Editing and Proofreading 101

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Editing vs Proofreading

- **Edit:** to prepare a document for publication by altering, adapting, and refining it (often substantive changes)

- **Proofread:** to read and mark corrections in a document (usually minor changes)
Commonly Asked Questions

• What’s a style guide?
• What’s the correct format for citations in reference lists?
• What is an n-dash?
• What is the difference between an n-dash and an m-dash?
• How do I use a semicolon? A colon?
Style Guides: The Editor’s Bible

- Style guides provide a common set of rules
- Commonly used style guides include American Medical Association (AMA), American Psychological Association (APA), Associated Press (AP), and Chicago Manual of Style (CMS)
  - ASA educational publications follow a slightly modified AMA style
- AMA style: 1,000+ pages condensed to 3 bullets
  - No periods in abbreviations
    - eg
    - ie
    - MD
  - Use numerals for numbers
    - EXCEPTION: spell out when used to start a sentence
  - Use serial comma (comma before the conjunction that precedes the last term)

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Correct Format for a Reference

• For ASA publications, references should follow *AMA Manual of Style*. The following is an example of a reference for a chapter of a book:

• The following is an example of a journal article reference:

• How to list various numbers of authors within a reference:
  – 1 author: Brown TF.
  – 2 authors: Green JM, Black LB III.
  – 6 authors: Brown TF, Green JM, Black LB III, White GA, Gray CW, Gold NM.
  – More than 6 authors: Brown TF, Green JM, Black LB III, et al.
  – More than 6 authors and a group: Brown TF, Green JM, Black LB III, et al; Research Group for New Diabetes Drug that Passed FDA Approval.
  – 1 author and a group: Brown TF; Research Group for New Diabetes Drug that Passed FDA Approval.
Commonly Confused Punctuation Marks: Hyphens, N-dashes, and M-dashes

• Dashes emphasize and clarify a certain section of material within a sentence
  – Hyphen
    • Connects words, prefixes, and suffixes permanently or temporarily
      – Temporary compounds serving as adjectives: well-edited volume, placebo-controlled trial, low-density resolution, long-term therapy
      – Compounds formed with the prefixes all-, self-, and ex- whether they precede or follow the noun
Commonly Confused Punctuation Marks: Hyphens, N-dashes, and M-dashes

– When not to use hyphens

• Adverb ending in -ly is part of the compound modifier (eg, commonly used phrase)

• Prefixes not joined by hyphens except when they precede a proper noun, a capitalized word, or an abbreviation: ante-, anti-, bi-, co-, contra-, counter-, de-, extra-, infra-, inter-, intra-, micro-, mid-, multi-, non-, over-, pre-, post-, pro-, pseudo-, re-, semi-, sub-, super-, supra-, trans-, tri-, ultra-, un-, under-

• Suffixes are joined without a hyphen: -hood, -less, -like, -wise

• Exceptions apply to prefixes and suffixes if clarity is at stake (eg, co-opt)
Commonly Confused Punctuation Marks: Hyphens, N-dashes, and M-dashes

– N-dash
  - Longer than a hyphen, half the size of an m-dash: –
  - Shows relational distinction in hyphenated or compound words and phrases
    - post–World War I
    - physician-lawyer–directed section
    - multiple sclerosis–like symptoms
    - non–English-language journals
Commonly Confused Punctuation Marks: Hyphens, N-dashes, and M-dashes

– M-dash
  • Equivalent in size to 2 hyphens: —
  • Indicates a marked or pronounced interruption or break in thought; provides more emphasis of separation than a comma or colon
    – All of these factors—age, severity of symptoms, psychic preparation, and choice of anesthetic agent—determine the patient's reaction.
  • Separates a referent from a pronoun that is the subject of an ending clause
    – Faulkner, Hemingway, and Twain—these were the authors he tried to emulate.
Semicolons vs Colons

• Semicolon
  – Represents a more definite break in thought than commas
  – Generally used to separate 2 independent clauses, especially if 1 of the clauses has internal punctuation or the clauses are long:
    • The conditions of 52% of the patients improved greatly; 4% of the patients withdrew from the study.
    • The patient's fever had subsided; however, his condition was still critical.
  – Used to separate a series of items when the series items also contain commas
Semicolons vs Colons

• Colons
  – Indicates a decided pause or break in thought, separates 2 main clauses in which the second clause amplifies or explains the first
  – Think of it as an “introductory” punctuation mark
    • Introduces a formal or extended quotation
    • Use after thus, as follows, the following when these phrase are part of a complete sentence:
      – Mary’s mother asked her to get the following items from the store: milk, eggs, cookies.
Four Points to Keep in Mind

1. Avoid providing incorrect information
2. Avoid misspelling
3. Avoid convoluted paragraph and sentence structure
4. Correct punctuation is key
Closing Thoughts

• Typos can happen to the best of us: always reread your work
• If the same material is repeated in a document (eg, physicians’ names appear in committee listing and in disclosures list, abbreviations used throughout), cross-check the occurrences to ensure consistency