

REVISION INSTRUCTIONS IN WRITING COURSES TAUGHT BY MR. ROBERTS AT USF SARASOTA-MANATEE

Updated 24 January 2012 (This document is also linked in upper left corner of the course website.)

1. Open the graded MS Word document that I have sent to you.
2. Go to FILE menu and choose SAVE AS. Change the name of your document to Lastname_XXXX_Y_revised.doc, where XXXX refers to the course number (such as 3242, 3246, 3250, 3310, 3416, 4212, 4218, 4260, 4264, 4268, 4311, 4906, 4946, or 4931) and Y refers to the assignment number. The word "revised" is an essential part of the file name.
3. LEAVE ALL OF MY ORIGINAL MARKS AND COMMENTS IN PLACE. Write all revisions in **blue-colored text** next to or near the original items I have marked in red text and/or yellow highlighting. This will allow me to scan your work quickly to see whether you have understood and correctly addressed the error or comment in question.
4. IF A REFERENCE SUCH AS "VAGUE ANTECEDENT" or "CONCISENESS" IS UNCLEAR TO YOU, look it up in the online grammar (linked to course Welcome page) or do a simple Google web search. You will quickly find, in most cases, an explanation of the mistake along with information on how to fix it. If you are still confused, send me an email. **Do not guess at how to fix an error.** What you learn through this process can literally make or break your career in any profession -- take it seriously.
5. For all items in **GREEN** highlighting, consult the USAGE TIPS (at the end of the syllabus and these instructions) and correct the error accordingly.
6. You must address EVERYTHING that is marked in the document. If I have already made a change for you, acknowledge that with a simple "understood" or similar notation.
7. During the revision process, analyze your work to find a more effective way to word a given paragraph or statement, and then include the re-written version in blue text. Revising should involve more than just correcting errors -- it should lead to an improvement in your understanding and implementation of stronger content, style, supporting detail, and reader-useful message.
8. Send your document back to me **within one week (or by announced deadline if different from this)** of my returning it to you. **If you miss this deadline, your grade will be penalized as noted in the course syllabus.**

T. Roberts, Instructor / thorsdag@comcast.net

Follow the example shown below:

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 9, 2008

FROM: [student name withheld], Market Analyst Manager

TO: Damon Gilliam, Market Analyst

SUBJECT: Inappropriate Use of Company Equipment

COPIES TO: Anna Ross, Bureau Chief of Marketing
Larry Turner, Director for Human Resources

As advised in the staff meeting on April 19, 2007, the department began monitoring use of company equipment. I gave a thorough explanation and examples of inappropriate uses. This memorandum outlines specific examples of inappropriate usage of the company notebook computer, cellular phone, and digital camera. **<= in your opening paragraph, indicate that you are specifically addressing Damon Gilliam; otherwise it sounds generic, as if you are addressing an entire department**

As advised in the staff meeting on April 19, 2007, the department began monitoring use of company equipment. I gave a thorough explanation and examples of inappropriate uses. You signed an agreement regarding use of company equipment on April 20, 2007. This memorandum outlines specific examples of your inappropriate usage of the company notebook computer, cellular phone, and digital camera.

NOTEBOOK COMPUTER. The Division of Marketing issued notebook computers to all employees in September 2006. The notebook allows remote access to the company intranet while away from the office. As outlined in the employee handbook, personal banking, inappropriate e-mail, and access to personal e-mail accounts are not allowed.

During the month of May, the following **uses** violations by you were **sited**: <= check spelling!

During the month of May, the following violations by you were cited:

- **May 7, 2007** – e-mail forward containing sexual content to Brenda Miller
- **May 12, 2007** – access MySpace.com
- **May 18, 2007** – access MySpace.com and Hotmail.com
- **May 29, 2007** – access BankofAmerica.com
- **May 31, 2007** – e-mail forward containing sexual content to Brenda Miller, Juanita Golden, and Sarah Dash

Inappropriate e-mail can be offensive to co-workers and disruptive to the workplace. Please see Section 4.6 in the employee handbook **referencing** regarding sexual content in the workplace. **Please see section 4.6 in the employee handbook regarding sexual content in the workplace.** Failure to correct these actions will result in immediate termination. <= "reference" is a noun; the correct form here is the participle "referring to" ("regarding" is shorter and faster)

CELLULAR PHONE CHARGES. The company cellular phone is for business-related phone calls only. The billing cycle ending May 28, 2007, revealed \$75.37 in phone calls to your home phone number. There are nine other phone numbers that were frequently called during this period. Please review the attached cellular phone statement and highlight all personal calls. As I explained in the staff meeting, such activity is an added expense to the Division of Marketing. You must reimburse the company within 30 calendar days from the date of this memorandum. Please realize that continued use **of the company cellular phone** for personal calls will result in additional disciplinary action, leading to suspension without pay or possible termination. **Please realize that continued use of the company cellular phone for personal calls will result in additional disciplinary action, leading to suspension without pay or possible termination.**

DIGITAL CAMERA. The digital camera is for company use only, and was provided for representatives to document marketing promotions. On June 3, 2007, your digital camera memory card was given to Ashley Stewart. As Ashley was downloading pictures for inclusion in the annual report, she retrieved 38 pictures of your recent vacation. These included two nude photos of you and a female. Your actions caused humiliation and discomfort to another employee. The next documented misuse of the digital camera will result in suspension without pay and possible termination. <= you've demonstrated effective choice of detail here and throughout your reprimand -- you are wise not be vague about such matters **Thank you for the feedback.**

I will continue to monitor use of company equipment and I expect its use to consist of work-related assignments only. If you have any questions on acceptable usage, please call me immediately.

We will meet again on July 10, 2007 to discuss your improvement. I value you as an employee and share commitment to your success as a market analyst within the Division of Marketing.

English Usage Tips: Memorize and Apply These in All Assignments

Listed here are some common errors found on student papers. Details on such matters may be found in <http://ccc.comnet.edu/grammar/> and in standard writing manuals. While some errors result simply from careless proofreading, others may represent a deeper misunderstanding. A respect for language customs is the mark of a person who understands and observes the basic civilities of a free and educated community. **Every student is expected to prepare flash cards for these tips and to commit this information to memory. Beginning with Assignment 3, penalties for any error that could be avoided by applying these tips will be DOUBLED.**

PUNCTUATION

Comma splice: this means joining two independent clauses together with a comma; this often happens when the word “however” is used. An easy fix is to begin a new sentence with “However” and separate this word from the other words with a comma. “However, he missed the plane.”

Apostrophe: this seemingly unimportant punctuation mark can create confusion if not used correctly. If used in “it’s,” it means “it is.” When referring to possession, “its” **never** has an apostrophe.

Hyphen: this is needed in compound modifiers such as “end-of-century art movement” or “Bush-influenced domestic policy.”

Dash: a space plus two hyphens and a space (--). This can be used to introduce an amplifying phrase, or to join two clauses. Example: “The student saw a major opportunity in graduating early -- he could begin his career immediately.”

WORDINESS: Writing concisely takes perception to see alternative ways to express a thought, and practice to eliminate unnecessary words. In addition to passive-voice verbs, common phrases that contribute to wordiness are these:

- due to the fact that	- there (is) (are)
- in light of the fact that	- under these circumstances
- being that	- the reason is because

PRONOUN REFERENCES: A common error in student writing is the use of *they*, *their*, *them* when a singular pronoun (*he*, *his*, *him*) is needed. This often occurs after indefinite pronouns such as *anyone*, *someone*, *no one*, *each one*. Each of these is singular and requires a singular reference. Modern teachers and editors, recognizing concerns about “sexist language,” may insist on the awkward *he/she*, *his/her*, *him/her* combination in such cases, but I find these forced pairs awkward and bureaucratic-sounding. Use either the masculine or feminine, but not both. Contrary to some feminists’ claims, the masculine *he/him/his* historically has nothing to do with male biological identity; it simply refers to “a person.” It appears “masculine,” but only in an archaic sense of grammatical gender. This is still evident in languages such as German, which assigns a masculine gender to “moon” (*der Mond*); the French do just the opposite, calling the moon feminine (*la lune*). Considering these “genders” in the same way a person is male or female is absurdly ignorant.

Better yet, convert the reference into a plural to eliminate the problem. Instead of “Any person who goes into business for himself/herself ...” write “People who go into business for themselves ...” Another pronoun reminder: in formal professional writing, use *that* or *which* to refer to ideas and objects and *who* or *whom* to refer to persons.

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT: In U.S. English, a collective noun such as “group” or “band” takes a singular, not plural, verb. It also takes a singular, not plural, pronoun. Other collective nouns treated as singular include *company*, *organization*, and *management*. Example: “The management of ABC Corporation has ensured its survival by use of the golden-parachute tactic.”

PARALLELISM: When listing items using bullet points or as a series in a sentence or paragraph, put these items in parallel grammatical form. Don’t mix verbs and nouns in such a list. Search Google for “parallelism” if necessary.

GENERAL USAGE TIPS

In prose, spell out as words all numbers ten or smaller; use the word *percent*, not the percent sign (%). An exception to this practice is allowed in a table or chart.

Use *either/or*, *neither/nor*, and *between* only with two items of comparison, never three or more. Use the word *among* for three or more.

Differentiate *ensure*, *insure*, and *assure*. We ensure a result, we insure an auto against damage, and we assure a person of his safety.

Distinguish between the verbs *serve* and *service*. The latter refers to the process of having the oil changed in your car ... or to bringing a bull and cow together in unholy matrimony. If you say your company *services* customers, you may lose business.

Learn how the verbs *effect* and *affect* differ. To *effect* means to bring about: “The dean *effected* an important change in the way office space was allocated.” To *affect* means to influence: “The actor’s performance in *Hamlet* deeply affected me.” Don’t confuse the noun forms of these words! (See dictionary.)

Spell out an acronym the first time it is mentioned in your paper so the reader knows what it refers to.

Alot vs. a lot: The first is a common misspelling of the second; it’s too informal for professional writing.

Between you and I vs. between you and me: The pronoun “me” is required because it is the object of a preposition; using “I” in writing or speaking will brand you as ignorant.

Lay vs. lie: These verbs are confused even by supposedly educated speakers and writers, so those who understand their proper use will be a step ahead; “lay” is normally used as a transitive verb (one that takes a direct object); for instance, “If you lay your head on the pillow, you’ll fall asleep”; “lie” is an intransitive verb and thus cannot have a direct object (“If you lie down on the bed, you’ll fall asleep”). More confusion: “lay” is the past tense of “lie”: *today he lies in a ditch -- yesterday he lay in bed*.

Hopefully vs. it is hoped or I hope: This confusion is commonplace but still a sign of ignorance; “hopefully” means “full of hope,” as in “She looked hopefully upon the teacher as a source of forgiveness for her goofing off all term.”

Who’s vs. whose: The first one is a contraction of “who is” or “who has”; the second is a possessive relative pronoun.

There vs. their vs. they’re: these homophones are commonly confused; the first is an expletive or adverb; the second is a third-person plural possessive adjective; the third is a contraction of “they are.”

Your vs. you’re: The first is a second-person possessive adjective; the second is a contraction of “you are.”

Number vs. amount: The first is used as a collective noun referring to countable items (as in “the number of hours in a day”); the second is a collective noun referring to uncountable items (as in “the amount of lust generated by excessive testosterone”).

Different from vs. different than: The first is standard in U.S. English; the second is preferred by the British. (And don’t spell “than” as “then”!)

Verbal vs. oral: The first refers to any communication expressed in words, whether written or spoken; the second refers only to communication expressed in speech. “Verbal agreement” in reference to a spoken agreement is simply wrong.

Imply vs. infer: Only a speaker or writer can “imply”; only a reader or listener can “infer.”

For more tips, see: <http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/errors.html>