

## Spot the Errors



This handout shows some common errors to look for when you edit your work. If you find a guideline that doesn't agree with what's presented here, that's okay. Make a choice and stay consistent.

## Easily Confused Words

**breath** (noun): She had a hard time catching her breath.

**breathe** (verb): She had to breathe through her mouth.

**it's** (contraction for it is or it has): It's time for the Zoom meeting to begin.

**its** (possessive determiner which we use when referring to things or animals): Organic fruit is known for its great taste.

**let's** (contraction for let us): Let's host a workshop for our clients this Thursday.

**lets** (verb:): The practitioner lets her clients contact her via email.

**loose** (an adjective or describing word used for something that doesn't fit tightly): She noticed that her jeans were loose since implementing the new eating plan.

**lose** (verb meaning "to be deprived of or forget something"): The practitioner didn't want to lose the attention of the workshop attendees. (A tip to help you remember: with lose, you lose the second "o.")

**than** (conjunction mainly used in comparisons): I hesitated to say that my breakfast was better than hers.

**then** (mainly an adverb): My client woke up early and exercised; then she had her breakfast.  
Helpful tip: Than has no one-word synonym. Then has many synonyms.

**their's**: This is wrong. It should be spelled **theirs**.

### IN CASE YOU'RE WONDERING

Synonym stands for a word or phrase that means exactly or nearly the same as another word or phrase.

## Plurals of Abbreviations

Plurals of abbreviations are formed by adding an *s*. Modern usage no longer places an apostrophe before the *s* unless it's needed to prevent misreading.

Examples: BMs, PDFs, 4 P's (apostrophe would be fine here)

## Choose the Correct Homophone

What is a homophone? One of two or more words having the same pronunciation but different meanings, origins and usually spellings

Some examples:

**bear, bare**

Bear with me.

**baited, bated**

bated breath

**complementary, complimentary**

complimentary gut program

**mucous (noun), mucus (adjective)**

The mucous in her throat caused her to cough. The practitioner talked about the gut mucus lining.

**sight, site**

She will have some good info on her site.

**to** (infinitive of verbs, preposition, adverb), **two** (number), **too** (adverb meaning also or more than is needed or wanted)

The practitioner wasn't sure what **to** do with the **two** food journals because she was **too** tired to think.

**their** (possessive form of they), **there** (often about location; the one to use as the first word in sentences that have the subject after the verb; one used with the verb be at the beginning of sentences and questions), **they're** (contraction for they are)

The practitioners ate their lunch over there by the meeting room. They're planning to go to the meeting room later for their afternoon session.

There are six clients signed up for the workshop.

**yolk, yoke**

I told my client that it was fine to eat the egg yolk.

## Watch Out for These

Correct	Incorrect
broccoli	broccoli
calendar	calender (unless you're talking about a machine)
chief	cheif
dessert (if you're talking about food)	desert
dairy (when you're referring to milk)	diary
definite	definate
digestive tract	digestive track
endometriosis	endometreosis
February	Febuary
forty	fourty
hygiene	hygeine
messiness	messyness
naturopath	naturalpath
not supposed to	not suppose to
one-on-one	one-on-on
PowerPoint	Power point
predictor	predicator
quiet (meaning softly)	quite
separate	seperate
vacuum	vaccum
weird	wierd
Wednesday	Wenesday
YouTube	You tube, You Tube

### IN CASE YOU'RE WONDERING

Incorrect: \$35 dollars

Correct: \$35

Correct: 35 dollars

## Etc., i.e., e.g.

### etc.

Et cetera and its more common abbreviation, etc., are used to show that a list of at least two items is incomplete.

Since the expressions “for example” and “such as” already indicate that a list is incomplete, et cetera and etc. should not be used at the end of a list introduced by either of these expressions.

**Incorrect:** She eats locally grown fruit such as apples or strawberries, etc.

**Correct:** She eats locally grown fruit, such as apples or strawberries.

**Correct:** She eats locally grown fruit: apples, strawberries, etc.

A comma is used before et cetera and its abbreviation, etc. It should be followed by a comma only if required by the surrounding text.

The abbreviation etc. always ends with a period, regardless of any added punctuation that may follow.

**Example:** Did you know that she likes fruit: apples, pears, peaches, etc.?

If etc. ends a sentence that takes a period, only one period is used.

**Example:** She likes apples, strawberries, blueberries, etc.

Don’t use the word “and” before etc.

Writers often confuse the Latin abbreviations *e.g.* and *i.e.* The guidelines below will help you to use these abbreviations correctly.

### e.g.

The Latin abbreviation *e.g.* (short for *exempli gratia*) means “for the sake of example,” or simply “for example.” It is followed by a partial list of examples.

**Correct:** Please eat some fibrous vegetables, e.g., carrots, cauliflower.

In a list of examples, avoid using *e.g.* (or *for example* or *including*) in the same sentence with *etc.*, since *etc.* would be redundant.

**Redundant:** The practitioner recommended taking several supplements, e.g., Vitamin C, probiotics, schizandra, etc.

**Correct:** The practitioner recommended taking several supplements, e.g., Vitamin C, probiotics and schizandra.

### i.e.

The Latin abbreviation *i.e.* (short for *id est*) means *that is* or *that is to say* and introduces a further explanation or paraphrase.

If you can substitute “that is,” “in other words” or “namely,” *i.e.* is correct.

Carla looked at her home—i.e., [or that is to say,] her grandparents’ house—with nostalgia.

These abbreviations are written in lower case, in roman (regular) type; they are **not** italicized.

Both abbreviations contain two periods (one after each letter):

e.g. (*not* eg.) and i.e. (*not* ie.)

When these abbreviations are not in parentheses, use a comma (or another mark of punctuation, such as a dash) **before** them.

**Example:** There are several foods that are good for the gut: e.g., vegetables, beans, and whole grains.

A comma is optional **after** these abbreviations. (Use of a comma is American style; omission of the comma is British style.)

## Either Is Okay

among More common and preferred	amongst
binging	bingeing
doughnut more common	donut
dreamed more common	dreamt
focused Highly preferred	focussed
homepage I saw this as one word and as two words. The dictionary seemed to favour two words.	home page More popular on Google Books Ngram Viewer <a href="https://books.google.com/ngrams/">https://books.google.com/ngrams/</a>
mosquitos	mosquitoes

What does the Ngram Viewer do?

When you enter phrases into the [Google Books Ngram Viewer](https://books.google.com/ngrams/), it displays a graph showing how those phrases have occurred in a corpus of books over the selected years. It has now been updated with fresh data through 2019.

## One Word or Two

<p><b>altogether</b> adverb (completely, entirely; on the whole, considering everything; all included) These technological problems are altogether frustrating.</p>	<p><b>all together</b> adjective phrase which means “together in a group” We found the practitioners all together in the kitchen.</p>
<p><b>already</b> adverb defined as by now or a specified time; before now or by now or the time in question If you are referring to an event that happened in the past, be sure to use already. The client had already filled out his food journal.</p>	<p><b>all ready</b> phrasal adjective that means collectively prepared; ready to go; all set; totally ready The practitioner asked the clients in the group if they were all ready to fill out their food journals.</p>
<p><b>alot</b> This isn’t a word</p>	<p><b>a lot</b></p>
<p><b>awhile</b> adverb that is never preceded by “for” for a short time The practitioner will be gone awhile.</p>	<p><b>for a while</b> set prepositional phrase The practitioner will be gone for a while.</p>
<p><b>apart</b> adverb meaning separated by a specified distance in time or space The client was apart from her partner for a few weeks and encountered some health challenges at that time.</p>	<p><b>a part</b> part means a piece or segment or something; part often appears in the phrase <i>a part</i> The practitioner’s talk will be a part of the summit.</p>
<p><b>backup</b> noun, sometimes an adjective If Plan A fails, don’t worry; we have a backup in place. Do you have a backup plan in place in case your laptop dies?</p>	<p><b>back up</b> phrasal verb True friends will always back up their friends in a fight. Back up all your files to the cloud so that you can access them from any device.</p>
<p><b>breakdown</b> noun Could you give me a breakdown of the costs of the workshop?</p>	<p><b>break down</b> phrasal verb Could you break down the costs of the workshop?</p>
<p><b>everyday</b> adjective means normal or ordinary I think it’s important to find the little things in everyday life that make you feel good.</p>	<p><b>every day</b> adjective and noun similar in meaning to each day You should make time every day to get some fresh air. Every day is a delight.</p>

<p><b>everyone</b> indefinite pronoun similar to everybody Are you just like everyone else?</p>	<p><b>every one</b> can usually be substituted with each one; Every one of those ideas is valuable.</p>
<p><b>follow-up</b> (not as common but also followup) noun, an appointment after the first adjective, intended as a response, a reaction, an evaluation You should schedule a follow-up appointment with your health coach.</p>	<p><b>follow up</b> phrasal verb to revisit it or to review it The practitioner should follow up with his attendees.</p>
<p><b>layout</b> noun The layout of the room was interesting.</p>	<p><b>lay out</b> phrasal verb Lay out the story development.</p>
<p><b>lineup</b> noun or adjective There is a long lineup of people waiting for the free book.</p>	<p><b>line up</b> verb form Please have your clients line up for their free book.</p>
<p><b>login</b> noun and adjective Your login is your username and password.</p>	<p><b>log in</b> phrasal verb Log in to your computer.</p>
<p><b>maybe</b> adverb means the same as perhaps Maybe you struggle to sleep at night.</p>	<p><b>may be</b> verb If you are here, you may be struggling with low energy.</p>
<p><b>opt-in</b> adjective Did you send the opt-in email?</p>	<p><b>opt in</b> phrasal verb She chose to opt in to phase 3 of the healthy liver program.</p>
<p><b>setup (or set-up)</b> noun or adjective Follow the setup instructions.</p>	<p><b>set up</b> phrasal verb You should set up the new computer since it will work better for your Zoom meeting.</p>
<p><b>workout</b> noun or adjective I told her that I tried to squeeze a workout in before our session.</p>	<p><b>work out</b> phrasal verb She felt it wouldn't be worth it if she didn't work out for a full hour.</p>