figure that can be used to represent the value of something in a calculation
 The use of US university Impact Factors as a **proxy** for world university Impact Factors

the authority to represent someone else, especially in voting
 Overseas students may register to vote by **proxy**

Punctilious

See: Meticulous/punctilious/scrupulous

Punctuation

See: Colon/full stop/semicolon, Dash/hyphen/minus, Hyphenated words

Purified water

Water purified by distillation (aqua dist.), double distillation (dd), reverse osmosis, ultra-filtration etc.

See: Aq. Dest.

Purport

Synonyms: to claim, to pretend, to profess

Purposely/purposefully

purposely intentionally, deliberately
 She **purposely** added the gentian violet to make the sperm heads visible

purposefully for a purpose, to make a point
 She **purposefully** nudged me to draw my attention to the lecturer's non-matching shoes

Quadrennial/quadrennium

quadrennium A **period of** four years
quadrennial **Lasting for** four years **and occurring every** four years

Avoid, use

A period of four years, Lasting for four years **or** Every four years

Qualitative/quantitative/semi-quantitative

qualitative of, concerned with, measured by subjective (non-numerical) means
quantitative of, concerned with, measured by objective (numerical) means
semi-quantitative yielding an approximation of the quantity or amount of a substance
 providing a relative rather than absolute amount

Quantification/quantitation

quantification is correct

Quantify

Synonyms: to assess, to count, to measure

Quantify/quantitate

quantify is correct

Quantile

A value that divides a frequency distribution into groups containing the same fraction of the population

Any of such groups containing, e.g.

100 equal parts	a centile	contains 1% of the data	5% of the values lie below the 5th centile
10 equal parts	a decile	contains 10% of the data	10% of the values lie below the decile (10th centile)
four equal parts	a quartile	contains 25% of the data	25% of the values lie below the quartile (25th centile)

See: Centile/percentile

Quantitative

See: Qualitative/quantitative

Quantity/value

quantity a specific number or amount measured in specified units

value a numerical quantity

The measured **quantity 24.7 mg** appears in a Table as the **value 24.7** under the heading of the **units mg**

See: Multipliers and units, Parameter/value, Units

Query

See: Interrogate/query/question

Quest/search

quest a long or arduous search for something
search the act of searching for something

Question

See: Doubt/question, Interrogate/query/question

Quickly/soon

quickly fast-moving, rapid
soon in or after a short time

ALERT Check the meaning when **using quick** and **soon**

Please reply **quickly**

ERROR *Semantics*: this means **typing fast** and **immediately** clicking the send button, or **writing rapidly** and **rushing** to the post-box
CORRECT [if the reply is needed within a short period of time] by

using soon

Please reply **soon**

Quinquennial/quinquennium

quinquennium A **period of five years**
quinquennial **Lasting for five years and occurring every** five years

Avoid, use

A period of five years, Lasting for five years **or** Every five years

Quit/stop

quit to go away, to leave
 After 10 months as lab. director, he **quit** to work elsewhere
does not mean stop

stop to cease, to desist, to end, to finish, to refrain from
 After six days the cultures were **stopped** and RNA was extracted from the cells

Quite

to the utmost extent or degree
 This is **quite** out of the question
 to a certain or fairly significant extent or degree
 It's **quite** a good thesis

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that **quite is not** used with words that **are one of a kind**

His work is **quite** unique

ERROR *Semantics*: oxymoron, **unique** means the **only one** if its kind, so **needs no qualification** before it

CORRECT by **omitting quite**

His work is unique

Quotation/quote

quotation noun

formal statement setting out the cost for a particular service
 Send me the **quotation** for the repair of the centrifuge
 words taken from a text or speech and repeated by someone other than the original author or speaker
 Darwin's **quotations** adorn all the laboratory walls

quote verb

May I **quote** this passage in my thesis?

See: Quotations

Quotation marks

used in pairs for

actual spoken or written words
 depending on journal style
 single

'I cannot agree with the questioner's interpretation'

double "I cannot agree with the questioner's interpretation"
quotation marks within quotations use the alternative form
 single within double "I cannot agree with the questioner's use of 'plagiarism' at all"
 double within single 'I cannot agree with the questioner's use of "plagiarism" at all'
non-spoken words or phrases that are used in a
 non-literal sense
 The lysosome is the cell's "**dustbin**"
 non-conventional sense, which has to be defined
 The female tract selects the "**fittest**" spermatozoa

ALERT Check that the special use of words enclosed in **quotation marks** is defined

Density gradient centrifugation separates spermatozoa of "**good quality**"
ERROR *Semantics*: what is meant by "good quality" is not explained
CORRECT by **replacing the quotation** by an **explanation**
 Density gradient centrifugation separates spermatozoa into those with **high motility** and **normal morphology**

See: So-called

Quotations

direct quotations repeat the words actually spoken or written within quotation marks (He **said** "...")
 indirect quotations paraphrase the spoken or written words without quotation marks (He **said that** ...)

The **tense** of quoted text depends on whether the quotation is **direct** or **indirect**

When what is said is grammatically **correct**

If the words Cooper spoke were "The regulation of volume is an important sperm function"

for **direct** quotation, use the **present** tense

Cooper **said**, "The regulation of volume **is** an important sperm function"

for **indirect** quotation, use the **past** tense

Cooper **said that** the regulation of volume **was** an important sperm function

If what is said is grammatically **incorrect**, the words used depend on whether the quotation is **direct** or **indirect**

If the words spoken were "It is **possible** that it **could** [conditional] be due to a vitamin-deficiency"

for **direct** quotation, **retain faithfully** the words spoken or written

He **said**, "It is **possible** that it **could** [conditional] be due to vitamin-deficiency"

for **indirect** quotation, use your judgement as reviewer to **amend the grammar**

He **said that** it was **possible** that it **was** [indicative] due to vitamin-deficiency

See: Possible that

Radiation

See: Irradiation/radiation

Radio-autography

See: Autoradiography/radio-autography

Radiography

See: Autoradiography/radio-autography

Raise/rise

raise **transitive** verb with object
 to lift something up
 simple past tense **raised**
 past participle **raised**
 I **raised** the objective lens on the microscope

rise **intransitive** verb
 [rise applies **only** to people or animals]
 to go up
 simple past tense **rose**
 past participle **risen**
 I **rise** at 6.00 every morning

See: Intransitive/transitive verbs

Raised

indicates a causal relationship, with time or after some manipulation
 transitive verb with **object** to **make** larger in extent or number
 active Hormone injections **raised** serum testosterone **concentrations**
 passive Serum testosterone **concentrations were raised** by hormone injections

ALERT Check that **raised is not** used for direct **comparisons**

Tubule diameters in the treated group were **raised compared with** those of the controls

Tubule diameters in the treated group were **raised in comparison with** those of the controls

ERROR *Syntax*: participles **are not** used for direct comparisons

CORRECT by

retaining *raise* as an intransitive verb and **stating the *sequence of events***

Tubule diameters **rose after ligation** of the efferent ducts

retaining *raised* as a participle and **stating the *cause of the increase***

Tubule diameters **were raised by ligation of the efferent ducts**

omitting *raised* and **stating what the tubule diameters *were above***

Tubule diameters in the treated group were **above** those of the ***non-ligated controls***

Tubule diameters in the treated group were **higher than** those of the ***non-ligated controls***

retaining the *comparative prepositional phrase* and **using the *absolute (positive)*** form of the adjective

Tubule diameters in the treated group were **high compared with** those of the controls

Tubule diameters in the treated group were **high in comparison with** those of the controls

Random/at random/randomise/randomised

random adjective made without method or conscious decision

A **random** selection of fertile patients comprised the control group

randomly adverb done without method or conscious decision

Animals were **randomly** included in the experimental and treatment groups

at random adverb done without method or conscious decision

Fertile patients were directed **at random** into control and treatment groups

randomised participle made random in order or arrangement, employed by random selection or sampling

A **randomised** controlled study of 1,000 infertile men

Random order

Oxymoron: something **random** cannot, by definition, be **ordered**: use **randomly**

See: Oxymoron

Range

See: Between ... and ... /from ... to, Interval/range

Range is/are

is is correct

as **range** is a **singular** noun, use the **singular**

Of the values the **range is** large

Range of ... is/are

is is correct

as **range of** refers to a **singular** value, use the **singular**

The **range of** values **is** large

ALERT Check that the **singular** is used with **range of**

A **range** of values **were** chosen to reflect physiological pH

ERROR *Syntax*: the word **values** is **plural** but the **subject** of the sentence (**range**) is **singular**

CORRECT by

using the *singular*

A **range** of values **was** chosen to reflect physiological pH

retaining the *plural* and **replacing *a range of*** by ***several***

Several values **were** chosen to reflect physiological pH

Rare/scarce

rare seldom found (often associated with high quality)

scarce occurring in small numbers or quantities

See: Scant/scarce/sparse

Rarely

used to stress a point

At the beginning of a sentence, **rarely** is followed by an ***inverted verb***

Rarely was the cilium observed extending for a long distance between cells

See: Inversion of verbs

Rate

the measure, quantity or frequency **measured**

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check if **rates** can be omitted

Spermatozoa from fertile men have **low rates** of DNA fragmentation **values**

ERROR *Semantics*: a **value** cannot have a low rate, but a **process** (fragmentation) can

CORRECT by **omitting**

rates

Spermatozoa from fertile men have **low** DNA fragmentation **values**

values

Spermatozoa from fertile men have **low rates** of DNA fragmentation

See: Degree/extent/rate, Frequency/rate

Rather/rather than

rather adverb a **simple** adverb, meaning somewhat
It was a **rather** small increase in gene expression
a **comparative** form of the adverb, meaning preferably, on the other hand
I would **rather** use testosterone

rather than conjunction, preposition
In this case I would use swim up **rather than** density gradient centrifugation

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check the position of **rather** in the sentence

He was **rather** a tall man
ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that
he was **taller** than most men

or

he was not a tall man **as expected**
CORRECT [if the former is meant] by
moving rather to define the following **adjective**

He was a **rather tall** man
CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by
adding commas around **rather** for emphasis
He was, **rather**, a tall man

ALERT Check that **rather** is used with words that **can be qualified**

His work is **rather** unique
ERROR *Semantics*: oxymoron, **unique** means **the only one** if its kind, so **needs no qualification** before it
CORRECT by **omitting quite**
His work is unique

See: Instead of/rather than/rather ... than

RCF/rpm

RCF Relative Centrifugal Force
The relative gravitational force exerted on a body moving in a circle around a central point
unit, gravity (*g*)
no space between the value and the unit
Samples were centrifuged at **600g** for 10 min

rpm revolutions per minute
The number of times per minute a body moves in a circle around a central point
Is a unit
Space between the value and the unit
Antibodies were mixed with adsorbing antigens by rotation at **10 rpm**

See: Units

Re (Latin)

prefix
See: Again/re

Readings

See: Data/readings

Reason

noun a cause, explanation or justification for an action or even
verb to think, understand and form judgements logically

ALERT Check that **reason is not** used with **explanatory words**

If we don't get funded our students will want to know the **reason why**
ERROR *Pleonasm*: the reason **explains** why, so **why** is **superfluous**
CORRECT by **using one or the other**, not both
If we don't get funded our students will want to know **why**
If we don't get funded our students will want to know the **reason**

The **reason** she spends less time in the laboratory **is because** she has to lecture abroad
ERROR *Tautology*: the **reason** explains the **cause**, so **because** is **superfluous**
CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both

The **reason** she spends less time in the laboratory **is that** she has to lecture abroad
 She spends less time in the laboratory **because** she has to lecture abroad

Reason ... is because

Tautology: as a **reason** explains the cause, **why** is *superfluous*, use **reason ... is**

Reason why

Pleonasm: as a **reason** explains why, **why** is *superfluous*, use **reason**

Reasoning

See: A priori/posteriori, Arguments, Deductive/inductive, Empirical/theoretical

Recent

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by the **date** or **time (or avoid)**

Recent results showed that

Syntax: wrong tense, replace by the present perfect tense: Recent results **have shown** that

See: Verbs

Recently results showed that

Syntax: wrong tense, replace by the present perfect tense: Recently, results **have shown** that

See: Verbs

Reciprocal

See: Common/mutual/reciprocal

Recognising

See: In recognition of/recognising

Recommendations are made that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **it is recommended that**

Recorded/registered

registered

values are **registered** by equipment

The temperature and CO₂ content were **registered** on the incubator's screen

recorded

values are **recorded** as data by scientists

The scientist **recorded** the temperature every 15 min

Recumbent

See: Incumbent/recumbent, Prone/prostrate/recumbent/repose/supine

Red in colour

Pleonasm: as **red** is a colour, **colour** is *superfluous*, use **red**

Reduce by/to

reduce by

indicates the **extent** of the reduction

The sperm concentration was **reduced by 70% from** that of the controls (a **70%** decrease)

reduce to

indicates the **value** after reduction

The sperm concentration was **reduced to 70% of** that of the controls (a **30%** decrease)

See: Deplete/reduce

Reduced

indicates a causal relationship, with time or after some manipulation

transitive verb with **object** to **make** smaller in extent or number

active

Capacitation **reduced** tyrosine **phosphorylation**

passive

Tyrosine **phosphorylation was reduced** during capacitation

ALERT Check that **reduced is not** used for **comparisons**

Tubule diameters in the busulphan-treated group were **reduced compared with** those of the control

Tubule diameters in the busulphan-treated group were **reduced in comparison with** those of the controls

ERROR *Syntax:* participles **are not** used for comparison

CORRECT by

retaining reduced as a participle and **stating the sequence of events**

Tubule diameters in the treated group were **reduced after administering busulphan**

retaining reduced as a participle and **stating the cause of the decrease**

Tubule diameters in the treated group were **reduced by busulphan**

omitting reduced and **stating** what the tubule **diameters were below**

Tubule diameters in the treated group were **below those of the control group**

Tubule diameters in the treated group were **lower than those of the control group**

retaining the comparative prepositional phrase and **using the absolute (positive)** form of the adjective

Tubule diameters in the treated group was **low compared with** those of the control group

Tubule diameters in the treated group were **low in comparison with** those of the control group

Expression of epididymal ADAM7 and GRP78 was **reduced** in old men **compared with** that of young adults
 Expression of epididymal ADAM7 and GRP78 was **reduced** in old men **in comparison with** that of young adults

ERROR *Syntax*: participles **are not** used for comparison

CORRECT by

retaining reduced as a participle and **stating the cause of the decrease**

Expression <of epididymal ADAM7 and GRP78 was **reduced by ageing**

omitting reduced and **stating** what the gene **expression was below**

Expression of epididymal ADAM7 and GRP78 in old men was **below that of young men**

Expression of epididymal ADAM7 and GRP78 in old men was **lower than that of young men**

retaining the comparative prepositional phrase and **using the absolute (positive)** form of the adjective

Expression of epididymal ADAM7 and GRP78 in old men was **low compared with** that of young men

Expression of epididymal ADAM7 and GRP78 in old men was **low in comparison with** that of young men

Reduced number of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **fewer**

Reduced relative to

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **less than** or **lower than**

Reduction

Synonym: cut, decrease

Redundancy/pleonasm/tautology

redundancy the use of unnecessary, repetitious or superfluous words
 comprises **pleonasm** and **tautology**

pleonasm the use of an unnecessary word whose **meaning is implicit** in an accompanying word

The **unnecessary word** should be omitted

for **absolute minimum**

[**minimum is** an absolute]

use **minimum**

tautology the use of an unnecessary word whose **meaning is repeated** in a different word in a phrase
 use **one or the other**, not both, e.g.

for **Currently** such methods are popular **today**

[**today is** current]

use **Currently** such methods are popular

or Such methods are popular **today**

ALERT Tautology can occur within abbreviations

ISBN number **N** stands for Number (International Standard Book Number)

HIV virus **V** stands for virus (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)

PDF file **F** stands for file (Personal Document File)

RAM memory **M** stands for memory (Random Access Memory)

See: Certainty/uncertainty, Pleonasm (also under individual entries), Tautology (also under individual entries)

Referee/reviewer

referee one who referees grants or manuscripts and makes recommendations

reviewer one who writes reviews

Reference

distribution The distribution of values obtained from a collection of **reference individuals**

individual An individual selected **from defined criteria** to provide reference values, e.g. a fertile man

interval The **values** bounded by (and including) a pair of reference limits, e.g. **2.5th to 97.5th** centiles

limits The **values at each end** of a reference interval, e.g. the lower (**2.5th**) and upper (**97.5th**) centiles

range The **extent** of values in a reference interval, e.g. **95%** of all values lie between the 2.5th and 97.5th centiles

values The values obtained from **reference individuals**

See: Interval/range, Observed/reference values

Reference value

See: Observed/reference values, Reference

Referred to as

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **called**

Refuse/refuses

refuse noun worthless or useless part of something

Refuse is a **singular** noun that has no plural

Potentially infectious **refuse has** to be incinerated in the autoclave

for **plural** use, use a **partitive** construction

Bags of refuse have to be incinerated in the autoclave

refuses verb third person singular of the verb **to refuse**

Refute

See: Deny/refute

Regard/regards

regard attention to or concern for something
 These results should be considered with **regard** to the role of LH in seasonal rhythmicity of testosterone

regards best wishes, friendly greetings
 Please give my **regards** to Professor Jones
 concerning, in respect to
 As **regards** content, the lecture will include his latest research findings

See: With regard to

Regarding/with regard to

regarding gerund (verbal noun)
 His **regarding** the manuscript as a valuable contribution was not shared by the others
 participle (verbal adjective) which can define a **noun, pronoun** and **noun phrase**
 contemplating, looking at, viewing
He was regarding the posters when they first met
 concerning, in respect of, with regard to
 I refer to your **email regarding** impact factors

preposition
 concerning, in respect of, with regard to
Regarding the publication costs, we'll charge you the lower rate

with regard to prepositional phrase, which can define a **verb**
 as concerns, regarding, with respect to
 He **made** enquiries **with regard to** the his exam results

See: Adjectival phrase/phrasal clause, Phrase, With reference/regard/respect to

Regardless

See: Irregardless/irrespective/regardless

Registered/registrated

registered is correct

Regrettable/regretfully

regrettably adverb used to describe **whole clauses**
 placed at the beginning of the sentence
Regrettably, none of the students know Chinese
(It is to be regretted that none of the students know Chinese)
(It is regrettable that none of the students know Chinese)

regretfully adverb used to describe **verbs or verbal phrases**
 placed after the *verb*
 I **have regretfully** to inform you that you have failed the examination
(It is with regret that I inform you that you have failed the examination)
[regret applies only to people]

ALERT Check that **regretfully** is only used for people

ERROR **Regretfully**, the cleaning agent is corroding the incubator
Semantics: this means that the **cleaning agent is feeling regretful**
CORRECT by using **regrettably**
Regrettably, the cleaning agent is corroding the incubator

Rate/speed

rate a measure, quantity or frequency
speed the rate at which something moves or operates or is able to move or operate

See: Frequency/rate

Reiterate

See: Iterate/reiterate

Reiterate again

Pleonasm: as **reiterate** implies a repeated action, **re** is **superfluous**, use **reiterate**

-related

legitimate device when attached to
nouns **Alcohol-related** diseases
 [diseases **caused by alcohol**]

is not used with adverbs, adjectives

See: Hyphenated words

Related to/with
related to is correct

Relative clause

plays the role of an **adjective**, qualifying a **noun**, relative pronoun or noun phrase

The **man whom we saw**

can be shortened by ellipsis of [**whom**] to

The **man we saw**

when be joined by **and, but**

both clauses can be introduced by **who**

When **two** relative clauses are introduced by **who** and joined by **and** or **but...**

The student **who** was technically competent **and who** was slow

The student **who** was technically competent **but who** was slow

...the second **who** (and its verb) **may be omitted** to form **one** relative clause

The student **who** was technically competent **and** slow

[**who was**] elided

The student **who** was technically competent **but** slow

[**who was**] elided

when joined by **although, because**

only one clause can be introduced by **who**

When two relative clauses linked by **although** or **because**

The student **who** was technically competent **although she was** fast

The student **who** was technically competent **because he was** slow

... the second **pronoun** (and its verb) **may be omitted** to form **one** relative clause

The student **who** was technically competent **although** fast

[**she was**] elided

The student **who** was technically competent **because** slow

[**he was**] elided

See: And that, And which, And who, But that, But which, But who

Relative to

Synonym: about

Relatively

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, inexact, **avoid**

use only when there is some **sense of comparison**

Relevant

See: Appropriate/relevant, Germane/pertinent/relevant

Relevant to mention here that results

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, **omit**

Remainder/rest

remainder a part, number or quantity that is left over (when some has been removed)

rest the part, number or quantity of something that remains (when some has been removed)

equivalent nouns

See: Residual/residue

Remainder is/are

is when **remainder** refers to something **singular**, use the **singular**

Of the stock **solution** the **remainder was** frozen

are when **remainder** refers to something **plural**, use the **plural**

Of the pelleted **cells** the **remainder were** digested in trypsin

Remainder of... is/are

is when **remainder of** refers to something **singular**, use the **singular**

The **remainder of** the **solution was** frozen

are when **remainder of** refers to something **plural**, use the **plural**

The **remainder of** the **cells were** digested in trypsin

See: Remaining ... is/are, Rest of ... is/are

Remaining

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

as participle means the remainder of, the rest of

See: Remainder of ... is/are, Remaining ... is/are, Rest of ... is/are

Remaining ... is/are

- is* when **remaining** describes something **singular**, use the **singular**
The **remaining** solution **was** frozen
- are* when **remaining** describes something **plural**, use the **plural**
The **remaining** cells **were** digested in trypsin

See: Remainder of ... is/are, Rest of ... is/are

Remaining is/are

- is* when **remaining** describes something **singular**, use the **singular**
Of the **solution** the **remaining was** frozen
- are* when **remaining** describes something **plural**, use the **plural**
Of the **cells** the **remaining were** digested in trypsin

Remarkable degree of stability

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **remarkably stable**

Render

Synonyms: to cause, to give, to make, to send

Repetition

of numbers

- An experiment **repeated twice is not** done **two** times
An experiment repeated **once** is done the first time and then **again**, so is done **twice**
an experiment repeated **twice** is **not** done **two times**, but **three**
an experiment repeated **thrice** is **not** done **three times**, but **four**

of magnitude

Three times as much as *does not* mean the same as three times more than

Once more than	(e.g. 3 [+3] = 6)	means	twice as much	(6 = 2 x 3)
Three times more than	(e.g. 3 [+3 +3 +3] = 12)	means	four times as much	(12 = 4 x 3)

of multipliers for numbers

repeat multipliers	Between 20×10^6 and 60×10^6	a range of 40 000 000	($60 \times 10^6 - 20 \times 10^6$)
	not between 30 and 60×10^6	a range of 59 999 070	($60 \times 10^6 - 30$)

of units repeat units

A cover slip 18 mm x 18 mm **not** 18 x 18mm

See: Double/twice, Duplicate/triplicate/replicate, In duplicate/duplicates, In replicate/replicates, In triplicate/triplicates, Interval/range, Thrice/treble/triple, Units

Repetition to avoid

to make reading easier, avoid

words giving the same meaning (pleonasm)

The **reason** just **why** is simple to explain

related ideas (tautology)

Currently such methods are popular **today**

repeated names

Rodin et al. examined ... (**Rodin et al.** 2003)

[change to (**Rodin et al.** (2003) examined ...)

(see **Hui et al.** 2003; **Hui et al.** 2004)

[change to (See **Hui et al.** 2003, 2004)]

ALERT Check that there **is no** unnecessary **repetition** of the **same word**

He owed less to judgment than **he owed** to luck

STYLE *Verbosity*: repetition of **he owed**

CHANGE by **omitting** one instance of **he owed**

He owed less to judgment than to luck

Serum glucose **levels** in the treated animals were reduced below the **levels** of the controls

STYLE *Verbosity*: repetition of **levels**

CHANGE by using a **pronoun**

Serum glucose **levels** in the treated animals were reduced below **those** of the controls

There is binding of **different** ligands to **different** receptors in **different** cell types

STYLE *Verbosity*: repetition of **different**

CHANGE by using **synonyms**

There is binding of **different** ligands to **various** receptors in **several** cell type

ALERT Check that there **is no** unnecessary repetition **of phrases**

The results reflect, **on the one hand**, the different maturity of the spermatozoa, and the effect of the obligatory centrifugation step, **on the other hand**

STYLE *Verbosity*: repetition of **hand**

CHANGE by **omitting** one instance of **hand**

The results reflect, **on the one hand**, the different maturity of the spermatozoa, and the effect of the obligatory centrifugation step, **on the other**

The male students largely voted for the amendment and the female students largely voted against the amendment
 STYLE *Verbosity*: repetition of students, largely, voted, amendment
 CHANGE by **omitting** one instance of *voted* and using a *pronoun*
 The male students largely voted for the amendment and the female students largely against it
 subsequently *shortening* by *ellipsis* of [students, largely, it]
 The male students largely voted for the amendment and the females against

They were more the **product of** student politics than **they were the product of** responsible reflection
 STYLE *Verbosity*: repetition of **they were the product of**
 CHANGE by **omitting** one instance of *they were the product of*
They were more the **product of** student politics than responsible reflection
 ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that
 they were more the product of **student politics** than they were the product of **responsible reflection**
 or
they were more the product of student politics than **responsible reflection was** the product of student politics
 CORRECT [if the former is meant] by
adding they were of
They were more the **product of** student politics **than they were of** responsible reflection
 ALERT Check that there *is no* unnecessary **repetition** of *similar ideas*

It is **vital** that sperm preparations are **vital** before their use in IVF
 STYLE *Verbosity*: the use of one word **with different meanings** in one sentence
 CHANGE by **using synonyms**
 It is **important** that sperm preparations are **alive** before their use in IVF

Pericytes initiate angiogenesis in quiescent tissue **in addition** to facilitating local invasion. **In addition**, they help protect the vasculature from drugs targeting cell signalling; **additionally**, several progenitor cells become intercalated as pericytes
 STYLE *Verbosity*: repetition of the same concept (**addition**) in similar words
 CHANGE by **using conjunctions** and **punctuation**
 Pericytes initiate angiogenesis in quiescent tissue **and** facilitate local invasion; they **also** help protect the vasculature from drugs targeting cell signalling. Several progenitor cells become intercalated as pericytes

Results **from previous comparative work in this field, published before in the literature** by Hinton et al (1975)², is at variance with our results
 ERROR *Tautology*: **comparative** work must be in the **same field**; **published data** must be of **previous** work and have appeared **before**; **published work** is necessarily found **in the literature**; citations are given **both** by name with date **and** reference number
 CORRECT by **omitting all unnecessary words**
 Results from Hinton et al. (1975) do not agree with ours
 ALERT Check that **substituted words** refer to the **intended noun**

Isoforms of another pro-angiogenic factor and its receptor are present in the epididymis, but in the epithelium not the stroma, a **site** inconsistent with a vascular role
 ERROR *Semantics*: **it is unclear** what **site** refers to, since the immediate antecedent **stroma**, containing the blood vessels, is a site **consistent** with a vascular role
 CORRECT [if the epithelium is meant] by
moving epithelium closer to **site**
 Isoforms of another pro-angiogenic factor and its receptor are present in the epididymis, **not in the stroma but in the epithelium**, a **site** inconsistent with a vascular role
moving site closer to **epithelium**
 Isoforms of another pro-angiogenic factor and its receptor are present in the epididymis **but at a site** inconsistent with a vascular role: the **epithelium** not the stroma

See: Certainty/uncertainty, Ellipsis, Fixation, Himself/himself/themselves, Pronouns, Redundancy/pleonasm/tautology, Staining, Style, Units

Repetition to use

pronouns instead of nouns
 synonyms
 the same word for effect or emphasis

ALERT Check if **repetition** is needed for emphasis

We employed a student who was **slow** but **technically competent**
 [but links *adjectives*]
 STYLE *Semantics*: this is a **descriptive statement** only
 CHANGE [if emphasis is required] by
repeating the **subject** and **verb**
 We employed a student who was slow but **who was** technically competent
 [but links *clauses*]

See: Pronouns, Relative Clause, Synonyms

Replace/substitute

substitute when X **substitutes for** Y
 In these experiments the student **substituted** mannitol **for** *myo*-inositol
 In these experiments mannitol was **substituted for** *myo*-inositol

replace when Y is **replaced by/with** X
 In these experiments *myo*-inositol was **replaced by** mannitol
 In these experiments *myo*-inositol was **replaced with** mannitol

Replete

Filled or well-supplied with something

Replicates

See: Duplicate/triplicate/replicate, Repetition

Report

See: Describe/report/state

Reported here demonstrate that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **demonstrate that**

Reported speech

See: Future tense, Quotations

Repose

See: Prone/prostrate/recumbent/repose/supine

Represent

See: Constitute/represent

Research

the systematic investigation into and study in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions

ALERT Check that **research is not** used with words **relating to investigation**

This review suggests several directions for further **research** that should be investigated

ERROR *Tautology*: **research** is an investigation

CORRECT by **omitting that should be investigated**

This review suggests several directions for further **research**

for further research and **replacing directions by problems**

This review suggests several **problems** that should be investigated

Research/researches

research is correct

research is a *singular* noun that has no plural

Much **research remains** to be done research

for a **plural** use, use a *partitive* construction

Several **fields of research were** described in this report

Residual/residue

residual adjective remaining after the main part has gone

residue noun a small amount of something that remains after the main part has gone

a substance that remains after a process such as combustion, evaporation, degradation

ALERT Check that **residue does not** cause confusion

This may reflect the washout by successive urinations of sperm **residues** remaining in the urethra after ejaculation

ERROR *Semantics*: **this implies** that parts of **degraded** spermatozoa (sperm **residues**) are in the urethra

CORRECT [if the **remaining** cells in the urethra were intact] by

replacing sperm residues by residual spermatozoa

This may reflect the washout by successive urinations of **residual** spermatozoa remaining in the urethra after ejaculation

replacing sperm residues by spermatozoa

This may reflect the washout by successive urinations of **spermatozoa** remaining in the urethra after ejaculation

See: Remainder/rest

Resorption

See: Absorption/resorption

Respective

adjective concerning each of several persons or things, individually

After the meeting, the participants returned to their **respective** institutions

See: Respectively

Respectively

concerning **two or more** persons or things in relationship to **an equal number of** other persons or things for each **separately, in turn or in the order** mentioned

John and Mary went home by train and plane, **respectively**

John [**stated 1st**] and Mary [**stated 2nd**] went home by train [**stated 1st**] and plane [**stated 2nd**]

Implies that **John** went by **train** and **Mary** went by **plane**

The concentrations of zinc, fructose and glucose were, **respectively**, 4.3, 7.8 and 0.1 mM

Zinc [**stated 1st**], fructose [**stated 2nd**] and glucose [**stated 3rd**] had concentrations of 4.3 mM [**stated 1st**], 7.8 mM [**stated 2nd**] and 0.1 mM [**stated 3rd**]

Implies that the concentration of zinc was 4.3 mM, of fructose was 7.8 mM and of glucose was 0.1 mM

ALERT Check that there are **at least two categories** of items related by **respectively**

We used flow cytometry and spectrophotometry, **respectively**

ERROR *Syntax*: as there is nothing to relate these methods to, **respectively** is **superfluous**

CORRECT by **omitting *respectively***

We used flow cytometry and spectrophotometry

ALERT Check that **respectively** is relevant

The concentration of NaCl was 5 mM and of sucrose was 50 mM, **respectively**

ERROR *Syntax*: as each compound is associated with its own concentration, **respectively** is **superfluous**

CORRECT by

omitting *respectively*

The concentration of NaCl was 5 mM and of sucrose was 50 mM

retaining *respectively* and sequentially **listing** the **compounds** and their **concentrations**

The concentrations of **NaCl** and **sucrose** were **5 mM** and **50 mM**, respectively

In our laboratory, testicular, epididymal and sperm-milieu proteomes have been examined, **respectively** [7, 8]

ERROR *Syntax*: there are **three** proteomes mentioned but only **two** references linked to them, so **respectively** brings no clarity

CORRECT by

omitting *respectively*

In our laboratory, testicular, epididymal and sperm-milieu proteomes have been examined [7, 8]

retaining *respectively* and **adding a *third reference*** for the third proteome

In our laboratory, testicular, epididymal and sperm-milieu proteomes have been examined, **respectively** [7, 8, 9]

Respirate/respire

respire is correct

Rest

See: Remainder/rest

Rest is/are

is when **rest** refers to something **singular**, use the **singular**

Of the **solution** the **rest was** frozen

are When **rest** refers to something **plural**, use the **plural**

Of the **cells** the **rest were** digested in trypsin

Rest of ... is/are

is when **rest of** refers to something **singular**, use the **singular**

The **rest of** the **solution was** frozen

are When **rest of** refers to something **plural**, use the **plural**

The **rest of** the **cells were** digested in trypsin

See: Remainder of ... is/are, Remaining ... is/are,

Resulted

occurred or followed as a consequence of

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by **what resulted**

ALERT Check whether **resulted** should be **replaced** by a **more relevant word**

A **decrease** in normal sperm morphology **resulted**

STYLE *Verbosity*: can be shortened

CHANGE by **converting** the **noun** to a **verb**

Normal sperm morphology **decreased**

Resulting

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

as participle means occurring or following as a consequence of

ALERT Check that **resulting** has a relevant noun to qualify

ERROR *Semantics:* **it is unclear** what inhibits tumour growth, the abnormal activation or its correction, so **this implies** that the inhibited tumour growth resulted from

the **abnormal activation** of Wnt/ β -catenin signalling

or

the **miRNA correction** of the abnormal activation of Wnt/ β -catenin signalling

CORRECT [if the former is the case] by

replacing *resulting* by *that results*, creating a **defining** clause

miRNAs have been shown to correct the abnormal activation of Wnt/ β -catenin signalling **that results** in inhibited tumour growth

CORRECT [if the latter is the case] by

replacing *resulting* by *which results*, creating a **non-defining** clause

miRNAs have been shown to correct the abnormal activation of Wnt/ β -catenin signalling, **which results** in inhibited tumour growth

ERROR *Semantics:* **Resulting** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **compounds** is the nearest noun it can complement. This gives the **unintended impression** that the **compounds caused** the **yields**

CORRECT [if the **difficulty in crystallising** the compounds caused reduced yields] by

providing a *noun* for the participle to describe

The compounds were hard to crystallize, **a fact resulting** in reduced yields

adding a *conjunction* to create an **adverbial subordinate clause**

Because the compounds were hard to crystallise, yields were low

using a *phrasal clause* as a subordinate clause

The compounds being hard to crystallise yields were low

rewriting the sentence with a ***noun*** for the participle to define

Crystallisation of the compounds proved difficult, **resulting** in reduced yields

rewriting the sentence with a ***noun*** and a ***verb***

The **difficulty** in crystallization of the compounds **reduced** yields

See: Defining/non-defining clauses

Retract/retraction/retractation

<i>retract</i>	verb	literal meaning to draw something back The cat retracted (sheathed) its claws
		figurative meaning to take back an assertion or claim The university retracted its claim of ownership
<i>retraction</i>	noun	associated with the literal sense of retract The retraction of the cat's claws was hindered in the diseased animals
<i>retractation</i>	noun	associated with the figurative sense of to retract The retractation of the union's claim followed the Dean's decision

Reveal

See: Find/reveal

Reveal that

make previously unknown or secret information known

used when there is **sufficient evidence** for a conclusion to be drawn

expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood

The micrographs **revealed that** cells **are** lost because of apoptosis

ALERT Check that the verb following **reveal that** is in the **present indicative** mood

Recent results **reveal that** the protein **could inhibit** a specific stage of fertilisation

ERROR *Semantics:* **reveals that** introduces something **certain** but the conditional **could** implies a **condition**

CORRECT [if there is **sufficient** evidence] by

retaining *reveal that* and **using the *present indicative***

Recent results **reveal that** the protein **inhibits** a specific stage of fertilisation

CORRECT [to emphasise **uncertainty**] by

omitting *reveal*

The protein **could inhibit** a specific stage of fertilisation

CORRECT [if there is a **condition**] by

retaining *could* and **providing the *condition***

Recent results **reveal that** the protein **could inhibit** a specific stage of fertilisation **if present from the time of sperm penetration**

See: Certainty/uncertainty, Conditional/subjunctive moods, Indicative mood, Moods of a verb, Quotations

Reverse

See: Inverse/reverse, Invert/reverse

Revert

to return to a previous state, condition, practice

does not mean overcome

ALERT Check that **revert** relates to a reversible process

The fertilisation defect caused by low intra-sperm pH could be **reverted** by alkalinising the spermatozoa

ERROR *Semantics*: a defect cannot be reverted, but the situation leading to it may

CORRECT by

replacing **reverted** by **overcome**

The fertilisation defect caused by low intra-sperm pH could be **overcome** by alkalinising the spermatozoa

rewriting **the sentence** and retaining **reverted**

The cause of the fertilisation defect, low intra-sperm pH, could be **reverted** by alkalinising the spermatozoa

Revert back

Pleonasm: as **revert** implies going back, **back** is *superfluous*, use **revert**

Reviewer

See: Referee/reviewer

Rhythm/rhythm

rhythm is correct

Right/rightly

right

adjective placed **after** the **verb**
correct, proper
direction
exactly
straight away

Did you **get** it **right**?

Turn right at the end of the corridor

The laboratory **is right** at the end of the corridor

They **went right** home

adverb placed **after** the **verb**
immediately
correctly

I'll **be right** back

He had **guessed right**

rightly

adverb placed **after** the **verb**
correctly
placed **before** the **verb**
correctly, properly
justifiably, justly
suitably

If I **remember rightly**, he never gives seminars

He **rightly stopped** the centrifuge when the alarm bell rang

She was **rightly annoyed** by their behaviour

Am you **rightly equipped** for the surgery?

Rise

See: Raise/rise

Robust/stringent

robust

sturdy in construction
able to withstand and overcome adverse conditions
He put up a **robust** defence of this thesis

stringent

exacting, precise, strict
used of conditions, regulations, requirements
The selection criteria for patients entering the study were very **stringent**
Less **stringent** conditions were used to elute non-specifically bound DNA from the filter

Rotate/revolve

rotate

of one object: to move around a central axis, to spin
The Earth **rotates** on its axis once a day
The centrifuge rotor **rotates** on its own axis

revolve

of one object around another: to move in an orbit around a central axis
The Earth **revolves** around the sun once a year
The centrifuge bucket **revolves** around the central rotor axis

See: RCF/rpm

Round in shape

Pleonasm: as **round** is a shape, **shape** is *superfluous*, use **round**

Rounding of decimals

rounding **up** or **down** of decimal numbers to the **nearest whole number**

the convention is to round numbers with decimal points

up	when between	0.6 and 0.9	<i>e.g.</i> 32.6 up to	33
down	when between	0.1 and 0.4	<i>e.g.</i> 32.4 down to	32
	to the nearest even number	when	0.5	<i>e.g.</i> 32.5 down to

See: Decimal places/significant figures

Sacrifice

to offer or kill as a religious sacrifice
to give up something valued for the sake of other considerations
does not mean to kill

ALERT Check that **sacrifice** is the **intended word**

The rats were **sacrificed** 10 days after the operation

ERROR *Semantics*: no religious or other considerations are pertinent

CORRECT by **replacing sacrifice** by **kill**

The rats were **killed** 10 days after the operation

See: Euphemism

Same/similar/similarly

same adjective identical, not different

similar adjective like, resembling, not identical

similarly adverb also, in a like manner, in the same way, likewise

ALERT Check that **same is not** used as an **adverb**

They function the **same**

ERROR *Syntax*: **same** is an **adjective** used here as an **adverb** describing a verb (**to function**)

CORRECT by **using** an

adverb

They function **similarly**

adverbial phrase including **same** as an **adjective**

They function **in the same way**

ALERT Check that **same** is used to mean **identical**

The **same** results were reported by Kurosaki et al. from a study of 54 patients

ERROR *Semantics*: the chances of studies **producing identical results** is slim (but studies may come to the **same** conclusions)

CORRECT by **using similar**

Similar results were reported by Kurosaki et al. from a study of 54 patients

See: Contrari-/like-wise, Like/similar/similar to, Like/such as

Same ... as/that

as is correct

when **same** is used as an **adjective** defining a **noun**

They used the **same programme as** we did

See: Exact ... as/that, Very ... as/that

Sample

See: Probe/sample

Sarcastic

See: Ironic/sarcastic/sardonic

Sardonic

See: Ironic/sarcastic/sardonic

Save

Except

See: But, Other/otherwise

s.c.

subcutaneously under the skin

sc./viz. (Latin)

sc. (scilicet [scire licet])

it is permitted **to know**

namely, that is to say, to wit

written **before** examples to provide **clarification**, to remove **ambiguity**, to supply a **missing word**

The archives cite the area, **sc.** the present lake, where the first laboratory stood

viz. (videlicet [videlicz])

it is permitted **to see**

as follows, in other words, namely, that is to say
 written **before** examples to specify something **previously mentioned**
 The thrust of his argument, **viz.** the novel role of cytoplasmic droplets, was not appreciated

Scant/scarce/sparse

scant barely sufficient or adequate, not plentiful
scarce occurring in small numbers or quantities
sparse thinly dispersed or scattered, scanty, in short supply

See: Rare/scarce

Scarcely

only just, almost not
 has a negative connotation
 used to stress a point
 At the beginning of a sentence, **scarcely** is followed by an **inverted verb**
Scarcely had I started the cultures when the sterile bench broke down

ALERT Check that **scarcely is not** used with a **negative**

He **didn't** have **scarcely** any grant money left for the equipment needed
ERROR *Syntax*: scarcely is a **negative**, so **needs no negative** verb (**not**) before it
CORRECT [if he did not have the grant money] by **omitting the negative**
 He **had scarcely** any grant money left for the equipment needed

See: Double negative, Inversion of verbs

Scarcely ... when/than

scarcely ... when is correct

Scepticism

doubt as to the truth of something

See: Plain/plainly

Scientist that/who

Scientist who is correct
 Scientists are **people**

See: That/which/who

Scratching

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check whether **scratching** is used as a **gerund** or a **participle**

The **rat scratching** was painful to watch
ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that the **rat** was painful to watch
CORRECT [if the **scratching** by the rat was painful to watch] by **using a genitive** and a **gerund**
 The **rat's scratching** was painful to watch

See: Gerund/participle

Scrupulous

See: Meticulous/punctilious/scrupulous

SD

See: Dispersion/precision

Search

See: Quest/search

Search for/seek

search for to seek, to try to find
 past tense **searched**
 Matching entries were **searched for** the in database
seek to search for, to try to find
 past tense **sought**
 Matching entries were **sought** in the database

interchangeable verbs

ALERT Check that **searched** is used correctly

Proteins that could not be defined were **searched** in the PIR database

ERROR *Syntax:* **search** requires a **preposition**

CORRECT by

retaining *searched* and adding a ***preposition***

Proteins that could not be defined were **searched *for*** in the PIR database

replacing *searched* by *sought*

Proteins that could not be defined were **sought** in the PIR database

We **searched** the transcription factor binding sites in the proximal promoter region with the new software

ERROR *Syntax:* search **requires a preposition**

CORRECT by

retaining *searched* and **adding a *preposition***

We **searched *for*** the transcription factor binding sites in the proximal promoter region with the new software

replacing *searched* by *sought*

We **sought** the transcription factor binding sites in the proximal promoter region with the new software

Searched/sought

See: Search for/seek

Second

Ordinal number

ALERT Check that **second *is not*** used with a **superlative**

This is the **second highest** grade I have achieved

ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, **this implies** that

this is the **second time** the highest grade has been achieved

or

a **second-ranked** grade was achieved

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

being *more explicit*

This is the **second time** I have achieved the **best** grade

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

using a *hyphenated adjective*

This is the **second-best** grade I have achieved

ALERT Check that **second-highest *is not*** used with a **preposition**

Cooper has the **second-highest** Impact Factor in the Institute **after** Nieschlag

ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, this gives the **unintended impression** there is a ***first-highest*** Impact Factor **after Nieschlag's**, making

Cooper's the **third** in rank, so **this implies** that

Cooper has the **highest** Impact Factor **after** Nieschlag

[he is **second** in rank]

or

Cooper has the **third-highest** Impact Factor in the Institute

[he is **third** in rank]

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

omitting *second-*

Cooper has the **highest** Impact Factor in the institute **after** Nieschlag

omitting *after Nieschlag*

Cooper has the **second-highest** Impact Factor in the Institute

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

omitting *after Nieschlag* and **replacing *second* by *third***

Cooper has the **third-highest** Impact Factor in the Institute

stating those authors coming ***before Cooper***

Cooper has the **highest** Impact Factor ***after Yeung and Nieschlag***

See: After, First/second/third

Second/secondly

Equally acceptable ordinal numbers

Style: **secondly** is ***unnecessary***, **second** is sufficient

See: First/second/third, First/firstly, Third/thirdly

Secretary/secretary

secretory adjective producing and discharging a substance

secretary noun person employed to assist with administrative duties

Seeing

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check that **seeing** has a relevant **noun** to qualify

Seeing the University clock tower ahead, **the laboratory** could not be far away

ERROR *Semantics:* **seeing** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **laboratory** is the closest noun it can complement
This gives the **unintended impression** that the **laboratory** saw the tower

CORRECT [if an **observer** saw the clock tower] by

adding a human element

Seeing the University clock tower ahead, **the student concluded that** the laboratory could not be far away

See: Dangling participles

Seemed

See: Auxiliary verbs

Seldom

used to stress a point

At the beginning of a sentence, **seldom** is followed by an **inverted verb**

Seldom have I seen such good monolayers

See: Inversion of verbs

SEM

See: Dispersion/precision

Semantics

See: Grammar

Semen is/are

is

is correct

semen is a **singular** uncountable noun that has no plural

Semen was collected by masturbation

for a **plural** use, use a **partitive** construction

Several **samples of semen were** evaluated per man

Semen/seminal

seminal adjective

related to semen

All major **seminal** components were assayed

(components **of semen**)

Seminal volume is needed to assess total sperm count

(the volume **of semen**)

strongly influencing later events, especially important

Darwin's **seminal** work on evolution

semen noun

the ejaculate

To obtain its volume, **semen** was collected into a pre-weighed vessel

noun used as a genitive (possessive)

The WHO manual describes methods of **semen** analysis

(the analysis **of semen**)

Semen volume is measured first

(the volume **of semen**)

Semen/sperm volume

semen volume

the volume of semen (the ejaculate)

(~ml)

sperm volume

the volume of a spermatozoon

(~fl)

Semen/sperm density

semen density

the weight per unit volume of semen

(g/ml)

sperm density

the weight per unit volume of sperm cells

(g/ml)

does not mean sperm concentration

[WHO terminology]

See: Sperm concentration/density

Semen analysis/quality

semen analysis

analytical **tests** used to determine semen quality

semen quality

the **values** of semen parameters determined by semen analysis

ALERT Check that **semen analysis** refers to semen

On arrival in the laboratory the epididymal aspirate was subjected to **semen analysis**

ERROR *Semantics:* an epididymal aspirate **is not** semen

CORRECT by **explaining what was done**

On arrival in the laboratory the **volume** of the epididymal aspirate and sperm numbers, motility and morphology were assessed

See: Parameter/value, Semen/seminal

Semi-

See: Demi/hemi/semi/sesqui

Semicolon

See: Colon/full stop/semicolon

Semi-monthly

See: Bimonthly/fortnightly/semi-monthly

Semi-quantitative

See: Qualitative/quantitative/semi-quantitative

Semi-weekly

See: Biweekly/fortnightly/semi-weekly

Seminal vesicles/vesicular

seminal vesicles noun the organ (the accessory glands **that produce** the largest component of semen)
The **seminal vesicles** are male secondary sexual organs
noun used as an adjective **Seminal vesicle** secretions comprise the major portion of the ejaculate

seminal vesicular adjective **of the** seminal vesicles
The major part of the ejaculate is formed by the **seminal vesicular** secretions

Sensible/sensitive

sensible being wise, prudent
He was **sensible** and read all the relevant papers before beginning his review
[**sensible** applies **only** to people]

sensitive for people: having high sensitivity
He was **sensitive** to criticism and did not join the meeting after the interview
for assays: being able to discriminate small differences
A **sensitive** technique can detect low amounts since it has a high **sensitivity**

Sensibility/sensitivity

sensibility being able to appreciate and respond to complex emotional influences
[**sensibility** applies **only** to people]

sensitivity being sensitive, for assays: the smallest difference measurable

ALERT Check that **sensibility** is the **intended word**

The discrepancy in values is probably due to differences in the **sensibilities** of the methods used

ERROR *Semantics*: **assays** are **inanimate and cannot** appreciate emotional influences
CORRECT by **replacing *sensibilities* by *sensitivities***

The discrepancy in values is probably due to differences in the **sensitivities** of the methods used

Sentences

A group of words usually with a **subject** (the topic) and a **predicate** (commenting on the topic) containing a **transitive verb**
Intransitive verbs of incomplete predication (verbs of being, link verbs) require a **complement** not a predicate

simple sentences

have **one main clause** (with one finite **verb**)
We **enclose** our revised manuscript with this letter

compound sentences

have two or more [main clauses] (each with a **finite verb**) joined by a **co-ordinating conjunction**
[We **enclose** our revised manuscript with this letter] **and** [supply a list of the changes made]

complex sentences

have one or more [main clauses] and one or more (subordinate clauses)
(Because the deadline **is** approaching), [we **enclose** now our revised manuscript] **and** [supply a list of the changes made], **but** [shall **send** the modified Figures] (after we **have retaken** some micrographs at higher magnification)

Sentences begin with words, **not** unaccompanied numbers

The first word of a sentence begins with a capital letter, unless it is a prefix

ALERT Check the **format** when beginning sentences **with numbers**

743 proteins were detected in the gels

ERROR *Syntax*: sentences **should not** start with **figures** written as **numbers**

CORRECT by

replacing numbers by words

Seven hundred and forty-three proteins were detected in the gels

using a **partitive construction** with the **singular**

A total of 743 proteins **was** detected in the gels

ALERT Check the **format** when beginning sentences **with prefixes**

Myo-inositol was used to lower ionic strength
 STYLE *Word usage:* prefixes **should not** be **capitalized**
 CHANGE by **capitalizing the first letter** of the **noun**
myo-Inositol was used to lower ionic strength

C-ros is expressed in the initial segment
 STYLE *Word usage:* prefixes **should not** be **capitalised**
 CHANGE by **capitalizing the first letter** of the **word**
 c-**Ros** is expressed in the initial segment

See: Clauses, Numbers in words/figures, Phrases, Total of ... is/are

Separate/seperate
separate is correct

Separation of ... by ... was performed
Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by the ... **was separated by ...**

Separation of the ... was accomplished
Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by the ... **were separated**

Sequela (Latin)
 a medical condition which is the consequence of a previous disease or injury
 [plural **sequelae**]

Sequester/sequestrate
sequester to isolate or hide away
sequestrate to take legal possession of assets

ALERT Check that **sequestrate** is the **intended word**

The blood-testis barrier forms an immunological barrier to **sequestrate** germ cell antigens from the circulation
 ERROR *Syntax:* the testis has **no legal possessions**
 CORRECT by **replacing sequestrate** by **sequester**
 The blood-testis barrier forms an immunological barrier to **sequester** germ cell antigens from the circulation

Serendipitous
See: Fortuitous/serendipitous

Serum
See: Blood plasma/serum

Serves the function of being
Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **is**

Sesqui-
See: Demi/hemi/semi/sequi

Several
Overused vague word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**
See: Few/several

Severe/severely
severe adjective The gene defect causes a **severe**, deforming **disease**
 [The **disease** is both **severe** and deforming]
severely adverb The gene defect causes a **severely deforming** disease
 [The **deformity** is severe]

See: Adjectives, Adverbs

Sex
See: Gender/sex

Shall/should
shall auxiliary verb (with an **infinitive without** the infinitive marker **to**)
 in the future tense
 indicative mood
 first person, singular/plural
We shall do it today, tomorrow
 for emphasis
 second/third person, singular/plural
You shall do it today
should auxiliary verb (with an **infinitive without** the infinitive marker **to**)

indicative mood

present tense

first person, singular/plural

I should appreciate receiving a rapid response

past tense of shall

first person, singular/plural

Yesterday I said that **I should do** it today

for duties, obligations

all persons, singular/plural

You should go home now

for expectations

all persons, singular/plural

She should finish by lunch time

for reporting future tenses

for the first person, singular/plural

future-in-the-past e.g. "I/we shall arrive tomorrow"

I thought that **I should arrive** on Monday

future perfect-in-the-past e.g. "I/we shall have finished by the weekend"

We believed that **we should have finished** by the weekendas a conditional in the **[Main, consequence, results]** clause of **conditional sentences** that **may not be true**

conditional mood

for the second/third person, singular/plural

If he were to apply [they **should accept** him]as subjunctive in the **[Subordinate, conditional]** clause of conditional sentences that **may not be true**

subjunctive mood

all persons, singular/plural

[If he **should** have done that], they would have helped him*See:* Moods of verb, Should/would, Ought*Shall/will**shall* auxiliary verb (with an **infinitive without** the infinitive marker **to**)

for future tense

indicative mood

first person singular/plural

I shall do it today, tomorrow

for emphasis

second, third person singular plural

He shall do itIn any disagreement between Chinese and English texts, the English **shall** prevail*will* auxiliary verb (with an **infinitive without** the infinitive marker **to**)

for future actions

indicative mood

second/third person, singular/plural

He will do it tomorrow

for emphasis

first person, singular/plural

I will do it today*See:* Shall/should, Will/would*Short**See:* Brief/short*Should**See:* Mood of a verb, Ought/should, Shall/should*Should/would**should* auxiliary verb (with an **infinitive without** the infinitive marker **to**)

indicative mood

present tense

first person, singular/plural

I should appreciate a rapid response

past tense of shall

first person, singular/plural

Yesterday I said **I should do** it today

for duties, obligations

all persons, singular/plural

You should go home now

for expectations

all persons, singular/plural

He should finish by lunch time**They should appreciate** your considering the enclosed manuscript for publication

for reporting future tenses

		for the first person, singular/plural	
		future-in-the-past	<i>e.g.</i> "I shall arrive tomorrow"
			I thought that I should arrive on Monday
		future perfect-in-the-past	<i>e.g.</i> "We shall have finished by the weekend"
			We believed that we should have finished by the weekend
	as a conditional in the [Main, consequence, results] clause of conditional sentences that may not be true	conditional mood	
		for the second/third person, singular/plural	
			If he were to apply [they should accept him]
	as subjunctive in the [Subordinate, conditional] clause of conditional sentences that may not be true	subjunctive mood	
		all persons, singular/plural	
			[If he should have done that], they would have helped him
would	an auxiliary verb (with an infinitive without the infinitive marker to)	indicative mood	
		present tense	
		second/third person, singular/plural	He would appreciate receiving a copy of your manuscript
		past tense of will	
		second/third person, singular/plural	Yesterday you said that you would write today
		to be determined to	
		all persons, singular/plural	Despite being warned, she would go
		to do as a habit	
		all persons, singular/plural	Every day he would perform Tai Qi before going to the lab
	for reporting future tenses in the second, third person singular/plural	future-in-the-past	<i>e.g.</i> "I shall arrive later" reported as You said you would arrive later
		future perfect-in-the-past	<i>e.g.</i> "We shall have finished by the weekend" reported as They said that they would have finished by the weekend
	in the [Main, consequence, results] clause of conditional sentences that may be untrue	conditional mood	
		all persons, singular/plural	If it were possible [I would attend]

ALERT Check whether **would or should** is required

I **would** be grateful if you **could** send the comments within three days
ERROR *Syntax:* the Main clause requires the **indicative**, the Conditional clause the **conditional**
CORRECT by replacing **would** by **should** and **could** by **would**
 I **should** be grateful if you **would** send the comments within three days

See: Auxiliary verbs, Moods of a verb, Ought/should, Shall/should, Used to/would, Will/would

Show

be, allow or cause to be visible

See: Claim/demonstrate/establish/show, Identify/show

Show that

used when there is **sufficient evidence** for a conclusion to be drawn
 expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood
 Recent results have **shown that** the protein **mediates** a specific stage of fertilisation

See: Certainty/uncertainty

Showed/shown

showed simple past tense
 In 1980 Yeung et al. **showed** that carnitine transport to the epididymal lumen was an active process
shown past participle
 In Fig. 2A the percentage of DNA-damaged spermatozoa **is shown**

Showed an inhibitory activity towards tyrosine phosphorylation

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **inhibited tyrosine phosphorylation**

Shown

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by **what was shown**

ALERT Check whether **shown** should be replaced by a **more relevant word**

A change in gene expression was **shown** after the treatment
STYLE *Verbosity:* can be shortened, **uninformative** as the nature of the change is not given

CHANGE by
using an *intransitive verb*
 Gene expression **changed** after the treatment
being more specific
 Gene expression **decreased** after the treatment

Shown here for illustration

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **shown here**

Sic (Latin)

so, thus
 written after a word or passage **that appears odd or erroneous**
 shows that it is being **quoted exactly** (including errors)
 usually enclosed within square brackets
 The epididymus [**sic**] is an important organ that few people can spell correctly

See: Verbatim

Signaled/signalled

signalled is correct
 Signal is a **polysyllabic** word with a **short** vowel and emphasis on the **first** syllable
 The final consonant is **doubled** when adding a suffix and the consonant is L (or R)

Signaling/signalling

signalling is correct
 Signal is a **polysyllabic** word with a **short** vowel and emphasis on the **first** syllable
 The final consonant is **doubled** when adding a suffix and the consonant is L (or R)

Significant/significative

significant is correct

See: Insignificant/significant

Significant figures

See: Decimal places/significant figures

Significant finding

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **significant**

Significantly

used only to indicate statistical significance (with the given P value)
do not use to indicate extent

ALERT Check that **significantly** is only used with the **comparative** form of the adjective

Sperm concentration after treatment was **significantly higher compared with** that of the controls
 Sperm concentration after treatment was **significantly higher in comparison with** that of the controls

ERROR *Tautology:* **higher** is the **comparative** form of the adjective and the prepositional phrases **imply a comparison**

CORRECT by

retaining the **comparative** form of the adjective and **using** the conjunction **than**

Sperm concentration after treatment was **significantly higher than** that of the controls

retaining the **comparative prepositional phrase** and **using** the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjective

Sperm concentration after treatment was significantly **high compared with** those of the control

Sperm concentration after treatment was significantly **high in comparison with** those of the controls

Synonyms: (non statistical sense) appreciably, definitely, markedly, much, remarkably

Similar

See: Same/similar/similarly, Contrari-/like-wise

Similar in every detail

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **the same**

Similarly

See: Contrari-/like-wise, Same/similar/similarly

Simultaneous

See: Concurrent/contemporary/contemporaneous/simultaneous

Since

preposition relating to a specific time
 used with the **present perfect** tense
 I **have worked** on the epididymis **since** 1974
 conjunction because

used with a **simple** tense

Flow cytometry was used **since** it *is* more precise than assessing wet preparations on slides

ALERT Check that the use of **since** *does not* cause confusion

Since they spoke he **changed** his mind

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **since** can mean **because** or **a duration**, so **this implies** that he changed his mind **from the time** they spoke

or

he changed his mind **because** of what was spoken

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

using the **present perfect tense**

Since they spoke he **has changed** his mind

rewriting the sentence and **being more specific**

He **changed** his mind **after** their meeting

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

rewriting the sentence and **replacing since** by **because**

He **changed** his mind **because** of what was spoken

See: Ago/since, For/since

Since ... therefore

Conjunctions that introduce **conditional clauses** resolved in the main clause **without a conjunction**

ALERT Check the **number of conjunctions** when using **since**

Since spermatozoa are in a fixed concentration of progesterone, **therefore**, they leave the well by chance, not by chemotaxis

ERROR *Tautology*: **since** is a **conjunction**, so **needs no additional** conjunction (**therefore**) in the sentence

CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both

Since spermatozoa are in a fixed concentration of progesterone, they leave the well by chance, not by chemotaxis

Spermatozoa are in a fixed concentration of progesterone, **therefore** they leave the well by chance, not by chemotaxis

See: As ... so, Because ... therefore

Single

the only one

ALERT Check that **single is not** used with words **implying unity**

The one **single** mistake he made was very obvious

ERROR *Pleonasm*: there cannot be two single mistakes; if there are two, they aren't single

CORRECT by

omitting one

The **single** mistake he made was very obvious

omitting single

The **one** mistake he made was very obvious

replacing one single by **sole**

The **sole** mistake he made was very obvious

Singing

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check whether **singing** is used as a **gerund** or a **participle**

They do not like **him singing** in the laboratory

ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that they **do not like him**

CORRECT [if that fact **he sings** was not liked] by

using the **genitive** and a **gerund**

They do not like **his singing** in the laboratory

See: Gerund/participle

Singular

See: Plural/singular

Site

A location where a particular event has occurred, is occurring or will occur

The epididymis is the **site** of sperm maturation and storage

ALERT Check that **site is not** used with a word meaning a **location**

The epididymis is the **site** where sperm maturation and storage occur

ERROR *Tautology*: a **site** is defined as **where** something occurs

CORRECT by

omitting the siteThe epididymis is **where** sperm maturation and storage occur**omitting occur** and **replacing where** by **of**The epididymis is the site **of** sperm maturation and storage*Sitting*A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)**ALERT** Check that **sitting** refers to an object **that can be seated****Sitting** in the social room, **an idea** struck the studentERROR *Semantics:* **sitting** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **idea** is the nearest noun it can complementThis gives the **unintended impression** that an **idea** was sitting in the social roomCORRECT [if the **student** was sitting in the social room] by**using the passive voice****Sitting** in the social room, **the student was struck** by an idea

See: Dangling participles

*Situation**Overused word:* often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

replace by what the situation was

*Slash/solidus**slash*

forward slash (stroke) (/)

may mean

a ratio

male/female

male **to** female**and**

penicillin/streptomycin

penicillin **and** streptomycin**division**

4/2 = 2

pathway common to Wnt **and** β -catenin**of**

Page 3/14

divided by

or

and/or

page three **of** fourteen pages**per**

mg/ml

and **or or**
milligrams **per** millilitre

used in some computer program paths

https://www/

useful when space is limited, e.g. as an entry in a list

as/as to all/all of so/so as to

does not mean plus, with

back slash (reverse solidus) (\)

used in some computer program paths

c:\windows

solidus

forward stroke used in fractions

 $\frac{1}{4}$ has a steeper angle than the **forward slash** used in division

1/4

Often ugly to look at, difficult to pronounce, shorthand, ambiguous, **avoid** in formal text**ALERT** Check whether a **slash** should be **replaced** by **more informative words**

To maintain sterility, the culture medium contained penicillin/streptomycin

ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, **it is unclear** whether **either** or **both** of the slash-joined compounds are added

CORRECT [if both were added] by

using andTo maintain sterility, the culture medium contained penicillin **and** streptomycin**using a hyphenated adjective** and **noun**To maintain sterility, the culture medium contained a **penicillin-streptomycin mixture**

Tight junctions separate the luminal and basolateral/serosal compartments

ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, **it is unclear** if the slash-joined words refer to **two** compartments or **one** compartment with **two** namesCORRECT [if **one of two** compartments is meant] by**using either ... or**Tight junctions separate the luminal and **either** basolateral **or** serosal compartmentsCORRECT [if **each of two** compartments is meant] by**using and**Tight junctions separate the luminal, basolateral **and** serosal compartmentsCORRECT [if there is one compartment with **alternative names**] by**using brackets**Tight junctions separate luminal and basolateral (**serosal**) compartmentsTight junctions separate luminal and basolateral (**or serosal**) compartments

ALERT Check the meaning when a **slash** is used with numbers

Sterile work-bench with room for 1/2 operators

ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, the slash here **could be read as** a solidus to mean one half (½)

CORRECT by **replacing** the *slash* by **or**

Sterile work-bench with room for 1 **or** 2 operators

See: "And/or", "Her/his", "He/she", Solidus

Small/smaller

small the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjective used with **comparative prepositional phrases**

The values were **small compared with** those of the control

The values were **small in comparison with** those of the controls

smaller the **comparative** form of the adjective used with the conjunction **than**

The values were **smaller than** those of the control

ALERT Check that the **smaller is not** used with phrases **implying comparison**

The values were **smaller compared with** those of the controls

The values were **smaller in comparison with** those of the controls

ERROR *Tautology:* **smaller** is the **comparative** form of the adjective and the prepositional phrases **imply a comparison**

CORRECT by

retaining the **comparative** form of the adjective and **using** the conjunction **than**

The values were **smaller than** those of the control

retaining the **comparative prepositional phrase** and **using** the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjective

The values were **small compared with** those of the control

The values were **small in comparison with** those of the controls

Small minority of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **few**

Small numbers of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **few**

Small percentage of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **few**

Small proportion of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **few**

Small in size

Pleonasm: as **small** implies size, **size** is **superfluous**, use **small**

Smaller in size

Pleonasm: as **smaller** implies size, **size** is **superfluous**, use **smaller**

So

used to stress a point

At the beginning of a sentence, **so** is followed by an **inverted verb**

So infected **were the cells** that the incubator and bench had to be sterilised

See: And so/so/so that, Inversion of verbs

So ... a/such a

so ... a adverb which can define an **adjective**

I have not read **so detailed** a grammar treatise before

such a adjective which can define a **noun**

I have not read **such a grammar** treatise before

used for emphasis

So/so much

so precedes the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjective

This method is **so good**

so much precedes the **comparative** form of the adjective

That method is **so much better**

So/such

so adverb which can define a **verb**

in such a way

She **so insulted** the students that they did not attend her lectures

such adjective which can define a **noun**, pronoun or noun phrase

refers to a particular object

She directed **such insults** at the students that they did not attend her lectures

So/therefore

so informal
therefore more formal

interchangeable conjunctions

See: And so/so/so that

So as to/to

interchangeable adverbs

Style: **so as to** is *unnecessary*, **to** alone is *sufficient*

See: And so/ so/so that

So-called

Indicates an unusual, non-conventional or peculiar use of a word or a phrase
 often enclosed in quotation marks the first time mentioned

Early success was achieved by employing the **so-called** "conventional" sperm-selection methods

See: Quotation marks

So far as it goes

See: As/so far as it goes

So long as

See: As/so long as

So that

See: And so/so/so that

Software/software

software is correct

software is a *singular* uncountable noun that has no plural

The **software was** used to analyse the data

for a *plural* use, use a *partitive* construction

Two **sources of** software **were** compared

Two software **programs were** compared

Solecism

A grammatical mistake in speech or writing, any violation of idiom or grammar

See: Redundancy/pleonasm/tautology

Solid

See: Continuous/solid/unbroken line, Filled/solid symbols

Solidus

See: Slash/solidus

Solution/suspension

solution **clear** fluid containing **soluble** particles (*e.g.* chemicals, solid, gas or liquid) **dissolved** in it
 Saline is a **solution** of NaCl in water

suspension **cloudy** fluid containing **insoluble** solids, **immiscible** liquids or **cells suspended** in it
 Percoll is a **suspension** of PVP-coated colloidal particles in medium
 Semen is a **suspension** of spermatozoa in seminal fluid

Some

approximately (with a number)

For this procedure, **some** five methods are known

See: Any/some

Some/some of

some **Some** spermatozoa were acrosome-reacted

some of **Some of** the spermatozoa were hyperactivated

interchangeable units

Style: **some of** is *unnecessary*, **some** alone is *sufficient*

Some ... is/are

is when what **some** refers to is *singular*, use the *singular*
Some semen was lost during collection

are when what **some** refers to is *plural*, use the *plural*
Some tubes were broken in the centrifuge

Some is/are

- is* when what **some** refers to is **singular**, use the **singular**
Of the viscous **semen some was** lost during processing
- are* when what **some** refers to is **plural**, use the **plural**
Of the motile **spermatozoa some were** acrosome-reacted

Some of ... is/are

- is* when what **some of** refers to is singular, use the **singular**
Some of the **syllabus is** taught in the first term
- are* when what **some of** refers to is plural, use the **plural**
Some of the **spermatozoa were** acrosome-reacted

Some of the ...

some of the refers to several of a **plural group**

ALERT Check that **some of the ... is not** used with a term **implying only one**

Our institute has **some of the most** qualified personnel in this area

ERROR *Semantics:* oxymoron, **some of the** implies there is **more than one** but there is **only one most** qualified (no one is as qualified)

CORRECT [if they **are** the most qualified] by

replacing *some of the* by the **definite article** and **using the singular**

Our institute has **the most** qualified **person** in this area

CORRECT [if they **are not** the most qualified] by

retaining *some of the* and **replacing the superlative** by the **comparative** adjective

Our institute has **some of the more** qualified personnel in this area

Our institute has **some of the better** qualified personnel in this area

retaining *some of the* and **replacing the superlative** by the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjective

Our institute has **some of the well** qualified personnel in this area

These are **some of the highest/lowest** grant rankings the institute has received

ERROR *Semantics:* oxymoron, **some of the** implies there is **more than one** but there is **only one superlative** (nothing is as high/low)

CORRECT [if it **is** the highest/lowest ranking] by

replacing *some of the* by the **definite article** and **using the singular**

These are **the highest/lowest** grant **ranking** the institute has received

CORRECT [if it **is not** the highest/lowest ranking] by

retaining *some of the* and **replacing the superlative** by the **comparative** adjective

These are **some of the higher/lower** grant rankings the institute has received

retaining *some of the* and **replacing the superlative** by the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjective

These are **some of the high/low** grant rankings the institute has received

See: Comparative/superlative, One of the best, One of the most, One of the only, Second

Some of the ... is/are

- are* is correct
as what **some of the ...** refers to (a **plural group**) is the subject, use the **plural**
We have **some of the** more important **documents** in our library
[**Of the documents** we have **some of the** more important in our library]

Some of the best

Oxymoron: **some of the** refers to some of a **plural group** but **best** is a superlative (of which there is only **one**: nothing is its equal)

ALERT Check whether **best** should be used

We have **some of the best** students

ERROR *Semantics:* oxymoron, **some of the** refers to **more than one** but there is **only one best**

CORRECT [if they **are** the best] by

omitting *some of* and **using the singular**

We have **the best student**

CORRECT [if they **are not** the best] by

retaining *some of the* and **replacing the superlative** by the **comparative** form of the adjective

We have **some of the better** students

retaining *some of the* and **replacing the superlative** by the **absolute (positive)** form of the adjective

We have **some of the good** students

See: Comparative/superlative, One of the ..., One of the only

Some of the most

Oxymoron: **some of the** refers to one of a **plural group** but **most** is a superlative (of which there is only **one**: nothing is its equal)

ALERT Check whether **most** should be used

We have **some of the most expensive** microscopes in the institute

ERROR *Semantics:* oxymoron, **some of the** implies **more than one** but there is **only one most**

CORRECT [if it is the most expensive] by

omitting *some of* and using the *singular*

We have ***the most expensive microscope*** in the institute

CORRECT [if they are not the most expensive] by

retaining *some of the* and replacing the *superlative* by the *comparative* form of the adjective,

We have ***some of the more expensive*** microscopes in the institute

retaining *some of the* and replacing the *superlative* by the *absolute (positive)* form of the adjective

We have ***some of the expensive*** microscopes in the institute

See: Comparative/superlative, One of the ..., One of the only

Some of the only

Oxymoron: **some of the** refers to one of a **plural group** but **only** implies there is just **one**

ALERT Check whether **only** should be used

The institute has received **some of the only** high value prizes in the University

ERROR *Semantics*: oxymoron, **some of the** implies **more than one** but **only** implies there is just **one**

CORRECT [if it is the only high value prize] by

replacing *some of the* by the *definite article* and using the *singular*

The institute has received ***the only*** high value ***prize*** in the university

CORRECT [if it is **one of many** high value prizes] by

retaining *some of* and replacing *the only* by *several*

The institute has received ***some of the several*** high value prizes in the University

See: Only/solely

Somebody

one of several people considered **individually**

See: Anybody, Everybody, Nobody

Somebody is/are

is is correct

as **somebody** refers to any **one** of several people considered **individually**, use the **singular**

Somebody from our lab. **is** going to get the prize this year

Someone

one of several people considered **individually**

See: Anyone, Everyone, No one

Someone is/are

is is correct

as **someone** refers to any **one** of several people considered **individually**, use the **singular**

At the end of the lecture **someone cleans** the whiteboard

Something

one of several things considered **individually**

See: Anything, Nothing, Something

Something is/are

is is correct

as **something** refers to **one** of several objects considered **individually**, use the **singular**

When he is present **something** unpleasant always **happens**

Sonicate/sonificate

sonicate is correct

Sonication/sonification

sonication is correct

Soon

See: Quickly/soon

Sophisticated

Synonyms: advanced, expensive, new, technical

Sort/sorts of

sort of requires **singular** after **this, that**

The technician is familiar with ***this sort of problem***

(The technician is familiar with ***problems of this sort***)

The technician is familiar with ***that sort of problem***

(The technician is familiar with **problems of that sort**)
sorts of requires **plural** after **these, those**
 The technician is familiar with **these sorts of problems**
 (The technician is familiar with **problems of this sort**)
 The technician is familiar with **those sorts of problems**
 (The technician is familiar with **problems of that sort**)

Sparing of/with
sparing of is correct

Specially
 See: Especially/specially

Species
 See: Genus/species

Species is/are
 each is correct
species is a both a **singular** and **plural** noun
 This **species is** found in the Amazon
 These **species are** endangered

Specific for/of/to
specific to is correct

Specious
 See: Fallacious/specious

Spectrum
 band of colours produced by separation of the components of light according to wavelength
 used to classify something in terms of its position on a scale between two extreme points
does not mean range
 See: Range/spectrum

Speculate
 to form a theory or conjecture about a subject without firm evidence

Speculate that
 used when there is **insufficient evidence** for a conclusion to be drawn
 expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood
 We **speculate that** the process **is** androgen-dependent
 See: Certainty/uncertainty

Sperm/spermatic morphology
sperm morphology is correct
 the morphology **of the spermatozoa**
 See: Sperm/spermatozoa/spermatozoon, Spermatic

Sperm/spermatozoa/spermatozoon
sperm used as an adjective in hyphenated words
sperm-egg binding (binding **of spermatozoa** to eggs)
sperm-zona recognition (recognition **by spermatozoa** of the zona pellucida)
 used as a adjective/genitive
sperm concentration (the concentration **of spermatozoa**)
sperm development (the development **of spermatozoa**)
sperm maturation (the maturation **of spermatozoa**)
sperm morphology (the morphology **of spermatozoa**)
sperm motility (the motility **of spermatozoa**)
sperm vitality (the vitality **of spermatozoa**)
spermatozoa
 plural noun
Spermatozoa were prepared by swim up
spermatozoon
 singular noun
 A **spermatozoon** was drawn into the ICSI pipette

ALERT Check that **spermatozoa is not** used as an **adjective**
 After centrifugation the **spermatozoa** suspensions were added to cryopreservative
ERROR *Syntax*: **spermatozoa** is a **noun** used here as a **genitive**
CORRECT by

replacing *spermatozoa* by *sperm*

After centrifugation the *sperm* suspensions were added to cryopreservative

retaining *spermatozoa* as a noun

After centrifugation the *suspensions of spermatozoa* were added to cryopreservative

See: Sperm/sperms

Sperm/sperms

sperm **layman** terminology and colloquial speech for **spermatozoon and spermatozoa**
scientific terminology as adjective/genitive

sperms **layman** terminology and colloquial speech for **spermatozoa**

ALERT Check that **sperm** or **sperms** *is not* used as a **noun**

The **sperm** in the upper left is labelled with ConA

STYLE *Word usage:* layman terminology

CHANGE by **using** the **full name** of the singular noun

The **spermatozoon** in the upper left is labelled with ConA

The **sperms** were examined in a microscope

STYLE *Word usage:* layman terminology

CORRECT by **using** the **full name** of the plural noun

The **spermatozoa** were examined in a microscope

See: Sperm/spermatozoa/spermatozoon

Sperm concentration/density

sperm concentration concentration is number per unit volume of a fluid
for spermatozoa in semen (**10⁶/ml** semen)

sperm density density is weight per unit volume
for spermatozoa obtained from continuous density gradient centrifugation fractions
from the equivalent density (**g/ml**) of gradient medium at the site of the cells at equilibrium
does not mean concentration of spermatozoa
[WHO terminology]

See: Multipliers and units, Sperm/spermatozoa/spermatozoon

Sperm density

See: Semen/sperm density, Sperm/spermatozoa/spermatozoon, Sperm concentration/density

Sperm volume

See: Semen/sperm volume, Sperm/spermatozoa/spermatozoon

Spermatric

Vague word: can mean related to blood vessels (spermatric cord), to semen or to spermatozoa

See: Sperm/spermatric morphology

Spermatogenic/spermatogenetic

spermatogenic is correct

Spermatogenesis/spermatogenic

spermatogenesis noun the process of sperm production from germ cells

The control testes displayed full **spermatogenesis**

spermatogenic adjective related to spermatogenesis

The treated testes displayed **spermatogenic** damage

Spermatozoon/spermatozoa/spermatozoal

spermatozoon correct for the singular noun
[Acta Nomina Veterinaria terminology]

spermatozoa correct for the plural noun
[Acta Nomina Veterinaria terminology]

spermatozoal incorrect; formed by analogy with epididymal, hormonal, seminal

Split infinitive

an infinitive in which a **word** (usually an adverb) or **phrase** is inserted between the **verb** and the infinitive marker **to**
adverbs **before** the verb relate to the **approach** to the verb
adverbs **after** the verb relate to the **performance** of the verb
adverbs **splitting** the verb provide **neither** indication

ALERT Check that **infinitives** *are not split* by **adverbs**

He proceeded **to boldly answer** the question

ERROR *Semantics:* ambiguous, **it is unclear** to what **bold** refers, to proceed or to answer

CORRECT [if it was bold (brave) of him to answer the questions at all] by

not splitting the infinitive and moving the adverb before the verb

He proceeded **boldly to answer** the questions

CORRECT [if he delivered the answers in a bold (confident) way] by

not splitting the infinitive and moving the adverb after the verb

He proceeded **to answer** the questions **boldly**

ALERT Check that **infinitives are not split** when forming a **negative**

I think it better **to not admit** that I deleted the file

ERROR *Syntax*: **not** should **precede** the **verb** it negates

CORRECT by **not splitting the infinitive and moving the negation before the infinitive**

I think it better **not to admit** that you deleted the file

He wanted **to no more than go** through the motions of helping out

ERROR *Syntax*: **no more than** only governs an infinitive **without** the infinitive marker **to**

CORRECT by **not splitting the infinitive and using** the auxiliary verb **to do** with the **infinitive** without the infinitive marker **to**

He wanted **to do no more than go** through the motions of helping out

ALERT Check that **infinitives are not split** by words **that could be** a verb

This work was done **to better understand** the causes of male infertility

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, the reader expects **better** to be the verb (meaning **to improve**) then realises it is used **as an adverb**

CORRECT by **not splitting the infinitive and moving the adverb after the verb**

This work was done **to understand better** the causes of male infertility

The current work was designed **to further investigate** the action of A23187 on the acrosome reaction

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, the reader expects **further** to be the verb (meaning **to develop**) then realises it is used **as an adverb**

CORRECT by **not splitting the infinitive and moving the adverb after the verb**

The current work was designed **to investigate further** the action of A23187 on the acrosome reaction

There was no plan **to even consider** postponing the exams

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, the reader expects **even** to be the verb (meaning **to make level**) then realises it is used **as an adverb**

CORRECT by **not splitting the infinitive and moving the adverb before the verb**

There was no plan **even to consider** postponing the exams

ALERT Check that **infinitives are not split** by adverbs **that could govern** more than one verb

I did not dare **to actually speak** to him

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **it is unclear** which verb **actually** governs, to dare or to speak

CORRECT [if the daring was a problem] by

not splitting the infinitive and moving the adverb before the auxiliary verb

I did not **actually dare to speak** to him

CORRECT [if the speaking was a problem] by

not splitting the infinitive and moving the adverb before the infinitive

I did not dare **actually to speak** to him

He expected her **to probably write** to the Editor

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **it is unclear** which word **probably** governs, what she wrote or to whom

CORRECT [if what she did is important] by

not splitting the infinitive and moving the adverb before the infinitive

He expected her **probably to write** to the Editor

CORRECT [if to whom she wrote is important] by

not splitting the infinitive and moving the adverb after the infinitive

He expected her **to write probably** to the Editor

He expected her **to first write** to the Editor

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **it is unclear** which word **first** governs, the verb or the recipient

CORRECT [if she were to do something else after writing] by

not splitting the infinitive and moving the ordinal number before the infinitive

He expected her **first to write** to the Editor

CORRECT [if she were to write to someone else after the Editor] by

not splitting the infinitive and moving the ordinal number after the infinitive

He expected her **to write first** to the Editor

He expected her **to probably first write** to the Editor

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **it is unclear** which **adverb** governs the verb and which the indirect object

CORRECT by **not splitting the infinitive and moving the adverbs** either side of the infinitive

He expected her **probably to write first** to the Editor

See: Adverbs, Probably

Spun down

Style: **layman** terminology, use **centrifuged**

Square in shape

Pleonasm: as a **square** is a shape, **shape** is *superfluous*, use **square**

Square-shaped

Pleonasm: as a **square** is a shape, **shape** is *superfluous*, use **square**

Staff is/are

is when **staff itself** is the subject, use the *singular*
 The scientific **staff is** underpaid compared with other groups
 The scientific staff, **which is** underpaid, voted to go on strike

are when what **staff consists of** (a **plural** group) is the subject, use the *plural*
 No **staff were** available for comment
 which can be considered shortened by ellipsis of
 No members of **staff were** available for comment
[members of] elided

See: Ellipsis

Staining

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check that **staining** has a **relevant noun** to qualify

After **staining**, the sections were mounted in glycerol and examined with a confocal microscope
ERROR *Semantics:* **staining** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **sections** is the nearest noun it can complement
 This gives the **unintended impression** that the **sections** did the staining

CORRECT [if the staining was done by a **technician**] by
using the passive

After the sections **were stained**, they were mounted in glycerol and examined with a confocal microscope
 After they **were stained**, the sections were mounted in glycerol and examined with a confocal microscope
using a gerundial phrase

After **being stained**, the sections were mounted in glycerol and examined with a confocal microscope

ALERT Check that **stained is not** used with words meaning staining

The slides were **stained** by PAS **staining**

ERROR *Tautology:* as it is obvious that **staining** causes things to be **stained**, there is **no need** to repeat the action in a verb (**stained**)

CORRECT by **using one or the other**, not both

The slides were **stained** by PAS

The slides were processed by PAS **staining**

See: Dangling participles

Staining of slides was performed

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by the **slides were stained**

Standing

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check that **standing** has a **relevant noun** to qualify

After **standing** in the refrigerator overnight, **we** filtered off the acid
ERROR *Semantics:* **standing** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **we** is the nearest noun it can complement
 This gives the **unintended impression** that **we** stood in the refrigerator

CORRECT [if the **acid** was stood in the refrigerator] by

moving the noun closer to its adjective and **using the passive**

After **standing** in the refrigerator overnight, the **acid was filtered**

See: Dangling participles

Standpoint

a **position** from which things are viewed (literally and figuratively)

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by a **more relevant** phrase (**or avoid**)

ALERT Check that **standpoint** refers to people directly affected

From the patient care **standpoint**, the new results will give hope

ERROR *Syntax:* **patient care** is **inanimate and cannot** have a standpoint

CORRECT by **rewriting the sentence** by

adding subjects with a viewpoint

From the standpoint of **those concerned with** patient care, the new results will give **patients hope**

being more specific

With regard to patient care, the new results will provide **more possibilities**

In its **effect on** patient care, the new results will give **doctors more therapeutic options**

Start

auxiliary verb followed by

a **gerund**, to mean for the first time

She started **teaching** at the age of twenty

The patient started **smoking** when he was 16

an **infinitive**, to mean on one occasion

She started **to teach** at nine o'clock

(at that point)

He started **to smoke** when he came home

(upon reaching home)

State

See: Describe/report/state

Stationary/stationery

stationary adjective remaining in the same place

stationery noun collective noun for writing materials

Statistic/statistics

statistics is correct

statistics is a **singular** noun, so the final **s does not** indicate a plural

Statistics is/are

are is correct

statistics is a **singular** noun treated as a **plural**

The **statistics were** checked by my Professor

for a **singular** use, use a **partitive** construction

One sub-branch of statistics **is** descriptive

ALERT Check that **statistic** is not used

70% abnormal spermatozoa is a high **statistic**

ERROR *Syntax*: statistics is a **singular** noun, so the final **s does not** indicate a plural

CORRECT by **using** words relating to **measurement**

70% abnormal spermatozoa is a high **value**

Status

The relative social, professional or other standing of someone or something

The position of affairs at a particular time

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by **what sort of status** is meant (**or avoid**)

use on its own the **noun** in the preceding **adjective**

favoured customer

(**not** favoured-customer **status**)

high ranking

(**not** high-ranking **status**)

Status quo (Latin)

The existing state of affairs

Sterility/sterilisation

sterility

the quality or state of being sterile, used for

inanimate objects

The bench was swabbed with disinfectant every day to ensure **sterility**

animals and man

The anti-tumour radio- and chemo-therapy had the side-effect of **sterility**

sterilisation

the process of sterilising, making sterile, used for

inanimate objects

HIV was eliminated by dry heat **sterilisation** for at least two h at 170°C

animals

Vasectomy is a surgical methods for male **sterilisation**

Still

See: Just now/still

Stop

auxiliary verb followed by

a **gerund**, to mean for ever

The doctor told me to stop **drinking** red wine

[**not to drink** red wine ever again]

an **infinitive**, to mean on one occasion

While reading I was encouraged to stop **to drink** red wine

[to stop reading and **to start to drink** red wine]

See: Quit/stop

Straight forward/straightforward

straight forward adverb in a straight line, straight ahead
Turn left at the main gate and go **straight forward** for 5 minutes

straightforward adjective uncomplicated, easy to do or understand
This project seems **straightforward** enough to be done here

Strata/stratum (Latin)

strata plural layers
stratum singular layer

Strategy/stratagem

strategy a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim
stratagem a plan or scheme, especially one used to outwit or trick an opponent
a cleverly designed scheme for achieving an end

Strategy/tactics

strategy a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim (abstract)
tactics devices or procedures for carrying out a strategy (detailed)

Strict/strictly

strict adjective exact in correspondence or adherence to something
Strict application of morphological criteria

strictly adverb with no exceptions; completely or absolutely
The morphological criteria were applied **strictly**
no more than, purely, solely
My visit was **strictly** business

Striking

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)
attracting attention by reason of being unusual, extreme, or prominent

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

Synonyms: marked, obvious

Stringent

See: Robust/stringent

Stripped

past participle

ALERT Check that **stripped** has a **relevant noun** to qualify

Stripped of her more exuberant adjectives, **she** has a point
ERROR *Semantics:* **stripped** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **she** is the nearest noun it can complement
This gives the **unintended impression** that **she** was stripped
CORRECT [if her **comments** were reduced in size] by
referring to what she said
Stripped of **their** more exuberant adjectives, her **comments** have a point

See: Dangling participles

Stroke

See: Slash/Solidus

Study

Overused vague word: often used unnecessarily, replace by **what was studied**

ALERT Check whether **study** should be **replaced** by a **more relevant word**

Protein immuno-histochemical **studies** were done by fluorescence microscopy
STYLE *Word usage:* **studies**, **done** and **using** are all overused used words
CHANGE by **emphasising** what the study **involved**
Proteins were **located** immuno-histochemically by fluorescence microscopy

See: Done, Using

Studies some years ago by ... showed that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by ... **showed that**

Style

A good scientific writing style **maximises** the **transfer of information** from the writer to the reader

It is realised by

avoiding ambiguity

If what is written is open to interpretation, **the reader may believe** an unintended meaning

ensuring clarity

If what is written is unclear, **the reader may have to guess** the meaning

removing surprises

If what is written contains unusual words or an unusual word order, **the reader may have to re-read** the text

It can be achieved by

choosing

the most appropriate to convey your meaning

the correct position for them in the sentence

meaningful punctuation

preferring the

concrete to the abstract

familiar to the unfamiliar

ordinary to the grandiose

short to the long

simple to the complex

adding variation with the use of

pronouns (to avoid repetition of nouns)

repetition (to emphasise a point in alternative words)

synonyms (to prevent monotony when repetition cannot be avoided)

avoiding confusion introduced by

double negatives

grammatical surprises

unattached participles

unbalanced sentences

removing the annoying caused by

calculations the reader can make

clichés

layman's terms

requiring the reader to choose alternatives

shorthand

the difficult to pronounce

the obvious

the repetitious

the unnecessary

too many abbreviations

verbiage

ALERT Check that you have written **what you mean**

The testosterone **levels** in the treated pre-pubertal males **reached the high levels** of an adult

ERROR *Semantics*: a level (which stays where it is) cannot reach a level

CORRECT by using **concentration**

The testosterone **concentrations** in the treated pre-pubertal males reached the high levels of an adult

The raised LH levels can increase Leydig cell proliferation **in an attempt to** normalise testosterone levels

ERROR *Teleology*: this gives the **unintended impression** that **LH levels are aware** of falling testosterone levels and **as a response deliberately increase** Leydig cell proliferation

CORRECT by explaining the **process** or **mechanisms involved**

The raised LH levels **stimulate** Leydig cell proliferation **that normalises** testosterone levels

ALERT Check whether what you have written **can be misinterpreted**

Of the two sperm populations, one **had** epithelial contact and **intact** acrosomal membranes and the other **did not have** epithelial contact and **damaged** acrosomal membranes

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, the sentence appears to be symmetrical (the first clause being positive [**having**] and the second being negative [**not having**]) but it is not, as the nature of the membranes also changes from **intact** (in the first) to **damaged** (in the second), so **this implies that**

the second population **did not have damaged** membranes

[i.e. they had **intact** membranes]

or

the second population **did not have intact** membranes

[i.e. they had **damaged** membranes]

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

emphasising the **discrepancy within** groups by replacing the **second and** by **but**, and repeating the **verb**

Of the two sperm populations, one had epithelial contact and intact acrosomal membranes and the other did not have epithelial contact **but had** intact acrosomal membranes

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

emphasising the **distinction between** groups by repeating **the negated nouns**

Of the two sperm populations, one had epithelial contact and intact acrosomal membranes and the other had **neither** epithelial contact **nor** intact acrosomal membranes

ALERT Check that what you have written **does not surprise** the reader

The aqueous layer was removed, the solvent concentrated, and the residue exploded

ERROR *Semantics*: the reader expects passive verbs in each clause, which gives the **unintended impression** that the **residue was exploded** (deliberately)

CORRECT [if the residue **exploded accidentally**, as a consequence of solvent concentration] by adding an **adverb** to the final clause

The aqueous layer was removed, the solvent concentrated, and **then** the residue exploded

introducing a **subordinate clause** by adding a **preposition** and a **conjunction**

After the aqueous layer was removed **and** solvent concentrated, the residue exploded

See: Jargon/layman terminology, Level, Much less, Much more, Repetition to use, Repetition to avoid, Style (under individual entries), Synonym/s (also under individual entries), Teleology, That, Thereby/therefore/thus, Verbiage/verbosity

Subjected to examination by

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **examined by**

Subjective case

See: Nominative case

Subjunctive mood

See: Conditional/subjunctive moods, Moods of a verb

Sublimation

See: Condensation/evaporation/sublimation

Subnormal

See: Abnormal/normal/subnormal/supra-normal

Subsequent/subsequently

subsequent adjective

The **subsequent** appearance of testosterone secretion induced epididymal growth

subsequently adverb

His competence ensured that he **subsequently** became the organiser of the next meeting

See: After/subsequent to, Consequent/subsequent, Prior/subsequent

Substantial/substantive

substantial of considerable importance, size or worth (quantitative)

There is **substantial** evidence for this theory

substantive

based on reality, real not apparent or imaginary (qualitative)

You need **substantive** evidence to support your hypothesis

in grammar: **pronoun**, word or phrase acting as a noun, the complement of a verb

This is **mine**

Substitute by/for/with

for is correct

To alter the ionic strength, sucrose was substituted **for** NaCl

See: Replace/substitute

Successful/successfully

successful adjective having achieved success, having accomplished a desired aim or result

The attempted differentiation of stem cells to muscle cells was **successful**

successfully adverb with the desired aim or result, with success

They **successfully** published their paper in Nature

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that **successfully** is necessary

A total of 400 protein spots was **successfully** identified

ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that some proteins **were identified unsuccessfully** (i.e. not identified)

CORRECT [if more than 400 proteins had been **studied** but not all identified] by

omitting successfully

A total of 400 protein spots was identified

rewriting **the sentence** with **successful** describing a **noun**

Identification of the protein spots was **successful** in 400 cases

On the other hand the seminal fluid viscosity was **successfully** correlated with seminal leukocyte concentration

ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that the **correlation was desired** [perhaps to satisfy a hypothesis]

CORRECT by using a **less suggestive** adverb

On the other hand the seminal fluid viscosity was **positively** correlated with seminal leukocyte concentration

On the other hand the seminal fluid viscosity was **significantly** correlated with seminal leukocyte concentration

Such

adjective of the nature indicated

We are looking for graduates with **such** qualifications
 adverb to the stated degree, in the stated manner
 It is **such** an easy essay that more people should use it
 pronoun in itself
 As **such** the manuscript was not that good

See: So/such

Such ... as/who

such ... as is correct
such is used to refer to something about to be introduced after **as**

ALERT Check that **such** is used with **as** when it is used as a subject

Recognition will be given to **such** of the students **who** complete the exam in less than an hour
 ERROR *Syntax*: when used an adjective **such** requires **as**
 CORRECT by

replacing *who* by *as*

Recognition will be given to **such** of the students **as** complete the exam in less than an hour

subsequently *shortening* by *ellipsis* of [*of the*]

Recognition will be given to **such** students **as** complete the exam in less than an hour

replacing *such of the* by *those*

Recognition will be given to **those** students **who** complete the exam in less than an hour

Such as

See: For example/such as, Like/such as, Such as/that

Such as/that

such as for example
 used to refer to something **just mentioned**
 He was given a **bag such as** a doctor carries

such that to the extent that

Its impact has been **such that** "performed according to WHO guidelines" has become a ubiquitous expression

See: Etc., For example/such as, Like/such as

Sufficient

See: Enough/sufficient

Suggest that

used when there is **insufficient evidence** for a conclusion to be drawn
 expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood
 It has been **suggested** that the process **is** androgen-dependent

ALERT Check that **suggest is not** used with words **reflecting uncertainty**

These results **suggest that** ROS production **is possibly** related to capacitation

ERROR *Semantics*: **suggest that** introduces concepts **considered certain**, but **possibly** indicates **uncertainty**

CORRECT [if there is **sufficient** evidence] by

retaining *suggest that* and using the *present indicative*

These results **suggest that** ROS production **is** related to capacitation

CORRECT [to emphasise **uncertainty**] by

omitting *These results suggest that*

ROS production **is possibly** related to capacitation

The results **suggest that** the enzyme **could be** efficient in recycling the substrate

ERROR *Syntax*: **suggest that** introduces concepts **considered certain**, but **could be** indicates **uncertainty**

CORRECT [if there is **sufficient** evidence] by

retaining *suggest that* and using the *present indicative*

The results **suggest that** the enzyme **is** efficient in recycling the substrate

CORRECT [to emphasise **uncertainty**] by

omitting *The results suggest that*

The enzyme **could be** efficient in recycling the substrate

CORRECT [if there is a **condition**] by

retaining *could* and providing the *condition*

The results **suggest that** the enzyme **could be** efficient in recycling the substrate **if glucose is present throughout the incubation**

See: Certainty/uncertainty, Indicate/suggest, Indicative mood, Quotations

Summarisation/summarise

summarise is correct

*Superfluous/unnecessary**superfluous*

unnecessary, especially through being more than enough
In a review the author should avoid presenting **superfluous** details

unnecessary

not needed

Others think that adding lactate and pyruvate is **unnecessary**
more than is needed, superfluous

Good experimental planning is essential to avoid **unnecessary** use of chemicals and animals

*Superior to/than**superior to*

is correct

Superlative

See: Comparative/superlative, Second

*Supersede/supersede**supersede*

is correct

Supine

See: Prone/prostrate/recumbent/repose/supine

Supplementary

Synonyms: additional, extra, more

Support ... that

used when there is **insufficient evidence** for a conclusion to be drawn
expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood

These data **support** the concept **that** sperm motility **is** related to osmotic swelling

ALERT Check that the verb following **support ... that** is in the **present indicative**

The data **support** the finding **that** capacitated spermatozoa **could exhibit** low levels of tyrosine phosphorylation

ERROR *Semantics:* **supports ... that** introduces concepts **considered certain** but the conditional **could** implies a **condition**

CORRECT [if there is **sufficient** evidence] by

retaining support the finding that and using the **present indicative**

The data **support the finding that** capacitated spermatozoa **exhibit** low levels of tyrosine phosphorylation

CORRECT [to emphasise **uncertainty**] by

omitting The data support the finding that

Capacitated spermatozoa **may exhibit** low levels of tyrosine phosphorylation

CORRECT [if there is a **condition**] by

retaining could and **providing the condition**

The data **support the finding that** capacitated spermatozoa **could exhibit** low levels of tyrosine phosphorylation **if zinc levels are kept low**

The data **support** the idea **that** these different biological roles **would reside** in different protein domains

ERROR *Syntax:* **supports ... that** introduces concepts **considered certain** but the conditional **would** implies a **condition**

CORRECT [if there is **sufficient** evidence] by

retaining supports the idea that and using the **present indicative**

The data **support** the idea **that** these different biological roles **reside** in different protein domains

CORRECT [to emphasise **uncertainty**] by

omitting The data support the idea that

These different biological roles **may reside** in different protein domains

CORRECT [if there is a **condition**] by

retaining would and **providing the condition**

The data **support** the idea **that** these different biological roles **would reside** in different protein domains **if the proteins in situ were to have access to the substrates they do in vitro**

See: Certainty/uncertainty, Conditional/subjunctive moods, Indicative mood, Moods of a verb, Quotations

*Suppose/think**suppose*

generally assume, believe or think something to be the case (but without proof or certain knowledge)

As you were the last to operate, I **suppose** these are your surgical instruments

to be required to do something because of an agreement, duty, obligation, regulation or rules; should, ought to

From his itinerary, he was **supposed** to be here by 8.00

think

to have a particular belief, idea or opinion

These surgical instruments were left by the sink; I **think** they are yours

ALERT Check that **suppose** is the **intended word**

The acrosome reaction is **supposed** to be stimulated by A23187 but it did not occur in our experiments

ERROR *Semantics:* **suppose** implies **no proof** but **stimulation by A23187** suggests there is **evidence**

CORRECT [if a **presumption** of stimulation by A23187 was the basis for the experiments] by

using a more **specific word** meaning considered to be true on the basis of some evidence

The acrosome reaction is **presumed** to be stimulated by A23187 but it did not occur in our experiments

See: Assume/presume, Believe, Certainty/uncertainty, Ought/should

Supra-normal

See: Abnormal/normal/subnormal/supra-normal

Surely

with assurance or confidence

The institute will move rapidly and **surely** in this research direction

without doubt, certainly

If the animals does not receive antibiotics soon, it will **surely** die

used to emphasise the speaker's or writer's firm belief that what he is saying is true

It is **surely** the case that as more students graduate, their quality declines

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

The use of **surely** inserts an element of persuasion or pleading that invites scepticism about the comments

ALERT Check whether the use of **surely** is necessary

Table 1 **surely** indicates a decline in the ipsilateral epididymal weight

STYLE *Word usage:* if it is obvious, there is **no need** to point it out

CHANGE by **omitting surely**

Table 1 indicates a decline in the ipsilateral epididymal weight

Surmise

to suppose something is true (without the evidence to confirm it)

used when there is **insufficient evidence** for a conclusion to be drawn

expressed by the following verb in the **present indicative** mood

From this observation we **surmise that** cells **are** lost because of apoptosis

See: Certainty/uncertainty, Suppose/think

Surprise

See: Amaze/surprise

Surprising

causing someone to feel astonishment or shock

meeting suddenly without warning

See: Unanticipated, Unexpected

Surprisingly

adverb used to describe a whole clause

Placed at the **beginning** of the sentence

Surprisingly, the Director entered the hall through the back door)

(**It was surprising to us** that the Director entered the hall through the back door)

[**It surprised us** that the Director entered the hall through the back door]

ALERT Check that **surprisingly** is the **intended word**

Surprisingly, the cells were hyperactivated as soon as they were recovered

[**It was surprising to us** that the cells were hyperactivated as soon as they were recovered]

ERROR *Semantics:* **an overstatement**, since the results are unlikely to have caused astonishment

CORRECT by using

replacing **surprisingly** by **unexpectedly**

Unexpectedly, the cells were hyperactivated as soon as they were recovered

using **unanticipated** in a *noun clause*

It was unanticipated that the cells were hyperactivated as soon as they were recovered

See: Amaze/surprise, Surprising/unanticipated/unexpected

Suspension

See: Solution/suspension

Symposion/symposium

symposium is correct

Symposion confusion with **German**

Synonyms

See: Antonym/synonym, Repetition to avoid, Synonym/s (also under individual entries), Style, Verbiage/verbosity

Syntax

See: Grammar

Systematic/systemic

systematic methodical, done or acting in accordance with a fixed plan or system
A **systematic** review of the literature

systemic of or relating to a system, not a particular part
The disease is localised, not **systemic**

Tactics

See: Strategy/tactics

Take

See: Bring/take

Taken together

refers to several items considered **collectively** as a **group**

ALERT Check that what **taken together** refers to is **provided**

Taken together this study confirms the importance of pyruvate in fertilisation

ERROR *Syntax*: nothing is mentioned that can be taken together with the study

CORRECT by

omitting taken together

This study confirms the importance of pyruvate in fertilisation

providing plural nouns for taken together **to define**

Taken together **with other results**, this study confirms the importance of pyruvate in fertilisation

Taken together, **the results from** this study **confirm** the importance of pyruvate in fertilisation

Taking

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check that **taking** complements the **intended noun**

Taking the broad view, the new **director** did more harm than good

ERROR *Semantics*: **taking** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **director** is the nearest noun it can complement

This gives the **unintended impression** that the **director** took the broad view

CORRECT [if the article **writer** took the broad view] by

being more specific

Taking the broad view, **the chairman felt** that the new director did more harm than good

adding a human element

Taking the broad view, **I feel** that the new director did more harm than good

See: Dangling participles

Taking into consideration

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **considering**

Taking into consideration the fact that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **as, because, since**

Tantamount

See: Paramount/tantamount

Target/target to

target is correct

Targetted/targeted

targeted is correct

Target is a **polysyllabic** word with a **short** vowel and emphasis on the **first** syllable

the final consonant is **not doubled** when adding a suffix (unless it is L or R)

Targetting/targeting

targeting is correct

Target is a **polysyllabic** word with a **short** vowel and emphasis on the **first** syllable

the final consonant is **not doubled** when adding a suffix (unless it is L or R)

Tautology

See: Redundancy/pleonasm/tautology, Tautology (also under individual entries),

Team is/are

is when the **team itself** is the subject, use the **singular**

This surgical **team is** the best in this region

are when what the **team consists of** is the subject, use the **plural**

The surgical **team are** now entering the operating theatre

which can be considered shortened by ellipsis of

Members of the surgical **team are** now entering the operating theatre
[members of] elided

See: Ellipsis

Technique

A way of carrying out a particular task

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check whether **technique** can be **omitted**

Agents that cause oxidative sperm DNA damage determine the outcome of **the ICSI technique**

STYLE *Tautology:* ICSI **is** a technique

CHANGE by **omitting the ... technique**

Agents that cause oxidative sperm DNA damage determine the outcome of **ICSI**

Teleology

The explanation of phenomena by the purpose they serve, rather than by postulated causes

Often unintentionally introduced by the expressions **in order to, to**

ALERT Check that inanimate objects **are not** credited with clairvoyant powers

Spermatozoa travel into the ampulla **to locate** the cumulus-oocyte complex

ERROR *Teleology:* this gives the **unintended impression** that **spermatozoa are aware** that they need to reach the oocyte and **as a response deliberately swim** towards it

CORRECT by **explaining the process or mechanisms involved**

Spermatozoa travel into the ampulla **where they encounter** the cumulus-oocyte complex

To cope with the oxidative environment in the knockout cauda epididymidis, its epithelium up-regulates three peroxidases

ERROR *Teleology:* this gives the **unintended impression** that **the epididymal epithelium is aware** that it must reduce oxidation and **as a response deliberately synthesises** antioxidant enzymes

CORRECT by **explaining the process or mechanisms involved**

The oxidative environment in the knockout cauda epididymidis **is countered by** epithelial upregulation of three peroxidases

GPX5 mRNA and protein are increased in Se-deficient males **to back up** failing Se-dependent enzyme activities

ERROR *Teleology:* this gives the **unintended impression** that **the epididymis is aware** of reduced activity and **as a response deliberately increases** enzyme activity to counter it

CORRECT by **explaining the process or mechanisms involved**

GPX5 mRNA and protein are increased in Se-deficient males, where they **compensate for** the failing Se-dependent enzyme activities

See: Style

Temperature

See: Heat/temperature

Tendency

an inclination towards a not particularly obvious characteristic or type of behaviour

is often followed by an **infinitive with** the infinitive marker **to**

She has a **tendency to be** very strict in her marking

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that the use of **tendency** is necessary

There was a clear **tendency** for expression to decrease along the epididymis

ERROR *Semantics:* **clear** means obvious but **tendency** means **not particularly obvious**

CORRECT [if the decline **is not clear**] by

omitting clear

There was a **tendency** for expression to decrease along the epididymis

CORRECT [if the decline **is clear**] by

replacing tendency for with **decrease in**

There was a clear **decrease in** expression along the epididymis

Tenet

See: Concept/idea/tenet

Tenses of verbs

Tense	Mood	Form	Continuous (imperfect)
		Completed	
		Voice	
		active	active
		passive	passive
future	action going to happen or be the case in the future		
	simple future	[refers to the future time]	

	indicative	I shall tell	I shall be told	I shall be telling	
		He will tell	He will be told	He will be telling	
	future perfect	[action will be completed at some stated future time]			
	indicative	I shall have told	I shall have been told	I shall have been telling	
		He will have told	He will have been told	He will have been telling	
present	action happening or being the case now				
	simple present	[refers to present time]			
	indicative	I tell	I am told	I am telling	I am being told
	conditional*	I should tell	I should be told	I should be telling	
	present perfect (perfect)	[action completed at the present time]			
	indicative	I have told	I have been told	I have been telling	
	conditional**	I should have told	I should have been told	I should have been telling	
past	having happened or being the case in the past				
	simple past (definite past)	[refers to the past time, on one occasion]			
	indicative	I told	I was told	I was telling	I was being told
	past perfect (pluperfect)	[action completed at some past time]			
	indicative	I had told	I had been told	I had been telling	
	*future-in-the-past				
	** future perfect-in-the-past				

See: Active/passive verbs, Future tense, Has been/was/is, Indicative mood, Quotations, Subjunctive mood, Verbs

Terminate

Synonyms: to cease, end, stop

Terminology

See: Nomenclature/terminology

Test subject

See: Proband/test subject

Testicular/testis

testis noun the organ
The **testis** is the primary male sex organ
noun used as an adjective
Testis weight is decreased after heating
testicular adjective **of the testis**
Testicular weight is decreased after heating

See: Blood-testis/-testicular barrier, Tubular/tubule

Testify

to give evidence as a witness in a law court
He **testified** against his institute's director
to serve as evidence or proof of something existing or being the case
These results **testify** that the treatment is working

ALERT Check that **testify is not** used as a passive

Over-expression of WIF1 has been **testified** to block Wnt/ β -catenin signalling
ERROR *Syntax*: **testify** is an intransitive verb, which has no passive
CORRECT by **replacing testified** by a **transitive verb**
Over-expression of WIF1 has been **proven** to block Wnt/ β -catenin signalling

Than

conjunction
when used with a comparative adjective, the **noun** or **pronoun** following **than** is in the **same case** as the **first term** of the comparison
comparing the **subject** of a sentence
He is taller **than I** am
(**we** are / **he** is / **she** is / **it** is)
(nominative, subject case)
comparing the **object** of a sentence
She employed **someone** taller **than me**
(**us** / **him** / **her**)
(accusative, object case)

Than joins parallel phrases: omit unnecessary repetition **only** if the meaning is not altered

ALERT Check there is **no ambiguity** after **using than**

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **it is unclear** what **than** refers to, the verb or the subject, so **this implies** that he owed less **to judgement** than he owed **to luck**

or

he owed less to judgment than **luck** owed to judgement
 CORRECT [if the former is meant] by
 repeating the **preposition**
 He owed less to judgement than **to** luck

See: As many as/than, As much as

Than/versus (Latin)

than introducing the second element in a comparison
 He thought it better to publish in Lancet **than** in PNAS

versus (vs) as opposed to, in contrast to
 We discussed the advantages of using epididymal **versus** ejaculated spermatozoa
 (We discussed the advantages of using epididymal **versus** [the advantages of using] ejaculated spermatozoa)
 He weighed up the pros and cons of giving a talk **versus** a poster
 (He weighed up the pros and cons of giving a talk **versus** [the pros and cons of presenting] a poster)

against
 The debate next week will be the students **versus** the staff

ALERT Check that **versus is not** used with words **implying comparison**

Comparisons were made between **those** receiving irradiation with chemotherapy **versus** chemotherapy alone
 ERROR: *Tautology*: **versus** and **comparisons** both imply that items **are being compared**
 CORRECT by
 replacing **versus** by **and those with**
Comparisons were made between **those** receiving irradiation with chemotherapy **and those with** chemotherapy alone
 rewriting **the sentence** and **retaining versus**
 The study was of those receiving irradiation with chemotherapy **versus** chemotherapy alone

Than was the case when

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **than occurred when**

Thank

to express gratitude to someone for doing something
 See: Acknowledge/thank

Thankful/thankfully

thankful adjective pleased, relieved
 I am **thankful** I got the job
 [**thankful** applies **only** to people]

thankfully adverb used to describe verbs or verbal phrases
 placed **after** the **verb**
 The lecturer **joined** the department **thankfully**
 [The manner in which he joined the department (**thankful** that he got the job) is described]

ALERT Check that **thankfully** is only used for people

Thankfully, my third application was successful
 ERROR *Semantics*: this means that **the application** is thankful
 CORRECT by
 retaining **thankfully** and adding a **human element**
 Thankfully, I was successful at my third application
 rewriting **the sentence** and replacing **thankfully** by **thankful**
 I am **thankful** that my third application was successful
 rewriting **the sentence** and replacing **thankful** by a **more relevant adjective**
 I am **glad** that my third application was successful
 I am **happy** that my third application was successful
 I am **pleased** that my third application was successful
 I am **relieved** that my third application was successful

That

conjunction
that is commonly omitted after believe, say, suppose, think
 I **believe** [**that**] you are correct
 I **say** [**that**] he is entitled to it
 I **suppose** [**that**] he could be right
 I **think** [**that**] this is the correct approach
that should not be omitted when it could cause confusion, after **infer, conclude**
 I **infer that** the osmolality was lower than that in serum
 She **concluded that** pH is responsible for activating sperm motility

demonstrative pronoun
That journal is a high Impact Factor

- ALERT** Check that **that** appears a sufficient number of times to make sense
- She **concluded** the email was a hoax
- ERROR** *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this could be interpreted** to mean **to close/end/finish**
- CORRECT** by **adding that** as a conjunction
She concluded **that** the email was a hoax
- He said **that** research was unnecessary
- ERROR** *Semantics*: ambiguous, **it is unclear** whether **that** is meant as a **pronoun** or **conjunction**, so **this implies that one particular** research project was unnecessary
[**that** as **demonstrative pronoun**]
or
research **in general** was unnecessary
[**that** as **conjunction**]
- CORRECT** [if the former is meant] by
adding an additional that
He said **that that** research was unnecessary
- CORRECT** [if the latter is meant] by
adding as such
He said **that** research **as such** was unnecessary
- He then realised he had left the microscope lamp on and **that** he had locked his keys in the lab
- ERROR** *Syntax*: **and** joins two grammatical equivalents; here there are **two realisations** but only **one that clause**
- CORRECT** by **adding a second that** as conjunction
He then realised **that** he had left the microscope lamp on and **that** he had locked his keys in the lab
- She knew **that** if she didn't change the culture medium at weekends **that** the cells would die
- ERROR** *Syntax*: the **main clause** after a conditional subordinate (**if**) **clause**, needs **no conjunction**
- CORRECT** by **replacing the second that** by a **comma**
She knew **that** if she didn't change the culture medium at weekends, the cells would die

See: And that, As if/like, But that, But that/that, That phrases, That clauses

That/this

- that** referring to **one** of several things **distant** from the speaker or being indicated
Use **that** bottle of BSA
referring to a specific thing **previously mentioned**, known, or understood
I know **that** publication but it had an error in Figure 1
- this** referring to **one** of several things **close** to the speaker or being indicated
Use **this** buffer
referring to a **specific thing currently** mentioned, known, or understood
This review is poor

That/those

- that** demonstrative pronoun referring to a specific item (**singular**) far from the speaker
- those** demonstrative pronoun referring to specific items (**plural**) far from the speaker
- ALERT** Check that **that is not** used with words **implying specificity**
- That** difference between **those** reports is difficult to explain
- ERROR** *Tautology*: both **that** and **those** refer to the same difference
- CORRECT** by **using one or the other**, not both
The difference between **those** reports is difficult to explain
That difference between **the** reports is difficult to explain

That/which clauses

See: Defining/non-defining clauses

That/which/who

- that** of things, collective nouns
in defining clauses only
This is the laboratory **that** the university built
- which** of animals, things
in defining and non-defining clauses
defining
The is the rat **which** escaped last week
non-defining
The rat, **which** is in the cage, was is infertile
- who** of persons
in defining and non-defining clauses
defining
That is the man **who** gave the last lecture
non-defining

That man, **who** gave the last lecture, came from Münster

See: Defining/non-defining clauses

That being so

See: Being so/the case

That being the case

See: Being so/the case

That clauses

That is repeated in coordinate clauses linked by the coordinating conjunctions **and** and **but**

He said **that** the affair was an outrage **and that** the chairman should resign

She said **that** he was guilty **but that** he should not be punished

That is not repeated in subordinate clauses introduced by **if** and **although**

There is the danger **that if** it were to be published, it could receive greater legitimacy

He has a point **that although** the work is interesting, it would not be accepted in a high ranking journal

take **indicative** verbs in statements that are both

shown to be true (from sufficient evidence)

and introduced by the words

conclude, demonstrate, determine, establish, indicate, prove, reveal, show

thought to be true (from insufficient evidence)

and introduced by the words

assume, believe, conceive, hint, hypothesise, possible, postulate

presume, probable, propose, speculate, suggest, support, surmise

do not take prepositions

ALERT Check that omitting **that does not** create **ambiguity**

The technician said **following** the advice of the student would not help

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, following can be a **preposition** or a **gerund**, so **this implies** that what was said **followed** the student's advice

[**following** as **preposition**]

or

the advice of the student should not be **followed**

[**following** as **gerund**]

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

adding that

The technician said **that** following the advice of the student would not help

ALERT Check that **that clauses do not** take prepositions

I was convinced **of that** he was innocent

ERROR *Syntax*: a **that** clause **does not** take a preposition (**of**)

CORRECT by **omitting the preposition**

I was convinced **that** he was innocent

From that she was here it can be inferred that she never went to Paris

ERROR *Syntax*: a **that** clause **does not** take a preposition (**from**)

CORRECT by

adding a noun

From **the fact that** she was here it can be inferred that she never went to Paris

replacing the fact that she was by a **genitive gerund**

From **her being** here it can be inferred that she never went to Paris

See: After/following, And that, But that, Deductive/inductive, Defining/non-defining clauses, Indicative mood, That

That is not the case

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **that is not so**

That phrases

noun phrases introduced by **that** can be the object of the verb **to be** and govern a **whole clause**

noun phrase

That the object of the Guidelines

as part of a clause

That the object of the Guidelines (**is to prevent accidents**)

as part of a sentence

That the object of the Guidelines (**is to prevent accidents**) [**is undeniable**]

[**It is undeniable that** the object of the Guidelines is to prevent accidents]

Thawed

See: Frozen/thawed

The

See: a/the/^

The case in question

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **this patient/situation**

The great majority of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **most**

The question as to whether

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **whether**

The reason is because

Tautology: as **because** explains the **reason**, use **because**

The same

A noun phrase, the object of the verb

He did **the same**

not an adverbial phrase

ALERT Check that **the same is not** used as an **adverb**

They function **the same**

ERROR *Syntax*: same is an **adjective not an adverb**

CORRECT by

using an adverb

They function **similarly**

retaining same in an **adverbial phrase**

They function **in the same way**

The significance of this study should be highlighted

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **This study is important**

The test in question

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **this test**

The tests have not as yet

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **the tests have not**

The treatment having been performed

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **after treatment**

There can be little doubt that this is

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **this is probably**

Their/them

their genitive preceding a **gerund**

The first group binds to Wnts, preventing **their binding** to receptors

them accusative preceding a **gerundial phrase**

The first group binds to Wnts, preventing **them from binding** to receptors

ALERT Check that **their** is necessary

The first group binds to Wnts, preventing **their** binding to **their** receptors

STYLE *Word usage*: **their** appears twice in one sentence

CHANGE by

omitting the second their

The first group binds to Wnts, preventing **their** binding to receptors

replacing their by **them from**

The first group binds to Wnts, preventing **them from** binding to **their** receptors

See: His/her/their

Themselves

See: Himself/herself/themselves

Theoretical

See: Empirical/theoretical

Theory

See: Hypothesis/theory

There is/are

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

There will always be a miscellany of quality in terms of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **the quality of the ... will vary**

Thereafter

Synonyms: afterwards, then

Thereby/therefore/thus

thereby as a result or consequence, by so doing, by that means, thus
 The students helped with the cultures, **thereby** gaining experience for research

therefore as a result or consequence, because of this, for that reason, so, thus
 The distribution was Gaussian and **therefore** parametric statistical tests were applied
does not mean for example, in this manner

thus as a result or consequence, because of this, for that reason, so, therefore
 The acid is concentrated and **thus** will need to be diluted
 by so doing, by that means, thereby
 I changed the medium over the weekend, **thus** allowing the student a day off
 in the way or manner indicated, like this
 Dr Yeung started the surgery, and while **thus** occupied Dr Cooper prepared the infusion
does not mean by this/which means, for example, to achieve this

ALERT Check that **therefore is not** confused with **for example**

Fluorescence intensity (FI) increased throughout the duct; **therefore**, FI was significantly higher in the cauda than caput

ERROR *Semantics*: what follows **therefore** is an **example, not a consequence**, of the prior clause

CORRECT by **replacing therefore by namely**

Fluorescence intensity (FI) increased throughout the duct; **namely**, FI was significantly higher in the cauda than caput

ALERT Check the meaning when **thereby** is used after a **negative**

He was criticised for **not** spending more on meetings, **thereby** increasing the opportunity for students to present their work
ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, this gives the **unintended impression** that **not spending more would increase** opportunity, whereas logic implies otherwise

CORRECT by

replacing increasing by decreasing

He was criticised for **not** spending more on meetings, **thereby decreasing** the opportunity for students to present their work

retaining increase and being more specific

He was criticised for **not** spending more on meetings; **spending more would increase** the opportunity for students to present their work

rewriting the sentence

He was criticised: increasing the opportunity for students to present their work **would follow** spending more on meetings

ALERT Check that **thus** is the **intended word**

Steps of the signalling cascade were blocked; **thus**, spermatozoa were treated with an inhibitor

ERROR *Semantics*: what follows **thus** is a **condition, not a consequence**, of the prior clause

CORRECT by

replacing thus by to achieve this

Steps of the signalling cascade were blocked; **to achieve this** spermatozoa were treated with an inhibitor

replacing thus by for which

Steps of the signalling cascade were blocked, **for which** spermatozoa were treated with an inhibitor

retaining thus and inverting the sentence

Spermatozoa were treated with an inhibitor, **thus** blocking the steps of the signalling cascade

inverting the sentence and using thereby

Spermatozoa were treated with an inhibitor, **thereby** blocking the steps of the signalling cascade

PNA labelling upon sperm maturation differed; **thus** in caput only the midpiece, and in cauda only the head was labelled

ERROR *Semantics*: what follows **thus** is an **example, not a consequence**, of the prior clause

CORRECT by

using namely

PNA labelling upon sperm maturation differed, **namely** in caput only the midpiece, and in cauda only the head was labelled

using a participial phrase and gerund

PNA labelling upon sperm maturation differed, **as demonstrated by the labelling of** caput spermatozoa only **on** the midpiece, **and** cauda spermatozoa only **on** the head

PNA labelling upon sperm maturation differed, **as judged by the labelling of** caput spermatozoa only **on** the midpiece, **and** cauda spermatozoa only **on** the head

See: And so/hence/therefore, And so ... therefore, Since ... therefore, So/therefore, Thus/thus far

Thereby

See: Thereby/therefore/thus

Therefore

See: Thereby/therefore/thus

There's/theirs

there's adverb, **apostrophe** to indicate omission

short for there is or there has

There's a light in the display panel

(**there is** a light in the display panel)

There's been an accident

(**there has** been an accident)

theirs personal pronoun, third person plural, genitive case, **no apostrophe**
It is not ours, it is **theirs**

See: Apostrophes

Therein

See: Herein/therein

Theretofores

Synonyms: previously, thitherto, until then

See: Heretofore/theretofore, Hitherto/thitherto

These/those

those referring to **many** of several things **distant** from the speaker or being indicated

Use **those** bottles of BSA

referring to specific thing **previously mentioned**, known, or understood

I know of **those** publications but have never read them

these referring to **many** of several things **close** to the speaker or being indicated

Use **these** buffers

referring to **specific things currently** mentioned, known, or understood

These microscopes are inadequate

They are both alike/similar

Style: both is *superfluous*, replace by they are alike/similar

They now find themselves in a position where they have to

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **they have to**

Thick/thickness

thick adjective

Tissue sections 4 μm **thick** were fixed and stained

thickness noun, often requires the preposition **of**

Tissue sections **of** 4 μm **thickness** were fixed and stained

Tissue sections **of thickness** 4 μm were fixed and stained

This

See: That/this

This/these

this demonstrative pronoun referring to a specific item (**singular**) close to the speaker

these demonstrative pronoun referring to specific items (**plural**) close to the speaker

ALERT Check that **this is not** used with words **implying specificity**

This difference between **these** studies is difficult to explain

ERROR *Tautology*: both **this** and **these** refer to the same difference

CORRECT by using **one or the other**, not both

The difference between **these** studies is difficult to explain

This difference between **the** studies is difficult to explain

This being so

See: Being so/the case

This being the case

See: Being so/the case

This moment in time

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **currently, now**

This was the case

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **this was true**

Third/thirdly

Equally acceptable ordinal numbers

Style: **thirdly** is **unnecessary**, **third** is sufficient

See: First/second/third, First/firstly, Second/secondly

Thither

See: Hither/thither

Thitherto

Synonyms: previously, theretofore, until then

See: Heretofore/theretofore, Hitherto/thitherto

Though

See: Albeit/although/though, As if/though, If/though

Thrice/treble/triple

<i>thrice</i>	adverb	three times as great	After treatment there were thrice as many spermatozoa After treatment there were thrice the number of spermatozoa The spermatozoa were washed thrice
<i>treble</i>	verb	on three occasions to increase by a factor of three transitive	
		active	Hormone treatment trebled the sperm count
		passive	The sperm count was trebled by hormone treatment
		intransitive	The sperm count trebled after hormone treatment
<i>triple</i>	adjective	three times of three parts	Triple -strength medium Triple bond
	adverb	three times as great	After treatment there were triple the number of spermatozoa
	verb	to increase by a factor of three transitive	
		active	Hormone treatment tripled the sperm count
		passive	The sperm count was tripled by hormone treatment
		intransitive	The sperm count tripled after hormone treatment

Through the use of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **by** or **with**

Throughout the entire area

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **throughout the area**

Throughout the whole of the experiment

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **throughout the experiment**

Thus

See: Thereby/therefore/thus

Thus far

to this degree or extent, until now, until the present stage in a process

Thus far the results are not known

Till/'till/'til/until

Till/until are correct

Interchangeable prepositions/conjunctions

Times as much as/more than/less than

times as much as

The original number **multiplied by** the number of times given

Twice as much $2 \times 3 = 6$

times more than

The original number **added to itself** for the number of times given

Once more than $3 + 3 = 6$

times less than

avoid, since

once less than $3 [-3] = 0$

means **none**

four times less than $3 [-3-3-3-3] = -9$

means **minus three times** ($3 \times -3 = -9$)

See: Repetition

Tissue

See: Organ/tissue

To

Infinitive marker

See: Finite/non-finite verbs, In order to/to, Teleology

To all intents and purposes

in all important aspects

Style: **and purposes** is **superfluous**, **to all intents** alone is **sufficient**

To be

a normal verb (to exist)
has no predicate
I **am**
a link verb (an intransitive verb of incomplete predication)
with no complement but a **complement** of
an adjective
He is **famous**
a noun
I am **a scientist**
a pronoun in the nominative
It is **I** who decides what changes are made
an auxiliary verb
with a **participle**
Now, I **am going**

See: Auxiliary verbs

To become

a link verb (an intransitive verb of incomplete predication)
has no predicate but a complement of
an **adjective**
She became **angry**

To claim that ... is/are

is is correct
introduces a noun clause
whatever is claimed is a **singular** subject; use the **singular**
To claim that these are new data **is** clearly untrue

To date/up to date/up-to-date

to date up to this point, up to now
To date there are is no information on this
up to date prepositional phrase
Bring me **up to date** on your research progress
up-to-date adjective
This review is an **up-to-date** account of research in this field

See: Thus/thus far

To do

to act
He **does** the text and I **do** the graphs and figures
an auxiliary verb (with an **infinitive without** the infinitive marker **to**)
for emphasis
I **did go**
for negatives
I **did not go** last night
for interrogatives
Did you **think** it was a good lecture?

See: Auxiliary verbs

To have

to possess
I **have** a new microscope
an auxiliary verb (with a **participle**)
present perfect
I **have written** a review now
past perfect (pluperfect)
By then I **had written** a review

See: Auxiliary verbs

To let

to rent out
I **let** my flat to the student
an auxiliary verb (with an **infinitive without** the infinitive marker **to**)
to allow, permit
I shall **let** him **come** to the seminar

See: Allow/permit, Auxiliary verbs

To my opinion

See: In/to my opinion

To my mind

See: In my opinion/to my mind

To seem

a link verb (an intransitive verb of incomplete predication)
has no predicate but a complement of

an **adjective**

She seems **clever**

a **verb**

She seems **to be** competent

To the best of our knowledge

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **To our knowledge, (or omit)**

To the contrary

See: On/to the contrary

Together

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**, especially when used with words **implying togetherness**

See: Attach together, Collaborate together, Connect together, Gather together, Join together, Link together, Meet together, Mingle together, Mix together, Unite together

Together with

prepositional phrase

ALERT Check when **using together with** that the verb **agrees in number** with the subject

The professor, **together with** her student, **were** doing surgery in the hospital

ERROR *Syntax:* **together with** is a prepositional phrase (meaning with), not a conjunction, and **does not govern the verb**

CORRECT by **using the singular**

The professor, together with her student, **was** doing surgery in the hospital

Synonyms: along with, as well as, in addition to

Tolerance/toleration/tolerisation

tolerance the capacity to endure continued subjection to something without adverse reaction
non-judgmental acceptance of different lifestyles and beliefs

toleration the practice of putting up with something that one disapproves of

tolerisation the induction of immunological tolerance

Tolerant of/to

tolerant of is correct

Tonicity

See: Osmolality/tonicity

Too

See: Either/too

Too many/much

too many for **countable** nouns

There are **too many mice** to go in one cage

too much for **uncountable** nouns

There is **too much Ca²⁺** in the medium

Total

comprising the entire or whole number or amount, complete

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that **total is not** used with words **implying totality**

The product will bring **total** elimination of the contamination

ERROR *Pleonasm:* elimination means **total** removal

CORRECT by **omitting total**

The product will bring **elimination** of the contamination

Total ... is/are

is

is correct

as the **total itself** is the subject, use the **singular**

The **total** amount requested for consumables **was** added to that for animals

Total of

Overused phrase: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

useful at the beginning of a sentence (where cardinal numbers are given in **words** not figures)

ALERT Check if **numbers in words** can be avoided

One thousand, seven hundred and forty three protein spots were identified in the 2D gels

STYLE *Pronunciation:* difficult to read

CHANGE by

replacing words by **numbers** and using **a total of** with the **singular**

A total of 1743 protein spots **was** identified in the 2D gels

replacing words by **numbers in brackets** and using **many** with the **plural**

Many protein spots (**1743**) **were** identified in the 2D gels

ALERT Check whether **total of** is necessary

The experiments involved **a total of** 30 mice and 40 rats

STYLE *Verbosity:* can be shortened

CHANGE by **omitting a total of**

The experiments involved **30** mice and **40** rats

The experiments involved **70** mice and rats

See: Numbers in word/figures

Total of ... is/are

is is correct

as **total** is a **singular** noun, use the **singular**

A **total** of 73 µg iodine **was** added

ALERT Check that the **singular** is used with **total**

A **total** of 60 animals **were** used in the experiments

ERROR *Syntax:* **total** is a **singular** noun but **the verb** is **plural**

CORRECT by

using the **singular**

A total of 60 animals **was** used in the experiments

retaining the **plural** and **omitting** the **total**

Sixty animals **were** used in the experiments

See: Volume is/are, Weight is/are

Total is/are

is is correct

as the **total itself** is the subject, use the **singular**

A volume of 500 µl in **total was** added

Totally

completely, absolutely

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check that the use of **totally** is necessary

I was **totally** convinced

ERROR *Pleonasm:* one is either **convinced or not**

CORRECT by **omitting totally**

I was convinced

The acrosomal response to progesterone was **totally** abolished

ERROR *Pleonasm:* abolition **can only be total** (if something remains it has not been abolished)

CORRECT by **omitting totally**

The acrosomal response to progesterone was abolished

Toward/towards

towards is correct in the direction of

See: Untoward

Trans

See: Cis/trans

Transcribed/transcripted

transcribed is correct

Transformations of the equations was achieved

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **the equations were transformed**

Transitive

See: Intransitive/transitive verbs, Tenses of verbs, Verbs

Transmission

See: Opacity/transmission/transmittance

Transmittance

See: Opacity/transmission/transmittance

Transpire

to come to be known

It **transpired** that his application did not arrive because his email had been hacked

does not mean happens

Transport/transportation

transport a system or means of conveying

The epithelial cells are responsible for ion and fluid **transport**

transportation the action of transporting, the process of being transported

The use of overnight **transportation** ensured sufficient isotopes for the experiments

Treatment modality

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **treatment**

Treble

See: Thrice/treble/triple

Tri (Greek. Latin)

three, having three **trisomy**

Triannual/triennial

triennial once every three years (tri-yearly) **and** thrice a year (thrice yearly, every four months)

triannual thrice a year (thrice yearly, every four months) **and** once every three years (tri-yearly)

avoid, use

Three times a year **or** Every three years

Triple

See: Thrice/treble/triple

Triplicates

See: Duplicate/triplicate/replicate

Try and/to

try to the usual form
auxiliary verb followed by an **infinitive with** the infinitive marker **to**
Try **to** solve it

try and implies encouragement

Try **and** solve it

which can be considered shortened by ellipsis of

Try **and** you will solve it

[you will] elided

Tubular/tubule

tubule noun a histological structure

The epididymal **tubule** is long

tubular adjective **of the** tubule

The total **tubular** length is 5 m

for **double** adjectives (diameters **of the** tubules **of the** testis) use

one adjective

testicular tubule diameters

two adjectives

testicular tubular diameters

Twice

See: Double/twice

Two different methods

Pleonasm: if they **weren't different** they would be the same method, **different** is *superfluous*, use **two methods**

Two equal halves

Pleonasm: as **half** implies equality, **equal** is *superfluous*, use **two halves**

Type/types of

- type of* a singular object is required after **this, that**
 The Dean is familiar with **this type** of student
 The Dean is familiar with students of **this type**
 The Dean is familiar with **that type** of student
 The Dean is familiar with students of **that type**
- types of* a plural object is required after **these, those**
 The Dean is familiar with **these types** of student
 The Dean is familiar with **those types** of student
- ALERT** Check when **using that type** that the verb **agrees in number** with the subject

Those are the type of students that the university needs more of
ERROR Syntax: type is singular but those is plural
CORRECT by **replacing type by types and making student singular**
 Those are the **types of student** that the university needs more of
replacing those are by this is and making student singular
This is the type of student that the university needs more of

Typically

- adverb as a matter of routine
- ALERT** Check that **typically is not** used with words **implying certainty**
- Typically** these procedures are **normally** involved in getting informed consent forms signed
- ERROR Tautology: typically and normally both mean as a matter of routine**
CORRECT by **using one or the other**, not both
Typically these procedures are involved in getting informed consent forms signed
 These procedures are **normally** involved in getting informed consent forms signed

See: Assumed, Claim/demonstrate/establish/show, Demonstrate, Determine, Indicate, Propose that, Redundancy/pleonasm/tautology, Reveals

Ultimate

Synonyms: final, last

Unanticipated

- not anticipated, expected or predicted
- See:* Surprising, Unexpected

Unattached gerunds

- gerunds with **no (unattached)** subject
 makes the first part of a sentence seem not belong to the following clause
 produces an incorrect (but often amusing) meaning
 His work was mainly on epididymal function, and after **reading** these papers, **Jones** comes across as a very astute thinker
 [implies that **Jones**, not the reviewer, read these papers]

Unattached participles

See: Dangling participles

Unbroken line

See: Continuous/solid/unbroken line

Uncertainty

See: Certainty/uncertainty

Under

- preposition below or beneath something
Overused word: often used incorrectly
- ALERT** Check that **under** is the **intended word**
- Spermatozoa were counted **under** phase contrast microscopy
- ERROR Semantics: under** makes no sense with an abstract noun (microscopy)
CORRECT by **replacing under by**
under conditions of
 Spermatozoa were counted **under conditions of** phase contrast microscopy
- by**
 Spermatozoa were counted **by** phase contrast microscopy
- in a and replacing microscopy by microscope**
 Spermatozoa were counted **in a** phase contrast **microscope**

See: Under a microscope

Under a microscope

Under means below or beneath something

a bench is usually **beneath** a microscope

slides may be placed **beneath (under) the lens** of an upright microscope

culture dishes are placed **above the lens** in an inverted microscope

in each case the object is placed **over/on (above)** the microscope **stage**

ALERT Check that **under** is correctly used

The samples were examined **under** a microscope

ERROR *Semantics*: samples **under** a microscope **are hidden** by it

CORRECT by

replacing under by **in**

The samples were **examined in** a microscope

using observed and **through**

The samples were **observed through** a microscope

replacing microscopy by **microscope**

The samples were **observed by microscopy**

See: Using

Under no circumstances

used to stress a point

At the beginning of a sentence, **under no circumstances** is followed by an **inverted verb**

Under no circumstances **should the microscope** be left on overnight

See: Inversion of verbs

Under the circumstances

See: In/under the circumstances

Undergone

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by **what was undergone (or avoid)**

Undoubtedly/undoubtedly

undoubtedly is correct

See: Indubitably/undoubtedly

Unequivocally/unequivocally

unequivocally is correct

Unexceptional/unexceptionable

unexceptional not outstanding, ordinary

unexceptionable not open to objections

Unexpected

contrary to expectation or prediction

See: Surprising, Unanticipated

Unfeasible

See: Feasible/unfeasible

Unilateral

See: Bi-/uni-lateral, Mono-/uni-lateral

Unique

having no like or equal, one and only, single, sole, unrivalled, unparalleled

does not mean exceptional, rare

almost/nearly unique

not unique, but one of a very **few** such items

ALERT Check that **unique is not** used with **qualifying words**

This work is comparatively/more/most/somewhat/very unique

ERROR *Oxymorons*: these adjectives express **degree** which is inapplicable to an **absolute**

CORRECT by **omitting the adjectives**

This work is **unique**

See: Quite, Rather/rather than

Uninterested

See: Disinterested/uninterested

Unite together

Pleonasm: as **unite** implies coming together, **together** is *superfluous*, use **unite**

Units

most units are **separated from the number** by a space

The spectrophotometer was 40 **cm** long by 20 **cm** wide and 10 **cm** high

Testicular volume was 20 **ml**

Mean sperm concentration was 30 **10⁶/ml**

some units are **not separated** by a space

Scrotal temperature was 32°C

Samples were centrifuged at 600**g**

Progressive sperm motility reached 45%

most units are **not repeated**

in text

The **percentage** was 8

(*not* The **percentage** was 8%)

The **pH** was 8

(*not* The **pH** was **pH** 8)

The **voltage** was 16

(*not* The **voltage** was 16 **V**)

in ranges

Between 3 and 4 **g**

(*not* Between 3 **g** and 4 **g**)

A range from 30—60%

(*not* A range from 30% to 60%)

A yield of 65—75%

(*not* A yield of 65%—75%)

A temperature of 32—37°C

(*not* A temperature of 32°C—37°C)

with dispersion

19.5 ± 3.1%

(*not* 19.5% ± 3.1%)

some units **are repeated**

units of dimension

A cover slip 18 **mm** x 18 **mm**

(*not* A cover slip 18 x 18 **mm**)

the **pronunciation** of some **units** depends on their role in the sentence

singular, when used as adjectives

The \$30,000 (**dollar**) CASA machine

A 2 h (**hour**) lunch break

The 500 ml (**millilitre**) beaker

A 20 min (**minute**) incubation

The 1.7 m (**metre**) student

A three wk (**week**) injection scheme

plural, when used as nouns

The CASA machine costs \$30,000 (**dollars**)

The lunch breaks lasts 2 h (**hours**)

The beaker holds 500 ml (**millilitres**)

The incubation lasts 20 min (**minutes**)

The student is 1.7 m tall (**metres**)

The injection scheme lasts three wk (**weeks**)

See: Multipliers and units, Plural/singular, Repetition to use, Repetition to avoid

Universal statements

Of reproducible actions consistently providing the same results

appear to be factual conditional statements

If you heat water, it boils

but **are not true** conditionals, because **if** can be replaced by **when** (meaning every time) or **whenever**

When you heat water, it boils

Whenever you cool water below 0°C, it freezes

See: Moods of a verb

Unless and until

Oxymoron: **unless** refers to **conditional** events and **until** refers to **unconditional** events: use **one or the other**, or **Unless or until**

Unlike

Adjective meaning dissimilar from

ALERT Check that **unlike** joins grammatical equivalents

Unlike other species, human spermatozoa are characterised by incomplete replacement of histones

ERROR *Semantics*: here **unlike** **compares** human **spermatozoa** with other **species**, not with spermatozoa of different species

CORRECT by

inserting the relevant **noun**

Unlike **spermatozoa** from other species, human spermatozoa are characterised by incomplete replacement of histones

shortening by eliminating repetition with **a pronoun**

Unlike spermatozoa from other species, **those** from man are characterised by incomplete replacement of histones

Unlike **those** from other species, spermatozoa from man are characterised by incomplete replacement of histones

replacing **unlike** by a **prepositional phrase**

As is not the case in other species, human spermatozoa are characterised by incomplete replacement of histones

ALERT Check that **unlike** defines **only one** object

Unlike that of the other PRDXs, the expression of PRDX6 was limited to Sertoli cell cytoplasm

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **it is unclear** what **unlike that** defines, the expression, its limitation or the cells, so **this implies that**

expression of the other PRDXs was **not limited** to the *cytoplasm* of **Sertoli cells**

or

expression of the other PRDXs was **not limited** to *cytoplasm*

or

expression of the other PRDXs was **not limited** to **Sertoli cells**

which means that

the other PRDXs were expressed in the *cytoplasm of Sertoli cells* as well as in **other Sertoli cell components**

or

the other PRDXs were expressed in the *cytoplasm of Sertoli cells* as well as in **the cytoplasm of other cells**

or

the other PRDXs were expressed in **Sertoli cells** as well as in **other cells**

CORRECT [if the fourth is meant] by

emphasising the other PRDX expression in the **entire Sertoli cell**

Unlike the **expression** of other PRDXs in the **entire Sertoli cell**, that of PRDX6 was limited to Sertoli cell cytoplasm

CORRECT [if the fifth is meant] by

emphasising the other PRDX expression in the **cytoplasm of Sertoli and other cells**

Unlike the **expression** of other PRDXs in the **cytoplasm of Sertoli and other cells**, that of PRDX6 was limited to Sertoli cell cytoplasm

CORRECT [if the sixth is meant] by

emphasising the other PRDX expression in **Sertoli and other cells**

Unlike the **expression** of other PRDXs in **Sertoli and other cells**, that of PRDX6 was limited to Sertoli cell cytoplasm

See: As was not the case/unlike

Unnecessary

See: Superfluous/unnecessary

Unregulated

See: Deregulated/unregulated

Unsatisfied

See: Dissatisfied/unsatisfied

Until

See: By/until

Until/up to now

until now

up to the point in time or the event, just now

used with the **past perfect**

(for something started in the past and already completed)

We **hadn't received** the sequence **until now**

[we have **just now** received it]

up to now

as far as the point in time or the event, by now, yet

used with the **present perfect**

(for something started in the past and applicable currently)

We **haven't received** the sequence **up to now**

[we have **still** not received it]

See: By/until, Just now/still, Till/'til/'till/until

Untoward

unexpected and inappropriate or inconvenient

Let's hope nothing **untoward** happens to the culture over the weekend

Upon

Synonym: on

Upper case

See: Lower/upper case

Up-regulation

See: Down-/up-regulation

Urge

See: Dictate/necessitate/urge

Us/we

us

when **us** would be used on its own

That's what happens to **us**

us is used when followed by a **description**

That's what happens to **us old scientists**

we

when **we** would be used on its own

That is what **we** agree on

we is used when followed by a **description**
That is what **we retired scientists** agree on

Usage/use

usage the manner of **using**
With careful **usage**, the equipment will last five years

use the act of **using**
The microscope was put to good **use**

Use/utilise

use deploy as a means of achieving something
He **used** a microscope to examine sperm motion

utilise make use of something that was not intended for that purpose
He **utilised** a paperclip to clear the pipette barrel

make practical and effective use of
For making the smear she **utilised** every part of the slide

Used to/would

used to auxiliary verb (followed by an **infinitive without** the infinitive marker **to**)
for habit, custom, repeated **events** in the past
She **used to plan** her experiments every Sunday
for repeated **states** in the past
He **used to be** a lecturer

would auxiliary verb (followed by an **infinitive without** the infinitive marker **to**)
for repeated **events** in the past
She **would plan** her experiments every Sunday

See: Auxiliary verbs, Moods of a verb, Will/would,

Useful/usefulness/utility

useful adjective able to be used for a practical purpose or in several ways

usefulness noun the quality or fact of being useful

utility noun the state of being useful, profitable or beneficial

See: Beneficial/useful

Using

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

Participle (verbal adjective) which can define a **noun**, **pronoun** and **noun phrase**
does not define verbs

Overused word: often used unnecessarily, replace by a relevant

gerund	in most cases by using
preposition	for simple instruments and methods by, from, in, on, through, with
prepositional phrase	for more complex instruments and methods by means of, by the use of, with the aid of

ALERT Check for verbiage if **using** follows a **past participle**

Proteins were **co-localised using** confocal microscopy

ERROR *Syntax:* a participle **does not** define a verb

CORRECT by **replacing using** by a

preposition

Proteins were co-localised **by** confocal microscopy

gerundial phrase

Proteins were co-localised **by using** confocal microscopy

prepositional phrase

Proteins were co-localised **by the use of** confocal microscopy

Proteins were co-localised **with the aid of** a confocal **microscope**

Compounds were **crystallised using** chloroform

ERROR *Syntax:* a participle **does not** define a verb

CORRECT by **replacing using** by a

preposition

Compounds were crystallised **from** chloroform

gerundial phrase

Compounds were crystallised **by using** chloroform

prepositional phrase

Compounds were crystallised **with the use of** chloroform

- Kinematic parameters were **determined using** a computer method
 ERROR *Syntax*: a participle **does not** define a verb
 CORRECT by **replacing using** by a
preposition
 Kinematic parameters were determined **with** a computerised method
gerundial phrase
 Kinematic parameters were determined **by using** a computerised method
prepositional phrase
 Kinematic parameters were determined **by means of** a computerised method
- Slides were **examined using** microscopy
 ERROR *Syntax*: a participle **does not** define a verb
 CORRECT by **replacing using** by a
preposition
 Slides were examined **by** microscopy
gerundial phrase
 Slides were examined **by using** microscopy
prepositional phrase
 Slides were examined **by the use of** microscopy
- Liquids were **filtered using** 90 g/m² filter paper
 ERROR *Syntax*: a participle **does not** define a verb
 CORRECT by **replacing using** by a
preposition
 Liquids were filtered **through** 90 g/m² filter paper
gerundial phrase
 Liquids were filtered **by using** 90 g/m² filter paper
prepositional phrase
 Liquids were filtered **with the use of** 90 g/m² filter paper
- Solutions were **heated using** a hot-plate
 ERROR *Syntax*: a participle **does not** define a verb
 CORRECT by **replacing using** by a
preposition
 Solutions were heated **on** a hot-plate
gerundial phrase
 Solutions were heated **by using** a hot-plate
prepositional phrase
 Solutions were heated **by the use of** a hot-plate
- Absorbance was **measured using** a spectrophotometer
 ERROR *Syntax*: a participle **does not** define a verb
 CORRECT by **replacing using** by a
preposition
 Absorbance was measured **in** a spectrophotometer
gerundial phrase
 Absorbance was measured **by using** a spectrophotometer
prepositional phrase
 Absorbance was measured **by the use of** a spectrophotometer
- Osmolality was **measured using** an osmometer
 ERROR *Syntax*: a participle **does not** define a verb
 CORRECT by **replacing using** by a
preposition
 Osmolality was measured **with** an osmometer
gerundial phrase
 Osmolality was measured **by using** an osmometer
prepositional phrase
 Osmolality was measured **by the use of** an osmometer
- pH was **measured using** a pH meter
 ERROR *Syntax*: a participle **does not** define a verb
 CORRECT by **replacing using** by a
preposition
 pH was measured **with** a pH meter
gerundial phrase
 pH was measured **by using** a pH meter
prepositional phrase
 pH was measured **by the use of** a pH meter
- Cell volume was **measured using** flow cytometry
 ERROR *Syntax*: a participle **does not** define a verb
 CORRECT by **replacing using** by a

preposition

Cell volume was measured **by** flow cytometry

gerundial phrase

Cell volume was measured **by using** flow cytometry

prepositional phrase

Cell volume was measured **with the aid of** flow cytometry

Monkeys were **observed using** binoculars

ERROR *Syntax:* a participle **does not** define a verb

CORRECT by **replacing using** by

preposition

Monkeys were observed **through** binoculars

gerundial phrase

Monkeys were observed **by using** binoculars

prepositional phrase

Monkeys were observed **with the aid of** binoculars

Spermatozoa were **removed using** a micropipette

ERROR *Syntax:* a participle **does not** define a verb

CORRECT by **replacing using** by a

preposition

Spermatozoa were removed **with** a micropipette

gerundial phrase

Spermatozoa were removed **by using** a micropipette

prepositional phrase

Spermatozoa were removed **with the aid of** a micropipette

Tissue fragments were **removed using** fine forceps

ERROR *Syntax:* a participle **does not** define a verb

CORRECT by **replacing using** by a

preposition

Tissue fragments were removed **with** fine forceps

gerundial phrase

Tissue fragments were removed **by using** fine forceps

prepositional phrase

Tissue fragments were removed **with the aid of** fine forceps

ALERT Check that **using** refers to a subject that **is capable of using something**

The protein docked with LPS **using** Hex 6.1 software

ERROR *Syntax:* **using** is a participle (verbal adjective) and the **protein** is the nearest noun it can complement

This gives the **unintended impression** that the **protein** performed docking to LPS by using the software

CORRECT [if the **software was used** to determine how the protein interacted with LPS] by

replacing using by a **prepositional phrase** and **using** a **passive verb**

The protein **was shown** to dock with LPS **by the use of** Hex 6.1 software

Using anti-androgens it has been shown that epididymal function is androgen-dependent

ERROR *Semantics:* **using** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **it** is the nearest noun it can complement

It is unclear what **it** refers to and therefore **what** is **using** anti-androgens

CORRECT by **replacing using** by a

prepositional phrase

The use of anti-androgens has shown that epididymal function is androgen-dependent

gerundial phrase

By **using** anti-androgens it has been shown that epididymal function is androgen-dependent

The location of the protein was determined by immune-detection techniques **using** a polyclonal antibody

ERROR *Semantics:* **using** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **techniques** is the nearest noun it can complement

This gives the **unintended impression** that the **techniques** were using a polyclonal antibody

CORRECT [if the antibodies **were used for** immune-detection] by

using an **adjectival clause**

The location of the protein was determined by immune-detection techniques **in which** a polyclonal antibody **was used**

using an **adjectival phrase**

The location of the protein was determined by immune-detection techniques **involving the use of** a polyclonal antibody

using a **defining (that) clause**

The location of the protein was determined by immune-detection techniques **that involved the use of** a polyclonal antibody

Structure-function studies **using** the recombinant protein showed that egg-binding did not involve carbohydrates

ERROR *Semantics:* **using** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **studies** is the nearest noun it can complement

This gives the **unintended impression** that the **studies** were using recombinant protein

CORRECT [if the recombinant protein **was used in** the structure-function studies] by

using an **adjectival clause**

Structure-function studies, **in which** the recombinant protein **was used**, showed that egg-binding did not involve carbohydrate

using an **adjectival phrase**

Structure-function studies, **involving the use of** the recombinant protein, showed that egg-binding did not involve carbohydrates

using a defining (that) clause

Structure-function studies **that involved the use of** the recombinant protein, showed that egg-binding did not involve carbohydrates

ERROR *Semantics:* **using** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **experiments** is the nearest noun it can complement
This gives the **unintended impression** that the **experiments** were using zona-intact eggs

CORRECT [if the **zona-intact eggs were used** to indicate fertilisation] by

using an adjectival clause

Experiments *in vitro*, **in which** zona-intact rat eggs **were used**, revealed that the polyclonal antibody blocked fertilisation

using an adjectival phrase

Experiments *in vitro*, **involving the use of** zona-intact rat eggs, revealed that the polyclonal antibody blocked fertilisation

using a defining (that) clause

Experiments *in vitro* **that involved the use of** zona-intact rat eggs, revealed that the polyclonal antibody blocked fertilisation

Using semen samples from healthy donors, non-apoptotic spermatozoa exhibited higher egg penetration rates than those of apoptotic spermatozoa

ERROR *Semantics:* **using** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **non-apoptotic spermatozoa** is the nearest noun it can complement
This gives the **unintended impression** that the **non-apoptotic spermatozoa** were using semen samples

CORRECT [if the semen samples **were used in** the study] by

rewriting the sentence

Non-apoptotic spermatozoa in semen **from healthy donors** exhibited higher egg penetration rates than those of apoptotic spermatozoa

See: By/by the use of, By using/using, Dangling participles, Defining/non-defining clauses

Usually

adverb as a matter of routine or common practice

Synonyms: customarily, normally, typically

See: Certainty/uncertainty, Customarily, Should/would, Will/would

Utilise

See: Use/utilise

Vague words

Imprecise words, often used unnecessarily, *e.g.*

affect, bulk, comparatively, done, effect, experienced, extremely, fairly, influence, instant, level, limited, major, majority, moment, much, proportion, quite, several, study, whatever

replace by more **precise** or **relevant** words (**or avoid**)

See: Overused words (also under individual entries)

Validate/verify

validate to check or demonstrate the factual correctness or truth of something on a sound or authoritative basis

verify to make sure or demonstrate that something is true, correct or justified

does not mean confirm, determine, examine, identify

ALERT Check that **verify** is the correct word to use

The sensitivity and specificity of the antisera were **verified** by Western blot analysis

ERROR *Semantics:* no true statement to be **verified** is given

CORRECT by **replacing verified** by **determined**

The sensitivity and specificity of the antisera were **determined** by Western blot analysis

There was a negative correlation between DFI and implantation rates after ICSI that was not **verified** after IVF

ERROR *Syntax:* no true statement to be **verified** is given

CORRECT by **replacing verified** by **confirmed**

There was a negative correlation between FI and implantation rates after ICSI that was not **confirmed** after IVF

See: Check/confirm/validate

Value

The numerical amount denoted by an algebraic **term**; a magnitude, quantity, or number

Overused vague word: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

ALERT Check if **value** can be omitted

Table 2 shows the melting temperature **values** of the samples

ERROR *Tautology:* a temperature **is a value**

CORRECT by **omitting value**

Table 2 shows the melting temperature of samples

After treatment the DFT index **value** was higher than that before
 ERROR *Pleonasm*: an index **is a value**
 CORRECT by **omitting value**
 After treatment the DFT **index** was higher than that before

See: Parameter/value, Quantity/value

Vapourisation

See: Evaporation/vapourisation

Variability

A measure of the dispersion of measured values

See: Dispersion/precision

Variable

See: Continuously/infinately variable, Parameter

Variation

See: Difference/variation

Variety in English text

text is easier to read when pronouns are used instead of nouns and synonyms are used instead of repeated words

See: Synonym/s (also under individual entries), Repetition to avoid

Variety is/are

is when the **variety itself** is the subject, use the **singular**
 Of culture media available the **variety is** enormous
are when what the **variety** refers to (a **plural** group) is the subject, use the **plural**
 Of sperm function tests a **variety are** available

Variety of... is/are

is when the **variety itself** is the subject, use the **singular**
 The **variety of** culture media available **is** enormous
are when what **variety of** refers to (a **plural** group) is the subject, use the **plural**
 A **variety of** sperm function **tests are** available

Various/varying

various different values, each of which is **defined** and **does not vary**
 The effect of **various** concentrations of quinine on sperm volume was measured
varying values that **are not constant** but change with time or conditions
 The **varying** concentrations of inositol in the medium were recorded throughout the culture

ALERT Check that **varying** is the **intended word**

Spermatozoa were incubated with **varying** concentrations of H₂O₂
Syntax: unless some mixing device were used the **concentrations added would be fixed**
 CORRECT by **replacing varying** by **various**
 Spermatozoa were incubated with **various** concentrations of H₂O₂

Vas deference/deferens

vas deferens is correct

Verbal

See: Oral/verbal/written

Verbatim (Latin)

In exactly the same words as originally used (including errors)
 The first paragraph in the Introduction was copied **verbatim** from Cooper (1991)

See: Sic

Verbiage/verbosity

verbiage unnecessary words
verbosity the use of verbiage

Both prevent the rapid acquisition of knowledge
avoid writing
 what does not provide information
 what is self-evident
 what has been written before (unless in a summary or for emphasis)

See: Style, Tautology/Verbiage (also under individual entries)

Verbs

Cases	Nominative	the subject case	for the doer of a verb	I gave Charlene John's book
	Accusative	the direct object case	for the direct object of the verb	I gave Charlene John's book
	Dative	the indirect object case	for the indirect object of the verb	I gave Charlene John's book
	Genitive	indicating possession	for the owner of something	I gave Charlene John's book
Forms	Finite	limited by person, tense, mood		I develop
	Non-finite	not limited (or restricted) by person, tense		
		Participles		developing cancers are dangerous
		Gerunds		developing cancers is dangerous
		Infinitives		to develop
Kinds	Verbs of doing			
	Transitive	the subject acts on the direct object		The technician fixed the microscope
	Intransitive	usually with no direct object of the action		The student slept during the lecture
			occasionally with a direct object	She dreamt a bad dream
	Prepositional verbs	link by the preposition to an indirect object		The student wrote to the lecturer
	Verbs of being (link verbs)			
	Intransitive verbs of incomplete predication			
		require a complement		He seems happy
	Helping verbs (auxiliary verbs)			
		for customs or habits, duty or obligation, emphasis, expectation, interrogatives, negatives, permission, tenses used with other		
		verbs		She would go to the seminar weekly
		participles		I have been the treasurer
		infinitives		She has to go now
Moods	Imperative	for commands, orders		Keep the bench sterile!
	Indicative	for statements, questions		I kept the bench sterile.
	Subjunctive	for conditions, ideas, suppositions		It would be surprising if he were to keep the bench sterile
	Conditional	for conditions		It would be surprising if he were to keep the bench sterile
Persons	First singular/plural	I/we		I keep the bench sterile
				We keep the bench sterile
	Second singular/plural	you/you		You keep the bench sterile
				You (all) keep the bench sterile
	Third person singular/plural	he, she, it, one/they		He/she/it/one keeps the bench sterile
				They keep the bench sterile
Tenses	Future	simple	I shall keep the bench sterile	
		perfect	I shall have kept the bench sterile	
	Present	simple	I keep the bench sterile	
		perfect	I have kept the bench sterile	
	Past	simple	I kept the bench sterile	
		perfect	I had kept the bench sterile	
Voices	Active	the subject performs the action of the verb		I kept the bench sterile
	Passive	the subject suffers the action of the verb		The bench was kept sterile
	Emphatic	the subject emphasised by an auxiliary verb		I do keep the bench sterile

See: Accusative case, Active/passive verbs, Auxiliary verbs, Conditional/Subjunctive Moods, Dative case, Finite/non-finite verbs, Genitive case, Gerund/participle, Indefinite third person, Indicative Mood, Intransitive verbs of incomplete predication, Intransitive/transitive verbs, Inversion of verbs, Nominative case, Person and number of verb, Tenses of verbs

Verses/versus

verses	plural of verse	
		writing arranged with a metrical rhythm, typically having a rhyme
		a group of lines that form a unit in a poem or song
versus	as opposed to, in contrast to	
		write versus in full in text
		abbreviate to vs elsewhere (Table, Figure legends)

See: Than/versus

Verify

See: Validate/verify

Very

adjective	identical, describing a noun
	They used the very programme we used
adverb	identical, describing an adjective

The second experiment involved the **very same** samples as the first

Overused as adverb: often used unnecessarily, **avoid**

Very ... as/that

as when **very** is used as an **adverb** defining an **adjective**
They used the **very same** method **as** we did

that when **very** is used as an **adjective** defining a **noun**
They used the **very method that** we did

See: Exact ... as/that, Same ... as/that

Via (Latin)

See: By way of/via

Vice versa (Latin)

The opposite of what has been stated; with the main items in the preceding statement the other way round

They will first study **physiology** and then **biochemistry** or **vice versa** (i.e. or first **biochemistry** then **physiology**)
Shall I come to **your** office or **vice versa**? (i.e. or will **you** come to **my** office?)

Overused words: often used incorrectly and inappropriately

ALERT Check that **vice versa** is used appropriately

Over-expression of HSP70 increases the tumorigenicity of cancer cells, and **vice versa**
ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that **over-expression of tumorigenicity can increase** HSP-70
CORRECT [if there is an **association between** tumorigenicity and HSP70 gene expression] by **rewriting the sentence** and **being explicit**
Over-expression of HSP70 increases the tumorigenicity of cancer cells, and cancer cells express high levels of HSP70

Viewpoint

See: Perspective/viewpoint

Vis-à-vis (French)

Synonyms: about, in relation to, towards

Visiting

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check whether **visiting** is used as a **gerund** or a **participle**

It was due to me **visiting** the Primate Centre that I realized what research I wanted to do
ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that the realization **was due to me**
CORRECT [if the **visit** to the Centre made me realise what I wanted to do] by using the genitive and a gerund
It was due to **my visiting** the Primate Centre that I realized what research I wanted to do

See: Gerund/participle

Vital

See: Important/vital

Viz. (Latin)

See: sc./viz.

Volume is/are

is when the volume is added as a **single** aliquot (considered **en masse**), use the **singular**
5 μ l **was** added
which can be considered shortened by ellipsis of
A **total** of 5 μ l **was** added
[a total of] elided
An **aliquot** of 5 μ l **was** added
[an aliquot of] elided

are when the volume is added intermittently, use the **plural**
5 μ l **were** added in 1- μ l aliquots

See: Aliquant/aliquot, Ellipsis, Total of ... is/are

Wait for/upon

wait for someone
I waited **for** the technician to come
something
I waited **for** the cells to reach confluence

wait upon someone

At the end-of-term dinner the lecturers waited **upon** the students

Walking

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check whether **walking** is used as a **gerund** or a **participle**

He did not like them **walking** along the road to the seminar
ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that he **did not like them**
CORRECT [if the fact they had **to walk along the road** was disliked] by using the **gerund**

He did not like **their walking** along the road to the seminar

See: Gerund/participle

Was

See: Has been/is/was

Was found to be

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **was**

Was the case

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **was true**

Washing

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check that **washing** refers to the **intended word**

After **washing**, the spermatozoa were resuspended to 5×10^6 /ml
ERROR *Syntax*: **washing** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **spermatozoa** is the nearest noun it can complement
 This gives the **unintended impression** that the **spermatozoa** were doing the washing
CORRECT [if the washing was done by a **technician**] by using the **passive**

After the spermatozoa **were washed**, they were resuspended in BWW

After **being washed**, the spermatozoa were resuspended in BWW

using a **noun**

After several **washes**, the spermatozoa were resuspended in BWW

adding a **human element** and a **pronoun**

After I washed the spermatozoa, **they** were resuspended in BWW

Washing the cells, the **student** brought me the results
ERROR *Syntax*: **washing** is a participle (verbal adjective) and **student** is the nearest noun it can complement
 This gives the **unintended impression** that the **student** was washing the cells
CORRECT [if I **was** washing the cells when the student brought me the results] by being **more specific**

As **I was** washing the cells, the student brought me the results

See: Dangling participles

Way

See: Far/way

We/us

we nominative subject) case
 as subject

where **we** would be used on its own

We go to work

we is used with plural subjects

We, you and they go to work

us accusative (object) case
 as object

where **us** would be used on its own

The prize was given to **us**

us is used with plural subjects

The prizes were given to **us**, you and them

for politeness, put your friends first when mentioned with others (included in **we** and **us**)

See: Complement/predicate, I/me, We/us

We wish to thank

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **we thank**

Week-old/weeks old

week-old attributive adjective
Fifteen six-**week-old** animals were used

weeks old predicative adjective
The animals used were six **weeks old**

See: Dash/hyphen/minus; Day-old/days old

Week's time

Pleonasm: as **week** implies time, **time** is *superfluous*, use **week**

Weight

See: Heavy/weight

Weight is/are

was when the weight is added as a **single** aliquot (considered *en masse*), use the *singular*
5 mg **was** added
which can be considered shortened by ellipsis of
A **total** of 5 mg **was** added
[a total of] elided
An **aliquot** of 5 mg **was** added
[an aliquot of] elided

were when the weight is added intermittently, use the *plural*
5 mg **were** added in 1 mg portions

See: Aliquant/aliquot, Ellipsis, Total of ... is/are

Well

adverb in a good or satisfactory way
He wrote his first review quite **well**
in a thorough manner
Add the protein slowly and mix **well**
very probably in all likelihood
Epithelial sphere formation in culture may **well** be the first sign of stem cell activation

adjective in good health, free or recovered from illness
After the operation he did not feel **well**
advisable, sensible
It would be **well** to find out what this job entails

ALERT Check **which meaning of well is intended**

That interrupting cellular homeostasis induces cancers has been **well** reviewed

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that
the topic was reviewed **competently**
or

the topic has been reviewed **many times**

CORRECT [if the former is meant] by

replacing **well** by **thoroughly**

That interrupting cellular homeostasis induces cancers has been **thoroughly** reviewed

CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by

replacing **well** by **often**

That interrupting cellular homeostasis induces cancers It has been **often** reviewed

What

that which, the thing that
Do **what** you like

See: How/what/why

What/which

what used in a question answered by providing **vague** information

At **what** time is the exam?

which used in a question answered by a providing **precise** information

On **which** day will the seminar be?

What ... is/are

is when **what** means something **singular**, use the *singular*
that which

What we need **is** more grant money

[**Our need is** more grant money]

the thing that

What surprises me **is** the cost of transport

[**A cause of surprise** to me **is** the cost of transport]

are when **what** means something **plural**, use the **plural**
those which
The manuscript omitted **what seem** to be two of the more important results
[Two of the more important **results seem** to be omitted]

ALERT Check with **what** that the subject **agrees in number** with the verb

What the laboratory needs **are** more centrifuges
ERROR *Syntax*: the word **centrifuges** is **plural** but the **subject** of the sentence (**what** meaning **the thing that, that which**) is **singular**
CORRECT by using the **singular**
What the laboratory needs **is** more centrifuges

See: Plural/singular

What ever/whatever

whatever is correct
what, whatsoever
adds emphasis to **what**
Do **whatever** you like
any
On **whatever** occasion

See: And whatever

What's more

Style: verbosity, unnecessary, **avoid**

Whatsoever

Synonyms: what, whatever

When

at any or every time that, whenever, whensoever
He is always out **when** I call

When/whereupon

when at any or every time that, whenever, whensoever
whereupon immediately after which

ALERT Check **which meaning** of **when** is **intended**

The calcium ionophore was added **when** hyperactivated motility occurred
ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **this implies** that
the ionophore was added **after** hyperactivated motility was observed
or
hyperactivated motility occurred **after** the ionophore was added
CORRECT [it the former is meant] by
replacing when by after
The calcium ionophore was added **after** hyperactivated motility was **first** observed
CORRECT [if the latter is meant] by
replacing when by whereupon
The calcium ionophore was added **whereupon** hyperactivated motility occurred

See: As/when ... by, If/when, When, When ever/whenever, Whensoever

When compared with

See: As/when compared with

When ever/whenever

whenever is correct
at whatever time, on whatever occasion, every time that, when, whensoever
adds emphasis to **ever**
He is always out **whenever** I call

See: If/when

Whence

See: Hence/whence

Whensoever

Synonyms: when, whenever

Where ever/wherever

where ever is correct
used to add emphasis to **ever**

He will go **where ever** there is grant money

Whereas/while

whereas and, although, on the other hand, contrasting actions
 Nero fiddled **whereas** I studied epididymal function

while during the time that, temporal relationships
 Nero fiddled **while** Rome burned

although, despite
While his persistence is admirable, he can be stubborn and refuse to accept advice

Whereas ... does not mean

The conjunction **whereas does not** introduce a noun clause

ALERT Ensure that a **whereas-clause does not** introduce a noun clause

Whereas the cells were stained with antibody **does not mean** that the protein is on the membrane

ERROR *Syntax*: the conjunction **whereas cannot** introduce a noun clause, so the verb **does not mean** has **no subject**

CORRECT by
 using a **conjunctive phrase**
The fact that the cells were stained with antibody **does not mean** that the protein is on the membrane
 subsequently **shortening** by **ellipsis** of [the fact]

That the cells were stained with antibody **does not mean** that the protein is on the membrane

adding a **demonstrative pronoun**
Whereas the cells were stained with antibody **that does not mean** that the protein is on the membrane

rewriting **the sentence** and replacing **does not mean** by a **human element**
I do not think, although the cells were stained with antibody, that the protein is on the membrane
One should not think, although the cells were stained with antibody, that the protein is on the membrane

Whereby

because of which, by which
 He developed a program **whereby** the data directly appeared in a Youden plot

Whereupon

See: When/whereupon

Which

which may be meant to refer to

the **immediate** antecedent
 He centrifuged the **solution, which** was turbid
 (the **solution** was turbid)

a more **distant** antecedent
Seeds were placed in a Petri dish **which** then softened in water
 (the **seeds** [not Petri dish] softened in water)

an entire statement
The membership fee has gone up again, which is intolerable
 (The **fact that the membership fee has gone up again** is intolerable)

ALERT Check that **which** refers to the **intended noun**

Seeds were placed in a Petri dish **which** then softened in water

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **it is unclear** if the seeds or the Petri dish softened in water

CORRECT [if the **seeds** softened in water] by
 using a **conjunction** after a **comma** with a **plural pronoun**
 Seeds were placed in a Petri dish, **and they** then softened in water

using an **adjectival phrase**
 The seeds, **placed in a Petri dish**, then softened in water

inverting the sentence so the **pronoun** is close to the **noun** it refers to
 The Petri dish contained the **seeds, which** then softened in water

See: And which, That/which/who

Which of the two ... is/are

is is correct
 as **which of the two** means **which one of the two**, use the **singular**
 It is difficult to say **which of the two** manuscripts **is** the better

While

Synonyms: although, whilst
 See: Whereas/while

While/whilst

each is correct; whilst is less common

Who

what or which person

See: And who, But who, That/which/who, Who/who ever/whoever, Who/whom**Who/who ever/whoever***who* what or which personNo matter **who** said that, it was a mistake*whoever* adds emphasis to *who*No matter **whoever** said that, it was a mistake*who ever* used to add emphasis in interrogatives**Who ever** gave you that idea?**Who/whom***who* relative pronoun, nominative (subject) caseI gave it to the man **who** has a book

Interrogative pronoun, nominative (subject) case

Who gave the book to the man?*whom* relative pronoun, accusative (object) caseThe man **to whom** I gave a book**To whom** it may concern

Interrogative pronoun, accusative (object) case

To **whom** did you give the book?**Whom** did you give the book to?Often confused, especially when a **clause** separates the subject or object from its verbI congratulated the student to **whom I was sure** the prize was givenI gave it to the student **who I was sure** was the author**Who** and **whom** can be **distinguished** by applying the following sequential procedures**separating** the clause by commasI congratulated the student to **who, I was sure**, the prize was givenI gave it to the student **whom, I was sure**, was the author**removing** the clauseI congratulated the student to **who** the prize was givenI gave it to the student **whom** was the author**checking** whether **who** (nominative) is the subject of the verb or **whom** (accusative) is the object of the verb**who** is **nominative** but used here as the indirect **object** of the verb **given****whom** is **accusative** but used here as the **subject** of the verb **was**if necessary, **changing who** for **whom** or *vice versa*I congratulated the student to **whom** the prize was givenI gave it to the student **who** was the author**replacing** the omitted wordsI congratulated the student to **whom I was sure** the prize was givenI gave it to the student **who I was sure** was the author**ALERT** Check if **who** or **whom** is correct when the **subject** or **object** is separated from its verb by a **clause****Who** do you think you are talking to?ERROR *Syntax:* **who** is **nominative** (subject case) but used here as the **object** (accusative case) of the verb **talking to**CORRECT by **replacing who** by **whom****Whom** do you think you are talking to?(To **whom** do you think you are talking?)**Whom** do they think we are?ERROR *Syntax:* **whom** is **accusative** (object case) but used here as the **complement** (nominative case) of the verb **to be**CORRECT by **replacing whom** by **who****Who** do they think we are?**Whoever/whomever***whoever* relative pronoun, nominative (subject) caseused for emphasis instead of **who** (**anyone who**, the **one who**)I dedicate this thesis to **whoever** discovered the cytoplasmic droplet*whomever* relative pronoun, accusative (object) caseused for emphasis instead of whom (**anyone whom**, the **one whom**)To **whomever** it may concern*See:* Who/whom**Whole number***Synonyms:* cardinal number, integer*See:* Number/numeral, Numbers**Wholly***See:* Completely/wholly

Who's/whose

- who's* relative pronoun, nominative (subject) case
short for **who is**
Who's there?
who has
Who's taken the photo?
- whose* relative pronoun
genitive case
Whose book is this?
(To **whom** does the book belong?)

See: Who/whom

Whose/of which

- whose* for people
The man **whose** vasa deferentia were sectioned
for animals
The rabbit **whose** vasa efferentia were ligated
for things
The book **whose** cover was torn
- of which* for animals
The rabbit, the vasa efferentia **of which** were ligated
for things
The book, the cover **of which** was torn

See: Pronouns

Why

See: How/what/why

Will

See: Shall/will, Will/would

Will/would

- will* auxiliary verb (with an **infinitive without** the infinitive marker **to**)
in the future tense
indicative mood
second, third person singular/plural
He will do it tomorrow
for emphasis
first person singular/plural
I will do it today, tomorrow
- would* an auxiliary verb (with an **infinitive without** the infinitive marker **to**)
indicative mood
present tense
second/third person, singular/plural
He would appreciate receiving a copy of your manuscript
past tense of will
second/third person, singular/plural
Yesterday you said that **you would write** today
to be determined to
all persons, singular/plural
Despite being warned, **she would go**
to do as a habit
all persons, singular/plural
Every day **he would perform** Tai Qi before going to the lab
for reporting future tenses in the second, third person singular/plural
future-in-the-past e.g. "I shall arrive later" reported as
You said **you would arrive** later
future perfect-in-the-past e.g. "We shall have finished by the weekend" reported as
They said that **they would have finished** by the weekend
in the [Main, consequence, results] clause of **conditional sentences** that **may not be true**
conditional mood
all persons, singular/plural
If it were possible [I **would attend**]

See: Moods of a verb, Should/would, Usually, Used to/would

Winning

A **participle** (verbal adjective) or **gerund** (verbal noun)

ALERT Check whether **winning** is used as a **gerund** or a **participle**

The professor told his students there was every chance of **them winning** the poster prize
 ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that **there was a chance of them**
 CORRECT [if there was a chance for them **to win**] by
 using the **genitive** and a **gerund**
 The professor told his researchers there was every chance of **their winning** the poster prize

See: Gerund/participle

With

having or possessing something

The patients **with** infertility are treated on Tuesdays and Thursdays

indicating the instrument used to perform an action

The infertile patients with infections were treated **with** antibiotics

ALERT Ensure that the use of **with does not** introduce confusion

We routinely treat patients **with** a positive semen culture **with** antibiotics

ERROR *Semantics*: ambiguous, **with** is used twice with different meanings; the reader may believe that semen culture is a treatment

CORRECT [if the patients were treated **with antibiotics**] by

replacing the first **with** by **who have**

We routinely treat patients **who have** a positive semen culture **with** antibiotics

replacing the first **with** by **presenting with**

We routinely treat patients **presenting with** a positive semen culture **with** antibiotics

inverting the order of the **with-phrases** and adding a **demonstrative pronoun**

We routinely treat **with** antibiotics **those** patients **with** a positive semen culture

We routinely treat **with** antibiotics **those** patients **presenting with** a positive semen culture

It is crucial to treat patients **with** positive bacterial cultures to reduce the contamination of embryos

ERROR *Semantics*: this gives the **unintended impression** that positive **bacterial cultures are used to reduce** contamination

CORRECT [if the bacterial cultures were used **to characterise the patients**] by

replacing **with** by **who have** and adding the **treatment used** to reduce the contamination

It is crucial to treat patients **who have** positive bacterial cultures **with antibiotics** to reduce the contamination of embryos

replacing **with** by **presenting with** and adding the **treatment used** to reduce the contamination

It is crucial to treat patients **presenting with** positive bacterial cultures **with antibiotics** to reduce the contamination of embryos

inverting the order of the **current with-phrases** and adding a **demonstrative pronoun**

It is crucial to treat **with antibiotics** patients **who have** positive bacterial cultures, to reduce the contamination of embryos

It is crucial to treat **with antibiotics** patients **presenting with** positive bacterial cultures, to reduce the contamination of embryos

See: And/with, By/the use of, By using/using

With a view to

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **to**

With effect from

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **from**

With reference/regard/respect to

with reference to

With reference to your letter of June 16th, we have requested an appointment with the Dean

with regard to

With regard to the publication costs, the lower rate will be charged

with respect to

The groups were similar **with respect to** age and abstinence time

equivalent prepositional phrases

See: As regards/as regards to, Concerning, In regard to/respect of, Regarding/with regard to, With reference to, With regard to, With respect to

With reference to

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **about** or **concerning (or avoid)**

See: With reference/regard/respect to

With regard to

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **about, concerning, in, to**

See: With reference/regard/respect to

With respect to

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **about, concerning, for**

See: With reference/regard/respect to

With the possible exception of

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **except possibly**

With the result that

Style: verbosity, can be shortened, replace by **so that**

See: And so/so/so that

With the use of

See: By/by the use of, By using/using

Wittily

Adverb used to describe

verbs or verbal phrases

placed after the **verb**

She **answered** his probing questions **wittily**

[The **manner** in which she replied (with jokes) is described]

whole clauses

placed at the **beginning** of the sentence

Wittily, she answered his probing questions

[**It was clever** of her to answer his probing questions]

Would

auxiliary verb followed by an **infinitive without** the infinitive marker **to**

We would **succeed**

ALERT Check that the tense of only one verb (**either** the auxiliary **or** main) is in the past

I would have liked to have seen it

ERROR *Syntax*: both the **auxiliary** verb and **infinitive** are in the perfect tense **but only one needs to be**

CORRECT by **using** the **perfect tense** of the

infinitive

I would like **to have seen** it

auxiliary verb

I **would have liked** to see it

See: Seemed, Should/would, Will/would, Used to/would

Words

See: Numbers/words/figures

Work/works

work a task or tasks to be undertaken

work is a **singular** noun that has no plural

Much **work remains** to be done research

for a **plural** use, use a **partitive** construction

Several **pieces of work were** described in this report

works all literary or musical pieces by a particular person regarded collectively:

The **works** of Shakespeare were on his shelves

Worse

See: Bad/worse

Worth while/worthwhile

worth while is correct

Worth while/worth-while

worth while predicative adjective

deserving, worth being done

The experiments are **worth while**

worth-while attributive adjective

deserving, worth being done

Only the **worth-while** experiments will be funded

Write to/about

to someone I wrote **to** the editor of J Fruitless Research

about something I wrote **about** my new experiments

Written

See: Oral/verbal/written

Wrong/wrongly

wrong adjective incorrect

He did the **wrong** thing

wrongly adverb incorrectly

The figures are **wrongly** calculated

Year

People are born in their **first year** of life
but are **less than one** year old
after their **first** birthday they have
completed their **first** year
are **one year old**
reached their **second** year
are **in** their **second** year

Year-old/years old

year-old attributive adjective
A ten-**year-old** boy
years old predicative adjective
The boy was ten **years old**

ALERT Check that **years is not** used with age

The average age of the men in the study was 45.9 **years old**

ERROR *Tautology*: **age** implies years old

CORRECT by

omitting old

The average age of the men in the study was 45.9 **years**

retaining years old and **rewriting the sentence**

The men in the study were on average 45.9 **years old**

ALERT Check whether **hyphens** are needed

Until then the semen from only **19 year-old** Danish men had been investigated

ERROR *Semantics*: the **19 men** must have been **more than** one year old

CORRECT by **adding a hyphen**

Until then the semen from only **19-year-old** Danish men had been investigated

See: Adjectives, Dash/hyphen/minus, Day-old/days old

Year's time

Pleonasm: as **year** implies time, **time** is *superfluous*, use **year**

Yes

See: No/yes in agreements

Yet

adverb by now or then, up until the present or a specified or implied time
I have **yet** to do the immuno-precipitation
from now until the future for a specified length of time
I hope to continue to work on the epididymis for some time **yet**
still, even (used to emphasise increase or repetition)
He's on the seventh draft and **yet** he is still working on it
conjunction but at the same time, but nevertheless
The referees' comments were unwelcome **yet** their advice improved the paper

You, he and I/me

See: He, you and I/me

You, they and we/us

See: They, you and we/us

You and me/I

me when **me** would be used on its own (as object)
The award was given to **me**
me is used with plural subjects
The award was given to **you and me**
I when **I** would be used on its own (as subject)
I will attend the seminar
I is used with plural subjects
You and I will attend the seminar

Young

See: Age/old/young

Yours faithfully/sincerely

Yours faithfully formal you may not know the person

		begins	Dear Sir/Dear Madam
		signed with	title Dr XYZ
<i>Yours sincerely</i>	less formal	you know the person	
		begins	Dear Mr/Ms/Mrs XYZ
		signed with	a given name

Zona/zonae (Latin)*zona* singularEach egg has a surrounding **zona** pellucida*zonae* pluralThe **zonae** pellucidae from several eggs were bisected for the hemi-**zona** test

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