English Grammar For Economics And Business

For students & professors with English as a Foreign Language

Patricia Ellman

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English Grammar For Economics And Business

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Contents

Acknowledgements 7

Introductory Remarks and Reference Works Consulted 8

1 Explanations of Common Errors in Alphabetical Order 22

2 Confusion Between Certain Words 86

3 Notes on Style 103

4 The Finishing Touches: 22 Basic Tips for the Final Editing of Texts and Theses – a Checklist 114

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5 Everything You Always Wanted to Know about the Definite and the Indefinite Article (but Were too Confused to Know Where to Begin) 118

Section 1: Analysis of presence or absence of the definite articles in various foreign languages 123

Section 2: The first Diagnostic Test 133

Section 3: The most widely-used constructions using the definite and indefinite articles 140

Section 4: Final remarks on the use of *the* and *a/an* (not always as articles) 157

Section 5: Reference essay: A key to the application of the 80 Rules for using/not using the articles 164

Section 6: Concluding remarks to Chapter 5 186

6 About the Author 188

7 Endnotes 189

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I will not go down to posterity talking bad grammar.

Benjamin Disraeli[1]

(written when correcting the proofs of his last Parliamentary speech on 31 March 1881)[2]

Acknowledgements

First, I must thank all the economics and business students who provided the raw material (i.e. the grammatical errors) and raison d'être for this guide.

I am equally grateful to Professor Peter Nijkamp and the late Professor Piet Rietveld of the Department of Spatial Economics at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration (including the Center for Entrepreneurship) of the VU University of Amsterdam for kindly giving their time to read the first draft, and suggesting a number of additional points of English grammar that often perplex writers of English as a foreign language. In addition, Professor Jeroen van den Bergh of the Department of Economics and Economic History at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain, went through the whole text forensically, and gave valuable feedback. And, at a later stage, Professor Peter Wakker of Erasmus University, Rotterdam allowed me access to his own 84-page *aide-memoire* on the intricacies of English usage, which generated some extra ideas.

Many thanks also go to Ada Kromhout of the Writing Skills Department of the University of Amsterdam, who wordprocessed an earlier much shorter draft, and set an immaculate standard for the layout of later drafts. For a later but not final version, special thanks are due to Ellen Woudstra, Editor at the VU Department of Spatial Economics. And I much appreciated the friendly encouragement and practical assistance given by Elfie Bonke of the VU Secretariat which helped me persevere with this task. My usual role in the Faculty is just to correct English grammar; writing about it is quite another matter when there are so many 'exceptions to the rule' and divided opinions. Finally, I am indebted to Miriam Drori, editor and author, for her thorough proofreading.

I dedicate this book to my dear husband, Michael. In my attempts to create example sentences, relevant for the target audience, he was a patient sounding board.

Patricia Ellman
Amsterdam, 2013

Introductory Remarks and Reference Works Consulted

The following points of English grammar, style and presentation are those which are most relevant for economics and business students with fairly advanced English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This guide represents a distillation on a need-to-know basis of the myriad points of grammar found in standard textbooks. Some students with EFL have access to in-house English courses, but many do not, and those who do often say they are too general to be useful.

The selected solecisms mainly concern the *most common* types of error that I have encountered over the course of 30 years, when working on around 2000 texts (articles, theses and books, both single- and multi-author) produced by EFL M.Phil. and Ph.D. students and academics. My client base includes authors from many different countries (e.g. the Netherlands, Italy, Portugal – including the Canary Islands, France, the Central and Eastern European countries, Morocco, Turkey, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Indonesia, and China. They write on a wide range of subjects, such as taxation policy, corporate social responsibility, educational economics, environmental economics (including insurance and measures taken against flood risk; road pricing; containerization; and airport logistics), urbanization processes, and network theory applied to commuting.

Amongst other things, the guide tackles such constantly recurring grammatical problems as:

- How to correctly place those slippery words: *already*, *also*, *often* and *only* in a sentence;
- When to use, or not use, the definite and indefinite articles (*the, a/an*);
- How to decide whether to use *like* or *such as*;
- When to use *less* and *fewer*, *few* and *little*, *big*, *large* and *great*; and
- How to choose between *compared to* and *compared with*.

In many cases, there is a clear right or wrong usage, but sometimes it is a case of knowing what is formal style, suitable for scholarly texts, and what is informal and therefore inappropriate in such texts. On a few occasions, it is simply a question of making a choice between two equally acceptable forms, and then sticking to that choice consistently.

To help with my explanations, I have consulted the following works:

Atkinson, Max, *Lend me Your Ears. All you need to know about making speeches and presentations*, Random House, UK, 2004. (*An invaluable reference work for those, like Dutch Ph.D. students, who have to defend their thesis, often in English, in public.*)

Baron, Kathleen, *Teach Yourself Good English. A practical book of self-instruction in English Composition* (based on the work by G.H. Thornton, completely revised and enlarged), The English Universities Press Ltd, London, UK, 2004.

Billingham, Jo, *Editing and Revising Text,* one step ahead series, Oxford University Press, New York, 2002.

Bourdieu, P. & J-C. Passeron, 'Introduction: Language and the relationship to language in the teaching situation'. In: P. Bordieu, J-C. Passeron and M. de Saint Martin, *Academic Discourse*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1994.

Bronk, Richard, *The Romantic Economist. Imagination in Economics*, Cambridge University Press, 2009. (*See the Notes on Style in Chapter 2 of this guide.*)

Bryson, Bill, *Troublesome Words*, Penguin Books, Third Edition, 2002. (*Written with the authority of a former subeditor of* The Times.)

Bryson, Bill, *Bryson's Dictionary for Writers and Editors*, Doubleday, London, 2008.

Burroughs-Boenisch, Joy, *Righting English that has gone Dutch*, Kemper Conseil, Voorburg, 2004. (*A unique guide aimed especially at Dutch users of English and their particular problems.*)

Canoy, Marcel, *Bertrand meets the fox and the owl. Essays on the theory of price competition*, Ph.D. thesis, Tinbergen Institute Research Series, no. 48, Thesis Publishers, Amsterdam, 1993. (*A model Ph.D. thesis written in English by a Dutch economics student.*)

Carter, Ronald & Michael McCarthy, *Cambridge Grammar of English. A Comprehensive Guide. Spoken and Written English. Grammar and Usage*, Cambridge University Press, 2006. (*This directs the reader to the website: Cambridge.org/corpus, a collection of common mistakes, and has a useful section on academic grammar.*)

Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 11th edition, Oxford University Press, New York, 2004.

Cook, Vivian, *Accommodating Broccoli in the Cemetery, or Why can't anybody spell?*, Profile Press, London, UK, 2004.

Duckworth, Michael, *Oxford Business English*, Oxford University Press, 2004. (*Section 36 gives a few exercises which provide limited practice in the use of the definite and indefinite articles; but, in this respect, see also the Diagnostic Tests in Chapter 5, Sections 2 and 5 in this present guide*).

Fowler, H.W., *Fowler's Modern English Usage*. Oxford University Press, First Edition, 1926. Revised Third Edition by R.W. Burchfield, 1998. (*An enormously readable, often witty, guide to the complexities of the English language.*)

Gooden, Philip, *Who's Whose? A No-Nonsense Guide to Easily Confused Words*, A & C Black Publishers Limited, London, Second Edition, 2007.

Gordon, Karen, *The Transitive Vampire. An Adult Guide to Grammar*, Severn House Publishers Ltd. London, 1985. (*Endorsed as 'extremely bizarre' by Frank Muir, but has a good explanation of squinting modifiers; see also Chapter 1 of this present guide.*)

Gwynne, N.M., *Gwynne's Grammar. The Ultimate Introduction to Grammar and the Writing of Good English*, Ebury Press, UK, 2013. (*The latest, but still totally traditional, primer.*)

Keleny, Guy, *Errors and Omissions*. (*An informative column which appears every Saturday in* The Independent*, an English newspaper. It picks out the main lapses of grammar and style in that paper during the previous week.*)

Keynes, Maynard, *Essays in Biography*, *Part II Lives of Economists*, Mercury Books, 1961. First published in 1933. (*An example of an English economist who wrote well.*)

Lamb, Bernard C., *A National Survey of UK Undergraduates' Standards of English*, The Queen's English Society, 1992. (*Contains some surprising findings – see* p. 13 *of this present guide.*)

Lamb, Bernard C., *The Queen's English and How to Use It*, O'Mara Books, 2011.

Leech, Geoffrey & Jan Svartik, *A Communicative Grammar of English*, Second edition, Longman, 1994.

McCloskey, D., *Economical Writing*, Waveland Press Inc., Long Grove, Illinois, 1999. (*This little book is specifically addressed to improving the writing style of economists – see also Chapter 2 of this guide.*)

Quest, The Journal of the Queen's English Society. (*This quarterly journal is devoted to encouraging the correct use of English and has interesting, often amusing articles on the state of the art of English grammar.*)

Shortland, Michael & Jane Gregory, *Community Science. A Handbook*, Longman Scientific and Technical, England, co-published with John Wiley & Sons, Inc. New York, 1991. (*This book gives good advice about both written and oral presentations.*)

Strunk Jr, William & E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*, Longman Publishers, Fourth Edition, 2000. (*The essentials of grammar are contained in this classic booklet.*)

Swan, Michael, *Practical English Usage*, Oxford University Press, Second Edition, 1995.

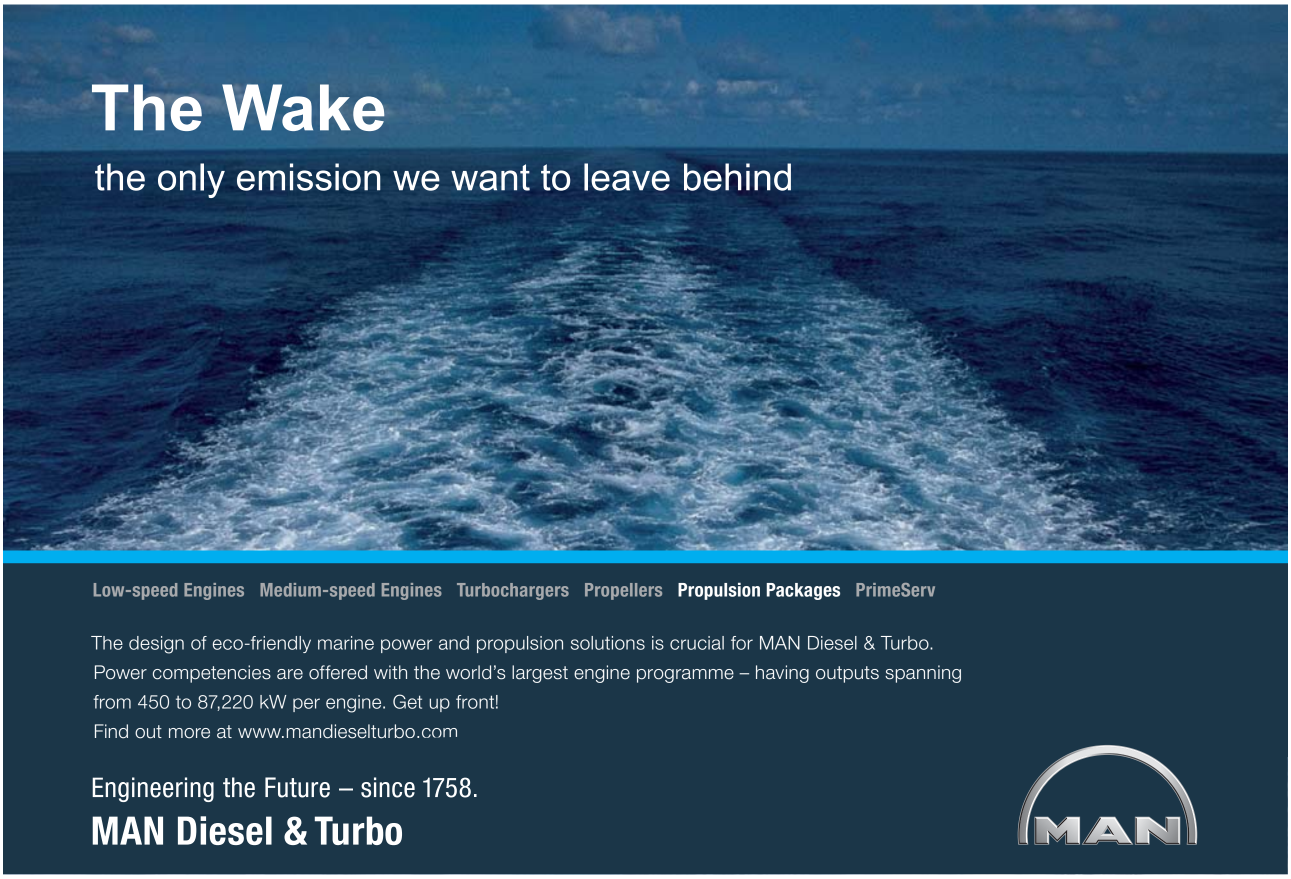
Swan, Michael & Bernard Smith (eds), *Learner English. A teacher's guide to interference and other problems*, Cambridge University Press, Second Edition, 2001. (*This excellent textbook pinpoints the particular difficulties experienced by EFL students with various mother tongues, for instance, concerning the use of the definite and indefinite articles.*)

Swales, John & Christine Feak, *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*, University of Michigan Press, 1994.

Taggart, Caroline & J.A. Wines, *My Grammar and I (or should that be 'Me'?)*, Michael O'Mara Books, Limited, London, 2008.

The Chicago Manual of Style. The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors and Publishers, The University of Chicago Press, 15th Edition, 2003. (*This book is justifiably described by its editors as: 'The indispensible reference for all those who work with words'.*)

The Journal of Industrial Economics (JIE). Various papers in the December issue of 2002. (*Used for some practical examples.*)



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Truss, Lynne, *Eats, Shoots and Leaves, the Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*, Profile Books, Ltd., 2003. (*This is a light-hearted, but thorough, guide to English punctuation.*)

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, Merriam Webster Inc., 1991.

Weiss, Edmond, H., *The Elements of International English Style*, M.E. Sharpe, New York, 2005.

Another recommended guide (not used here) is:

Troyka, L.Q. & D. Hesse, *Simon & Schuster Handbook for Writers*, Prentice Hall, Eighth Edition, 2007.

Note: Some of the more technical examples used to illustrate certain points of grammar and style are based on sentences taken from two articles published in *The Journal of Industrial Economics* (*JIE*). These sentences are placed between inverted commas, followed by the abbreviation (*JIE*). The reader may wonder why, out of all the economics journals in the world, I chose this particular one. The reason is that, when this guide was originally conceived (as a 30-page handout in 2003), I was teaching 'Writing Skills' to a group of international students at the University of Amsterdam who were writing Masters theses in English on Industrial Economics. It seemed logical, therefore, to turn to a journal specializing in their subject for practical examples. The two articles picked at random from just one issue of *JIE* provided me with plenty of material showing both correct and incorrect usage of English. These articles were:

Saul Lach, 'Do R&D Subsidies Stimulate or Displace Private R&D? Evidence from Israel' , *The Journal of Industrial Economics* 50 (4): 369–390 (December 2002) (possibly written by an EFL author).

Fiona M. Scott Morton & Joel M. Podolny, 'Love or Money? The Effects of Owner Motivation in the Californian Wine Industry', *The Journal of Industrial Economics* 50 (4): 431–436 (complimented in Chapter 2 of this guide **Notes on Style**).

Both these articles are of a high academic standard, but a close inspection reveals some grammatical and copy editing errors.

In the main, however, the illustrative examples are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

Please note that, in general, the guide is in British English, which is the author's mother tongue, and which is standard in the Netherlands, where the author lives and works. Attention is drawn in various places to American usage, where different.

To facilitate reference, the selected points of grammar, etc. are explained in alphabetical order in Chapter 1. Immediately preceding this, on pages 14–21, a **List of Frequently-found Grammatical and Editing Errors** is provided for those readers who need rapid access to particular grammatical constructions. The list contains cross-references in cases where a point of grammar is mentioned in more than one entry. This makes it easy to find answers to both one's own personal set of queries and to FAQs about grammar in general.

The item **Confusion between certain words** in this list is developed in more detail in Chapter 2, in order to highlight pairs or groups of words which look similar but which are quite different and thus cause difficulties.

To make this a more useful guide, a one-stop shop for both students and academics, Chapter 3 gives advice on the elusive subject of writing style, and Chapter 4 contains basic advice about the final editing of theses, papers, and books.

Chapter 5 (Sections 1–5) is an in-depth study of the use of the definite and indefinite articles (*the, a/an*), especially aimed at EFL students whose mother tongue does not have any articles. They sometimes adopt a 'hit and miss' approach to the use of these articles. Sections 2 and 5 contain Diagnostic Tests of increasing complexity so these students can check their progress in mastering this crucial aspect of English grammar.

It may be of encouragement to writers of English as a second language to know that Dr. B.C. Lamb (a frequent contributor to *Quest*, the *Journal of the Queen's English Society*, and President of that Society) finds that his international students of Life Sciences at Imperial College (IC) London often have a better grasp of English and spelling than his native British students (Lamb, 1992: 5). In his survey of the standard of English of UK undergraduates, he also reports the surprising finding that even UK students reading for degrees in *English* 'wrote essays full of errors in spelling and grammar' (Lamb, 1992: 59), and that '…in several universities and industrial research groups, UK-educated staff show their writings to overseas-educated staff…to get the English corrected…' (Lamb, 1992: 54). A more recent survey by Dr. Lamb (*Quest* Autumn 2007, No. 97: 22–26 and Winter 2007, No. 98: 32–37) reports a continuing dire situation in the UK in spite of remedial lectures. He has quantified the difference in the average number of English-language mistakes per student in the final-year exam paper at IC: native British 52, overseas students 18 (BBC Radio 4 'Today' programme, 5 October 2009). I think, however, that Dr. Lamb would be impressed by the quality of English in the theses written by students with EFL at Dutch Universities *before* the final language check by a native speaker.

Moreover, Bryson (2002: 30, 60) quotes errors made by a distinguished grammarian and a leading Professor of English. And, as will be seen in a few places in this guide, such experts may disagree amongst themselves, so it is not only students writing in EFL who have problems.

In English-speaking countries there are no official bodies determining correct language use. Accordingly, there can be different opinions as to what constitutes correct English.

List of Frequently-found Grammatical and Editing Errors

A/An 22
Abbreviations 22
About/On? 23
Active/Passive voice? 23
Advice 23
All right 23
All together/Altogether 23
Also/Already (see also Often/Only) 24
Alternate/Alternative 24
Although/Though 24
Amongst others/Amongst other things 25
Amount/Number (see also Number/Amount) 25
And/But 25
And/or 26
Another 26

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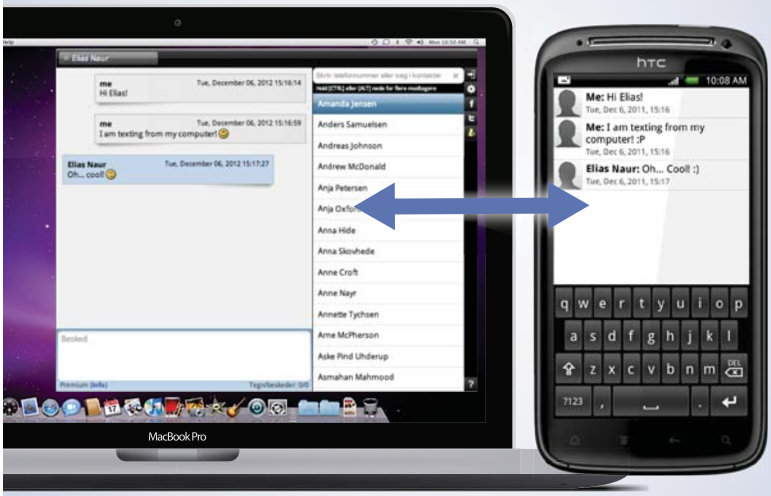

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Apostrophes 26
At the moment 26

Based on/On the basis of 27
Begin/Start/Commence 27
Benefited/Benefitted 27
Besides 27
Between/Among (Amongst) 28
Bibliographies 29
Big/large/great 30
Both…and 31
Both to/to both 31
British and American spelling 32

Capital letters 33
Centred around 33
Cf. 33
Commas (see also Lists) 33
Compared with/Compared to 34
Confusion between certain words 36
    actual/actually 86
    adaptation/adaption 87
    advice (noun)/advise (verb) 87
    affect (verb)/effect (verb and noun) 87
    ambiguous/ambivalence/equivocal/univocal 87
    (to) analyse (verb)/analysis (noun: singular)/analyses
        (verb 3rd person singular, and noun: plural) 88
    assume/presume (see also GNP/GDP) 88
    assure/ensure/insure 88

    belief/believe 88
    borne/born 89
    briefly/concisely 89

    choose/chose 89
    complementary/complimentary 89
    composed of/consists of/comprises 90
    content/contents 90
    continual/continuous 90
    criterion/criteria 90

dependant/dependent 90
discreet/discrete 91

economic/economical 91
employ/deploy 91
especially/specially 91
eventual(ly) 92
evoke/invoke/provoke 92

farther/further 93
feet/foot 93
forth/fourth 93

GDP/GNP 93
geographic/geographical 93

homogeneous/homogenous 94

immeasurable/unmeasurable 94
imply/infer 94
insulation/isolation 94
it’s/its 94

lack/miss 95
lead/led 95
lie(s)/lay(s) 95
life/live 96
lose (verb)/loose (adjective) 96

method/methodology 96
minimal/minimum 97

offer/provide 97
orient/orientate 97

partly/partially 97
per cent/percent 98
percentage/percentage point 98
prescribed/proscribed 98

preventive/preventative 99
principal/principle 99
proved/proven 99

ratio/ration 99
regardless/irregardless 100

sanction/(verb)/sanction (noun) 100
simple/simplistic 100
systematic/systemic 100

their/there 101
therefore/therefor 101
to/too/two 101

uninterested/disinterested 102

were/where 102
whose/who's (see also Contractions below) 102

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Contractions 36
Could/Should/Would 36

Dangling modifiers (see also Squinting Modifiers) 37
Data is/Data are 37
Dates 38
Definite and indefinite articles
(see also Chapter 5, in particular Section 2, the first Diagnostic Test) 38
Did (used incorrectly) 39
Difference between/Difference compared with 39
Different from/than/to 39
Due to (see also Fact (The fact that)) 39
Dutch constructions 40

Editing texts (see Chapter 4) 40
Either…or 40
Especially (see also * especially/specially in Confusion Between Certain Words) 41
Etc. + Such as 41
Exists (There exist/s) 41

Fact (The fact that) 42
Favourite words and overuse of the same words 42
First, Second, Third, Fourth, etc. 42
Focusing/Focussing 43
Footnotes 43
For example/e.g. 43
Former/Latter 43
Furthermore/In addition/What is more/Moreover 44

(The) Gerund 44
Glossary (see also Abbreviations) 45
Group words: singular or plural verbs? 45

Half (of) 46
He/She, His/Her (problems with) 46
However 46
(a) Hundred, 100 48
Hyphenated words 48

I 49
If-clauses 49
In case/In case of/In the case of 49
Indeed 51
Independent of 51
-ing form of the verb (misuse of) 51
Insight into 51
Instead of/Rather than 52
In the last decades 52
Inversion of subject and verb 52
Inverted commas (see also Punctuation and Bibliographies) 54
Italicized words 56

Kind of/Kinds of 57

Less/fewer 57
Like/Such as 57
Likely 58
Lists 58
Little/Few 59
Looks like/Looks as if 59

Majority 59
May/Can 60
May/Might 60
Misspelling 60
Months 61

Neither 61
None 62
…not only…but also (see also Inversion of subject and verb) 63
Number/Amount 63
Number of (followed by singular or plural verb) 63
Numbers 64

Offer/Provide (see *offer/provide in Confusion between certain words) 64
Often/Only (see also Also/Already) 64
On the one hand…on the other hand 66
On the other hand/In Contrast/On the contrary/Conversely 66
Own 66

Parameter(s) 67
Percentages
(see also * percent/percentage point in Confusion between certain words in Chapter 2) 67
Person of verbs 67
Plurals 67
Prepositions (avoid using at end of sentence) 68
Prepositions (their use after nouns) 69
Presently 69
Principle of Parallel Construction 70
Punctuation (see also Commas and Hyphenated words) 72

Questions 74

Respectively 75

Short sentences 75
Singular verbs (special occasions when to use) 75
So-called 75
S or Z 76
Spellings that cause difficulty 76

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Split infinitives 78
Squinting Modifiers (see also Dangling Modifiers) 78
Style 79
Substitute 79
Superfluous words 79

Tenses 81
That/Which 81
The…of 83
Tons/Tonnes 83

Use/Employ/Deploy (verbs) 83
Use/Usage (see also * use/usage in Confusion Between Certain Words in Chapter 2) 84

Whether 84
Which/That 84
Which/Who(m) 84
While/Whilst 84
Who's/Whose 85
Who/Whom 85
Words and phrases to avoid using in academic texts
(see also Favourite words and overuse of the same word) 85

1 Explanations of Common Errors in Alphabetical Order

A/An

Use of *a*	**Use of *an***
a GATT round	an IMF project
a WTO rule	an EU scheme
a Master's degree	an M.Sc. degree
a United Nations (UN) initiative	an umbrella organization
a planned economy	an economic plan

To decide whether to use *a* or *an*, the rule is:
Use *a* when the next word begins with a consonant (e.g. a *crisis*) or a voiced vowel (e.g. *a European*, where *Eu* is pronounced 'Yu').
Use *an* when the next word begins with an unvoiced vowel (a, e, i, o, u, e.g. an *equilibrium*) or a vowel sound (as in *an M.Sc*, i.e. M is pronounced 'eM').

Note: *a* or *an* historic event can both be used, but possibly *an* is somewhat old-fashioned these days (for a more detailed explanation, see Chapter 5, Section 4.72).

Abbreviations
Establish any abbreviations for frequently-used terms (FUTs) (terms used more than five times) when such FUTs are first used, and then stick to that abbreviation within one chapter. Do not keep switching between the 'frequently-used term' in full and the abbreviation (FUT). In later chapters, it may be necessary to re-establish the FUT in full again, in case the reader has forgotten its meaning. If there are many abbreviations, provide a Glossary of Terms with the dissertation.

e.g. 'We will call these utility-maximizing owners, or UMs…UM owners are willing to accept a lower financial return on their winery. Profit-maximizing owners (PMs) care solely about financial return from the winery.' (Quote from a published paper in the *Journal of Industrial Economics* – hereafter *JIE* – 50 (4): 435.)

Some abbreviations habitually take the definite article:
the OECD
the BBC
the US

others drop it:

GATT
UNESCO
NAFTA

Note: In a number of published works, I have seen the *List of Abbreviations* incorrectly called the *List of Acronyms*, but the latter are only those abbreviations which have, over the course of time, become a word in common use, such as radar, Aids.
See, e.g., Niamh A. O'Sullivan, *Social Accountability and the Finance Sector: The Case of Equator Principles (EP) Institutionalisation*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2010, p. xiii. (Nevertheless, this thesis was awarded a cum laude, and was a good example of fluent writing for those in the field of corporate social responsibility.)

About/On?
In formal texts, use *on*:
e.g. He gave a lecture *on* industrial organization [rather than *about*].
He wrote a book *on* industrial organization ['a book *about*' could be used for, say, a children's book].

Active/Passive voice?
In general, try to use the active voice. It produces shorter, more vigorous sentences.
Stylistically: The factory employs 500 people.
is better than: 500 people are employed by the factory.
However, there is a place for the passive voice in academic and scientific writing; for instance, if we want to emphasize the 'agent':
e.g. In Bangalore, beautiful silk cloth is made in factories by women who work long hours in appalling conditions.
(Here the 'agent' to be emphasized is the women who work in a sub-standard industrial environment.)
And, where we are not interested in the 'agent' but only in the action, the passive can also be used:
e.g. Numerous books have been written on the theory of the firm.

Advice
One gives advice (not *an* advice) (and not advi**s**e, which is a verb).

All right is the correct form (**NOT** *alright*).

All together/Altogether
These have separate meanings:
e.g. Taken all together [i.e. as a whole], his writings are a tour de force.
This hypothesis is not altogether [i.e. completely] valid.

Also/Already

These two words are often misplaced in a sentence.

Also is often placed at the beginning of a sentence when it more comfortably belongs in the body of the sentence:

e.g. The superconductor industry also provides components for the computer industry.

Placed at the beginning of this sentence, *also* could be ambiguous [i.e. meaning 'in addition to what has just been said…'].

Also is often placed out of order within the sentence:

> Transport is a derived demand but its evolution *also determines* [**not:** *determines also*] the welfare of regions or nations.

The position of *already* is even more crucial if a sentence is to sound and read like natural English:

e.g. We have already seen on p. 53 that social costs diverge [**not:** *seen already* or *diverge already* – these are not English rhythms].

(See also the entry for two other misplaced words **Often/Only.)**

Alternate/Alternative

These words are sometimes incorrectly used interchangeably:

Alternate means 'taking turns':

e.g. Two distinct fish-harvesting policies are being followed in alternate years.

Alternative means 'different' or 'another'.

e.g. 'Organisation theorists have criticised the profit model and have suggested an alternative [**no**t alternate] theory called satisficing' (Richard G. Lipsey, *An Introduction to Positive Economics*, 2nd ed.,Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1966, p. 397).

(For another good example of the use of *alternative* see the entry **Instead of/Rather than**.)

Note: It is possible to have several alternatives, not just a choice of two (as is sometimes believed):

e.g. There are a number of alternative plans for the development of Rotterdam harbour.

Although/Though

Though is more informal, so avoid using it in academic texts.

But, when used as an adverb, *though* can be a useful substitute for *however* if that word is being used too frequently in a paragraph:

e.g. The most powerful case, though, for the expansion of the EU is political not economic.

Nevertheless, as a first choice, *however,* is best here.

Amongst others/Amongst other things

There seems to be difficulty in choosing which of these two expressions to use, even though there seems to be a simple distinction. The former refers to people, usually authors, the latter to things.

e.g. (see, amongst others, Smith, 1999; Watson, 2001; Young, 2009)
He explained that climate change was caused by, amongst other things, human activity.

Amount/Number

'*Amount* of cars' is incorrect. '*Number* of cars' is correct.
Use *amount* for uncountable items (amount of coal).
Use *number* for countable items (number of tonnes).

And/But

At one time it was not considered acceptable to begin sentences in formal (as opposed to literary) texts with *And* or *But*. However, a few years ago, the editors of the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* ruled that this is now acceptable. In particular, it may be useful to begin a sentence with *But* to avoid undue repetition of *However*.

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And/or

Do not use this construction, it causes confusion:

e.g. 'Once a subsidy is received, and the firm commits to undertake the subsidized R&D project, the firm can adjust its portfolio of R&D projects, initiating new ones and/or closing old ones' (*JIE* 50 (4): 372).

It would be better to amend the last phrase of this sentence as follows:

'initiating new ones, closing old ones, or taking both these measures'.

Another

Note the correct use of *another* when mentioning two *equal* quantities of the same thing:

e.g. In order to strengthen the balance sheets of banks, the British Government announced it was prepared to provide £25 billion in ordinary shares and another £25 billion in preference shares.

Another should not be used if the second amount is higher or lower than the first amount.

Apostrophes

Note that, for names ending in 's', the possessive form normally has another 's' after the apostrophe, viz.:

Walras's
Jevons's
Philips's
(Also: Marx's)

As exceptions, Taggart and Wines (2008: 17) advise that: 'If the last syllable [of a name] is pronounced *-iz* or *-eeze*, stick to *s*', don't add the extra *s*.' This probably explains why in economics texts Hedges' theorem has no extra *s*.

Take care to distinguish between the singular and the plural when using apostrophes:

e.g. consumers' surplus; prisoner's dilemma; Arrow's theorem

At the moment

This phrase may refer both to 'now', i.e. at this very instant, and to a slightly longer stretch of present time:

e.g. At the moment, I am writing this entry for the guide [meaning 'Just now').

At the moment, the world is in a state of financial crisis [meaning 'at the present time', as in the Dutch 'op dit moment'].

At the moment, it is not possible to implement this architecture, because there is no consensus about a database model for dynamic incident-specific information [sentence from a draft M. Phil. thesis] [meaning 'in the current period'].

Sometimes, EFL students write *On the moment*, which is incorrect.

Based on/On the basis of

Based on is often used incorrectly, when *On the basis of* should be used. Note the difference:

e.g. On the basis of [**not:** *Based on*] our findings, it can be concluded that the economy is growing.
Unfortunately, their findings are based on spurious data.

As a rule, *based on* follows the verb 'to be' (as above), or a noun:

e.g. an economic plan, based on that of Germany

Begin/Start/Commence

Where do I begin? Where shall I start? Let battle commence! These three idiomatic expressions demonstrate both the problem with, and the solution for, using these three different verbs which have the same meaning.

I have picked up a general consensus among non-native English users that *start* is preferable to *begin*. However, after consulting a number of sources, I can find no evidence for this. The original *Fowler's Modern English Usage* (1926) sees no difference between *begin* and *start*, but Burchfield's (1998: 163) *The New Fowler's Modern English Usage* begs to differ, advising that:

> 'It is a sound rule to use "begin" in all ordinary contexts unless "start" is customary (*the engine started right away*; *he starts work at 9 am*; *the game started on time*).'

So let us accept this latest advice and give preference to *begin*:

e.g. The construction of the airport began in the 1920s.
The conference begins this week.

That said, if a *future* situation is envisaged, *start* seems more natural:

e.g. The construction of the third runway at Heathrow is not likely to start in the near future.

Commence is used in formal situations (e.g. concerning the law, military hostilities, and religious and state ceremonies (see the first line of this entry).

Benefited/Benefitted

Both are correct, stick to one form in your text.

Besides

Non-native writers of English often use the phrase *Next to* at the beginning of a sentence, when they really mean *Besides*, in the sense of 'As well as'. The confusion arises because *Next to* is the same as *Beside* (without an 's' at the end) in English, but that is a *completely different word* from *Besides*.

Contrast: Besides [i.e. As well as] being a net importer of oil, the US is also a net importer of computer components.
with: The oilfield is situated beside [i.e. next to] the Gulf.

Note that: 1) *Besides* is sometimes used incorrectly to mean 'Alternatively'.
2) *Besides,* (followed by a comma) can also be used at the beginning of a sentence (to mean: 'Additionally', 'In addition', 'Further', 'Furthermore'), but it should be avoided in academic texts, as it is too colloquial.

Between/Among (Amongst)

As a general rule, use *between* when two parties are involved in an allocation, and *among* (*amongst*) when there are more than two. However, it is also quite acceptable to use *between* where more than two parties are concerned, but each is treated individually, as in the first of these examples:

e.g. An agreement to integrate production was made between all the firms on the Kalenborg model industrial estate.
The EU Regional Fund is divided among (amongst) all the Member States.
Even experts on grammar disagree among (amongst) themselves.

Bryson (2002) makes the distinction between 'reciprocal' (use *between*) and 'collective' (use *among/amongst*).

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Note that there is no need to worry about whether to use *among* or *amongst*. Both can be used, though *amongst* is mainly British usage.

EFL students occasionally write 'between x to y', but it is correct to say 'between x and y':

e.g. *Incorrect:* between 100 to 200 persons per acre

Correct: between 100 and 200 persons per acre

Correct: Because of the world fuel shortage, the rise in fuel prices this year will be between 20 and 30 per cent.

Note also the distinct difference in meaning between the following sentences:

e.g. World population is expected to rise to between 11 and 12 billion.
(The actual increase is not known unless the initial level is known.)
World population is expected to rise by between 11 billion and 12 billion [an awkwardly phrased, but not incorrect, sentence written by an EFL economics student].
(This means 'a rise of more than 11 but less than 12 billion'.)
However, in this case, it would be better to say:
World population is expected to rise by 11 to 12 billion.

Bibliographies

Keep bibliographies as simple as possible, i.e. minimizing use of commas, brackets and full-stops. They must be scrupulously consistent. An inconsistent bibliography reflects a disorganized mind and could be an indication of sloppy thinking in the dissertation itself. It sounds obvious, but all references cited in the text should be included in the Bibliography, and vice versa. It is surprising how rarely this occurs in texts that I edit.

The following is an example of a 'minimalist' way of presenting a bibliography, with punctuation pared down to the bare essentials. It comes from a publication of Springer-Verlag, Heidelberg, a leading academic publishing house:

Hornik K., Stinchcombe M. and White H. 1989. Multilayer feedforward networks are universal approximators. *Neural Networks*, 2: 359–66.

Le Cun Y., Denker J.S. and Solla S.A. 1990. Optimal brain damage, in Touretzky, D.S. (ed.) *Advances in Neural Information Processing*, San Mateo, Morgan Kaufmann, 598–605.

Learner, E.E. 1979: *Specification Searches*, Wiley, New York.

Moody J. 1992. Generalization, weight decay and architecture selection for nonlinear learning systems, in Moody J., Hanson J. and Lippmann R. (eds.) *Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems*, Morgan Kaufmann, San Mateo, 471–79.

Openshaw S. 1988. Building an automated modelling system to explore a universe of spatial interaction models, *Geographical Analysis*, 20, 1: 31–46.

Openshaw S. 1993. Modelling spatial interaction using a neural net, in Fischer M.M. and Nijkamp P. (eds.) *Geographical Information Systems, Spatial Modelling, and Policy Evaluation*, Springer, Berlin, 147–64.

Note:

1) The inconsistency in the punctuation of the entries for Learner, E.E. 1979, and Touretzky, D.S., where a comma occurs after the name instead of a space;
2) The inconsistent order of the publisher and place: in the second reference it is San Mateo, Morgan Kaufmann, while in the fourth reference it is Morgan Kaufmann, San Mateo;
3) Page references for journals are preceded by a colon (:); page references for books are preceded by a comma (,). This is actually common practice but it could be simplified by using a colon (:) for both journal and book entries.
4) The abbreviation (*eds*) should not end in a full stop, but (*ed.*) should because *d* is not the last letter of the whole word *editors*. However, the style guide of Cambridge University Press instructs that both *ed*. and *eds*. should have a full stop. Where an abbreviation ends with the last letter of the whole word, usually no full stop is used (*Dr*, *Mr*).
5) There is one other inconsistency. Can you spot it? (Answer: p. 187)

(See also Chapter 3 of this guide**,** *The Finishing Touches: 22 Basic Tips for the Final Editing of Texts and Theses*.)

Big/large/great

Big often sounds too informal, but in economic texts can be quite acceptable: big business, a big rise in employment.

Big and *large* are associated with concrete nouns, e.g. big/large deficits, big/large subsidies, whereas *great* is associated with abstract nouns, e.g. great hope, the Great Depression (one would not say the Big/Large Depression).

However, there are occasions where all three of these words can be used interchangeably: big/large/great increase or fall; big/large/great number or amount.

Obviously, this is a big subject (one case where *large* or *great* will not do)!

Both…and

Do **not** write ‘both…as well as’, a common error: the construction is always ‘both…and’. The following quotation from a Dutch Ph.D. thesis illustrates this error (which was repeated twice on one page):

e.g. Abnormal share price changes after personal share purchases reflect both new information as well as market mispricing’ (David Veenman, *Insider Trading. The Interrelation between Accounting Information, Stock Prices, and Reported Insider Trades*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2010, p. 164).

This should read:

‘…both new information and market mispricing… ’

Both to/to both

With this construction, as often with English style, it is important to achieve balance:

e.g. Fish stocks in the North Sea are related to both food supply and fishing rates.
or: Fish stocks in the North Sea are related both to food supply and to fishing rates.

Both these sentences are correct, but what people tend to write, incorrectly, is:

e.g. Fish stocks in the North Sea are related both to food supply and fishing rates.
or: Fish stocks in the North Sea are related to both food supply and to fishing rates.

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If *to both* is used, then there is no need to repeat *to* in the second part of the sentence.

If *both to* is used, then *to* must be repeated in the second part of the sentence.

The same 'rule' applies to *both by*, *by both* and to *both with*, *with both*.

Note: When using *both*, it is important to place it correctly in the sentence.

Incorrect: This makes it possible to assess whether both variation in hailstorm damage throughout the year and in high damage periods can be largely explained by temperature and precipitation [sentence taken from a draft article].

Corrected: This makes it possible to assess whether variation in hailstorm damage both throughout the year and in high damage periods can be largely explained by temperature and precipitation.

British and American spelling

In terms of style and grammar, there is virtually no difference between texts written by British and American academics. Spelling can differ, however, and a text should be produced with one consistent type of spelling, not a mixture. Here are a few examples of British/American English spellings found in economics texts:

British English	**American English*** **
Amongst (but among is also acceptable)	Among
Analyse	Analyze
Behaviour	Behavior
Centre	Center
Colour	Color
Dialogue	Dialog
Defence	Defense
Dyke	Dike
Endeavour	Endeavor
Enrol	Enroll
Favourable	Favorable
Honour	Honor
Labour	Labor
Licence	License
Litre	Liter
Metre	Meter
Modelled	Modeled
Offence	Offense
Per cent	Percent
Practise (verb) *	Practice (verb) *
Programme (meaning schedule)	Program
Rigour **	Rigor
Sceptic	Skeptic
Sulphur	Sulfur
Towards	Toward
Travelled	Traveled
Unfeasible	Infeasible
Vigour **	Vigor

* Note: the spelling of the noun 'practice' is the same in Br./Am. English.

** Note: rigorous, vigorous are identical in Br./Am. spelling.

*** Note: American spelling uses fewer hyphens, e.g. (Am.) nonlinear, (Br.) non-linear; (Am.) quasispecies, (Br.) quasi-species.

Capital letters

Use capital letters for Part I (etc.), Chapter 1 (etc.), Section 1 (etc.), Appendix 1 (etc.), Figure 1 (etc.), Table 1 (etc.) (e.g. in Chapters 1 and 2), but NOT when referring to 'this chapter', 'this section' (etc.).

Centred around

This expression is frequently encountered in texts produced by non-native speakers, but is dismissed by *The Chicago Manual of Style* as 'illogical phrasing'. The advice is to use *centre on* or *revolve around* instead.

Cf.

This abbreviation is often used incorrectly to mean 'see', when in fact it means 'compare with', when indicating a difference. So, 'see, e.g., Wood (1970)' means that Wood provides the point just made, while 'cf. Wood (1970)' means that the last point should be compared with Wood's opinion. (For other examples of the correct use of *cf.* see Chapter 5, 1.A.5. and A.7.)

Commas

Sometimes commas are used when they are not necessary or completely incorrect, and sometimes they are omitted when they are essential.

These days, many publishing houses do not use commas ***after*** *e.g. i.e. viz. cf.* in order to reduce clutter on the page. However, all these abbreviations still need a comma ***before*** them:

e.g. The firm makes a number of products, e.g. pvc gutters.

Lynne Truss (2003) reports a current unwelcome tendency for, what she sarcastically calls, a 'yob's comma' to crop up between the subject and the verb:

e.g. The Russian economy, grew last year.

Such commas should never occur, though I have come across them in the texts I edit.

(Note: '*yob*' is English slang for 'anti-social person'. Here, it is used metaphorically by Ms Truss to indicate an unforgivable solecism.)

On many occasions, I encounter commas incorrectly preceding *that*:

e.g. Those firms, that declined last year, have performed better this year.

Neither of these commas should be used.

(**See also the entries Punctuation and That/Which.**)

Where it is appropriate to use commas, people often forget that they go in pairs in many circumstances, and they omit either the first or the last comma:

e.g. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that, in the next budget, he would abolish tax for those workers earning less than £10,000.

The following is an example from a published paper where a sentence has a stray comma after 'sample'. This comma is not really necessary and could be omitted, but if it is retained it should be balanced earlier in the sentence by an additional comma after 'that' [*finds that, in*].

> '…Busom (2000) finds that in about 30% of the Spanish firms in her sample, public funding fully crowds out privately financed R&D' [should be 'finds that, in…'] (*JIE* 50 (4): 371).

People tend to leave out the first comma of a pair (as above). Or, they may omit to use a comma between a subordinate clause and a main clause:

> 'If subsidized R&D involves setting up or upgrading research facilities (labs), then the fixed costs of other current and future R&D projects are lowered' (*JIE* 50 (4): 371).

Here I have added a comma between *(labs)* and *then* which was not there in the published text. The comma provides a necessary 'breathing space'.

Non-native English writers may find it difficult to know when commas are necessary around phrases beginning with *who* or *which*, and when they are not. Here is an example where no commas are necessary:

> 'These results imply that an owner who has just purchased his winery will price 5.5% higher than his PM [profit-maximizing] peers…' (*JIE* 50 (4) : 453).

In this case, the *who* phrase is an integral, essential part of the sentence, and cannot be removed without the sense of the sentence being adversely affected.

In the following sentence, where commas are used around the *who* phrase, that phrase is not essential and can be omitted without any harm to the general sense of the sentence:

> The female employees, who represent 40% of the workforce, have lower wages than the male employees.

I also favour the use of the 'Oxford comma', to mark off the last item of a short list:

> Concrete is made of sand, gravel, and water.
>
> The industrial categories are: clothing and textiles, glass and ceramics, and iron and steel.

These commas separate each item unambiguously.

(For punctuation in long lists, see the entry **Lists** below.)

Compared with/Compared to

Compared with is used when a *contrast* is being made, for example between two sets of figures. This is often the case in economic analysis:

e.g. Compared with the figures for 2000, those for 2001 are much lower.

Compared to is used when one is indicating a *likeness* between two things:

e.g. The Australian trade pattern can be compared to that of New Zealand [meaning that the two patterns are similar].

The most well-known example employed to explain the use of *compared to* is the line from one of Shakespeare's sonnets:

> 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?'

Though this has no relevance for economics, it is a useful *aide-memoire*, when deciding whether to use *compared with* or *compared to.*

An example more relevant to economics where *compared to* is correct is in the following context, where the sets of figures are hopefully expected to be the same:

> One way of validating the results is to reaggregate the estimated data sets to the level at which the observed data exist and *compare* the estimated *to* the observed distribution.

The expression *comparable to* also refers to a likeness:

e.g. The Zwolle region is more or less comparable to the Netherlands as a whole in terms of distribution of firm size.

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The following example (taken from an economics student's paper) clearly shows within the space of a single sentence the essential difference between the use of *to* and *with* after the words *comparable/compared*:

e.g. 'Even though the level of external debt to GDP in Argentina was comparable to [i.e. similar to] that of other Latin American and developing countries, the level of external debt to exports was strikingly high compared with [i.e. in contrast to] that of other countries' [parts in square brackets added – PE].

Confusion between certain words

Chapter 2 discusses 62 pairs of words which are commonly confused, e.g. affect/effect, discreet/discrete, because they seem similar.

Contractions

In academic texts, contractions (such as *didn't*, *doesn't*, *don't, haven't, isn't*, *who's*) should not be used. Write out the expression in full (*did not*, etc.). Contractions are too informal.

Could/Should/Would

It is sometimes difficult for non-native users of English to know which of these three words is most appropriate in a particular sentence. This is a complex area of English grammar and, for the purposes of this short guide, the following explanation is limited to the kind of sentence in an academic text where doubt may arise when considering whether to use *could*, *should* or *would*. In the sense of these words discussed here, this choice basically depends on the *degree* of probability.

(1) *Could* suggests a possibility, but not a strong possibility:
e.g. The proposed transport policy could solve the mobility problems in the region.
(See also the entry **May/Might.)**
(2) *Should* suggests quite a strong possibility (= ought to):
e.g. The proposed transport policy should solve the mobility problems in the region.
(3) *Would* suggests a very strong likelihood, or even a definite outcome:
e.g. The proposed transport policy would solve the mobility problems in the region.

(Note: In a completely different sense, *would* suggests intention, as in:

The author would like to thank Prof. X for his comments.

To say: 'The author *should* like to thank Prof. X …', would imply that the author is aware that it is usually polite to thank Prof. X, but, in this case, he is not going to because he has reservations about the value of Prof. X's contribution to his paper.)

Dangling modifiers

This item refers to the need to put phrases in their correct place in the sentence. To illustrate this, consider the following extreme example:

> Over the last 2 years, it can be seen that new UK graduates are increasingly setting up their own businesses looking at the self-employment statistics.

The misplacement of the last phrase ('dangling' at the end) implies, erroneously, that it is the graduates' new businesses which are engaged in looking at start-up statistics.

More often, the modifier is left dangling at the beginning of the sentence, without being firmly attached, viz.:

> Looking at the self-employment statistics for the last 2 years, new UK graduates are increasingly setting up their own businesses.

This sentence would be better expressed as follows with additional essential words (here in italics):

> Looking at the self-employment statistics for the last 2 years, *it can be seen that* new UK graduates are increasingly setting up their own businesses.

The following bad example of a headline in *The Independent* newspaper shows how a dangling modifier can result in nonsense. In this case, the errant dangling modifier is 'planned by EU defence chief', misplaced at the end of the headline:

> **Headline horror**
> Sir: With regard to your headline (14 August): 'Continent-wide force to counter terror planned by EU defence chief', I hope that the EU defence chief has been put behind bars under the anti-terrorism legislation.
> FRANCIS SHAXSON
> *Winyerborne Kingston, Dorset*

In order to preserve the counter-terrorist reputation of the EU defence chief, the headline needs to be rewritten to eliminate the dangling modifier:

> 'Continent-wide force planned by EU defence chief to counter terror.'

(See also the entry **Squinting modifiers** below.)

Data is/Data are

Data is commonly treated as a plural noun (*data are*). However, the editors of the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* have recently ruled that data can now be treated as a singular noun (*data is*), according to the preference of the author. *Data is* sounds more natural to me, but to date it does not seem to be catching on. Whatever you choose, singular or plural, use one form consistently. (Note in the first Diagnostic Test in Section 2 of Chapter 5, *data is* is used consistently in the published text used for the test.)

A glance at some of the articles in the *Journal of Industrial Economics* reveals singular and plural use of data in different papers, and both singular and plural in the same paper.

Dates

Write dates in the following simplest way, devoid of extraneous commas:

15 January 2004

There is no need to write 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th (etc.). (By the way, never write, as I have seen, 2th, 3th, etc.)

Definite and indefinite articles

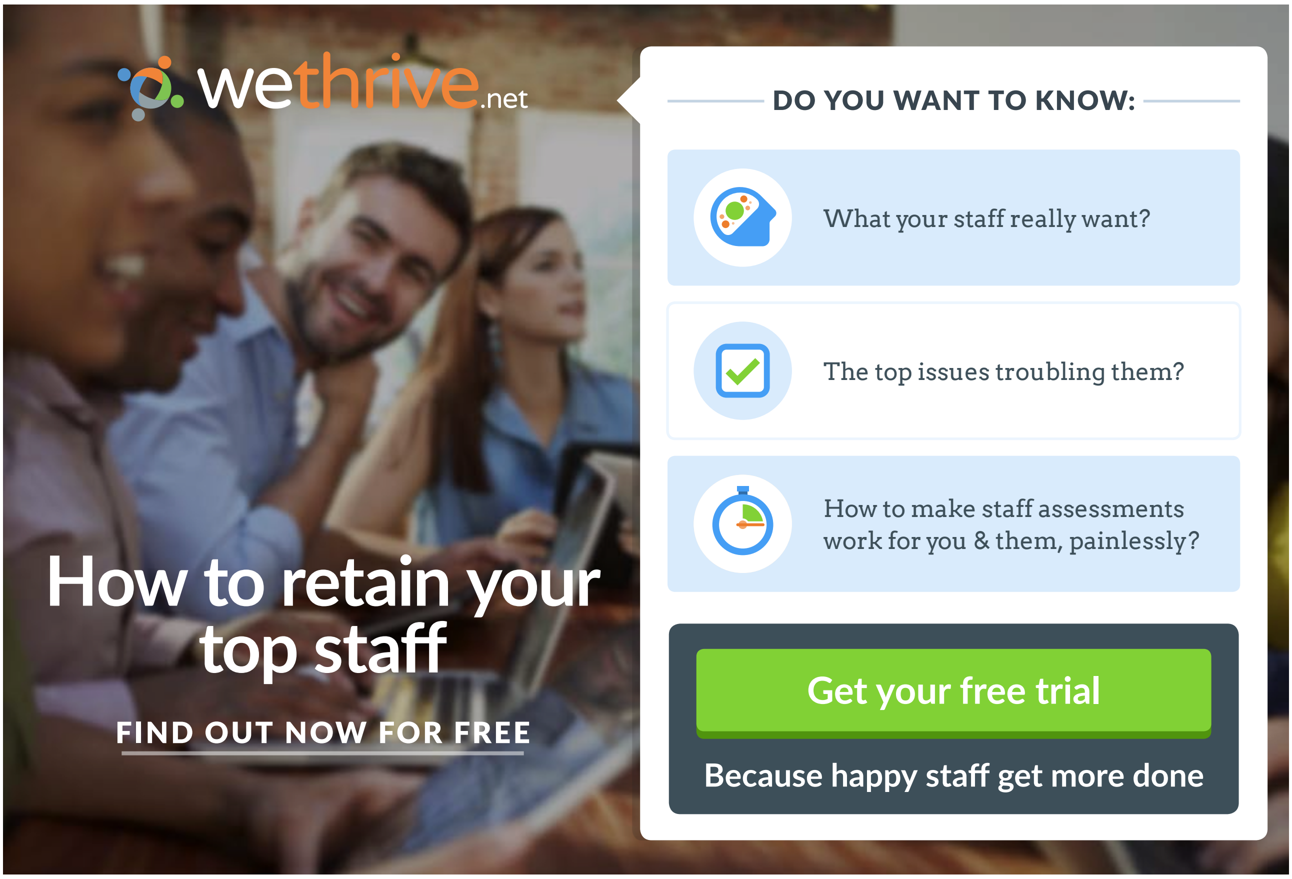
One could write at length (see Chapter 5) on the subject of the many nuances of the minute words *the*, *a/an*, but here only the main errors in the use of these words will be highlighted.[3]

The most common mistakes made by students who do not have mother-tongue English involve leaving out the (in)definite article when it is necessary to use it, or, vice versa, putting it in when it is not needed. (Try the Diagnostic Tests in Sections 2 and 5 of Chapter 5 to check your ability to use these articles.)

The title of a monograph by a Dutch social geographer was ruined by the Indian publishers who printed: *Informal Sector in Clothing Industry of Tamil Nadu*. Though this was good Indian English, it sounds illiterate in both British and American English, where it would be: *The Informal Sector in the Clothing Industry of Tamil Nadu*.

Two other common examples of the incorrect omission of *the* are found in the following sentence: ‘Marshall developed his theory of elasticity of demand in last century’.

Here it should say: ‘the elasticity of demand’, and ‘in the last century’.



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The same problem of omission occurs with the use of *a/an*:
e.g. 'as result' (incorrect), 'as a result' (correct).

Very important: Do not write 'the trade theory', 'the general equilibrium theory', or 'the society'; 'trade theory', 'general equilibrium theory, and 'society' suffice. However, when referring back to a specific society, like the Royal Economic Society, it should be called 'the Society' (with a capital 'S').
(As well as the two tests on article usage in Chapter 5, Sections 2 and 5, see the entries **In case/In case of/In the case of**; and **The…of**.)

Did (used incorrectly)
Do not use *did* as an auxiliary with a verb unless *emphasis* is meant, as in:

> After years of indecision, the UK did eventually enter the Common Market in 1972.

But, as a simple statement, write:

> The UK entered the Common Market in 1972.

EFL students tend to write things like 'he did understand', when the correct form is 'he understood'.

Difference between/Difference compared with
These expressions mean the same, but note how they should be used:
e.g. The difference between x and y is considerable.
The difference compared with the previous results is striking.

Different from/than/to
In British English the usual form is *different from*; *different to* is more colloquial.
In American English *different than* is used, but that sounds wrong in British English.

Due to
Due to is classified as: an adjective (*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*); a preposition (*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*); and an adjective (*The Chicago Manual of Style*). In fact, even expert grammarians are divided about the correct usage, and some grammar books do not include it. Academic publishers (e.g. Elgar) take the view that *due to* should only be used in specific circumstances, i.e. where it means the same as 'attributable to', when it is used as an adjective directly relating to a noun:
e.g. It is expected that there will be increased unemployment due to the credit crunch.
(Here *due to* relates to the noun 'unemployment'.)

e.g. The rise in oil prices is due to the war in Iraq.
Here *due to* may be used predicatively after the verb 'to be' (here, 3rd person singular 'is') as it relates to the noun 'rise'.

Publishers' editors would consider it incorrect to use *due to* adverbially (i.e. to describe a verb), as in the following sentence:
e.g. Oil prices are rising due to the war in Iraq.
In this case, editors would replace *due to* with *because of* or *owing to*.

The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* advises that *owing to* is the better alternative, but also points out that the use of *due to* after a verb is now 'very common in all types of literature and is regarded as part of standard English'. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* agrees that this usage 'has been recognized for decades', but nevertheless adds that 'you will still run the risk of causing offense if you use it.'
The misuse of *due to* is now so endemic that Burchfield (1998: 233), in *Modern English Usage*, considers it a 'forgotten battle', as the incorrect use has become part of the natural language. He quotes worthy publications like the *Times Educational Supplement* and the *London Review of Books*, whose copy editors have not corrected contributors who misuse it. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the correct usage should not be encouraged. The copy editors' 'Bible', *the Chicago Manual of Style*, considers it is 'better phrasing' to use *owing to* or *because of* rather than *due to* in adverbial phrases. So this advice should be followed by authors submitting articles for publication.
Perhaps one day publishers will bow to the inevitable process of change in English grammar and accept *due to* in all circumstances.
(See also the entry **Fact**, where *due to the fact that* is an expression to be avoided.)

Dutch constructions
In texts produced in English by Dutch authors, I often find the following constructions which are not English:

allow to:	when what is meant is 'makes it possible to', enables us to', 'allows us to';
avoid to:	when what is meant is 'avoid doing (something)';
prevent to:	when what is meant is 'prevent from doing (something)';
suggest to:	when what is meant is 'suggest doing (something)' or 'recommend (something)';
take care of:	when what is meant is 'deal with' or 'address' ('take care of' applies to children, aged relatives, or hospital patients).

Editing texts
(See Chapter 4 of this guide which gives 22 basic editing tips to produce a finely polished text.)

Either…or
This expression is best restricted to two items (*either a or b*), though it can be legitimately used for three items (*either a, b or c*, but NOT either a or b or c).
(See also the entry **Both to/to both**, as the same 'balancing' rule applies here: you can say 'either *to* x or *to* y'; '*to* either x or y'.)

Especially

Non-native writers often begin sentences with *Especially*, when *In particular* would sound more natural. Within the body of the sentence, *especially* and *particularly* are often interchangeable. These words are frequently overused in a text. *Mainly or notably* could be a substitute if this is happening, or consider whether these words are really necessary.
(See also * **especially/specially** in the entry **Confusion between certain words**.)

Etc. + Such as

Do not put *etc.* at the end of lists that begin with *such as* because *etc.* at the end is superfluous.

Note: There is no need to write *etc.* in full as *etcetera*, unless this is specifically requested by a publisher.

Exists (There exist/s)

There exist/s is often used incorrectly when *There is/are* is all that is simply required. *There exist/s* is another example of a foreign (e.g. Dutch) construction.

However, *there exist(s)* is correctly used in descriptions of mathematical relationships:

> There exists a function such that x + y = 0.

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Fact (The fact that)

This expression is generally considered to be stylistically redundant. Use simply *that*, unless it is absolutely impossible to replace *the fact that*. The wordy phrase *due to the fact that* is also frowned on: *because* can be used instead. Likewise, *despite the fact that* can be replaced by the more succinct *although* or *even though*.

Favourite words and overuse of the same words

Check to see that you are not overusing a particular word or phrase in your manuscript. This often happens unconsciously but makes the text monotonous. Examples I have come across are: 'consequently', 'driving force', 'particularly', 'with respect to', and 'such as' (and see the entry **Especially** above). In one text, the repeated phrase 'as such' had no meaning, and was superfluous.

One particular place where words are repeated is at the end of the Introduction to a paper, in the paragraph which describes the subsequent structure of the paper. Here are two real examples: the first uses a variety of nouns and verbs to describe what each section of the paper does (e.g. *review*, *describes*, *tests*):

> 'The remainder of the paper will proceed as follows. A *review* of the existing literature is in Section II; a *discussion* of the theoretical implications of this phenomenon is contained in Section III. Section IV *describes* the data on California wines and the survey we designed and administered. It also *discusses* the general types of owners we find in the industry. Section V *tests* the hypotheses on quality and price generated earlier in the paper, and Section VI concludes' [italics added] (*JIE* 50 (4): 433).

while the second repeats *presents* twice:

> 'Section 2 *describes* the main features of R&D support in Israel and the data analysed in this paper. Section 3 *presents* the main conceptual and empirical issues that arise in the estimation of the subsidy effect while Section 4 *presents* the empirical results. Conclusions close the paper' [italics added] (*JIE* 50 (4): 373).

The second *presents* could be replaced by *provides*, *analyses*, or *examines*.

(See also the entry **Words and phrases to avoid using in academic texts**.)

First, Second, Third, Fourth, etc.

It is preferable to use these forms, rather than Secondly, Thirdly, Fourthly, etc. at the beginning of a sentence. Also remember that, if you say 'First(ly)', then there should be a 'Second' point at least. Sometimes I come across 'Third' without any preceding 'First(ly)' or 'Second' highlighting the previous points. Do not start such a list without a good introductory sentence:

e.g. There are four main factors. First, … Second, …, etc.

Note: Because many publishers instruct the use of *First* not *Firstly*, it is commonly believed that it is wrong to use *Firstly* when beginning to make a number of points. However, it is not incorrect to use *Firstly* if you wish, but for consistency it should be followed by Secondly, Thirdly, etc.

Focusing/Focussing
Both are correct, stick to one form in your text.

Footnotes
These should be written as one sentence, and their corresponding numbers should be placed consistently in the text, either before or after the punctuation, but not both , i.e. *either* '…recently.[1]' and 'the town,[2] where…', *or* 'recently[1].' and 'the town[2], where…'. It would be wrong to put: '…recently[1].' and 'the town,[2] where…'.

For example/e.g.
When the example comes at the end of a sentence, the abbreviation *e.g.* can be used:

> Productivity per hour in the UK is lower than in some other European countries, e.g. Germany and France.

The same applies to an example *in brackets* within the body of a sentence:

> Some countries (e.g. the US and Russia) are not committed to the reduction of industrial pollution proposed by the Kyoto Protocol.

However, *for example* must be written out *in full* if the removal of the example leaves an incomplete sentence:

> There are many objections to intensive fish farming: it is known, for example, that fish reared in such industrial conditions have high concentrations of heavy metals.

Here, if the whole example is removed from the sentence, it ends in mid-air, truncated with no meaning.

Note: Do not use *f.e.* as an abbreviation for *for example*, use *e.g.*
Also note: Some publishers require *for example* to be always written in full.
These days, because publishers wish to avoid the clutter caused by unnecessary punctuation on a page, a comma is not used after *e.g.* But if *e.g.* is used in the phrase 'see, e.g., Webb, 1990', commas are used both before and after *e.g.* A few publishers specify that such a citation should be written in full: 'see, for example, Webb 1990'.

Former/Latter
Avoid using these words if possible, because it is annoying for the reader to have to go into reverse and reread the previous sentence. But, if you must use them, then make sure they only refer to, respectively, the two items mentioned in the previous sentence:

Correct: China and Russia are superpowers. The former is still a Communist State, while the latter is now a market economy.

Incorrect: France, Germany and the Netherlands are market economies, while Cuba and China are planned economies. The latter joined the WTO only recently.

Here it is not clear whether *latter* refers to Cuba *and* China or just China, unless you say *the latter two*. Incidentally, do not mix up the spelling of *latter* with *later*.

Furthermore/In addition/What is more/Moreover
All these words are placed at the beginning of a sentence:
Furthermore or *Further* means the same as *In addition* (or *Additionally*).
What is more is rather colloquial, not really suitable for academic texts.
Moreover means the same as all these expressions but is slightly more emphatic.

(The) Gerund
This part of speech, also known as a 'verbal noun', is well known in Latin, but it is also a rather tricky part of English grammar, even for native speakers. It is the present participle (the 'ing' part of the verb) preceded by the possessive form of the noun or pronoun:
e.g. With regard to the financial crisis, the government denied having anything to do with the *banks' collapsing*. In other words, they refused to accept responsibility for *their being* in dire straits [the gerund construction is italicized].

People, both native and EFL speakers, often write incorrectly, 'for them being in dire straits'.

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Glossary

(See the entry **Abbreviations** above.)

Group words: singular or plural verbs?

In English, words like 'majority' do not always take a singular verb. In this first case, it does:

> The majority *supports* the 5-year business plan.

But, in the second case, it does not:

> The majority of the firms *are* run collectively.

(See also the entry **Majority**.)

The same rule applies to 'per cent':

> 60 per cent *receives* some kind of subsidy.
> 60 per cent of the firms *receive* some kind of subsidy.

In the following example from a published paper in the *Journal of Industrial Economics*, the use of the singular verb is incorrect:

> 'A wide variety of instruments is [should be: *are*] used by governments to further technological change' (*JIE* 50 (4): 369).

In British English, in general, the following group nouns can be used with singular or plural verbs:

bank
commission
committee
firm
government
public
team

However, in economic texts, the following group nouns are always singular:

bank
firm
team

But do not mix singular and plural verbs in the same sentence:

Incorrect: The European Commission do not wish to sacrifice their green policies in the current credit crisis, but it is aware that not all Member States are willing to go along with this.

This can be corrected by writing:

either The European Commission *does* not…*its* policies…but *it is* aware… [all verbs and pronouns singular].

or The European Commission *do* not…*their* policies…but *they* are aware [all verbs and pronouns plural].

Half (of)

In many cases, *of* is added unnecessarily after *half*:

e.g. Over half the population in developing countries live in rural areas [**not:** half of the population].

He/She, His/Her (problems with)

These days, it is not considered politically correct to refer to *he* all the time in a text (except in British legal texts). Some people go to the other extreme and religiously refer to *she*, whenever the choice arises. This is unsatisfactory as well. And even more so is a haphazard mixture: *he* here, *she* there, willy-nilly. The form *he/she* (or, if you must, *she/he*) is one generally accepted solution, but it looks and sounds awkward. A good way round the problem, if it is practical, is to put the sentence in the plural.

Instead of: In the firm survey, *the respondent indicated his/her answer* by a cross in the appropriate box.

Substitute: In the firm survey, *the respondents indicated their answers* by a cross in the appropriate box.

However, though not yet accepted by grammar purists, one can observe a new hybrid solution to the *his/her* problem emerging in a range of respectable written media, i.e. using *their* instead of *his/her*, when referring back to a single person. This solution can be illustrated by amending the following sentence from a published article:

> 'One might think a winery's minimum quality represents something about the owner's taste and *their* [in place of the original *his or her*] willingness to manufacture cheap products' (*JIE* 50 (4): 445).

This usage now has the blessing of the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*.

The Chicago Manual of Style advises that 'he or she' is preferable to 'he/she'. A rather neat solution to this problem is 's/he', but it is not widely used and frowned upon by the grammar purists.

However

There are two problems with the use of *however*. The first concerns its *placement* in the sentence. Students are often unsure where it is best placed. In fact, it can take a number of positions, depending on the particular emphasis the writer wishes to make.

There appears to be a misconception among both some mother-tongue and many non-native writers of English that sentences should *on no account* begin with *However*. And some believe the exact opposite. However, this is not necessarily the case, especially if one wishes to draw attention to a contrast or qualification to a certain point that has just been made, viz.:

> The coefficients measuring quality do not change significantly from the previous specification. *However,* including owner preference makes 'age of winery' insignificant' [italics added] (*JIE* 50 (4): 451).

When, as is frequent, *however* is placed within the body of a sentence, to achieve a natural flow, it must be in the right position. In the following sentence, *however* is placed awkwardly:

> This estimate, however, is not significantly different from zero.

This would read better as:

> This estimate is not, however, significantly different from zero.

The position of *however* in a sentence that includes *not* is more tricky than in the following positive sentence:

e.g. 'Note, however, that quality is well controlled for in the regression' (*JIE* 50 (4): 451).

However can also be placed at the end of a sentence to underline a point that has just been made:

e.g. The G8 summit of 2005 had ambitious aims to end poverty in Africa. This is unlikely to happen in the near future, however.

Note that, when using *however* in this sense of drawing a contrast, it is always followed by a comma when it occurs at the beginning of a sentence. However, when it occurs mid-sentence it must have a comma before and after (see the relevant examples above).

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The second problem with *however* is that it is often incorrectly used as a conjunction where it should be used with a capital letter to begin a new sentence:

Wrong: Population decline seems likely in all European countries, however, anxieties on this issue seem exaggerated. [**Should be**: '(…) countries. However, (…)']

Nevertheless can be used in place of *However* if special emphasis is intended:

e.g. Inflation rose in the UK during October 2012 because of the 200 per cent rise in university tuition fees. Nevertheless, this factor only had a small effect on the actual inflation rate.

The word *however* also has a second meaning 'in whatever way – to whatever extent'. In this case it is used without commas in front or behind:

e.g. However badly the economy is faring at present, eventually there will be an upswing.

In this second meaning, it is also recommended to split *however*, into *two* words if extra emphasis is required:

e.g. How ever will the car industry survive the current recession.
or
How will the car industry ever survive the current recession.

Note that this splitting only applies to the second meaning of *however*.

(a) Hundred, 100

Write: There are a hundred firms…
Or: There are 100 firms… (not 'a 100').

Hyphenated words

When noun phrases are used *adjectivally* to modify another noun, hyphens are required:

Note: the long run
but: long-run development, long-run equilibrium
Note: decision making
but: decision-making process
e.g. '…insider buying is associated with positive short- and long-term future abnormal stock returns…' (David Veenman, *Insider Trading. The Interrelation between Accounting Information, Stock Prices, and Reported Insider Trades* (2010). Ph.D. thesis, University of Amsterdam, p. 165.

Hyphens are also needed to bind together words that are inextricably linked:

privately-owned
learning-by-doing
firm-specific
crowding-out (the noun only, the verb is 'to crowd out')
publicly-funded
trade-off (the noun only, the verb is 'to trade off')

(See also the general entry **Punctuation** for the difference between hyphens and dashes.)

I

It has been the practice in academic texts written by only one author to use 'we' not 'I', when referring to the author, as is the case for texts written by more than one author. But, according to the book *Cambridge Grammar of English* (Carter and McCarthy, 2006, Section 147a: 284): 'Nowadays it is becoming less frequent for single authors to refer to themselves in the first person plural.' Many authors rightly object to using what is called 'the Royal we' when they are the only researcher involved in the study. However, in academic texts, use the first person singular, *I*, only when absolutely necessary. Rather than 'I found that…', write 'It was found that…'.

I can legitimately be used in acknowledgements:

e.g. I would like to thank Professor X for his critical but constructive comments.

Even here, however, one could dispense with 'I' and say: 'The author would like to thank…'

If-clauses

It is not surprising that non-native users of English often use the future tense in *if*-clauses that refer to the future. This is logical, but the English language is not always logical, and this use of the future is incorrect. Usually the present tense is used with *if* when indicating a future event:

The firm's future will be assured, if the grant application *is* [not *will be*] approved.

In case/In case of/In the case of

Even in near-perfect English texts produced by non-native English users, there is still a great deal of confusion regarding the use of these three expressions.

Most commonly, *In case of* is used when *In **the** case of* is what is correct:

e.g *In the case of* [**not:** *In case of*] real estate auctions, bidders who have time-specific needs for property [they need the house now not six months from now] fall into this category.

In case is often used when it would be more natural to say *if*, as in a poorly expressed sentence like this:

e.g. In case utility functions are ordinal and non-comparable, we are faced with Arrow's Impossibility Theorem (Arrow 1951).

This sentence should begin:

If utility functions are ordinal…

In British English, *in case* and *if* have subtly different meanings, as illustrated in these two sentences:

1. The firm has to lay off workers in case orders decline.
   This means that redundancies are being made *in advance* because there is a strong possibility that there will be a fall in orders.

2. The firm will have to lay off workers if orders decline.
   This means that redundancies will only happen *after* a fall in orders.

However, *In case of* and *if* are sometimes interchangeable:

e.g. In case of climate change, it would be best to take preventive measures now.

This is the same as:

If there is climate change, it would be best to take preventive measures now.

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But there *is* a difference between *in case of* and *if* in this pair of sentences:

e.g. In case of a sudden rise in interest rates, it would be best to take out a fixed-rate mortgage.
If there is a sudden rise in interest rates, it would be best to take out a fixed-rate mortgage.

The first sentence refers to a decision (to take out a fixed rate mortgage), which is taken *now* because of the possibility of an event (a rise in interest rates) in the future. The second sentence refers to a decision (to take out a fixed rate mortgage) which is taken in the *future* in response to a possible future event (a rise in interest rates).

Accordingly, *in case of* and *if* are not interchangeable here.

In the event of is another way of saying *in case of*.

Indeed

Like *also* and *already*, *indeed* is often misplaced in a sentence:

Incorrect placing: The Chancellor did balance the budget indeed.
Correct placing: The Chancellor did indeed balance the budget.

Sometimes **indeed** is used when **in fact** is correct:

Incorrect: The figure shows that indeed global warming has been at a standstill for 10 years.
Correct: The figure shows that, in fact, global warming has been at a standstill for 10 years.

Independent of

EFL writers tend to say *independent from*. Note this correct example:

e.g. One of the key elements of the CAP reform is a single farm payment independent of production.

-ing form of the verb (misuse of)

I have not seen this particular point addressed in any grammar book, but the misuse of the present particle (i.e. the part of the verb ending in *-ing*: e.g. resulting, underlying) occurs frequently in texts written by authors with EFL. The following sentences (from a draft thesis) illustrate this misuse, which is perhaps more a lapse of style than an actual error:

e.g. Radical innovations embodying alternative technologies have little chance to compete for massive adoption.

Improved: Radical innovations which embody alternative technologies…

e.g. To stimulate the liberalization of the electricity market, the government has implemented various policies encouraging market competition and supporting promising cost-effective technology.

Improved: …has implemented various policies to encourage market competition and support promising (cost-effective) technology.

Insight into

Note this phrase, as, more often than not, EFL students write ‘insight in’, which is incorrect.

Instead of/Rather than

The choice between these two expressions can sometimes present difficulties for EFL students. The difference is, however, quite simple.

Instead of means *in place of*, as in:

e.g. The graduate student gave the lecture instead of the Professor.

Rather than conveys a sense of comparison and means 'as a preferred option' as in:

e.g. Freight is increasingly being transported on inland waterways rather than by road or rail.

The latter sentence shows why I corrected the following sentence in a draft journal article:

> 'We exclude observations referring to [the tonnage of] container transport because the price for container transport depends on the number of containers transported rather than [originally 'instead of'] on the weight of freight' [words in square brackets are added, P.E.].

Here a decision has been taken to prefer one measure as opposed to another.

Another example showing the correct use of *rather than* is:

> 'Another alternative hypothesis that we want to address is that these hobbyist winery owners are selling their image and story, rather than the quality of the wine' (*JIE* 50 (4): 453).

In the last decades

I often come across this phrase in texts produced by Dutch authors, but it is not English as I know it.

Either say: In recent decades [if referring to no more than the last 20 or 30 years].
or: In past decades [if a fairly long time span is involved].
or: In the last two decades [i.e. specify the exact number of decades concerned].

Inversion of subject and verb

This change in the natural order of 'subject and verb' to 'verb and subject' particularly happens after sentences beginning with the word 'Only':

e.g. Only in a limited number of niche markets is it possible to build underground logistic systems.

Here, *it is* is reversed to *is it.*

Or when an auxiliary verb is used:

e.g. Only in the Netherlands do so many people shop in the hinterland of small and medium-sized towns.

Here, the auxiliary verb 'do' and the subject 'many people' are reversed.

e.g. Only in A is the ranking order reversed.

Here, the auxiliary verb 'is' and the subject 'the ranking order' are reversed.

Note: This inversion applies only when *only* is used as an *adverb*. There is no inversion when 'only' is used as an *adjective*:

e.g. Only settlements of more than 5000 inhabitants are defined as 'urban' in this study.

Also after certain words with a negative or restrictive connotation, the subject and verb reverse their normal places in the sentence. This often causes difficulty in sentences beginning with *Not only*:

e.g. Not only *did the firm* lose money, it had to close down [normal order: the firm lost money].

Note the addition of the auxillary verb ‘did’ in the inversion. It is this part of the verb which is inverted [did the firm].

With the verb ‘to be’ the inversion is more straightforward:

e.g Not only *was the factory* closed down after the pollution incident, but the managing director was imprisoned [normal order: the factory was closed down].

Other expressions to which this inversion rule applies, when such expressions occur at the beginning of a sentence, are as follows:

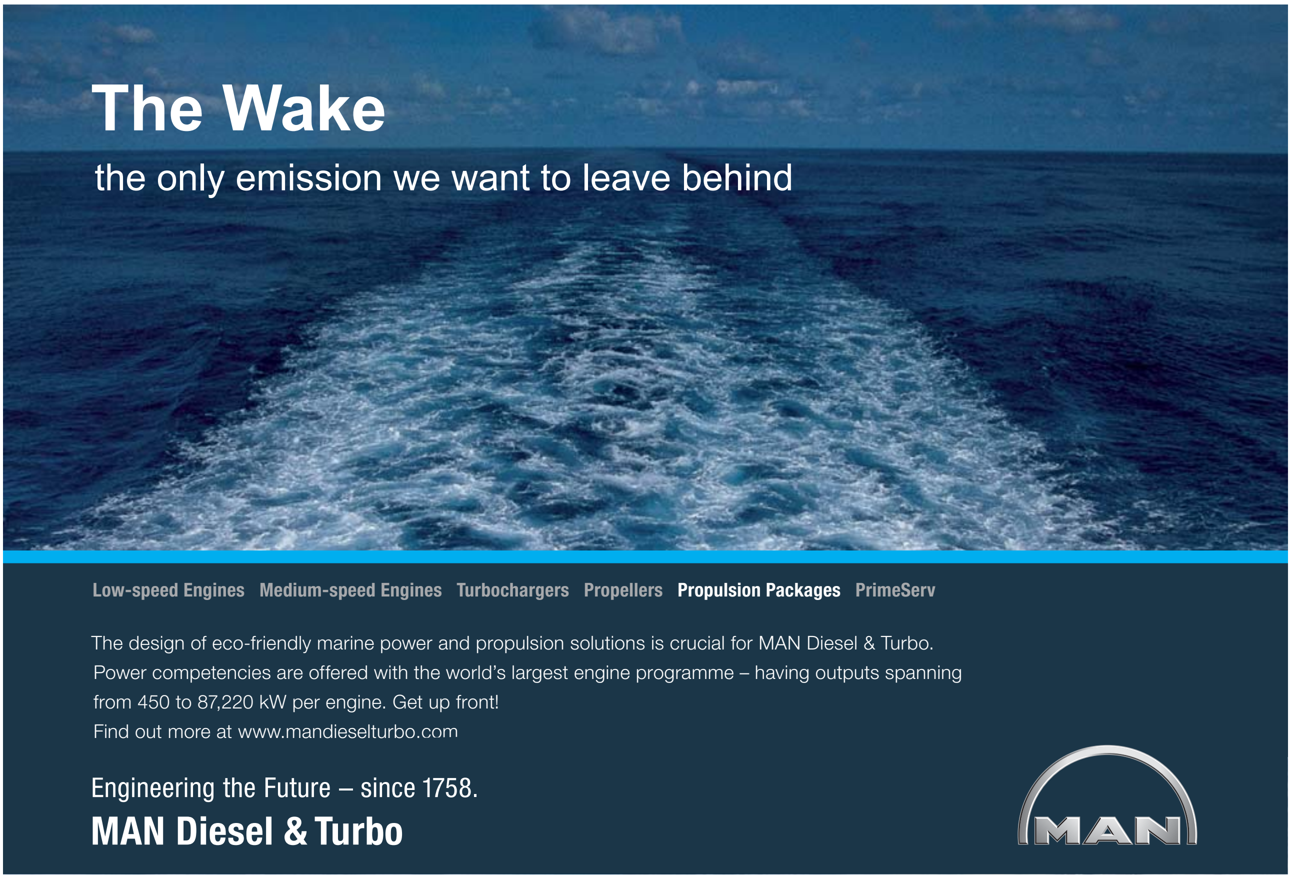
Hardly *had the business* closed down, when it started up again.

‘***Never*** in the course of human conflict *was so much* owed by so many to so few’ (Winston Churchill 1940: Speech, *Hansard*, 20 August [italics added]).

Only then *did the factory* compensate the workers affected by asbestos poisoning.

Only after the approval of the development grant *did the prospects* for the firm improve.

Scarcely *had interest rates* been reduced by the Bank of England than they were raised again.



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Inverted commas: 'Single' or "double"?

1) Use **single inverted commas** to indicate economic terms (all examples are from *JIE*):
   Is there an 'additionality effect' to R&D subsidies? (50 (4): 370).
   This is the 'selection on observables' assumption (50 (4): 382).
   The terms 'company financed', 'private' and 'own' R&D expenditures are used interchangeably (50 (4): 371).

or to refer to previously-defined terms:

> Firms in 'preferred' development areas receive 60% of the approved R&D budget (50(4):373).
> 78% of the owners would be 'somewhat' or 'very' unlikely to sell their winery if they would get a higher return on the stock market (50 (4): 432).

or to mark a slightly unusual word or phrase:

> The mean respondent does between a quarter and a half of his socializing with 'wine people' (50 (4): 439).

or to highlight the names of variables:

> 'Ownership years' is included separately in the regression [inverted commas added] (50 (4): 453).

Here, without the inverted commas, the sentence sounds ungrammatical because a plural noun (years) is used with a singular verb (is).
In this case, italic print could also be used to pick out *Ownership years*. But do not use italics and inverted commas together (so, NOT '*Ownership years*').

or used around well-known words, phrases or clichés that are not actual quotations:

> a 'real-life' situation
> the 'what if' or counterfactual outcome

Single inverted commas are sometimes used to indicate that a word is not all that it seems:

> The 'gain' can be calculated as follows.

Single inverted commas are often used around the titles of journal articles in a Bibliography:

> Ballestro, E. and C. Romero, 1998, 'Uncertainty and the Evaluation of Public Investment Decisions', *American Economic Review*, 60: 364–78.

(However, see the entry **Bibliographies** above regarding the need to avoid extraneous punctuation.)

Finally, British publishers usually stipulate that authors should use single inverted commas (quotation marks) around quotations from a source cited in a text. For example, in Francis Spufford's 'fairy tale', *Red Plenty* (2010: 5), about the Soviet planned economy run by mathematical economists, he explains, as I quote here:

> 'Because the whole system of production and distribution in the USSR was owned by the state, because all Russia was in Lenin's words "one office, one factory" it could be directed, as capitalism could not, to the fastest, most lavish fulfilment of human needs.'

Note the position of the full stop *inside* the final quotation mark. This is because the quotation is a *whole sentence*. If only *part* of a sentence is quoted, then the full stop comes outside the inverted commas:

> One reviewer said that Spufford has 'a piercing eye for historic detail'.

2) Use **double inverted commas** (quotation marks) around a quotation *within* a quotation, as in the use of Lenin's words "one office, one factory" in Spufford's quotation at the end of point (1) above.

Opposite to British English punctuation, in American English double quotation marks are used around quotations, and single ones around quotations within quotations.

Also note that, in American English, at the end of quotations which are not full sentences or after the title of an article in a journal, the punctuation always comes *inside* the final inverted commas. This looks wrong to British eyes, viz:

- According to Bjørn Lomborg, in *The Skeptical Environmentalist* (2001: 280), the IPCC modelling groups admit that their scenarios are 'an attempt at "computer-aided story-telling." '
- Boyarski, A. (1962). 'On the application of Mathematics in Economics,' *Problems of Economics* 4(9).

* * *

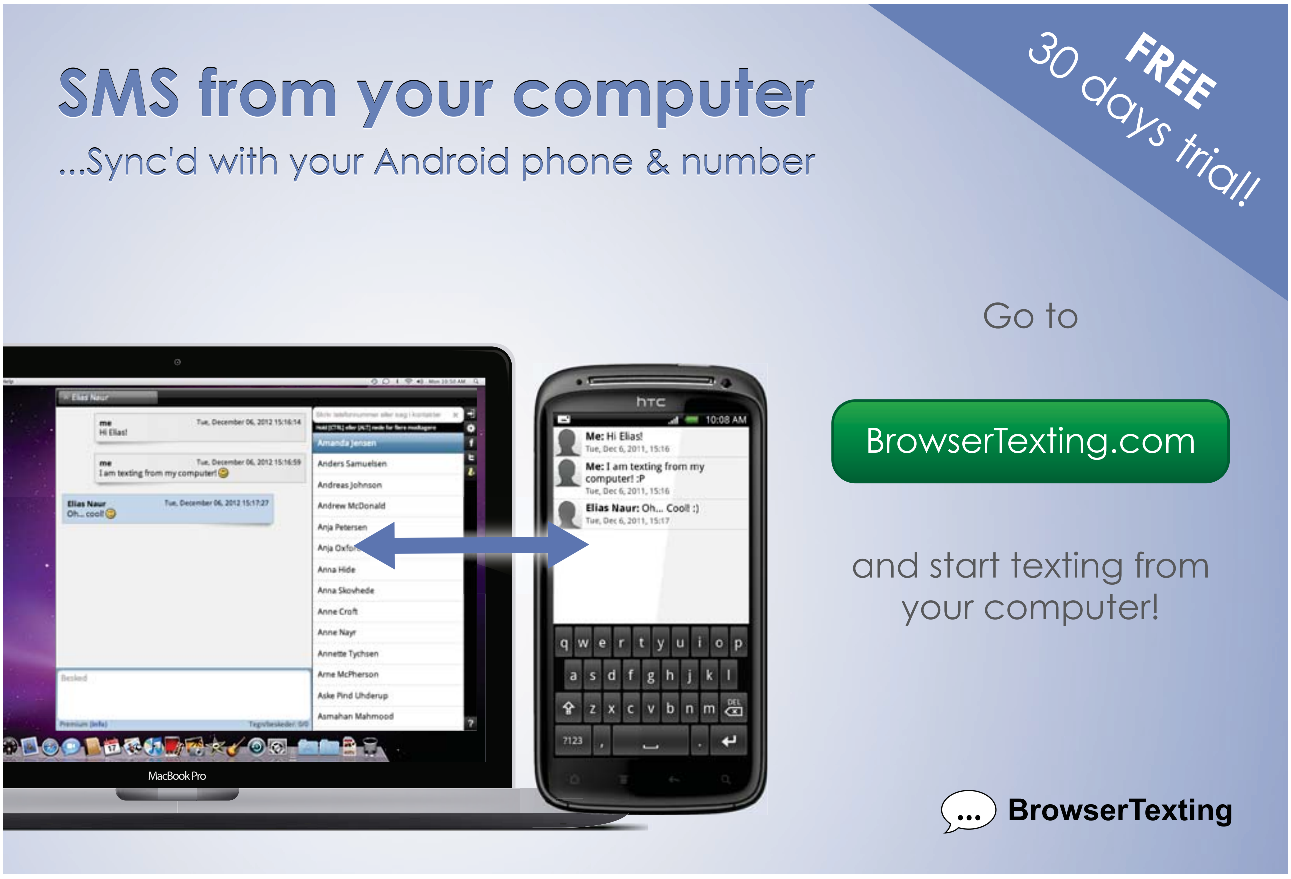
When quotations have more than 50 words it is not necessary to use inverted commas, either single or double. Just present the quotation as an inset block of text, often in smaller print than the main text, (see the quotation at the end of the entry **Often/Only**.)

Italicized words

In American English texts, well-known Latin or other foreign phrases are not italicized. At one time in British English texts, such phrases were always italicized, but now are *no longer* italicized. For instance:

a priori
ad hoc
ceteris paribus
et al.
ex ante
ex post
inter alia
mutatis mutandis
vis-á-vis
Weltanschauung
zeitgeist

For guidance on italicization, check the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. (Note also, the use of italics for book or journal titles mentioned in a text or bibliography.)



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Italics can also be used to emphasize certain words in a sentence:

> 'Another possibility for assessing the effect of the R&D subsidy is to look at the performance of firms *after* the subsidy has been discontinued' (*JIE* 50 (4): 380).
> 'Suppose that liquidity-constrained firms are more likely to apply for – and to receive – an R&D subsidy *and* to tighten their R&D expenditures' (*JIE* 50 (4): 381).

Kind of/Kinds of

Make sure that these expressions are used consistently with singular or plural nouns:

e.g. kind of model [singular]
kinds of models [plural]

The same rule applies to *sort of/sorts of*.

Less/fewer

The Queen's English Society (QES), which defends the purity of English grammar, wages a continual battle for the correct usage of these words. The rule is:
Less is used with uncountable nouns, e.g. less coal, less money.
But note: *less than 50 euros*, not *fewer than 50 euros*, because 50 euros are treated as a total amount, not as a collection of individual euros.
Fewer is used with countable nouns, e.g. fewer cars, fewer people.

Informally, however, English speakers often use *less* with countable nouns (e.g. less cars, less people), and it is with this practice that the QES takes issue. Nevertheless, the rule is simple to understand, and the formal use of *less* and *fewer* is easy to apply.

Like/Such as

When a sentence involves a list of items as examples, it is not correct to begin the list with *like*.
Such as is the correct expression:

e.g. 'This can happen when, for example, some of the released resources from subsidising a superfluous project are invested in non-R&D activities, *such as* marketing, production, etc.' (*JIE* 50 (4): 380).

Neither Bryson (2002) nor Gooden (2007) consider the FAQ: When should *like* or *such as* be used? But Guy Keleny in his Saturday grammar column in *The Independent* has addressed this question. He explains: '"Like" means "similar to", "such as" means "in the same category as"':

e.g. Building Societies, like banks, are experiencing a time of extreme uncertainty.
(Here there is similarity.)

e.g. Classical economists, such as Adam Smith and Ricardo, believed in the virtues of the free market.
(These economists belong to the category 'classical economists'.)

Do not use tautological expressions such as: '*like*, *e.g.*', and '*such as*, *for example*': *e.g.* and *such as* are quite sufficient on their own – they should not both be used together.

Likely

The British and the Americans use this word differently but the meaning is the same.

British:	The housing market is likely to improve in 2011.
American:	The housing market will very likely improve in 2011.

Lists

When making a number of points in a sentence it is better to separate them by semi-colons (**;**) rather than commas (**,**), because semi-colons achieve an absolutely clear division between the items. A comma cannot do this as effectively:

> 'The group of wines in the $2.00–$ 3.50 range include many varieties: red table wine, Zinfandel; Cabernet Sauvignon; and Crenin Blanc' [based on a sentence in the *JIE*].

In the original article, this list was separated only by commas, and 'red table wine, Zinfandel,' on first reading, appeared to be two separate items. The use of the semi-colon after 'Zinfandel'; gets rid of this ambiguity.

The list above contains only short items, but when each item is long, or there is a combination of long and short items, the semi-colon is even more useful:

> 'A bottle of wine is described by: its price; the year it appears in *Wines and Vines*; vintage; grape varietal; the appellation on the label; the quality of the bottle and its vintage; whether it is ready to drink; and a variety of characteristics of the winery producing the bottle' [commas of original sentence replaced by semi-colons] (*JIE* 50 (4): 438).

When making lists of points, either full stops or semi-colons can be used at the end of each point. The rule is:

- If the point made is a whole sentence, then use, as is usual, a capital letter to begin the point, and a full stop at the end.
- If the point is not a complete sentence, use a semi-colon at the end, except for the last point, which should end in a full stop.
- Sometimes, one finds, incorrectly, whole sentence points which, while beginning with a capital letter, end incorrectly with a semi-colon.
- Use bullet points or dashes to highlight points.
- A list of points should all be grammatically identical: *either* all whole sentences *or* all partial sentences (words or phrases), not a mixture.

[This list is all whole sentences.]

Little/Few

The rule for the use of *little* and *few* is the same as that for *less* and *fewer. Little* is used with uncountable nouns: little investment.

Few is used with countable nouns: few managers.

(See **Less and Fewer** above.)

Looks like/Looks as if

Looks like is colloquial and is not suitable for academic texts:

e.g. It looks like rain today.
Global warming looks like the end of the world to some people.

Looks as if is more formal:

e.g. It now looks as if the Large Hadron Collidor will not be a complete waste of public money, as it is beginning to produce results.

Majority

Note: While the word majority is singular, it usually goes with a plural verb, but the following published sentence incorrectly uses a (3rd person) singular verb:

e.g 'The vast majority of the subsidies granted represents 50% of the agreed R&D budget' (*JIE* 50 (4): 370).

This should be 'represent' (3rd person plural).

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May/Can

There is an important difference between *may* and *can*.

May implies permission; *can* indicates ability:

e.g. Fishermen may not catch cod in excess of their quotas.

[i.e. They do not have permission for this.]

e.g. Cod stocks can be replenished by means of quota.

[i.e. This indicates that it is definitely possible to conserve cod by this means.]

May/Might

People often find it difficult to decide when to use *may*, and when to use *might*: it is simply a matter of the *degree of uncertainty*. Though implying some uncertainty, *may* suggests there is more chance of something happening than *might*:

e.g. The output figures *may* improve [perhaps a 50% chance].
The output figures *might* improve [perhaps a 30% chance].

It is a common misconception that *might* is the past tense of *may*. In fact, they both refer to the present and the future. *May well* suggests a strong possibility:

e.g. The output figures *may well* improve [perhaps a more than 50% chance].

Misspelling

Because English is not a phonetic language, both native and EFL users have difficulty with spelling. The following are the most common misspellings by foreigners:

Wrong	**correct**
acessible	accessible
accesible	
accomodate	accommodate
acommodate	
adress	address
addres	
appartment	apartment
comission	commission
eitgh	eighth
homogenous	homogeneous
occurence	occurrence
questionaire	questionnaire
seperate	separate
strenth	strength
supercede	supersede

Where words in some languages are quite or even slightly similar to English, there is a tendency for foreign words to be used in English texts by EFL writers:

e.g.	**French** writers with EFL use:	**English**
	developpement	development
	entreprise	enterprise
	isolation	insulation
	méthode	method
	sensible	sensitive
	Dutch writers with EFL	
	en	and
	isolatie	insulation
	of	or
	periode	period
	succes	success
	systeem	system

Months
Remember, in English, months of the year begin with *capital letters*:
January, February, March, etc.

Neither
There is confusion about whether *neither* should be followed by a singular or a plural verb. As in many cases discussed above, the difference is between formal and informal English:

Neither X nor Y is possible (formal = academic).
Neither X nor Y are possible (informal).

As a general rule, use a singular verb if the subject is singular, and a plural verb if the subject is plural.

e.g. This year there are no signs of global warming, but neither is there expectation of cooling in the long run.
Generally speaking, house prices are not rising, but neither are they falling in some parts of the country.

Important notes:
Never say: *neither…or*; always *neither…nor*.
Also never say: *either…nor*; always say: *either…or*.

None

People also ponder whether to use a singular or plural verb with *none*. The answer is singular in formal English, as advised by Leech and Svartvik (1994, Section 513: 263):

e.g.   None [i.e. not one] of the firms is performing well.

However, according to Bryson (2008: 294):

> 'Although *none* can always take a singular verb, there is no rule recognized by any authority on English grammar that it cannot equally well take a plural one'.

Burchfield (1998: p. 526) agrees, and adds that:

> '…the choice of plural or singular in the accompanying verbs, etc., has been governed by the surrounding words or by the notional sense'.

e.g.   In my work as an editor, I have read many Ph.D. theses on economics written by students with EFL, but none has impressed me as much as the one I single out in Chapter 2 of this guide.
So far none of the many measures taken to alleviate the global credit crisis have been shown to work.

(These are my own sentences, using *none has* and *none…have*, following Birchfield's examples and advice to consider context.) In the first case, one thesis *has* impressed me; in the second case, many measures *have* not worked.

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…not only…but also

People often get into a tangle when employing this useful expression. The key is to achieve a *balanced* sentence structure. The following sentence does *not* have such balance:

e.g. The sample of respondents does not only include the firm's current workers but also its former employees.

This sentence is unbalanced because there is a verb (include) after *not only*, but no verb after *but also*.

There are two ways to make a balanced sentence:

1. The sample of respondents includes not only the firm's current workers but also its former employees.
   Here, by placing the verb *includes* before *not only*, it serves both parts of the *not only…but also…*expression, and achieves balance.

2. The sample of respondents not only includes the firm's current workers but also represents its former employees.
   Here, the sentence is balanced, because there is a verb (*includes*) after *not only* and another verb (*represents*) after *but also*.

3. Not only does the sample of respondents include the firm's current workers but it also represents the former employees.
   This is yet another way of balancing the sentence by creating two main clauses with two different verbs.
   (For sentences which begin with *Not only*, see the entry above **Inversion of subject and verb**.)

Note: Do not put a comma before *but also* which is often done incorrectly.

Number/Amount

Students often confuse *number* and *amount*. The distinction is simple.
Use *number* when you can count the units:

e.g. a great number of cars/people/trees

Use *amount* when there are no countable units:

e.g. a large amount of money/oil/water

Number of (followed by singular or plural verb)

It is useful to know that the expression *The number of* takes a singular verb, but *A number of* takes a plural verb:

e.g. The number of firms in the computer games industry *is* not known.
A number of firms in the region *are* closing down.

Numbers

As a general rule, write out numbers *one* to *ten* in full, and write *11* onwards in figures. *Ten* is 'transitional', meaning that it can be written either as a word (*ten*) or as a number (*10*). However, Cambridge University Press asks its authors to write *one* to a *hundred* in words, so check your publisher's policy. If it is the lowest of a series of numbers, e.g. five, then it is more sensible to write it as a number 5 because it looks strange to have one number as a word and all the other numbers as figures. Always write percentages in figures: 23 per cent, 5 per cent.

Also, use numbers, not words, for:

Chapter 1 [not *one*]
3 seconds/minutes/hours/days/weeks

Offer/Provide

(see ***offer/provide** in **Confusion between certain words**)

Often/Only

The positioning of these words in a sentence frequently causes difficulties. They must be focussed on the right part of the sentence, otherwise the correct meaning may not be conveyed.

The word *often* is usually placed before the main verb:

e.g. 'In the environmental debate, you often hear general discussion based on extremely short-term trends' (Bjørn Lomborg, 2001: 8, *The Skeptical Environmentalist*).

(i.e. Here, *often* comes before the verb 'hear'.)

When there is an auxiliary verb, *often* comes after the auxiliary:

e.g. In the nineteenth century, coal was often transported on canals by barges.

(i.e. Here, *often* comes after the auxiliary 'was'.)

But *often* can also be placed at the very end of a sentence:

e.g. The fall of the pound against the euro is happening more and more often.

The placing of the word *only* is an even more delicate matter. The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* advises:

> '…to avoid ambiguity, you should place the adverb *only* next to the word or words whose meaning it restricts':

e.g. The town has only 6000 inhabitants

not: The town only has 6000 inhabitants.

But observe how the meaning of the following sentences is changed, depending on where *only* occurs:

e.g. The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave only a small tax reduction to low-paid workers.

[i.e. Here, *only* focusses on the adjective 'small'.]

e.g. The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave a tax reduction only to low-paid workers.
(i.e. Here, *only* relates to the words 'low-paid workers', i.e. he did not give the reduction to any other group.)

e.g. Nowadays the British government only lends money for university study, whereas formerly it gave grants.
(i.e. Here, the British government lends money, but no longer gives grants.)

The difficulties with the positioning of *only* is well illustrated by the following example from Guy Keleny's Saturday column "Errors and Omissions" in *The Independent* newspaper:

> An odd little glitch afflicted one of the articles we published on Tuesday about the fall of Lehman Brothers: 'Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley remain the only independents on Wall Street.' That implies they were the only independents before and remain so. The writer meant to say that they are the only remaining independents.

(See also the entry **Also/Already** which, like *often* and *only*, are examples of focussing adverbs, and the entry **Inversion of Subject and Verb** which concerns the position of *Only*, *Not Only* at the beginning of a sentence.)

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On the one hand…on the other hand (a favourite expression of economists)

On the one hand must always be followed, in the same sentence, or soon after, by *on the other hand*.

e.g. On the one hand, a year ago the economic crisis was deepening, but, on the other hand, inflation was falling. [**Note** the commas on either side of *on the other hand*.]

However, a sentence can begin *On the other hand*, ***without*** being preceded by a sentence which contains *On the one hand*, but in this case the contrast is not so strong.

Often, students write, incorrectly, 'on one hand', leaving out *the* before *hand*.

But it is allowed, indeed desirable, to leave out *hand* in *on the other hand* when the two phrases occur near to each other in the sentence, as in:

e.g. This means that to determine the effect of risk aversion on the SCC, the climate-economy model should make a distinction between, on the one hand, risk aversion and, on the other, the marginal utility of consumption and the discount rate, which is not done in the standard model (sentence extracted from a draft paper by Jeroen van den Bergh and Wouter Botzen, February 2013).

In long sentences, it is best to keep the second *hand* in this expression, as, by the end of the sentence, the reader may have forgotten the first *hand*.

Do not say, as is often done, 'on the one side…on the other side'.

On the other hand/In Contrast/On the contrary/Conversely

These phrases are different ways of introducing a comparison, each progressively stronger. Students often use *On the contrary* to begin a sentence, when the milder, *On the other hand* will do. *In contrast* and *On the contrary* are fairly equal in strength, but *Conversely* should only be used when referring to a diametrically opposite position.

The following examples show how this set of four expressions should be used:

e.g.
1. The United Kingdom is currently relatively successful in restoring economic growth, after a long period of recession. On the other hand, its growing deficit on the current account of the balance of payments may lead to a new crisis in the future.
2. In contrast to the USA, Russia has a rapidly depreciating currency.
3. In the upswing of the economic cycle, it is wise to have a budget surplus. On the contrary, under conditions of recession, budget deficits are quite sensible.
4. If prices go up, demand falls. Conversely, if prices go down, demand rises.

Own

There is a tendency for economics and business studies students and professors with EFL to say *own* in isolation, without specifying *whose* own:

> 'Because the characteristics that make a firm a recipient of an R&D subsidy are likely to be correlated *with own R&D* effort, we need to control for this potential source of correlation' (*JIE* 50 (4): 383).

Here, it would be more literate to say *its own*, as it is *the firm's own* R&D effort, which the author himself writes elsewhere in the same article:

> 'We restricted ourselves to the effect of the subsidy on the firm's own R&D expenditures' (*JIE* 50 (4): 378).

Parameter(s)

Do not use this word except in a strictly technical sense:

e.g. the parameters of the model

Otherwise, use *boundaries*, *limits*, *guidelines*, *elements*.

Percentages

Either use the percentage sign (%) consistently in the text for percentages (95%, 60%), or write per cent (or percent) consistently (95 per cent, 60 per cent). In fact, most publishers instruct that the % sign should not be used in the main text but it can be used in tables and figures. Do not, as I noticed in the article on the wine industry in *JIE*, in the space of one paragraph, write 'five percent' in one place, then '10 percent', and finally, '3.3%' (*JIE* 50 (4): 376).

(See also ***per cent/percent** in Chapter 2 **Confusion Between Certain Words**.)

Person of verbs

Do not keep switching between the 3rd and the 2nd person, as in:

e.g. When *one* is making a sample survey, *you* must be careful to ensure that it is representative.

Either use *one* all the time or *you* all the time (the former is preferable), but not both in the same sentence.

Plurals

Students from China, Indonesia and Israel tend to use the plural form of nouns (when these end in 's'), when they should be using the singular:

e.g. *Incorrect*: The road networks is congested. [It should be *network*.]

Swahili speakers tend to turn words which usually have a singular form into plurals:

e.g. breads, informations, equipments [It should be *bread*, *information*, *equipment*.]

Danish and Russian speakers do the same:

e.g. her hairs [It should be her *hair*.]

However, words like *bread*, *cheese* and *hair* do have a legitimate plural form as in: *a variety of breads/cheeses, the hairs on the back of your hand*.

Arabic speakers, on the other hand, may (for numbers above ten) use the singular form when the plural is correct. This is because in Arabic one would say (in literal translation):

e.g. The farmer has nine pigs and 20 cow.

(In English it would be *cows*.)

Prepositions (avoid using at end of sentence)

If possible, try to avoid using these parts of speech (e.g. *with*, *to*) as the last word in a sentence; it makes the ending of the sentence sound weak:

e.g. In Section 6, the concept of Cost Benefit Analysis will be dealt *with*.

This sentence is better expressed if *with* is moved from the end by changing the sentence from passive to active:

Section 6 deals *with* the concept of Cost Benefit Analysis.

e.g. Consumers attain a higher utility, the smaller the distance from the product quality to the level an individual aspires to [sentence based on one in a draft Ph.D. thesis].

This sentence can be improved by changing the last part to:

…the level to which the individual aspires.

e.g. The papers which we now turn to [has a weak ending].

The papers to which we now turn [has a strong ending].

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Prepositions (their use after nouns)

It is often not realized:

a) that two nouns cannot always share the same preposition; and
b) what is the correct preposition to use after certain nouns.

Both these mistakes can be illustrated with reference to the following flawed draft sentence:

> The formulation of the condition here highlights the relations and the differences with ordinal equivalences.

Here, the author probably thought he was on the right lines because he believed that 'relation' and 'difference' could share the same preposition (*with*), but this is not so. First of all, 'differences *with*' should be 'differences *from*'. Second, 'relations' then cannot share the preposition *from* with 'differences', because 'relations' is always followed by the preposition *to* or *with*. Therefore, the correct way to rephrase this sentence is as follows:

> The formulation of the condition here highlights the relations to, and the differences from, ordinal equivalence.

A less technical example of this rule is:

> The UK exports cars to, and imports cars from, some of the other EU Member States.

An example of a shared preposition is:

> The UK has trade and other economic relations with the other EU Member States.

Presently

Bryson (2002) advises against the use of 'presently', or 'at present', on the grounds that they are redundant in a sentence. The same applies to 'currently'. However, it is instructive to note that, according to the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, in British English 'presently' has two separate meanings: '1. after a short time or soon; 2. at the present time'.

e.g. Presently, the Chancellor will make a pre-Budget statement.

(Here *presently* does have a function, because if it were omitted it would be impossible to know whether the statement would be made sooner or later: meaning 1.)

e.g. The world stock markets are presently undergoing a sharp rally.

(Here *presently* can be removed without loss of meaning. It is implicit that the meaning is 'at the present time': meaning 2.)

The American *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* remarks that sense 2 (now) is 'most common in contexts relating to business or politics'. *Webster's* also says that many commentators have objected to this use, though there appears to be no foundation for this opinion. *Webster's* quotes the example:

> 'The fastest rising cost is Medicaid, presently paid by states and cities (William Safire 1982).'

Weiss (2005: 47) confirms this, saying that *presently* meaning *currently* is American usage. *Webster's* provides these meanings: '1a (archaic) at once; 1b before long. 2 at the present time, now.'

Principle of Parallel Construction

This subject has already been covered to a considerable extent under the entries above concerning **Both to, to both**, **Either…or**, and, in particular **Not only…but also**, where the importance of achieving a balanced sentence structure was stressed. However, the same principle applies to groups of sentences. Here is an example from a draft paper I once edited, where the principle of parallel construction has been violated:

> First, there is *exchange efficiency*. A Pareto-optimal position will be achieved only when the marginal rate of substitution between any two goods is the same for each consumer. Second, a Pareto-optimal situation will be achieved when the marginal rate of technical substitution between factors is the same in each use and for all producers, *factor combination efficiency*. Third, the consumer's marginal rate of substitution between products must equal the marginal rate of transformation between products, *economic efficiency*.

According to the Principle of Parallel Construction, this passage would be better expressed thus:

> First, there is *exchange efficiency*: a Pareto-optimal position…
> Second, there is *factor combination efficiency*: a Pareto-optimal situation…
> Third, there is *economic efficiency*: the consumer's marginal…

There is one more aspect of parallel construction which is a source of error. In a list of items, if articles or prepositions are used, this must be done in a symmetrical way. In the following sentence the sporadic use of the article (*the*) is incorrect:

> The Germans, French and the Dutch have higher productivity per hour than the British.

To make it correct:
Either use the article (*the*) only at the beginning of the sequence of nationalities:

> The Germans, French and Dutch have higher productivity per hour than the British.

or repeat the use of the article (*the*) before each nationality:

> The Germans, the French and the Dutch have higher productivity than the British.

Similarly, in the following sentence, the use of the preposition (*on*) is incorrect:

> The JIT [Just In Time] deliveries will be made on Mondays and on Wednesdays and Fridays.

To make it correct:
Either use the preposition (*on*) only at the beginning of the series:

> The JIT deliveries will be made on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

or repeat the use of the preposition (*on*) every time:

> The JIT deliveries will be made on Mondays, on Wednesdays and on Fridays.

Note also the need to repeat *which* or *that* in two consecutive clauses:

e.g. The rise in fuel prices which is now affecting all European countries, and which may continue in future years, is particularly affecting low-income families.

Karl Marx said that each should contribute according to his abilities, and that each should be paid according to his needs.

The same rule applies to *who*:

e.g. Margaret Thatcher, who was the first woman British Prime Minister, and who won three consecutive terms in office, was known as the Iron Lady.

However, it is best to avoid making sentences in which words like *which*, *that*, *when*, *where*, *who* are repeated in close succession:

e.g. In the near future, when the polar ice cap melts, when global warming reaches a critical point, sea levels will rise all over the world.

This can be rephrased as:

When global warming reaches a critical point, and the polar ice cap melts, the sea level will rise.

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Punctuation

The *comma* (**,**) has already been dealt with at length in the entry **Commas** above.

One aspect of the *semi-colon* (**;**) was dealt with in the entry **Lists**, but this type of punctuation is mainly used to separate what are, in effect, two sentences which are very closely linked. One example is the very first sentence in the earlier entry **Prepositions (avoid using at end of sentence)**. The writer has to decide whether the use of a *full stop* (**.**) would create too long a pause between the two ideas expressed. Here is another example:

> It was necessary to conduct a sample survey; it could only be done by telephone.

The colon (**:**) is used when the second part of the sentence is an illustration or amplification of the first part. For an example, see my improved version of the long passage quoted near the beginning of the entry **Principle of Parallel Construction**. Another example is:

> 'There are two types of inputs the owner may value: quality, *s*, that customers also value, and *t* (a wine-maker who has a French accent and costs more, but is not better than other wine-makers) that consumers do not value' (*JIE* 50 (4): 436).

Exclamation marks (!) should not be used in academic texts. They make the text look frivolous or pretentious. The reader is intelligent enough to be aware when a good point has been made, or when there is a remarkable result:

e.g. The R^2 was 0.999.
not: The R^2 was 0.999!

Hyphens (-) which link words should be used sparingly, e.g. when the meaning of two words or a string of words would be ambiguous without the hyphen(s). For instance, there is a difference between *recollect* (meaning to recall) and *re-collect* (to collect again: bees do this when making honey), and between *200-odd citations* (round about 200 citations) and *200 odd citations* (200 strange citations).

However, it is not necessary to hyphenate expressions such as:

> often used
> frequently occurring

but the following expressions do need hyphens:

> a 28-year-old male
> three-quarter-hour intervals

(For more examples, see also the entry **Hyphenated words.**)

Sir Winston Churchill wrote that: 'One must regard the hyphen as a blemish to be avoided wherever possible', quoted in Fowler (1926: 255), who himself devoted six columns to the use of the hyphen). American English uses hyphens parsimoniously, compared with British English, but does use them in 'better-off' and 'worse-off', where British English does not.

Then there is the distinction between the use of *long dashes* ' – … – ' and *brackets* '(…)' within a sentence. *Dashes* are used when one wishes to make a *quick* aside (i.e. remark) that hardly affects the flow of the main sentence:

e.g. 'This owner's net costs – financial and psychic – are lower than the costs of an identical profit-maximising firm' (*JIE* 50 (4): 435).

Dashes go in pairs (as above) when the interruption to the main sentence occurs mid-sentence.
Note: Do NOT put a comma after a dash (–,). Do not confuse long dashes (—), which separate parts of a sentence, with short hyphens (-), which link two or more words. (See *Hyphens* above, and the entry **Hyphenated words**.)

Brackets are used for a brief example within the body of the sentence (or at the end):

e.g. 'We are not claiming that the specifics of the model above (quality and ability) apply to art galleries or other utility-maximising settings' (*JIE* 50 (4): 437).

or for a long aside which interrupts the flow of the main sentence:

e.g. 'The "sister" premium is substantial (at the mean, approximately 40 cents for each quality level difference) and could be a reason for a winery to continue to produce high-quality wines despite unremunerative direct financial returns' (*JIE* 50 (4): 448, Footnote 12).

In general, however, try to avoid long interruptions in brackets by making two sentences. Otherwise by the time readers have got to the end of the bracketed passages, they will have forgotten what came before the brackets.

Square brackets [ ] are used when an author makes an insertion in a quotation from the work of another author in order to make the quotation fit better into the surrounding text:

e.g. '…this methodology embrace[s] and build[s] in unanticipated events and uncontrolled variables.';

or to add an explanatory note:

e.g. 'Some believe its *methodological* approach is as important as its *content*' [italics are the author's];

or round the Latin word *sic*, meaning 'this' (i.e. as it was written) to indicate when there is a mistake in spelling or grammar, in an original quotation. The following example of a rather amusing typographical error shows how *sic* is used:

In the Preface to the book *Tax Policy in OECD Countries, Choices and Conflicts* by Ken Messere, IBFD Publications BV, Amsterdam, the author thanks his research and secretarial staff, acknowledging: 'Their good humour in coping with my bad hadwriting [sic] helped a lot' (p. 4). This was, in fact, a typesetter's or a proofreader's mistake, but in this case it serves to strengthen the apology. Note the use of square brackets within a quotation. Here, it is necessary to add [sic] to the original quotation when citing it. Otherwise the reader might think 'had' is a mistranscription of 'hand' made by the author of this grammar guide.

Questions

If these occur within the sentence, always begin the question with a capital letter:

> The question inevitably arises: Should the fish-farming industry in Scotland be allowed to continue if its products are dangerously polluted?

Do not confuse questions and statements. There is sometimes a tendency to put question marks at the end of statements, when they should only be used with genuine questions:

e.g. *Incorrect:* The question is whether short sea shipping can deliver solutions to the congestion and sustainability problems? [This is not a question.]

Correct: The question is: Can short sea shipping deliver solutions to the congestion and sustainability problems?

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Respectively

The expression 'x respectively y' (which is often encountered in texts written by non-native users of English) is incorrect. This is the correct way to use *respectively*:

e.g. For the years 1998 and 2002, the increase of production was 12 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively.

Short sentences

(See Chapter 3 of this guide, **Notes on Style**.)

Singular verbs (special occasions when to use)

It is useful to know that a singular subject takes a singular verb, *even if* the words: 'with', 'as well as', 'in addition to', 'except', 'together with' and 'no less than' intervene between the subject and the verb:

e.g. Oil, as well as high-tech goods, is among the imports of the USA.
The CEO, together with his Deputy, is preparing the company's Annual Report.

Remember that, if the subject is singular, the verb is always singular, *even if* the object is plural:
e.g. The country's main problem is too many imports.

Vice versa: If the subject is plural the verb is always plural *even if* the object is singular:
e.g. Too many imports are the country's main problem.

Note also that plural-looking words such as 'politics', 'economics', 'mathematics', and 'statistics' are (usually) treated as singular words which take singular verbs:
e.g. It has been said that economics is 'The Dismal Science' (Thomas Carlyle, 1850).

(But note too the following exceptions to this 'rule':
The trade statistics are encouraging for the third quarter.
What are his politics?
On the other hand:
What is economics for?)

So-called

Do not use this expression unless a negative connotation is implied. People often use it incorrectly to describe technical terms, e.g. the so-called greenhouse effect; so-called Pareto-optimality. Using *so-called* to describe these terms suggests there is something spurious about them. When making reference to economics or business terms, it is better to say: …what is known as the 'Heckscher-Ohlin trade theory'; or: …what is referred to as the 'law of supply and demand'; or what is called the 'Veblen effect'.

The following sentence shows the correct usage of *so-called* in its true negative meaning:

e.g. For the security and prosperity of the population, there is a need for all countries to be real democracies, not the so-called democracies that exist in some parts of the world.

S or Z

This entry refers to those words which can be spelled with either an *s* or a *z*, e.g. organise/organize; industrialise/industrialize; mechanisation/mechanization; realise/realize. Both these spellings are correct, but within one text the author should be consistent, i.e. choose either the *s* or the *z* form, do not mix the two types. Some people think that spelling such words with a *z* is more suitable for scientific texts, while the *s* spelling is best for more literary texts. On the other hand, others think the *z* form makes the text look unattractive, too 'hard'. One of the quality newspapers in the UK, *The Independent*, chooses the *s* form. However, it is a matter of personal preference. This is the advice given in the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (*COED*), but it does say in the introduction that the 's' form is particularly used in British English. The 'z' form is not an Americanization, but is widely used in American English. The *COED* itself, published in New York, uses the 'z' form in its own explanations of words, and that is what is done in this guide.

Note that, in British English, the word *analyse* is always written with an *s*. In American English, it is always *analyze* with a *z*.

The word *fertilizer* has only a *z* in American English. The words *advertise*, *enterprise*, *franchise*, *merchandise*, and *supervise* have only an *s* form in both British and American English.

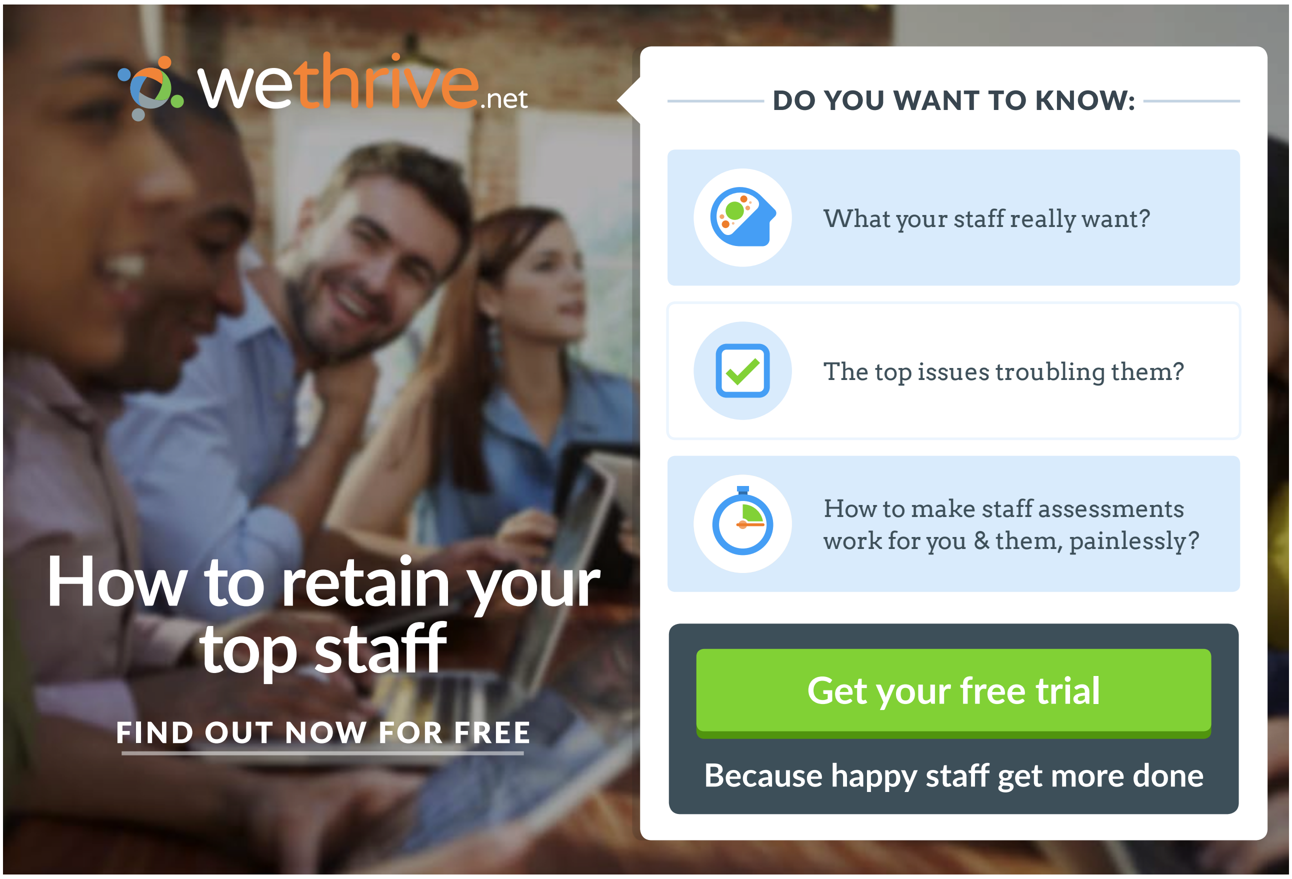
Spellings that cause difficulty

Even with the widespread use of spellcheckers these days, misspelled words still crop up in texts. The following words are often spelled incorrectly in draft economics and business texts:

accommodate
commission
commitment
committed
committee
eighth
fourth (i.e. the fourth item in a series)
forty
fulfil (US: fulfill)
fulfilled
fulfilment (US: fulfillment)
height
heterogeneous
homogeneous

install (US: instal), installation
instalment (US: installment)
minuscule
occurred
precede
proceed
received
rhythm
satisficing
separate
skilful (US: skillful)
strength
successful
supersede

(See also the entry **Confusion between certain words** and **Misspelling** above.)



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Split infinitives

It is widely believed that there is an unbreakable rule in English grammar that infinitives (e.g. to determine) should not be split (e.g. to ultimately determine). But, according to authorities like Fowler, there never was such a 'rule'. Infinitives can be split at will as long as it 'sounds right', and where no other place in the sentence will do for the adverb concerned (i.e. 'ultimately' in the example below). However, what 'sounds right' is a matter of instinct, which makes it difficult for non-native users of English to know when to split and when not to split the fickle infinitive. Nevertheless, this skill may come with familiarity and practice.

In this sentence, the adverb *ultimately* cannot be placed anywhere else in the sentence but must split the infinitive:

> Multicriteria analysis enables the policy maker to ultimately determine the most-preferred policy option.

In the following example, however, it would be wrong to split the infinitive in the second sentence:

> 'Cranes and crane operators, trams and rails, golf clubs and golf balls are all examples of pairs of goods that are complements for each other. The reader will be able *to expand* this list *indefinitely*' (Richard G. Lipsey, *An Introduction to Positive Economics*, 2nd ed.,Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1966, p. 210).

To write 'to indefinitely expand' would not sound natural. For those who wish to go more in-depth into the complexities of the split infinitive, read H.W. Fowler's incomparable essay on this subject in *Fowler's Modern English Usage* (1926) (see the list of reference works that I consulted on pp. 8 to 12 of this present guide). *Gwynne's Grammar* (2013), although more recent, has a more strict attitude to avoiding the split infinitive.

Squinting modifiers

A squinting modifier is a word or phrase placed between two words, so that it is ambiguous to which word it refers, as in:

> The Managing Director said *yesterday* the firm had lost nearly all its suppliers.

The meaning of this sentence is unclear: it might mean:

> Yesterday, the Managing Director said the firm had lost nearly all its suppliers.

Or: The Managing Director said the firm had lost nearly all its suppliers yesterday.

Actually, I have only encountered this type of error once in an economics text, but it sounds intriguing, so I have included it in this list of grammar pitfalls, for completeness, as it is linked with the entry **Dangling modifiers** above.

Style
(See Chapter 3 of this guide, **Notes on Style.**)

Substitute
When using the verb *substitute*, great care should be taken to ensure that, if what you really mean is 'x is being replaced by y', you do not inadvertently say 'y is being replaced by x'. This often happens.

Carefully note these meanings:
Substitute x for y [means 'replace y with x'].
Replace x with y [means 'y is substituted for x'].
The *COED* 9th edition used to advise: 'The use of *substitute* with the prepositions *by* or *with*… is highly informal and should be avoided in standard English. The colloquial example *substitute dairy milk with soy milk* should be reworded as *substitute soy milk for dairy milk*.' However, in the 11th edition, it concedes that, though *with* is 'still disapproved of by traditionalists, this use is now generally regarded as part of standard English'.

Notwithstanding the advice of the *COED*, in economics texts, *substitute by* is the usual form.

Once, an author changed his conclusion after I had edited his draft article, and used *substitute* the wrong way. This meant that, in the published article, the findings of his research were completely reversed! (The copy editor of the journal concerned did not notice.) The same thing happened in the last line of a draft Ph.D. thesis, but fortunately it could be rectified in time, otherwise the conclusions would have been totally at variance with the argument of the thesis.

Superfluous words
Why use two, three or more words when one would do perfectly well? This can be illustrated by reducing the following sentences (taken from a draft text).

Original sentence (before editing):
This paper sheds light on how the rural world is opening to novel and challenging adjustments associated with a globalizing world.

Improved sentence (after editing):
This paper sheds light on how the rural world is adjusting to the challenges of a globalizing world.

Original sentence:
Farmers should be encouraged to continue to play a positive role in contributing to the maintenance of the countryside.

Improved sentence:
Farmers should be encouraged to contribute to the maintenance of the countryside.

There is a tendency to 'over-egg' the use of verbs:
e.g. 'serve to inform', when 'to inform' is enough;
'revert back', when just 'revert', is correct.

Weiss (2005: 34) provides a useful checklist of what he describes as 'smothered verbs', i.e. wordy verbal phrases that are best expressed by strong verbs, i.e.

give an answer to = answer
reach a conclusion = conclude
reach an agreement = agree
reach a decision regarding = decide
hold the opinion = believe
furnish an explanation for = explain
I would add: give emphasis to = emphasize

Weiss (2005: 32) also indicates how one simple word can replace a hackneyed phrase such as:

rectangular in shape = rectangular
midway between = between
completely finished = finished (or, completed)

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Bill Bryson (2002) adds to this list:

close proximity = near
brief summary = summary

I would add:
the fact that = that (see also the entry **fact**)
the lion’s share = most
the reason why = the reason is
the vast majority = most, the majority

Shortland and Gregory (1991: 76) describe an even more reductive process of ‘word chemistry’, advising:

> ‘One way to deal with long sentences is to distil them, boiling off the unnecessary words and leaving the remainder intact:

Before distillation	*After distillation*
Such a process is a very rare event.	Such a process is very rare.
The fact of the matter is that no results have been obtained.	No results have been obtained.
The results were of an intriguing nature.	The results were intriguing.
The situation regarding the shortage of equipment is a serious problem.	The shortage of equipment is a serious problem (Better still: The shortage of equipment is serious.)’

Tenses

Do not mix tenses in the same paragraph. This especially applies to summaries and conclusions. For instance, do not say in one place ‘Author A said that…’ [past tense], and in another ‘Authors Y and Z state that…’ [present tense]. In the summary, do not switch between ‘it was found that…’ and ‘we find that…’. When describing the steps taken in the foregoing research in a chapter summary or dissertation conclusion, use the past tense. Always *begin* such summaries or conclusions with the past perfect (…in this chapter/paper/thesis/book we *have analysed*…), and then move into the simple past (…the results *showed* that…).

That/Which

A question students often ask is:

> ‘How do you decide whether to use *that* or *which*?’

The answer lies in the difference between British English and American English. *The Chicago Manual of Style* (15th edition, 2003: 230) advises:

'In British English, writers and editors seldom observe the distinction between the two words', and, as a British native speaker, I can confirm this. In fact, before I became aware of the American usage, I could not answer this FAQ. In American English, *that* is used 'restrictively', which means that the sentence does not make sense if the clause beginning with *that* is removed. That clause is an essential component of the sentence

(Try doing this in the penultimate sentence above by removing the words after 'means'.)

Here is another example:

e.g. In the 'Winter of Discontent' in Britain in 1979, when the dead were lying unburied and the rubbish was piling up in the streets, the Prime Minister was alleged to have said that there was no crisis.

(This sentence would end in 'mid-air' without the clause after 'said'.)

In American English, *which* is used 'non-restrictively', which means that the sentence would still make sense without the clause beginning *which*:

e.g. The Town Planning Act of 1909, which was the first Act of this kind in England and Wales, laid the foundations of British town planning right up to the present day.

(Here, the clause beginning with *which* and ending in *Wales* could be removed without any loss of sense. It is not essential.)

Note 1. In both British and American English there is no comma before *that* when it is used restrictively. But when *which* is used non-restrictively (see the previous example), there must be a comma before *which* and another at the end of the clause (or a full stop if the end of the clause is the end of the sentence).

Note 2. Although commas are not used before clauses beginning with *that*, there are instances where it is permissible and necessary to put a semi-colon before the word *that;* that is, when it is being used to clarify or expand a point (as has been done in this sentence before 'that is'). Another example is:

e.g. Some British financial commentators are concerned that the pound is falling against the euro; that being said, this development could be advantageous for exports from the UK to the rest of the EU.

This sentence shows both where *no comma is used* before *that* (concerned that), and where *a semi-colon should be used* before *that* (euro; that being said,).

(For more information about *that* and *which* in relation to commas, see the entry **Commas**.)

The…of

Non-native writers of English often omit the *the* at the beginning of this ubiquitous expression, as in this published sentence:

> 'Another interesting area for further research lies in how motives of subsequent generations of owners differ from those of the original owner, and the implications for evolution of the industry'(*JIE* 50 (4): 454).

It would be more literate to say 'how *the* motives of subsequent generations…' and 'the implications for *the* evolution of the industry…' [italics added].

Tons/Tonnes

Take care to distinguish between *tons* (imperial tons, i.e. 1 ton = 1016 kg) and *tonnes* (metric tons, i.e. 1 tonne = 1000 kg). Do not write *tons* on its own unless you mean imperial tons.

Use/Employ/Deploy (verbs)

Employ is an acceptable synonym for *use*, but *deploy* is not always used correctly. *Deploy* is used specifically in a military context.

e.g. The UN decided to deploy peace-keeping forces in the Congo.

(see also ***employ/deploy** in the entry **Confusion between Words**)

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Use/Usage

In an attempt to introduce variety into their vocabulary, some students often use the noun *usage* incorrectly, as an alternative to the noun *use*. *Usage* refers specifically to *word* usage (linguistics). Sometimes, *employ* can be used as a synonym for use.
(See also ***use/usage** in the entry **Confusion between certain words**.)

Whether

There are two points to make about the use of this word:
(1) Use it on its own without adding 'or not', unless the sense is 'regardless of whether':
e.g. It is uncertain whether the G8 summit will be able to 'Make Poverty History' in Africa, as it claims is its goal.
(No need to say 'whether or not'.)
Whether or not the EU Constitution is dead, the euro will remain a strong currency.
('Whether or not' means 'regardless of whether' here, so its use is appropriate in this sentence.)

(2) It is correct to say 'the question whether' [**not:** 'the question of whether' or 'the question as to whether'].

Which/That

(See the entry **That/Which** above.)

Which/Who(m)

Use *which* after inanimate nouns; *who* or *whom* when referring to people. Ideally both *which* and *who(m)* should be placed immediately after the word with which they are associated:
e.g. The Dutch economy, which has experienced steady growth for over a decade, is now in recession.
Ricardo was a nineteenth century classical economist, who was also a Member of Parliament.
The bank director, whom the Government asked to refund his enormous bonus, has refused to give it back to the taxpayers who bailed out his bank.

It is a common error to use *that* after human subjects when only *who* is correct.
(See also the entries **Who/Whom** and **Who's/Whose**.)

While/Whilst

Dictionaries advise that *whilst* is chiefly British usage, but these days, in British English texts, *while* seems to be in favour and *whilst* sounds a trifle archaic.

Who's/Whose (the main title of Philip Gooden's (2007) book is *Who's Whose*)
Who's is short for *who is*, and should not be used in formal academic texts.
Whose is the possessive form of *who*, but unlike *who*, can also be used in association with inanimate objects:

e.g. The Town Planning Act of 1909, whose aim was to secure the orderly and aesthetic development of towns and cities, emerged from the Garden City Movement in England.

Whose is allowed here because, otherwise, it would involve an unwieldy construction, viz.:

> The Town Planning Act of 1909, the aim of which was to…

Note that *whom*, unlike *whose*, can never be allowed with inanimate subjects, as was done in one draft text which I edited recently:

> 'Statistically significant observations are those for whom this ratio exceeds 1.6 in absolute terms.'

This should read '…are those for which this ratio exceeds…'.

Who/Whom

People tend to use *who* where, grammatically, *whom* is correct. *Who* is fine in informal speech, but not in an academic text. In this sentence, *whom* is used correctly:

> 'This parameter is higher on average for UM [utility-maximizing] owners, whom we are able to identify from our survey' (*JIE* 50 (4): 448).

Words and phrases to avoid using in academic texts

a lot of	(too colloquial)
at hand	(use 'concerned' instead)
avalanche/tsunami (of papers)	(too 'over the top')
lion's share	(a cliché)
nice (except when meaning 'subtle')	(vague and childish)
not any more	(better to use 'no longer')
plethora	(an excess of, too many, not simply 'many')
reason why	(repetition)
silly	(too frivolous)
the fact that	(superfluous words: see also the entry **Fact**)
the vast majority	(too hackneyed, use simply 'most')

Also avoid 'business speak', such as:

low hanging fruit	(means 'the easiest option')
think out of the box	(means 'think innovatively')
swallow the frog	(means 'don't procrastinate when faced with a difficult task')

2 Confusion Between Certain Words

The following are commonly confused words, because they either look similar or sound the same. I originally made this list on the basis of actual mistakes I had encountered in students’ written work, but then I read two books: *Troublesome Words* by Bill Bryson (2002), and *Who’s Whose: A no-nonsense guide to easily confused words* by Philip Gooden (2007), and selected more such problematic words that could be relevant for students writing economics or business texts. I have acknowledged these ‘borrowed’ words where they occur in the list below, which is now a synthesis of my first list and these useful additions, but the examples are mainly my own.

* **actual/actually**
In English, these words mean, respectively, ‘real’ or ‘ in fact’, and should not be confused with similar-looking words from other European languages, e.g. *actuel(lement)*, *actuële*, *aktuell*, *attual(ment)*, which should all be translated using words such as ‘present’, ‘current’, ‘up-to-date’, ‘at this moment’, ‘now’, ‘at present’.

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*** adaptation/adaption**

People are sometimes uncertain about which of these words to use. At one time, it was incorrect to use *adaption*. In the 9th Edition of the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (1995), there is no entry for *adaption*, and then *adaptation* reigned supreme. However, in recognition of the increasing tendency to use *adaption*, whether or not correct, the 11th Edition of the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (2004) now gives it a separate entry, indicating that it is an alternative for *adaptation*. Strangely, the entry for *adaptation* does not follow through by mentioning the existence of this alternative, as is usual when there is an alternative form. Nevertheless, it would appear that it is now acceptable to use either *adaptation* or *adaption*. But there should be no switching between the two forms, as is sometimes observed in student texts within the space of one paragraph. That being said, *adaptation* is still the form most commonly used (and, in my opinion, preferable). (See Chapter 5.5, p. 177, where, because of a quotation from an American source, both forms are used in the key essay.)

This entry illustrates the adaptability of the English language within the space of a decade. The language is never set in stone.

*** advice (noun)/advise (verb)**

When using the noun, people often incorrectly use the spelling of the verb:

e.g. This guide gives good advice; I would advise you to read it.
[noun] [verb]

*** affect (verb)/effect (verb and noun)**

The following examples show the difference:

e.g. The results of the study are adversely *affected* [i.e. influenced] by the poor response rate.

e.g. To *effect* [i.e. bring about] a change in policy at the shareholders' meeting, it is necessary to have a two-thirds majority.
The *effect* [i.e. result] of the new policy is far from clear.

*** ambiguous/ambivalence/equivocal/univocal**

While Bryson (2002) draws attention to the confusion between *ambiguous* and *equivocal*, Gooden (2007) notes that between *ambiguous* and *ambivalent*.

Ambiguous means 'not clear':

e.g. The results of the Stated Choice experiment were ambiguous.

Many foreign students use *univocal* as the opposite of *ambiguous*, but this word is rarely seen in English texts. Instead, *unambiguous* or the simpler *clear* should be used.

Ambivalent means being torn between two conflicting ideas:

e.g. He was ambivalent about the concept of climate change.

Equivocal is the most negative of this group of words. It means 'unclear in a questionable way':

e.g. Many reviewers consider the conclusions of Bjørn Lomborg's book *The Skeptical Environmentalist* to be equivocal.

*** (to) analyse (verb)/analysis (noun: singular)/analyses (verb 3rd person singular, and noun: plural)**

There is a tendency to confuse these words, especially the plural noun *analyses* which is often incorrectly used in place of the singular noun *analysis*. It is wrong to say: 'The analyses was made for the period 1990–2000', when there was only one *analysis*. This error may arise because the oral pronunciation of the plural noun *analyses* (aná-li-ses) is different from that of the singular verb *analyses* (ána-ly-ses).
In passing, note that in British English *analyse(s)* (verb) is always spelled with an 's', not a 'z' as in American English.

*** assume/presume**

Although Gooden (2007: 26) sees no difference between these words, I agree with Bryson (2002) that there is a distinction.
Use *assume* when making a plausible assumption:

e.g. For the purposes of this model, let us assume that the population will remain stable.

Assume indicates the creation of a theoretical context.

Use *presume* when there is more uncertainty:

e.g. As the dollar has been falling for some time, investors presume this trend will continue.

Presume is more often related to direct statements about reality.

(For another example of *presume*, see the entry **GDP/GNP** in this list.)

*** assure/ensure/insure**

There is great uncertainty about the correct use of these three quite similar words, but each has its particular use. As a rule of thumb: assure people; ensure events; insure things – all referring to 'making sure something happens':

e.g. The government assured the electorate that taxes would not be increased if they were re-elected.
By making a number of concessions, the government ensured the passage of the Bill through Parliament.
It is necessary to insure buildings against risk of fire.

*** belief/believe**

The spelling of the noun *belief* is often confused with that of the verb *believe*:

e.g. The common negative beliefs [noun] about the impact of immigration are often not reflected in empirical research.
Not many economists believe [verb] that the market economy is best to allocate the world's resources fairly.

* **borne/born**

These two words are often mixed up. Note the difference:

e.g. The cost is borne by the consumer.
The number of children born to women aged over 35 is rising.

* **briefly/concisely**

Non-native users of English often write 'to describe concisely/shortly', but 'to describe briefly' sounds more natural. 'A brief summary' is tautological, as by definition a summary is brief.[4]
One **can** say 'a concise account', meaning a summary of text which contains the salient points.

* **choose/chose**

The first is the present tense, the second is the past of the verb 'to choose'. Do not, for instance, write, as in this sentence from a published article:

> 'Therefore, even if a winery does not use its own grapes, there are some constraints on the ability to chose [should be *choose*] an appellation' (*JIE* 50 (4): 443).

* **complementary/complimentary**

e.g. a complementary [i.e. related] product
a complimentary [i.e. free] sample
a complimentary [i.e. a favourable] review

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*** composed of/consists of/comprises**
The first two of these phrases have similar meanings, but the third means 'embraces' and should not be followed by *of*.
As Bryson (2002) puts it succinctly: 'The whole comprises the parts, but not vice versa.' Sometimes people with EFL incorrectly write 'exists of' when they mean 'consists of'.

*** content/contents**
Content refers to the subject of, or main theme(s) or idea(s) in, a paper or book:
e.g. Her supervisor had no criticism of the content of her dissertation, but had reservations about the English presentation.

Contents refers to the list of basic 'ingredients' that make up a whole book – the Preface/Acknowledgements, the chapters, sections (possibly sub-sections, and even sub-sub-sections), appendices, index, tables and figures. All these are set out on the Contents page(s) of the book.

*** continual/continuous (found in Bryson, 2002)**
Continual means 'happening frequently, but with interruptions in-between':
e.g. During October 2008 train services through the Channel Tunnel were affected by *continual* breakdowns.

Continuous means 'happening without interruption':
e.g. Temperature is a continuous variable.

*** criterion/criteria**
The plural form *criteria* is often used incorrectly to mean the singular:

e.g. What is the main criterion for the success of environmental policy? [This refers to one *criterion*.]
What are the criteria for the selection of nature conservation areas? [This refers to a number of *criteria*.]

Note: The same problem (i.e. mistakenly using the plural for the singular) occurs with the use of:
memorandum [singular]/memoranda [plural]
phenomenon [singular]/phenomena [plural]

*** dependant/dependent (found in Gooden, 2007)**
Here, the confusion arises because *dependant* is a noun and *dependent* is an adjective:
e.g. Parents receive special tax relief for dependants [noun].
The dependent [adjective] variables explain the independent variable.

* **discreet/discrete**

These words are often confused.

Discreet means 'careful':

e.g. It is necessary to be discreet when handling sensitive government data.

Discrete means 'separate':

e.g. An integrated complex model for decision-making contexts is developed, in which the choice between alternative discrete investments takes place under conditions of uncertainty.
A discrete variable is a distinct, indivisible unit.

* **economic/economical**

The word *economical* is sometimes used incorrectly for the word *economic*. Note that 'economic' pertains to the economy, whereas 'economical' implies a tendency to be careful with money (thrifty):

e.g. The economic outlook is poor.
It is necessary to be economical with natural resources.

Note, however, the title of McCloskey's (1999) booklet *Economical Writing*, which cleverly combines both these meanings. (See also Chapter 3, **Notes on Style.**)

* **employ/deploy**

These words are sometimes used incorrectly as synonyms in a misguided attempt to add variety to the vocabulary of text, but they each have a distinct usage:

e.g. Students are often employed as part-time workers [meaning 'given jobs'].
More troops are being deployed in Iraq [meaning: brought or moved into position for military action].

Deployed is sometimes used in innovation studies to denote the large-scale application of a new product or technology. For example, the term 'RDD&D' is used as an extension of 'R&D', and means 'Research, Development, Demonstration and Deployment'.[5]

* **especially/specially**

Especially is often, but not always, interchangeable with *particularly* or *in particular*:

e.g. On average, England now has the highest population density in Europe, especially in the South East of the country.

Specially means 'for a specific purpose':

e.g. a specially designed low-carbon eco-building

* **eventual(ly)**

In English, this means ‘final(ly)’, ‘ultimate(ly)’, ‘in the end’, ‘after all that’, and should not be confused with the Dutch word *eventueel*, which is translated as ‘possible’.

* **evoke/invoke/provoke**

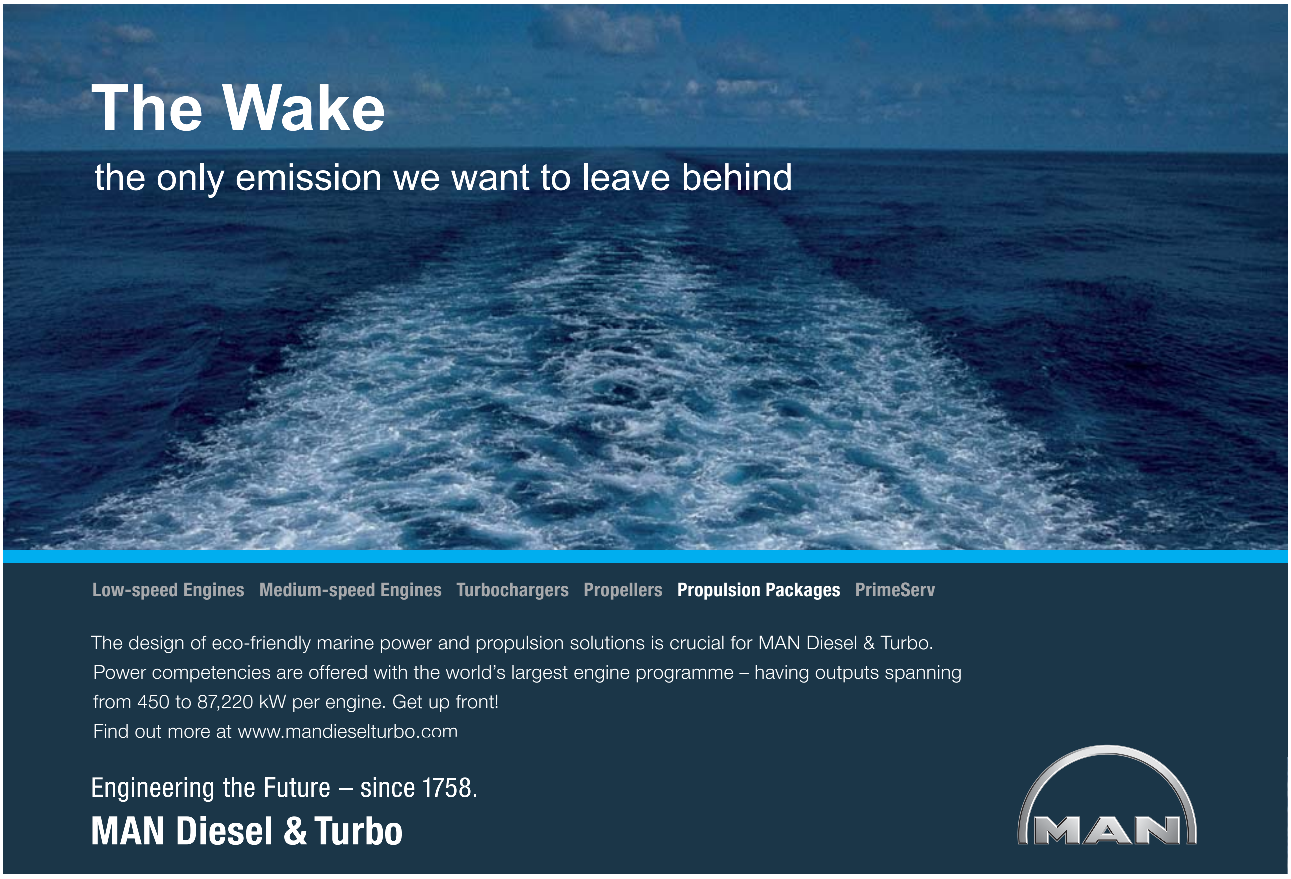
Evoke and *invoke* are two very intriguing words, as in one of their various senses they do mean the same thing: to call on a deity or spirit, or call up a memory. This is the primary meaning of *evoke* and the third meaning of *invoke*. If there is a difference in this sense, it is that *things evoke* a memory, and *people invoke* a memory:

e.g. The Normandy beaches evoke the memory of World War II.
Hamlet invoked the memory of his murdered father.

In this sense, neither *evoke* nor *invoke* have much relevance in an economics context, but in their secondary senses they do. And this is where the confusion arises because these words have different secondary meanings. According to the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*:

Evoke means ‘to elicit’ (a response):

e.g. When interest rates rise, this always evokes a response from the bond markets.



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Invoke means ‘to call earnestly for’:

e.g. The protesters at the G8 summit invoked the ideas of the original anarchist leaders, such as Bakunin, in their demonstrations.

Because these two words sound very similar, it is easy to confuse them, and for the same reason they are sometimes confused with *provoke*, which means ‘to stimulate a sharp response’.

e.g. The managing director’s indiscretion provoked a disastrous fall in the price of shares in his company.

*** farther/further**

Though the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* indicates these words are interchangeable, *The Chicago Manual of Style* reflects their actual different usage in practice, i.e. ‘(…) use *farther* for purely physical distance (…) and *further* for figurative distance.’

e.g. The farther South one travels, the warmer the climate becomes.
Ph.D. theses usually conclude with recommendations for further research.

*** feet/foot**

Note when to use *feet*:

e.g. Standard containers are 20 feet long.

– and when to use *foot*:

e.g. A 20-foot container is the standard size and is the basis for the TEU (Transport Equivalent Unit).

*** forth/fourth**

Fourth (which comes after *third*) is often misspelled as *forth* which has an entirely different meaning, as in *to set forth*, i.e. to go on a journey.

*** GDP/GNP (I was reminded of this by Bryson (2002).)**

I include these because I was once surprised to be asked to explain the difference by an EFL economist.

GDP is Gross Domestic Product, excluding foreign earnings.
GNP is Gross National Product, including foreign earnings.

*** geographic/geographical**

I was also once asked to explain the difference between these two very similar words, but I think it can be summed up by the answer ‘same difference’.[6] However, note the common usages:

geographic information systems
a geographical distribution

* **homogeneous/homogenous**
Homogeneous relating to *homogeneity* (referring to uniform composition) is frequently spelled incorrectly as *homogenous*:

e.g. The different models of commuter behaviour produced homogeneous results [correct spelling of *homogeneous*].

An example of the incorrect spelling of *homogeneous* occurred on *The Guardian* newspaper letter page on 2 October 2008, when a correspondent wrote:

> 'To refer to an isolated criminal action as a huge and diverse population's homogenous "anger" is *The Daily Mail's* territory.'

It should be 'homogeneous "anger"'.

Homogenous is a biological term meaning 'homologous', referring to similar evolutionary origins (*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*).

* **immeasurable/unmeasurable**
Immeasurable means 'too big to measure'.
Unmeasurable means 'not possible to measure'.

* **imply/infer**
Imply means 'to suggest', 'not say explicitly':
e.g. He implied that the bank was failing but gave no hard facts.

Infer means 'to deduce from the evidence':
e.g. He inferred from the balance sheet that the bank was failing.

* **insulation/isolation**
Both French and Dutch students confuse these English words because *isolatie* in Dutch and *isolation* in French mean the same as *insulation* in English, i.e. 'material used to insulate something' (*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*).
In English, *isolation* means something completely different, i.e. the feeling of being isolated (separate) from others, lonely. It also applies to an 'isolated island', one far from any other.

* **it's/its**
Its is the possessive of 'it'.
It's is a contraction for 'it is'.

*** lack/miss**

Non-native users of English often use *miss*, *missing*, *missed*, where they should use *lack*, *lacking*, *lacked* [meaning 'do not have']:

e.g. Many settlements in remote rural areas lack telecottaging facilities.

*** lead/led**

Remember that *led* (not *lead*) is the past tense of the verb 'to lead':

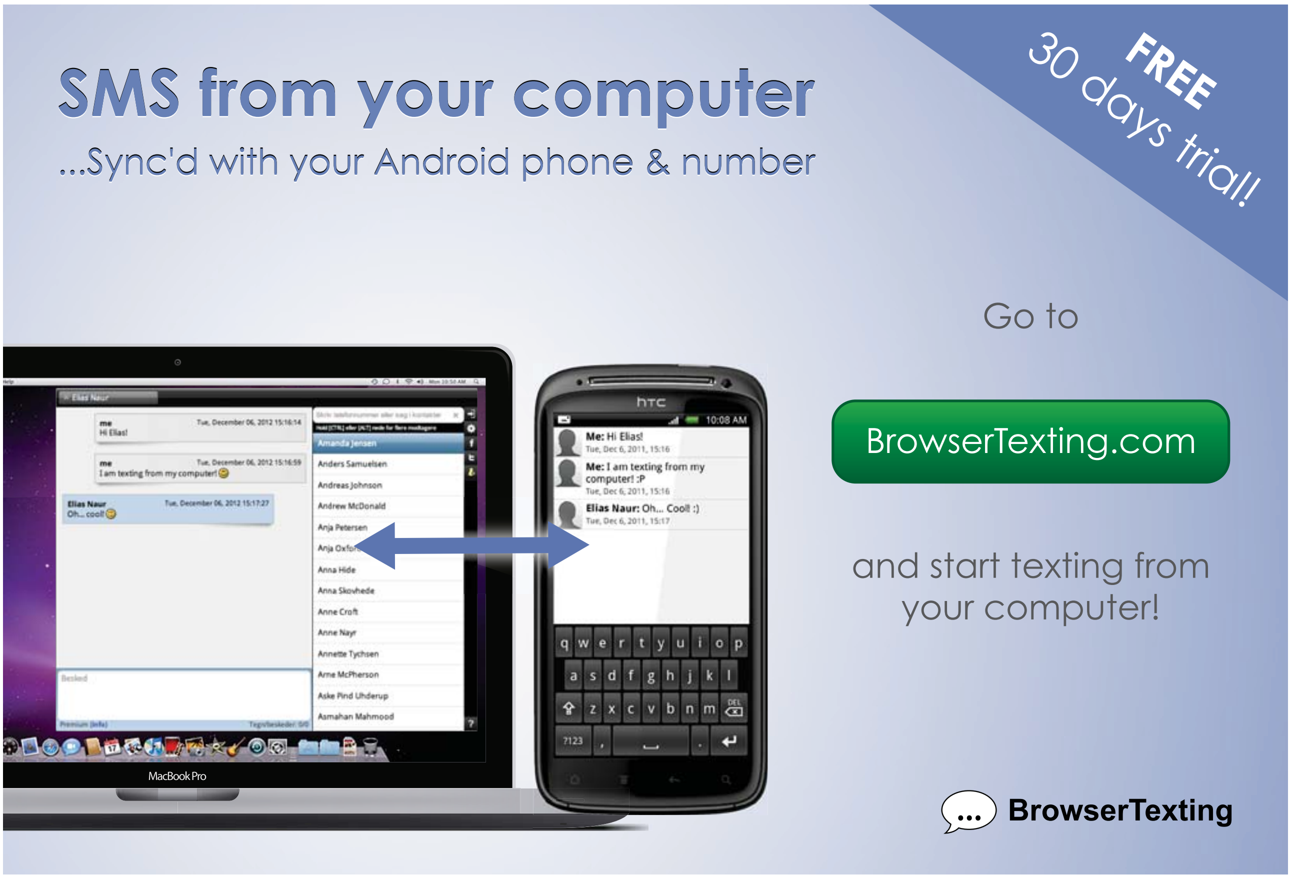
e.g. At the end of the twentieth century the rise of CFC gases led to the hole in the ozone layer.

(The confusion arises because the noun *lead* (a heavy metal) is pronounced the same way as the past participle *led*.)

*** lie(s)/lay(s)**

These words are often mixed up when the meaning to be conveyed is 'can be found in', as in the corrected sentence:

> 'Another interesting area…for future research *lies* in how the motives of subsequent generations of owners differ from those of the original owner, and the implications for the evolution of the industry' [italics added] (*JIE* 50 (4) :453).



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Note: This sentence is an improved version of a poorly expressed sentence in a published paper in *the Journal of Industrial Economics*, where 'the' is missing in the first line (see the entry **the…of** below). However, the use of *lies* was correct.

If you remember that *lay(s)* means 'put(s) down' (on a flat surface), it will be less easy to confuse this word with *lie(s)* in its meanings of 'is situated in' or (as above) 'can be found in'.

Another source of confusion concerns the past participle of the verbs *to lie* and *to lay. Lain* is the past participle of *lie*, and *laid* is the past participle and past tense of *lay*:

e.g. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had lain awake all night thinking about the financial crisis.
The bases for the European Monetary Union were laid down in the Treaty of Maastricht.

*** life/live**

The spelling of the noun *life* is often confused with the verb *live*, and there are the added complications that the plural of *life* is *lives* (not *lifes*), and that *live* is an adjective, as well as a verb.

Note these critical differences in the following examples:

e.g. (*life*, singular noun) Enhancing the quality of life is an important element of many policy recommendations.
(*lives*, plural noun) Many lives were lost in the tsunami.
(*live*, adjective) Too many small live fish are caught in fine nets.
(*lives*, singular verb) The commuter lives far from his/her workplace.
(*live*, plural verb) Nowadays most people live in urban areas.

EFL students often incorrectly write *lifes* when they mean *lives*, both as a noun and as a verb.

*** lose (verb)/loose (adjective)**

Note the difference: 'to lose momentum', 'a loose definition'.

*** method/methodology**

Method means a 'particular procedure for accomplishing or achieving something' (*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*):

e.g. He used two different methods to make his calculations.

The associated adjective is *methodical*, meaning 'orderly':

e.g. He was very methodical in his research procedures.

Methodology means a 'system of methods used in a particular field':

e.g. Ph.D. students often extend the methodology of previous experts in their subject.

The associated adjective is *methodological*, meaning 'pertaining to a methodology':
e.g. His work has a number of methodological shortcomings.

*** minimal/minimum**

These two words are often confused with each other, although there is more than a subtle difference between them:
Minimal is an adjective referring to quality, while *minimum* is both an adjective and a noun:

e.g. 'A minimal amount' is a very small amount.
The UK would like the EU to give minimal subsidies to agriculture in each Member State [adjective, i.e. an extremely small level of subsidies].
EU expenditure must be reduced to a minimum [noun], meaning the smallest possible amount (i.e. the minimum [adjective] amount), subject to the demands of lobby groups and governments.

*** offer/provide**

A very common error by writers with EFL is to misuse the verb *offer* when it would be correct to say *provide*:
Incorrect: In Section 2, we offer a literature review.
Correct: In Section 2, we provide a literature review.

The primary meaning of *offer* is 'to present (something) for (someone) to accept or reject' (*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*), which is not really appropriate for a literature review. In another well-used meaning, *offer* refers to making a prayer or a sacrifice to a deity, again not the right word to use in connection with a literature review – or with research results or a summary and conclusions. In all the cases where *to offer* is often used incorrectly, and *to present* is better. There is, however, one instance where it is legitimate to use *offer*:
e.g. We now offer our own interpretation of the OECD survey results.
Here, the idea of accepting or rejecting the interpretation reflects the correct meaning of *offer*.

*** orient/orientate**

These words are used too loosely. *Orient* should always be used, unless the meaning to be conveyed really is 'position towards the East':
e.g. This book is oriented towards policy makers.
Mosques and synagogues in Western Europe are orientated towards the East.

***partly/partially** (found in Bryson, 2002)

Partly means 'in part':
e.g. The paper is written partly by Professor X, and partly by her graduate student.

Partially means 'incompletely':

e.g. The deadline for his thesis is at the beginning of May, but it is already April and it is only partially written.

*** per cent/percent**

Per cent is the British English form.

Percent is the American English form.

(See also Chapter 2 on editing tips, which explains when to use the % sign.)

***percentage/percentage point**

There is a very important distinction between these two forms which is not always observed. Note the difference in the following sentences:

e.g. In the UK inflation rose from 3 to 4 per cent in one year, i.e. by one percentage point.
This represents a rise of 25 per cent.
3 per cent is a percentage – each per cent is a percentage point.

*** prescribed/proscribed**

These words mean, respectively, 'recommended' and 'forbidden' – quite opposite meanings!

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*** preventive/preventative**

These two words have the same meaning but *The Chicago Manual of Style* recommends only using *preventive*.

*** principal/principle**

This is a very common confusion.

Principal meaning 'chief' is both a noun and an adjective:

e.g. (as a noun) The Principal of a school [i.e. the most important person in the school].

(Here, *Principal* is a 'proper noun', starting with a capital letter.)

e.g. (as an adjective) the principal city of a country

Principle meaning 'a basic tenet or belief' is only a noun:

e.g. It is an economic principle that the demand curve slopes down to the right.
The precautionary principle
Marshall's *Principles of Economics*

*** proved/proven**

The verb 'to prove' has two past participles: *proved* and *proven*, and students may be confused about which of these forms to use. The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* advises: 'Both are correct and can be used interchangeably (this has not been proved yet; this has not been proven yet).' Nevertheless, *proven* sounds rather archaic.

However, this instruction relates to proved/proven as a verb. When the past participle of 'prove' is used as an adjective, only *proven* is used:

e.g. a proven method

Moreover, although *proved* is most commonly used as the verb form, in a mathematical context 'proven' is the preferred form in the passive voice:

e.g. This theorem is not proven.

but in the active voice:

e.g. Professor X has proved the theory.

*** ratio/ration**

The confusion between these two words is probably because they are both associated with the idea of 'share'.

Ratio refers to the relationship between two amounts.

Note how it is written:

e.g. The ratio of x to y [not x and y].

Ration means 'a certain amount of a commodity in short supply that is officially allowed to the population by the Government (e.g. food in wartime, healthcare, student finance) (*COED*, 2004)'.

* **regardless/irregardless**

Gooden (2007) states that *irregardless* does not exist, but it does exist in the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*.

However, the simpler *regardless* suffices.

* **sanction/(verb)/sanction (noun)**

These are an interesting pair of words that look exactly the same but which can have diametrically opposite meanings, as both verb and noun:

Sanction (verb) means 1. 'to give official permission' [a positive connotation]:

e.g. The governments of the Benelux countries decided to sanction a financial injection.

Conversely, it also means 2. 'to impose a penalty or sanction [see noun below] on' [a negative connotation]:

e.g. The EU sanctions countries like the Faroe Islands which do not comply with EU fishing quotas.

Sanction (noun) means 1. 'final permission' or 'authorization' [a positive connotation]:

e.g. In Russia, it is necessary for firms to have the sanction of the President for major investment projects.

Conversely, it also means 2. 'penalty' [a negative connotation]:

e.g. The American government is threatening economic sanctions against Iran and Syria.

The positive version of the verb (to sanction) and the negative version of the noun (sanction – often in the plural) are most commonly used in practice.

* **simple/simplistic** (found in Gooden, 2007)

Simple means 'easily understood', 'uncomplicated':

e.g. a simple model

Simplistic means 'making something seem less complex than it really is':

e.g. To say that CO_2 emissions are the sole cause of global warming is simplistic.

* **systematic/systemic**

Systematic means following a fixed plan, or being methodical:

e.g. There needs to be a systematic reworking of the contributions made by each Member State to the EU budget.

Systemic basically relates to physiological systems:

e.g. a systemic disease of human or plant organisms

However, it can be extended metaphorically to refer to problems affecting the operation of a public body:
e.g.	There is an urgent need for systemic change in the workings of the EU.

*** their/there**
These often appear as typing, rather than grammatical, errors:
e.g.	There is usually a rise in house prices when countries lower their interest rates.

*** therefore/therefor**
Therefore is often misspelled *therefor*, but the meanings are quite different.
Therefore means 'hence' or 'consequently' or 'for that reason'.
Therefor is used primarily in legal texts meaning 'for that object or purpose', 'in return for', or 'for it'. One might say, although it would be rather archaic: 'As the UK gains little benefit from the Common Agricultural Policy, it has negotiated a rebate therefor.'

*** to/too/two**
The confusion between these three words often concern typing, rather than grammatical, errors. The following sentence contains all three words typed correctly:
e.g.	Two countries had too much influence on the outcome of the negotiations to reform the CAP.

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* **uninterested/disinterested**

These words mean, respectively, 'not interested' and 'impartial' – again quite different.

e.g. Climate sceptics are uninterested in the scientific basis of global warming.

He has a disinterested attitude towards climate change [meaning he is not on one side or the other].

* **were/where**

These often occur as typing, rather than grammatical, errors. The following sentence contains both words typed correctly:

e.g. New oilfields were found where the engineers were drilling.

* **whose/who's**

Whose is the possessive form of *who*:

e.g. Keynes is an economist, whose ideas are still relevant today.

Who's is the contraction of *Who is* and has no place in academic texts.

(See the entry **Contractions** in Chapter 1.)

3 Notes on Style

Academic language…is no one's mother tongue

Bourdieu et al. (1994: 8).

Good grammar is not everything, however, as Noam Chomsky famously illustrated in his perfectly grammatical, but completely meaningless sentence: 'Colorless green ideas sleep furiously' (Chomsky, *Syntactic Structures*, 1957). More usually, it is possible for a text to have perfectly correct English grammar, but which is nevertheless dull and monotonous, and does not read smoothly. This is true for both mother-tongue writers and those with English as a foreign language (EFL). But there is a particular problem for those with EFL, in that, on the whole, their writings have no 'voice'. Voice is that essential quality of style which embodies the unique personality of the author. It is an elusive element that cannot be imposed from above by a copy editor. Unfortunately, most Ph.D. theses written by economics students with EFL, though solid pieces of work and competently presented, have a rather bland, depersonalized style, and could have been written by the same *homo economicus*. However, in their favour, they often have greater clarity of expression than works by many native English-speaking economists, who are not in general noted for the excellence of their style (unlike historians, for instance), nor for their ability to communicate, in a lively way, in a language understandable to the public at large. There is even one economist, Dierdre McCloskey, who would agree with this criticism. In her *Economical Writing* (1999), addressed specifically to economists, she bemoans their anaemic style, and advises how to remedy this deficiency.

Style is a somewhat nebulous concept that cannot be taught. One can give advice to avoid too many short or lengthy sentences, and to vary their structure to ensure that each sentence does not begin monotonously with the main clause. These basics are elaborated in Strunk and White's (2000) compact little booklet *Elements of Style*. But heeding this advice will not necessarily guarantee a 'good style'. Perhaps, however, the magic of style can be absorbed unconsciously by reading, as McCloskey suggests, the Classics of English Literature. More relevant are the works of those Anglo-Saxon economists, who *do* have a fine style, without being 'flowery' in the literary sense. There is no need to be a Shakespeare to write well about economics. And nor does a clear and simple exposition imply a lack of rigour, though the excesses of a journalistic style should be avoided.

In his readable *Essays in Biography*, Maynard Keynes (1933: 190) paid the following compliment to the writing of his fellow distinguished economist Alfred Marshall:

> The way in which Marshall's *Principles of Economics* is written is more unusual than the casual reader will notice. It is elaborately unsensational and underemphatic. Its rhetoric is of the simplest and most unadorned order. It flows in a steady, lucid stream, with few passages which stop or perplex the intelligent reader, even though he knew but little of economics.

However, today, Maynard Keynes's own English style would be regarded as outdated, somewhat mannered, and archaic.

A modern English academic who writes on urban and regional planning, and who has an elegant and individual English style, is Professor Sir Peter Hall. A good example is his magnum opus *Cities in Civilisation* (1998), a sustained piece of fine writing over nearly 1000 pages. As a policy maker, the former London Mayor Ken Livingstone found this book an inspiration.

One of the academic articles I used for some examples in Chapter 1, 'Love or Money? The Effects of Owner Motivation in the California Wine Industry', *The Journal of Industrial Economics* 50 (4): 431–456 (December 2002), turned out to be quite a find. It manages to provide an analysis of some important aspects of business economics in a nutshell, presented in a pleasant and readable style.

As a role model of a Ph.D. thesis written in English by a Dutch Economics student, I would single out Marcel Canoy's (1993) *Bertrand meets the fox and the owl. Essays on the theory of pure competition* (no. 48 in the Tinbergen Research Series). Each chapter begins with a dialogue between this fox and owl, who discuss in colloquial English a point of economic theory. This sets the scene, and the theme is then developed more formally within the body of the chapter. This imaginative work combines mathematical analysis with a lively, sometimes witty and playful, fluent English style that would meet with Keynes's approval. Let us eavesdrop as Fox and Owl bicker about game theory (Canoy, 1993: 65, 66):

> Fox: The problem with yesterday's game was not the game itself, but the squirrels. […] First of all, they couldn't judge the quality of the nuts. Also our baskets were not directly adjacent to each other, so that for at least some squirrels it was a longer route to the basket with the lowest price. Moreover, they had to wait in a queue to obtain the lowest price. Still, they *all* went to the lowest price.
>
> Owl: What difference would it make if the experiment was performed with more sophisticated animals like owls?

Fox: Actually, I was thinking about snails. The difference is that snails would certainly consider the distance between their home and the baskets to be an important factor. I can show that if the distance between the baskets is sufficient, an equilibrium exists with two different prices.

Owl: So if we play the game, an equilibrium can emerge?

Fox: Yes, but my real claim concerns a rather more subtle issue. Suppose that the snails are evenly distributed over a given circular area, so that no location is a priori better than another. I bet that if the distance between the baskets is sufficient, it is still conceivable that I make more profit than you in equilibrium, even if I have the highest price. Naturally, you may decide upon locations.

Owl: What do you mean by *conceivable*? If the Nash equilibrium is unique, the profits are simply what they are, assuming we do not play randomised strategies. If no location is better than another, demand is evenly spread among the two baskets, so in equilibrium both firms have to charge the same price.

Fox: If you think that, it is easy for you to accept the bet.

Canoy's writing style would also meet with the approval of Richard Bronk (2009), the author of a recent book on the history of economic thought: *The Romantic Economist. Imagination in Economics* (Cambridge University Press). Bronk is not himself an economist, but a classicist and philosopher, who has had a career in international finance, where he encountered economics at the 'coal face'. He considers that economics should be written in an accessible style, and in this literate book he practises what he preaches. He urges economists to 'avoid an over-reliance on specialist economic terminology and the dehumanised language of mathematics and algebra' (Bronk, 2009: 17). While, nonetheless, recognizing the value of mathematics in economics, Bronk urges economists to continually search for new metaphors, both to deepen and refresh their own understanding and to clarify their message to a wider audience of policy makers, entrepreneurs and ordinary readers. Quoting the Romantic poet, William Wordsworth, Bronk believes that this can be achieved by using the 'fluid and grounded language "really used by men"' (Bronk, 2009: 18). He also echoes McCloskey's plea for more oomph in economic writing.

Although style is not as concrete a subject as grammar to impart to authors with EFL, the following checklist may help them avoid some of the basic pitfalls in their aim to provide fine writing, for both written and oral presentations.

Written texts

1) Above all, avoid tortured, overlong sentences. That is, those where, after the main clause, a cascade of points relentlessly follow, one after the other without a pause for breath. Such sentences are known as 'loose'. The following single sentence occupies a whole paragraph:

> A feature of the reform strongly supported by optimal planners was a switch in the formula for forming enterprise wholesale prices from cost (i.e. labour and material costs) plus a profit margin expressed as a small percentage of cost plus a profit margin expressed as a substantial percentage (usually 15 per cent) of the value of the capital employed, a move in line with the suggestions of the optimal planners (and also of those economists who advocated the price of production as a general base for price formation), but not altogether satisfactory from their point of view (because the allowance for the use of capital equipment should take the form of rent charges reflecting the scarcity of particular types of means of production rather than an economy wide average rate of profit (Michael Ellman, *Soviet Planning Today. Proposals for an Optimally Functioning Economic System*, Cambridge University Press, 1971, p. 35).

This is a perfectly grammatical sentence, but it might have been better to split it in the middle to make two sentences: '…employed. This was a move in line with…'

Even worse is the long periodic sentence, where after an extensive list of points, the main clause comes at last, by which time the reader has 'lost the plot'. The reader's brain cannot cope easily with such sentences. They may result from the structure of the author's native language. For instance, sentences in Russian can be much longer than their English translations. This point is demonstrated by the safety instructions on Russian planes, where the English version, shown side by side with the Russian, is much shorter. So, if Russian is the author's native tongue, this wordiness and convoluted sentence formation may be carried into his/her English writing. Indeed, in the example of the overlong sentence above, the native English speaking author may have been influenced by the sentence structure of his Russian sources.

The following unwieldy sentence (taken from a draft paper by an EFL author) demonstrates elements of both the 'loose' and the 'periodic' sentence:

> The ecological city system, the set of public goods, the capacity of city beauty to attract activities, the quality of the urban landscape, and the creativity of the inhabitants have a role in determining the wealth of a city: in producing a sense of well-being, in attracting to the locality people, specialized skills, talent and investments to compete more successfully.

Such a long sentence is too difficult to read comfortably. Again, it could be divided as follows (with some changes to improve the flow):

> '…inhabitants, all have a role in determining the wealth of a city. They produce a sense of well-being…'

2) That said, about avoiding long sentences, texts read better if the sentences are varied in type and form. While having too many long sentences is taxing for the reader, too many short sentences provide an uncomfortable jerky reading experience. It is also important not to start every sentence with its main clause but begin with one or, at most, two subordinate clauses. (See the previous sentence.)

3) Paragraphs should not be too long. A whole page of unrelieved text without a paragraph, or even three-quarters of a page, is too much. Moving from paragraph to paragraph, the argument should flow smoothly with the help of *logical connectors*. These words or phrases are placed at the start of a paragraph to provide a bridge with the preceding paragraph. Examples are: 'That said,'; 'In spite of this,'; 'Nevertheless,'.

4) Avoid using long words and pretentious language in the forlorn hope it will look more 'academic'. Pseudo-intellectual phrasing cannot disguise a pitiful lack of meaning. However, this is more likely to be a fault of native English speaking authors, as their EFL counterparts usually write very clear texts, because they are likely to express themselves more simply in a language which is not their mother tongue. Nevertheless, sometimes meaning gets lost in translation, although the sentence itself may be perfectly grammatical, as in the following example from an Italian author's English text:

> Big bands go out from the city centre.

This initially perplexed me, but what the author really wanted to say was:

> Major arterial roads radiate from the city centre.

5) Do not repeat keywords in the same sentence or paragraph as it makes the text monotonous. Some languages, e.g. Italian, do not have such a rich vocabulary as English, which has a good choice of words with similar meanings. But take care not to chose an inappropriate word when presented with an English dictionary with a wide choice of synonyms. For instance, 'tiny' or 'little' is not always a substitute for 'small': an EFL author may write 'a tiny town' when 'a small town' is correct, though either 'a tiny village' or 'a small village' is acceptable.

Nevertheless, do not go to extremes in trying to avoid repeating the same word. Sometimes, it is not only acceptable, but also necessary, to repeat words. For instance, in detailing the steps of a calculation, it would look odd to say in one place 'add' and in another 'put together' just for the sake of variety. However, instead of repeating one word, a universal heading can be used at the top of a list.

e.g. It is necessary to add:

(1) …
(2) …
(3) …
etc.

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6) As well as avoiding repetitions of words, do not repeat the same quotation in different parts of the text, even in different chapters. As quotations are so distinctive, it makes the reader think: 'I've seen that somewhere before'.

7) If you need to refer back to an earlier section or chapter, do not put 'as mentioned above/earlier' without providing a cross-reference (e.g. see Section 3.1), as otherwise the reader will be irritated by having to search back until the section concerned is found.

8) Get the rhythm of the sentence right by putting the words in their correct natural order:

    not: Reformulate through constant elasticity of substitution his result.
    but: Reformulate his result through constant elasticity of substitution.[7]

9) Avoid spoiling the academic tone of your text with the use of colloquialisms, clichés, and slang when writing academic texts. Phrases like 'At the end of the day' are outlawed for being too hackneyed. Instead, 'Ultimately' is short and to the point.

10) Do not use obscure foreign phrases that are not encountered in English texts. If a foreign phrase is not in a reputable English dictionary, like the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, then do not use it. These days, foreign phrases that are in common use are no longer italicized in the dictionary, e.g. a priori, ceteris paribus, ex ante, ex post, inter alia, post hoc, but note *aide-memoire*.

11) Do not use archaic words:

archaic	*meaning*
happenstance	by chance
heretofore	prior to this

12) Make sure your text contains no ambiguities. These can occur especially with the use of 'it', and 'the former' and 'the latter', when it may not be clear exactly what is meant. The following example, however, shows exactly how to use this latter pair of expressions:

> One important difference between planning by material balances and planning by input-out is that the former is concerned with gross production and gross production of commodities, and focuses attention on supply bottlenecks, whereas the latter starts from final consumption, and focuses attention on the net output available for final consumption (Michael Ellman, *Soviet Planning Today. Proposals for an Optimally Functioning Economic System*, Cambridge University Press, 1971: 87).

(For more examples, see Chapter 1 of this guide, the entry **Former/Latter**.)

13) Do not assume the reader has the same depth of knowledge as yourself, the author, who is an expert in the field concerned. Sometimes it is necessary to explain a point more fully, even though its meaning might seem obvious to the author. For instance, it is difficult, if not impossible, to follow the argument in the following statement, taken from a draft thesis:

> 'In particular, Buckles and Hungerman (2010) argue that socioeconomic characteristics statistically differ between children born in different months of the year, mainly as a result of teenage pregnancies.'

What this interesting but obscure statement actually means had to be explained in the final draft with this footnote:

> 'It appears that unwanted pregnancies are often conceived in the summer months, which results in more children with a low economic status being born in the winter months.'

It is also frustrating for the reader if the author asks questions but does not provide the answers. Samuelson falls into this trap in his classic economics textbook.

14) Make free use of analogies, similes, and metaphors to brighten the text. Intriguing names for economic models, like 'Galaxy' and 'Urban Facebook', or for diagrams, like 'Spider' or 'Amoeba', are graphic. Finding imaginative names for theories, e.g. 'restaurant bill theory', arouse the reader's interest, and are easy to remember. Barak Obama originated the powerful metaphor of "the fiscal cliff". Even though economists know that the reality of the situation is gradual, rather than abrupt decline, this vivid image creates a talking point. In the financial world, the phrase 'dead cat bounce' is very graphic. Make your own text quotable, just like the texts you yourself have chosen to quote. A theme or leitmotif can be a useful tool. Richard Lipsey uses this device to good effect in his textbook *An Introduction to Positive Economics*, where he frequently uses the humble Brussels sprout to illustrate points of economic theory in order to ground them in reality.

15) If your thesis is very theoretical, set the scene by relating it to a real-life situation. I recall one thesis which used the decline of Easter Island as an introductory chapter prior to a theoretical economic analysis. More of these 'stories' could add extra depth to a dissertation.

16) A nice touch is to start each chapter with a pithy quotation from an expert on the field or from works of literature. It puts the reader in context (see the quotation at the start of this Chapter 3).

17) Give your text a proper ending. Too often, like a jazz composition, Ph.D. theses end in 'mid-air', on an uncertain note. Perhaps this is realistic, if, after 250 pages of discourse, the issue is still not resolved. In general, however, a text should not end in a lame, mediocre way, but with a sense that all avenues have been exhaustively explored, and with a memorable phrase.

18) When you have finished the first draft of your text, after a suitable interval, take time to read it carefully, and you will then probably be able to more easily spot its imperfections that were initially not apparent.

Oral presentation

The following additional points on style refer particularly to the manner of making oral presentations. Of course, the papers which are delivered orally need to be based on style principles (1) to (18) listed above, but academics with EFL often have to address conferences in English. Moreover, in some countries, e.g. the Netherlands and Belgium, Ph.D. students often choose both to write their thesis and to defend it in public, in English. This is because some of the members of the Examining Committee on the platform may be either native English speakers or do not know the language of the student and have English as a second language.

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19) A highly recommended text for students preparing oral presentations is Prof. Max Atkinson's (2004) *Lend me Your Ears: all you need to know about public speaking*. He gives particularly good advice about the use/misuse of PowerPoint as a back-up. Supporting spoken words with words on a screen can produce information overload for the audience, who end up without being able to take anything in. Moreover, the number of slides is escalating. I have heard of presentations using more than 100. In a worst-case scenario, the slide operator may become 'out of sync' with the speaker, and the coordination of speech and screen breaks down.

    The worst Ph.D. presentation I have ever witnessed involved an introductory speech delivered in broken English at breakneck speed to get everything into a 10-minute 'window', against the background of long detailed bullet point lists flashing by on a big screen. It was impossible to follow either type of presentation simultaneously. The neural networks of the brain were scrambled, and no information was conveyed.

    One of the best Ph.D. presentations I have attended concerned a statistical method for evaluating nature. It was delivered against a background of projected images of a set of sublime landscapes and soft music. That was all that was required to put the audience in a receptive mood to absorb the content of the technical speech.

    Atkinson (ibid.) advises that, if it is necessary to use bullet point lists, then keep them short, and incorporate blank slides in the sequence so the audience can 'switch off' from time to time, and concentrate on the spoken words.

20) While repetition is not, in general, recommended in written texts, in a speech it can be very effective as a rhetorical device used, in modern times, by orators such as Lenin ('study, study, study') and Tony Blair ('education, education, education'). When making a series of points, three is the ideal number.

21) Rhetorical questions can add a touch of drama to a presentation, making the audience 'sit up'. But take care not to pause too long after asking the audience the question, or someone in the audience may be inclined to answer it. A true story serves to illustrate this point. The Soviet dissident, Andrei Almarik, came to Amsterdam to give a lecture about his difficult life in the Soviet Union. He explained how tough it was to be accepted as a student at Moscow University, and gave an example of a hard question on an obscure point of Soviet history that he had been asked at his failed interview. He appealed to the audience: 'Who could possibly know the answer to that?' But the question hung just a little too long in the air, and a member of the audience, who was not even Russian, 'helpfully' supplied the answer – thus ruining the speaker's argument.

22) Point (21) above is also an example of another vital ingredient of oral presentation – the use of story telling. An appropriate – or, better still, an amusing – anecdote can be a powerful tool to give life to a theoretical analysis. To give an illustration: after one defence of a Ph.D. thesis on the spatial economics of small rural settlements in the Netherlands, the candidate's (Dutch) supervisor, who made the closing speech in English, managed to give the serious subject of rural diversification an immediacy that an account of years of research could not achieve. He happened to have been born in one of the villages in the study, and had recently returned to visit his aged mother. They took a walk in the surrounding fields and it was apparent that, over the decades, the area had changed beyond recognition. The final farmhouse they passed was now an establishment called 'Paradise'. For a moment, the audience were slightly puzzled, and then realization dawned, so the occasion ended on a high note with laughter.

23) The story in point (22) actually combines two rhetorical devices. As well as narrative, there is puzzle-solving, which is a method often employed in the advertising industry, capitalizing on an interesting aspect of human behaviour. That is, people are more likely to be attracted to a product and buy it if an advert presents them with a word game. The answer is not immediately apparent, but when they have eventually solved it, they feel 'clever', and, as a result, are favourably disposed towards the product. The same applies when a speaker is trying to get a point across.

24) However, in the final analysis, whether EFL writers can produce a text with good English style may well depend on how well they can write in their own mother tongue. But it is interesting to note that, in a BBC Radio 4 discussion of his novel *The Boy with the Topknot*, the Punjabi author Sathnam Sanghera revealed that he could write better in English than in his mother tongue.

25) When EFL authors or students deliver conference papers in English, to achieve a smooth presentation, they should rehearse well to avoid stumbling over words, which may then be mispronounced and cause confusion for those listening. As a result, the audience may possibly lose the thread of the exposition while they try to understand apparently unknown vocabulary. This advice applies equally to native English speakers who can also be incoherent even in their mother tongue if they are 'winging' it, and have not practised to make perfect.

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 have dealt with the basics of grammar, style and oral presentation which are relevant for authors with EFL when they write academic texts. That might seem all there is to know about this skill, but now Chapter 4 provides another useful checklist of *final* editing points, to which these authors, especially students, can refer when making those finishing touches that are essential to the final draft and a camera-ready copy of a text.

4 The Finishing Touches: 22 Basic Tips for the Final Editing of Texts and Theses – a Checklist

The following advice may seem obvious, but these basic points are often overlooked, and need to be corrected in draft articles and dissertations, which holds up completion and submission.

Spelling

1. Check that the spelling of the whole text is consistently all in British English or American English throughout. Do not mix the two spellings (see the entry **British and American English** in Chapter 1). However, the original spelling of quotations should be maintained, even if it is at variance with the text (see the entry on the use of **sic**). For words with two acceptable spellings, e.g. focused/focussed, benefited/benefitted, choose one and stick to it.

S or Z

2. Where words (like organize/organise) can have an *s* or a *z* form, decide which you (or the publisher) prefer, and use it consistently throughout the text (see the entry **S or Z** in Chapter 1). Again, the original spelling of such words in quotations should be maintained.

Citations and References

3. Check that there is a one-to-one correspondence between text citations and the Reference entries. (Any sources consulted, but not used in the text, could be in a separate list called, for example, ‘General Reading’, but this is rarely seen.) In addition, there should be consistency between citations and References with regard to the spelling of the author’s(s’) name(s) and the date of the publication concerned (see the entry **Bibliographies** in Chapter 1, which has a test of your observational skills).

4. When a citation occurs as an integral part of a sentence, put the date in brackets after the author’s(s’) name(s):
   e.g. White and Brown (2000) wrote the paper on this topic.

   or White and Brown’s (2000) paper on this topic is the seminal contribution.

   When a citation occurs at the end of a sentence, put it all in brackets:
   e.g. (see, e.g., Smith, 2000).

If there are multiple citations in brackets, separate them off with semi-colons (;):
e.g. (see, e.g., Smith, 2000; White, 2002; Young, 2008).
(Order multiple citations in date or alphabetical order.)

5. In citations where a work has more than two authors, put 'et al.' (not in italics) after the first name (e.g. Smith et al., 1999). Do not forget the full stop (.) after 'al.' if using British English; there is no full stop after 'et al' in American English.

6. Check that the punctuation and layout of each of the References are exactly the same.

Main Contents

7. Check that the chapter headings and subheadings in the Contents are exactly the same as they are in the body of the text. You cannot trust the computers to do this.

8. On the main Contents page, the words of the chapter headings should not stray into the page numbers column.

9. If any chapter, section, table or figure titles in the text contain superscript numbers referring to footnotes, or to a table or figure Notes, then these superscripts should NOT appear in the main Contents or in the List of Tables and the List of Figures.

Appendices

10. If chapters or sections have Appendices, tie in the numbering of the Appendices, and any tables or figures therein, with the number of the chapter or section concerned.
    e.g. An Appendix at the end of Chapter 3 could be called Appendix 3A, and, if it has parts, these would be numbered 3A.1, 3A.2, etc. Any tables and figures in this Appendix should then be labelled Table 3.A1 (etc.), Figure 3.A1 (etc.).

Tables and Figures

11. Include a List of Tables and a List of Figures (in that order) immediately after the main Contents, each beginning on a separate page, and check that the titles in these lists are exactly the same as in the text.

12. It is the convention to put table titles above the tables, and figure titles below the figures.

13. The Sources of tables and figures go below the table and figure Notes. In the case of figures, the Notes and Sources are usually placed immediately below the figure title, all beneath the figure, i.e.:
    Figure 1.1…
    Note(s):….
    Source(s):…

14. Figure and table titles do not have a full stop at the end, but Sources and Notes do end with a full stop.

15. All tables and figures should be referred to in the body of the text.

Equation numbers

16. Equation numbers should be flush with the right-hand margin. Check to confirm that all equation numbers follow consecutively, with no doubling or skipping of numbers.

    Use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) for equation numbers, not Roman numerals (I, II, III, IV, etc.).

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Per cent/percent/%

17. Use per cent (British English) or percent (American English) as words in the text, not the % sign. However, the % sign is used in tables and figures.

Abbreviations

18. If there are a great many abbreviations and acronyms in the text, provide a Glossary explaining them in full, placed after the List of Figures.

Dates

19. Write all dates in this fashion: 20 May 2008. It avoids commas and having figures next to figures, and is favoured by publishers.

Printing advice

20. Avoid having small isolated blocks of text of only a line or two above or below tables and figures that occupy most of the page.

21. Use graded weights of print for chapter headings (heaviest), section headings (medium) and subheadings (lightest).

22. Lastly, check that all spacing between letters, words,[8] paragraphs and sections is consistent in the entire text, and, if the right-hand margin is justified, make sure no pages have uneven right-hand margins. Ensure all long dashes are the same length. In particular, where there is a pair of dashes, it often happens that one dash is shorter than the other, which is usually a computer-generated error. There should be a space on either side of the dashes – like this. In the final proofreading make sure no lines have got 'lost' in the printing process – sometimes lines of text accidentally disappear below tables and figures and at the end of pages, and, where the right-hand margin is justified, occasionally short lines crop up. Finally, check page references are all present and correct and consistently printed (e.g. Weiss, 2005: 32), that the vertical list of page numbers in the main Contents exactly matches the page numbers in the main text, and that the titles of chapters and their sections do not stray into the column reserved for the page numbers.

5 Everything You Always Wanted to Know about the Definite and the Indefinite Article (but Were too Confused to Know Where to Begin)

Introduction

As the use of the definite and indefinite articles (*the*, *a/an*) is frequently the most difficult aspect for many writers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), this entire section is devoted entirely to its complexities.

In the main part of this grammar guide, the short entry **Definite and Indefinite Articles** indicates that there is much more to the use of these articles in the English language than the basic rule: 'particular' = *the*, and 'general' = *a/an*. Although this is a good rule of thumb, it is too simplistic, especially for students with English as a foreign language (EFL students) who have no article in their mother tongue (for details, see Section 1 below). Therefore, this section is designed to help EFL students understand the many nuances of the definite (*the*) and the indefinite (*a/an*) articles when writing texts in English. All EFL students have problems with English articles to a greater or lesser extent, even if they are familiar with the concept of articles in their own language. The chapter is structured as follows:

Section 1 presents an analysis of the presence or absence of articles in various foreign languages. This shows which language groups are likely to have the most problems, and extensive notes explain the common and specific problems that are experienced by each language group. In total, 30 difficulties are identified and explained. This will provide a few tips for students prior to attempting the first Diagnostic Test in Section 2. However, most of the explanatory notes come *after* this test, whose educative purpose is to give the students practice in using the articles and to help them learn from their mistakes.

Section 2 is the actual first Diagnostic Test consisting of an extract from a published spatial economics text written by a native speaker of English. All the definite and indefinite articles are blanked out, and spaces are left in front of nouns and noun phrases where no article is used, as it is just as important to know where *not* to use articles as it is to know where to use them. The student must then attempt to reinsert, or not use, the articles correctly. The difficulty or ease of this exercise will immediately signal whether or not the student has a problem with articles and, if so, pinpoint particular or general difficulties. Following the test, the full text is provided so that answers can be checked against the original.

Section 3 contains three lists showing when to use:

(1)	no article at all	(22 Rules)
(2)	the definite article (*the*)	(25 Rules)
(3)	the indefinite article (*a/an*)	(19 Rules)

I have called these explanations 'Rules', but they might also be described as 'contexts', as in:
e.g. *The sea* is usually calm in the Baltic. [Rule 23]
The student was all at *sea* where using articles was concerned. [Rule 1]

Sometimes writers of EFL apply the articles correctly in one context, but then shortly afterwards make an error.

The test in Section 2 covered the *main bases* with respect to the use/non-use of articles, but did not cover *all* 80 Rules in Sections 3 and 4, as it was impossible to find a 'real' piece of text which did this. Section 3 attempts to fill this gap but does not claim to be an exhaustive list. However, it is a reasonably comprehensive account of the use of the articles. Equally important, it explains where *non-use* is appropriate, as EFL students often introduce articles into a text where no article is required.

"I studied English for 16 years but... ...I finally learned to speak it in just six lessons"
Jane, Chinese architect
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Section 4 covers 14 special points and constructions involving the use of *the* and *a/an*. This brings the total number of 'Rules' to 80.

Section 5 is an attempt to include all the 80 'Rules' for the use/non-use of articles within the confines of a brief essay. The extract from a book used in Section 2 for the first Diagnostic Test was only a 'starter', just conveying some frequently occurring examples of article usage. As it proved impractical to find a short published text that included *all* the points discussed in this chapter, I have created my own text to serve this purpose. It is on the subject of 'global warming', which is a topic that exercises the minds of environmental and other economists and is of concern to a growing number of corporations. To my knowledge, no other guide has provided such a concentrated checklist.

The information provided in this chapter is a synthesis of the instructions on the use of articles in the following books:

1. *Practical English Usage*. Michael Swan. Oxford University Press, Second edition, 1995.
2. *Learner English, A teacher's guide to interference and other problems*. Michael Swan & Bernard Smith (eds). Cambridge University Press, Second edition, 2001. (Note: This book not only helps EFL students to understand the roots of their individual difficulties with articles, but also explains why they may experience problems with all other aspects of English grammar.)
3. *The New Fowler's Modern English Usage*. R.W. Burchfield (ed.). Oxford University Press, third revised edition, 1996.
4. *Academic Writing for Graduate Students, A course for nonnative speakers of English*. John M. Swales & Christine B. Feak. The University of Michigan Press, 2005.(Note: The basic idea for the tests in Sections 2 and 5 of this chapter is borrowed from Appendix 1, Tasks 2 and 5 of this book, which is very useful, but concerns texts on the art of handwriting and medical matters. Here, the test texts are more ambitious, based on more relevant economics and business texts. Moreover, unlike in Swales & Feak, the answers are provided: the full original text follows the tests.)
5. *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 11th edition, 2004.
6. *Oxford Business English and Practice*, Section 36. Michael Duckworth. Oxford University Press, second edition, 2004.

This in-depth treatment of the English articles is worthwhile because, of all the written errors made by EFL students, the incorrect use of the articles is perhaps the most important. This involves: the wrong or random choice of *the*, *a/an*; their unnecessary presence; or incorrect absence. Such mistakes are an immediate pointer that a text has been written by a non-native English speaker. These small, but crucial, words pervade an English text, occurring in most sentences.

In grammatical terms, *articles* are a subclass of 'determiners', which are words that identify things and come before nouns (the world, a country) or before qualifying adjectives preceding nouns (the exchange rate, an open economy). The other determiner subclasses are *possessives* (e.g. my, his, our) and *demonstratives* (e.g. this, that, these). In English, articles and possessives are never mixed (e.g. the yours) as is done in French, Italian and Spanish.

The most basic rule is that the definite article is used in association with *particular* things (the law of supply and demand) or persons (Marshall, the economist), and the indefinite article with *general* things (a developing country). However, this is by no means the whole story. The English language is never so simple, as the notes in Sections 3 and 4 will demonstrate, and sometimes defies explanation. What, for instance, is the subtle difference between these two sentences:

> 'The weather has been wonderful this summer', and
> 'This summer we have been having wonderful weather'?

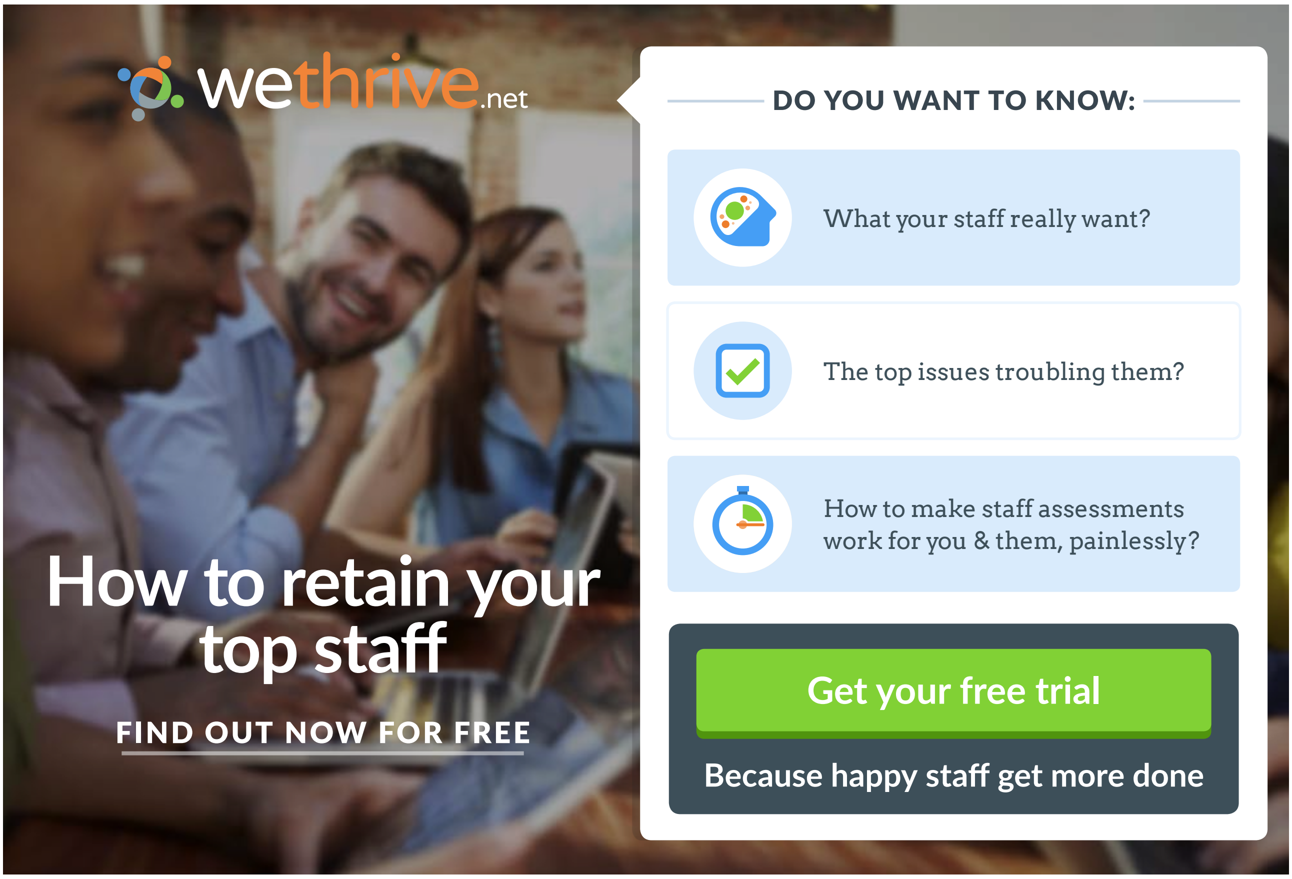
In the first sentence, the definite article is used before 'weather' (where it is the subject), and in the second sentence no article is used before 'weather' (where it is used as an object). Moreover, in the first sentence 'The weather' would appear to refer to 'weather' in general, thus breaking the 'rule' that 'the' is used for particular things. It could, however, be argued that 'The weather' means a particular *type* of weather at a particular time of year.

Notwithstanding these complexities, it is not all bad news where English articles are concerned. Indeed, in a number of respects the English articles are much easier to use than their counterparts in some foreign languages. Both English articles have no genders or cases. The definite article has no plural form, though *some/any* can be used as the plural of *a/an*. However, the use of this 'plural' is often optional, viz.:

Either	German has some cases.
Or	German has cases.
Either	Russian does not have any articles.
Or	Russian does not have articles.

In contrast, looking at other languages, for both articles French and Spanish have two genders (masculine and feminine – respectively: *le/la* and *un/une*; and *el/la* and *un/una*), and a separate plural (respectively: *les*; and *los*). Dutch has two definite articles: masculine and neuter – *de* and *het*, and one plural: *de*. German really goes to town with three genders for both articles (masculine, feminine and neuter – *der*, *die*, *das*; and *ein*, *eine*, *ein*) and a plural (*die*) for the definite article, all of which have four cases (nominative, accusative, genitive, dative). This is not the sum total of the versatility of the German articles, as there is yet a separate *negative* indefinite article (*kein*), which also has three genders and four cases. Compare all this with the mere *two* unisex and undeclinable English articles.

The difficulty with the English articles lies not in their form but in their myriad uses. Therefore, first, Section 1 of this chapter will begin to unpack these uses by revealing the relative ability of EFL students to cope with the English articles, according to their mother tongue. Of course, not only between but also *within* each language group there will be a range of ability from those who have an innate ‘feel’ for the English language to those who are struggling to achieve fluency.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Section 1: Analysis of presence or absence of the definite articles in various foreign languages

The extent to which EFL students with various mother tongues may have difficulties with using English articles is explained below in subsections A, B, C, D and E (in order of increasing difficulty) (based on information about language groups provided in **Source 2** on p. 120, with my own examples).

A. Languages (apart from English) that have both articles: definite and indefinite

Dutch
French
German
Greek
Italian
Portuguese
Scandinavian languages
Spanish and Catalonian

Difficulties experienced by native speakers of Group A

Common problems

1. **The definite article is used where it should be omitted in general statements, i.e. before plural nouns**

Wrong:	The interest rates are rising.
Correct:	Interest rates are rising.
Wrong:	The money was not used in primitive societies.
Correct:	Money was not used in primitive societies.

2. **The definite article is often used incorrectly before certain nouns**

society	
nature	[when it means ‘countryside’; but when it means ‘character’, the definite article may be used, e.g. the nature of the problem]
planning	
space	
training	

e.g. 'There is no such thing as society' [not: as the society] [quote of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, *Womans Own*, 31 October 1987].
An integrated part of the Rotterdam harbour development programme is a plan for nature [not: for the nature].
Planning is essential for creating a sound economy [not: The planning].
The exploration of space [not: of the space] is not economically viable.
Job centres now offer training to the unemployed [not: the training].

3. **Indefinite article omitted where it is necessary**

Wrong:	He is economist.
Correct:	He is an economist.
Wrong:	On that farm there are hundred (thousand) hectares of poor land.
Correct:	On that farm there are a hundred (thousand) hectares of poor land.

4. **Indefinite article used where it should be omitted**

Wrong:	On that farm there are a 100 (a 1000) hectares of poor land.
Correct:	On that farm there are 100 (1000) hectares of poor land.

Note the difference between the examples of Errors 3 and 4 where, in the former, the number 'a hundred (a thousand)' is written in words, while in the latter the number '100 (1000)' is written in figures and does not require the use of the article *a*.

Specific problems for certain EFL students

5. **Definite article used incorrectly before most place names** (i.e. by Greeks and Italians)

Wrong:	the Chicago; the France (cf. the French *la France*)
Correct:	Chicago, France

There are a few exceptions: The Hague (note the capital T in *The*), the Netherlands, the Maldives, the Philippines, the UK, the United States, the Yemeni Republic. Note, however, that 'the Ukraine' used to be correct but now, in conformity with the general rule, it is 'Ukraine', without the definite article.

6. **Definite article used incorrectly before proper names** (e.g. by Greeks and Italians)

Wrong:	The President Chirac criticized the George Bush's decision to invade Iraq.
Correct:	President Chirac criticized George Bush's decision to invade Iraq.

7. **Definite article used incorrectly before possessive pronouns** (e.g. by the French, Italians, and Spanish)

Wrong: That book is the yours [cf. the French *le votre*].
Correct: That book is yours.

8. **Definite article used incorrectly before or after proper nouns**[9] **and before place names used as genitives with 's** (e.g. by the French)

Wrong: the Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.
Correct: Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.
Wrong: the America's economy; America's the economy
Correct: America's economy

(This does not apply before *ordinary* genitive nouns, e.g. the country's economy – There, it is correct to use the definite article.)

9. **Nouns that are always plural in English used incorrectly in the singular with (mainly) the definite article** (e.g. by the French)

Wrong: The British no longer sell the arm to Indonesia (**should be**: sell arms).
Wrong: When goods enter a country they have to go through the custom [**should be**: go through customs].

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10. **Indefinite article wrongly omitted after *with*, *without*** (e.g. by Greeks and Italians)
    Wrong: The Soviets ran the economy of the USSR with series of Five-year plans [**should be**: with a series of Five-year plans].
    Wrong: Without rise in interest rates, house prices will increase [**should be**: Without a rise…].

11. **Indefinite article wrongly omitted after *as*** (e.g. by the French and Germans)
    Wrong: He is employed as engineer [**should be**: as an engineer].

12. **Indefinite article used incorrectly before nouns that are uncountable in English but may be countable in other languages** (e.g. by Italians and Portuguese)
    Wrong: The financial consultant gave an advice to investors [**should be**: gave advice…].

13. **Indefinite article used incorrectly after qualifying adjectives** (e.g. by Italians)
    Wrong: There was sharp a fall today in share prices on the London Stock Exchange.
    Correct: There was a sharp fall today…

14. **No distinction made between the indefinite article and the written number 'one'** (e.g. by the Spanish)
    Wrong: One plan is necessary to run the economy efficiently [**should be**: A plan…].

15. **Confusion about when to use *few/little* or a *few/a little*** (by Italians)
    few/little have a negative connotation:
    e.g. Saudi Arabia has few sources of fresh drinking water.
    Saudi Arabia has little fresh drinking water.

    a few/a little have a more positive connotation:
    e.g. There are only a few people without a car these days.
    There is still a little money in your bank account.

    Note: 'a good few' means 'many' – the opposite of 'few'.

16. **Indefinite article wrongly omitted in idiomatic phrases** (by Scandinavians)

Wrong:	Get answer	Make decision
Correct:	Get an answer	Make a decision

B. A language with a definite article but no indefinite article

Arabic

Speakers of this language share the problems of Group A (see Errors 1–16 above), but also have particular problems of their own. Although there is a definite article, it is not freestanding but is attached in front of the noun as a prefix (al-), and is not used in the same ways as in English.

17. **Use of definite article in Arabic where it is not used in English**
The lecture is the Wednesday
[**should be**: is on Wednesday].
In Canada, they grow the wheat
[**should be**: they grow wheat].

18. **Problems with the English article arising from the Arabic genitive construction**
In Arabic there is no equivalent of genitive nouns, either with an apostrophe ('s, s') at the end or with *of the/of a* in front. So literal translations from the Arabic might look like this:

Literal English	*Idiomatic (normal) English*
paper Samuelson	the paper of Samuelson (or: Samuelson's paper)
wage worker	the wage of a worker (or: a worker's wage)
economy the country	the economy of the country (or: the country's economy)
state economy the country	the state of the country's economy

Most problems with the use of articles by Arabic speakers stem from the absence of the indefinite article in Arabic.

19. **Indefinite article wrongly omitted with singular countable nouns**

Wrong:	This is book about English grammar.
Correct:	This is a book about English grammar.

20. **The indefinite article is used in places where the English definite article is not used (i.e. before uncountable and plural nouns)**

Wrong:	A wheat is grown in Canada.
Correct:	Wheat is grown in Canada.
Wrong:	These are a books from the library.
Correct:	These are books from the library.

C. A language with no definite article but a separate indefinite article

Turkish

Again, there are the usual problems with the article (Errors 1–16 above), especially because there is no definite article.

21. **Incorrect use of definite article before direct objects**
    Although Turkish has no definite article, the form of definite direct objects is different from that of indefinite direct objects. This means that Turkish speakers have a tendency to put *the* in front of all direct objects, even though it may not always be correct to do this in English.
    e.g. Mayor Boris Johnson runs the London [**should be**: runs London].
    The its economy is booming [**should be**: Its economy is booming].

    The errors in these examples may look the same as Errors 5 and 7 in Section A above, but the cause is different.
    The indefinite article exists as a separate entity in Turkish but it is placed between an adjective and the noun. In this respect, the error is the same as Error 13 in Section A above (i.e. *sharp a fall* instead of, the correct, *a sharp fall*).

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22. **Incorrect use of *some* instead of *a*/*an***

Wrong:	The industrialist prepared some business plan for some bank that loaned him some money.
Correct:	The industrialist prepared a business plan for a bank that loaned him some money.

The difficulty here arises because in Turkish the distinction between countable nouns (i.e. business plan and bank) and uncountable nouns (i.e. money) is not so clear as it is in English. It is therefore difficult to decide whether to use *a/an* (before countable nouns) or *some* (before uncountable nouns). The choice is more often for *some*, but this does not work with countable nouns, as is evident in the example above.

D. A language with no separate definite or indefinite articles but with suffixes added to nouns to indicate whether they have a definite or indefinite sense

Farsi

Once more the usual errors apply, in particular omitting necessary articles of both kinds or adding them unnecessarily:

Wrong:	Professor told student to spend more time in library [definite articles omitted].
Correct:	The Professor told the student to spend more time in the library.
Wrong:	John Galbraith is economist and novelist [indefinite articles omitted].
Correct:	John Galbraith is an economist and a novelist.

E. Languages with no articles at all

This group contains many major world languages, and it is their native speakers who will benefit most from the detailed guidance in Chapter 5.

Chinese
Dravidian languages (e.g. Tamil)
East African languages (e.g. Swahili)
Korean
Japanese
Malay/Indonesian
Polish
Russian
South Asian languages (e.g. Hindi)
Thai
West African languages

EFL students who speak these languages experience the whole gamut of difficulties described in Sections A–D above (Errors 1–22). For example, see:

Error 6 Misuse of the definite article with proper names (e.g. in Swahili)
Wrong: the President Zuma
Error 9 Making plural nouns singular after definite and indefinite articles (e.g. in Swahili)
Wrong: the arm trade a trouser
Correct: the arms trade trousers
Error 14 Use of *one* in place of *a*/*an* (e.g. Dravidian languages)
Error 20 Indefinite article overused especially with plurals (e.g. in Malay/Indonesian)
Wrong a books

23. **No concept of plural noun endings, which may result in the incorrect omission of articles**
    These general difficulties with articles are compounded in those languages in this group that have no plural noun endings, e.g. Korean (which just repeats a word to make it plural), Japanese (in nouns not referring to people), Malay/Indonesian, and Thai.
    e.g. Have you finished exam?
    Could mean: Have you finished the exam?
    Or: Have you finished the exams?

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24. **Pluralization of mass nouns, together with misuse of the article** (Malay)

a butters	[**Should be:** butter]
the butters	[**Should be:** butter]

25. **Hit or miss approach in using articles**

Amongst others, Russian and Thai speakers apply or omit the articles at random and often choose the wrong article:

Wrong:	China has booming economy.
Correct:	China has a booming economy.

More specific problems with articles for Group E students:

26. **The definite article omitted universally** (South Asian languages)

See the example of a book title in the main part of this guide, in the entry **Definite and indefinite articles**.

It is very common for the definite article to be omitted incorrectly before certain plurals:

Wrong:	Findings (Results) show that…
Correct:	The findings (The results) show that…

27. **The demonstrative used *in place of* the definite article** (e.g. Dravidian languages)

Wrong:	that next year
Correct:	the next year

28. **Confusion between *a* and *an*** (e.g. by speakers of Swahili)

a tsunami	(use *a* before consonant)
a university	(use *a* before voiced vowel)
an investment	(use *an* before unvoiced vowel)

29. **Indefinite article omitted before nouns of quantity and mass** (e.g. Malay/Indonesian, Central and East European languages)

Wrong:	Number of mines have been earmarked for closure.
Correct:	A number of mines have been earmarked for closure.
Wrong:	There is decreasing amount of investment in Iraq.
Correct:	There is a decreasing amount of investment in Iraq.

30. **Indefinite article omitted before abstract nouns** (Malay/Indonesian, Central and East European languages)

Wrong:	In recent years, there has been change for the better in Russia.
Correct:	In recent years, there has been a change for the better in Russia.

Note 1. With respect to Errors 1–30, where reference is made (in brackets) to a certain language or languages, this only means that speakers of those languages are more prone to make these errors, not that the error concerned is not made by native speakers of other languages in Groups A–E.

Note 2. In Section 1 the material about the articles has been organized in terms of the errors that EFL students are likely to make. After the first Diagnostic Test in Section 2, Sections 3 and 4 then provide a more systematic explanation of how to use the English articles. Inevitably, there will be a certain amount of repetition of Section 1 points in Sections 3 and 4, but this will help the learning process. Moreover, new examples are used and extra 'Rules' are included to fill any gaps in the Section 1 list. The final Diagnostic Test in Section 5 gathers together everything in this long Chapter 5.

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Section 2: The first Diagnostic Test

In the following Diagnostic Test, a spatial economics text written by a native English speaker is used to practise using the articles. In this text, all the definite and indefinite articles in front of every noun or noun phrase have been extracted and replaced by blank spaces marked thus: ___. Blank spaces are also inserted before nouns and noun phrases (e.g. ___ economic planning) that do not need articles, as EFL students often add unnecessary articles. The student has to decide what article, if any, to insert in the blank spaces. There are three choices:

1) *The*, *the* (the definite article)
2) *A/An*, *a/an* (the indefinite article)
3) No article, i.e. neither the definite nor the indefinite article (in this case, leave the space blank).

Example of a test sentence:
___ GNP of ___ country is not ___ indicator of ___ happiness.

Example with blanks filled in, or left blank (no article required):
The GNP of *a* country is not *an* indicator of ___ happiness.

If a test sentence starts with a blank space, and no article is required, change the first letter of the noun or noun phrase into a capital letter (unless it is a 'proper noun' that already starts with a capital letter, e.g. Adam Smith, France).

Test: ___ investment is necessary. ___ manufacturing industry must grow.
Answer: ___ Investment is necessary. ___ Manufacturing industry must grow.

Test: ___ WTO rulings are sometimes controversial.
Answer: ___ WTO rulings are sometimes controversial.

When you have worked through the test, you can compare your answers with the original text, a copy of which follows the test. This will help you to see what, if any, aspects concerning the use of articles are causing problems for you. Within the text, some of the uses are repeated, as is normal in any piece of writing. This will give you extra practice. Indeed, it is only by repetition that the elusive, instinctive use of the articles can be acquired.

The test text only includes the main constructions that use articles (or do not use them, as the case may be). Ideally, a test text should cover *every* single point discussed in this chapter, but, in practice, it is unlikely that a short extract of a real text would do this.[10] Those constructions that do not appear in this particular block of text can be found (together with all those that are used in the practice text) in the list of uses in Section 3, supplemented by special points in Section 4.

The test: Fill in the blanks with the definite or the indefinite article, or leave blank if no article is required. If no article is required at the beginning of a sentence, then the first letter of the first word of that sentence must be changed to a capital letter. In the text below, where this choice has to be made, the first letter of this word is placed in square brackets.

The following text with the articles removed is extracted from P. Ellman, The Socio-Geographic Enquiry, in: Royal Commission on Local Government in England, *RESEARCH STUDIES 1* by the Greater London Group, the London School of Economics and Political Science, London, HMSO, 1968, pp. 415–416.

Socio-geographic enquiry

Introduction

__ problem

0.1 "__ average hinterland… is made up of __ many components. Every single commercial, industrial, professional and administrative undertaking has __ territory of its own, and these territories cannot exactly coincide. To take __ average of __ boundaries between __ different types of __ hinterland would involve assessing subjectively __ amount of significance to attach to each… Nevertheless it is apparent that in some urban hinterlands __ average is __ mean between almost coincident individual functional hinterlands, whereas in __ others there is so much difference that __ average is of somewhat reduced value. It is therefore important to consider significant types of __ functional hinterland. __ [h]interlands defined by __ daily journey to work and by __ retail shopping and distribution are perhaps __ two most significant… and all __ others tend eventually to conform to them. It may further be argued that __ journey to __ work hinterland ultimately reveals itself as __ dominant factor".[11]

0.2 In these words F.H.W. Green summarises __ central problem which faced us in __ socio-geographic enquiry, and suggests __ practical solution which we too have employed. In fact __ whole half century of __ British geographical research, since __ pioneering work of C.B. Fawcett,[12] has emphasised __ same conclusion. In delimiting __ boundaries of __ cultural regions, __ critical patterns are those of __ movements which __ people make most often: and __ daily journey to __ work is __ one they make most often and most consistently.

0.3 This point of frequency is __ telling one. __ [p]eople commute much more often across __ local authority boundaries than they cross those boundaries to shop. If __ daily shopping were taken as __ standard, on __ basis that it happens as often as __ commuting journeys, then __ existing administrative areas would doubtless be fragmented into __ minute units. Within __ towns, __ local shops tend to be __ main destination of __ daily shopping trip : in __ rural areas, __ home village suffices. __ [s]hopping trips that do tend to cross __ boundaries, on __ other hand, are those for __ durable goods ; and these occur at most fortnightly, if not less frequently still. Indeed, some people in __ Kent have reported that they never shop for __ durable goods. Therefore, if we seek __ linkages between __ areas that loom largest in __ people's own consciousness, __ commuting journey will prove __ most significant.

0.4 Associated with this, in favour of __ use of __ commuting as __ basic study, is another significant point. Where __ detailed shopping data exists, as in __ Kent, it shows that in many cases even __ durable goods shopping hinterlands are more restricted than __ commuting hinterlands. In most cases, however, there is __ remarkable accordance between __ two types of __ hinterland, as around __Royal Tunbridge Wells, __ Medway Towns and __ Maidstone. Only in __Canterbury, with its remarkable dominance as __ shopping centre in __East Kent, did __ hinterland for __ durable goods shopping extend more widely than __ hinterland for __commuting. When we extended our study of __ durable goods shopping from __ Kent to __ rest of __ region, through __ development of __ theoretical model based on __ Kent observations, __ remarkable point which emerged was __ degree to which __ small towns met their own demands for __ durable goods, thus restricting __ spheres of __ influence of __ major centres for this type of __ shopping.

0.5 There is another, more pragmatic reason for putting __ study of __ commuting first. It is that __ data is far more comprehensive in coverage than __ data on __ shopping. Within __ South East Economic Planning Region, __ comprehensive data on __ shopping patterns, based on __ direct survey, exists for __ wide sample of areas within __ one county (__Kent) and for one town (__ Guildford); and __ basis of these two surveys is not comparable. __ [c]ommuting data, in contrast, is available for all __ urban and __ rural authorities in __ country, for __ three separate dates (1921, 1951, and 1961), in __ broadly comparable form; this allowed __ relationships to be established, not only within __ region, but where apposite across its borders.

0.6 There is __ one deficiency in __ commuting data: it relates to __ units which are often large and heterogeneous in __ character. __ [d]ata is presented in __ form of __ matrix of __ flows between __ administrative areas (__Metropolitan, County and Municipal Boroughs; Urban and Rural Districts). This leads to particular difficulties in __ interpretation in __ rural areas, since one big rural area may be orientated towards as many as __ four different towns, with no possibility of saying which parts of __ area are most strongly orientated towards which towns. __ Dunmow Rural District, in Essex, is __ good example of this problem. In such __ case, it was generally necessary to fit __ entire rural district into __ hinterland of that centre to which it sent ___ most commuters, though it would have been more realistic to draw __ hinterland boundaries within __ rural district itself. This would be possible only if __ commuting statistics, and hence __ workplace statistics, were coded and presented by __ Census on __ basis of __wards and __ civil parishes. But this limitation is __ minor one when set against __ general richness and __ comprehensive character of __ commuting data.

0.7 Therefore, our primary basis for __ delimitation of __city regions is __ study of __ commuting patterns and of __ changes in those patterns over __ time. It is then supplemented by __ study of __ shopping patterns for __ durable goods, which is based on __ development of __ general model of these patterns based on __ Kent observations, and on __ application of this model to __ rest of __ South East Planning Region. __ *Section 1* of __ report presents __ analysis of __ commuting and describes __ concept of __ *Standard Metropolitan Labour Area*, which is __ basic geographical unit of analysis of this data. __ *Section 2* describes how __ concept of __ Standard Metropolitan Labour Area was extended and transmuted into __ concept of __ *District*, which is __ geographical unit recommended in our main report as __ basis for __ local government reform in __ South East region. __ *Section 3* presents __ results of __ analysis of __ durable goods shopping, and relates this to __ concepts of __ Standard Metropolitan Labour Area and __ District. And lastly __ *Section 4* supplements __ shopping analysis by __ study of __ provision of __ retail shops and __ other central services in __ towns of __ region, with __ primary purpose of identifying __ most important centres of __ urban activity as __ basis for __ local government reform.

End of first Diagnostic Test

So you can check your answers, the full text comes next.

Answers to the Diagnostic Test: the original text

The actual text is marked as follows:
* indicates where either *the* or *a/an* could be acceptable;
** indicates where no article or the definite article could be acceptable;
*** indicates where no article or the indefinite article could be acceptable.

Note that the articles are highlighted in **bold** to help the student but this was not done in the original.

A visual check of the full text against the completed test text will enable you to verify the places where it is correct not to use any article.

Socio-geographic enquiry

Introduction

The problem

0.1 "***An** average hinterland… is made up of many components. Every single commercial, industrial, professional and administrative undertaking has **a** territory of its own, and these territories cannot exactly coincide. To take **an** average of **the** boundaries between different types of hinterland would involve assessing subjectively **the** amount of significance to attach to each… Nevertheless it is apparent that in some urban hinterlands **the** average is **a** mean between almost coincident individual functional hinterlands, whereas in others there is so much difference that **the** average is of somewhat reduced value. It is therefore important to consider significant types of functional hinterland. Hinterlands defined by **the** daily journey to work and by retail shopping and distribution are perhaps **the** two most significant… and all others tend eventually to conform to them. It may further be argued that **the** journey to work hinterland ultimately reveals itself as **the** dominant factor".[13]

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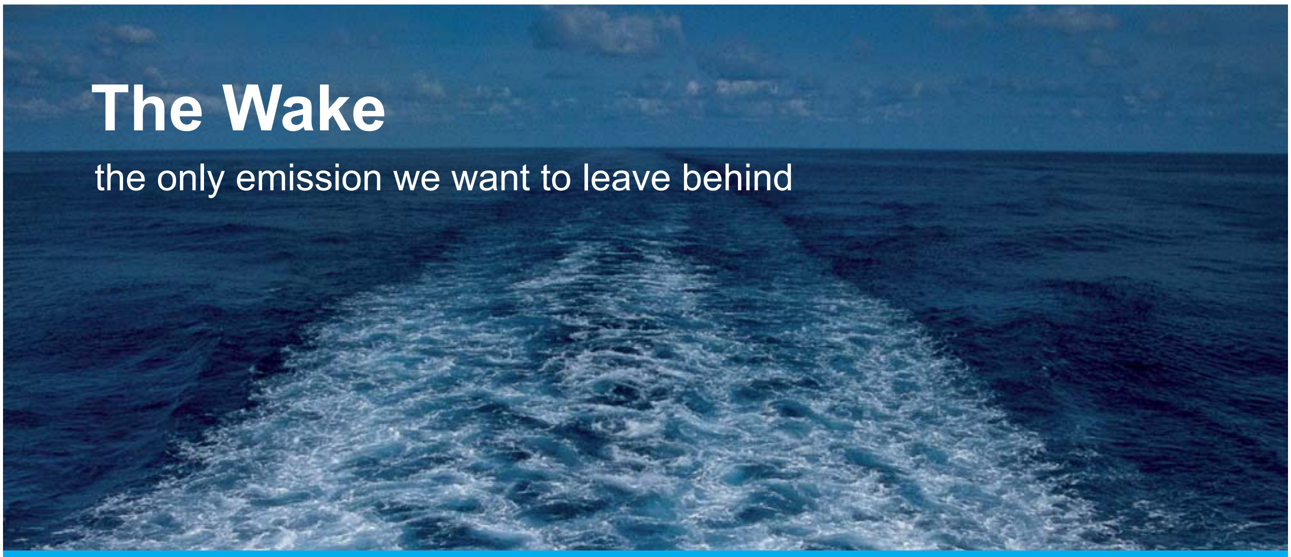

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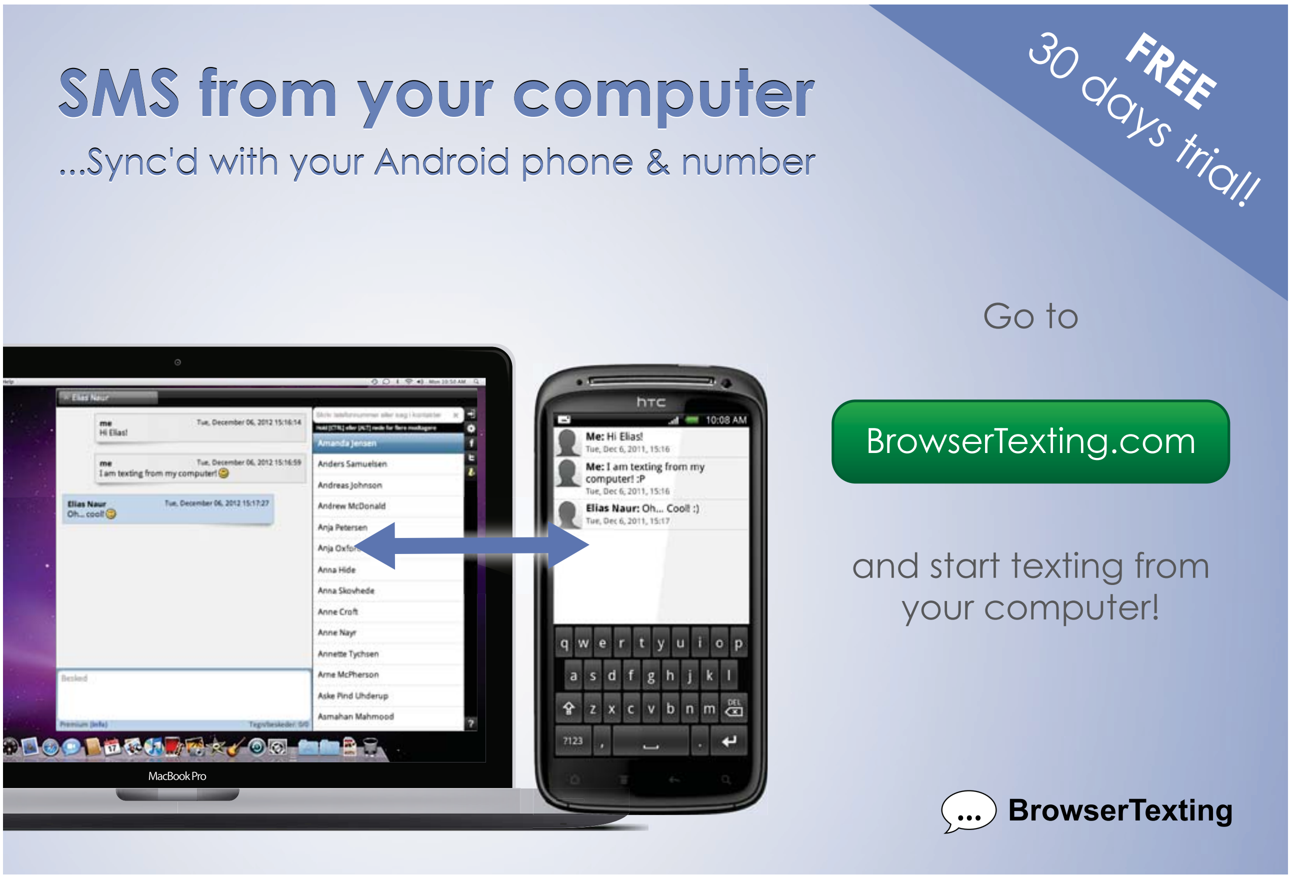
0.7 Therefore, our primary basis for **the** delimitation of city regions is ***a** study of commuting patterns and of **changes in those patterns over time. It is then supplemented by **a** study of shopping patterns for durable goods, which is based on **the** development of **a** general model of these patterns based on **the** Kent observations, and on **the** application of this model to **the** rest of **the** South East Planning Region. *Section 1* of **the** report presents **the** analysis of commuting and describes **the** concept of **the** *Standard Metropolitan Labour Area*, which is **the** basic geographical unit of analysis of this data. *Section 2* describes how **the** concept of **the** Standard Metropolitan Labour Area was extended and transmuted into **the** concept of **the** *District*, which is **the** geographical unit recommended in our main report as **the** basis for local government reform in **the** South East region. *Section 3* presents **the** results of **the** analysis of durable goods shopping, and relates this to **the** concepts of **the** Standard Metropolitan Labour Area and District. And lastly *Section 4* supplements **the** shopping analysis by **a** study of the provision of retail shops and other central services in **the** towns of **the** region, with **the** primary purpose of identifying **the** most important centres of urban activity as ***a** basis for local government reform.

Section 3: The most widely-used constructions using the definite and indefinite articles

Section 1 concentrated on the difficulties with articles experienced by each language group. Section 3 now reinforces the lessons learnt in the Section 2 test, by providing a more comprehensive checklist of the situations where articles are used in English, and indicates the type of article appropriate for each situation. First, however, it is instructive to draw attention to those instances where *no article* is required before the noun or noun phrase (but is often found in texts written by EFL students). The numbered Rules 1–80 correspond to the superscripts (with hyperlinks to Section 3) used in Section 5 (Format 3) to indicate their occurrence in the test essay on global warming.



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3.A When to use no article (technically known as the 'zero article')

1) No article is used when the noun (often in the plural form) or noun phrase has a general meaning:

e.g. Bachelor's degrees take three years [**not**: The Bachelor's degrees].
Dutch farmers grow potatoes [**not**: The Dutch farmers…the potatoes].
It is cost-effective to transport high volume goods by air, and low volume goods by sea.

Compare with 3.B.23, where the definite article is used for nouns or noun phrases with a particular meaning.

2. No article is used with abstract nouns:

e.g. Life is difficult in the slums of Bombay [**not**: The life…].
Change is in the air in Turkmenistan [**not**: The change…].

3. Uncountable nouns *generally* do not take articles:

e.g. Unemployment is rising [**not**: The unemployment…].
Money is needed for the tsunami victims [**not**: The money…].
Water is scarce in the Sahara [**not**: The water…].
Oil is now €52 per barrel [**not**: The oil…].
Energy can be generated from the wind [**not**: The energy…].
Carbon dioxide concentrations are increasing in the atmosphere [**not**: The carbon…].

However, when used in a particular sense, uncountable nouns can take the definite article:

e.g. The water in that river is stagnant [i.e. this particular stretch of water].

And in a few cases the indefinite article:

e.g. Omega-3 is an essential oil.
Merino sheep have a fine wool.

But note in both examples the interposition of an adjective between the article and the noun.

The following italicized uncountable nouns are often preceded incorrectly by the definite article in texts by writers of EFL:

Society will no longer tolerate the avaricious behaviour of bankers.
Some recent studies have attempted to evaluate *Nature*.
Training is essential to bring the long-term unemployed into work.
Planning is the answer to the problem of global warming.
Colonizing *space* will ensure the future of planet Earth.

4. No article is used where countable nouns in foreign languages are uncountable in English:
   e.g. Financial advisers give advice to homebuyers [**not**: the advice, or an advice].
   Estate agents provide information about houses for sale (**not**: the information).

5. Certain uncountable nouns sometimes need no article at all; and sometimes need the definite article; and, more rarely, the indefinite article:
   e.g. rain, snow, weather, global warming [no article]

Rain: Both rain and drought can ruin crops [no article].
In November 2000, the rain was so heavy in Britain that much of the country was under floodwater [definite article].
A light rain was falling when the protesters started the anti-war march [indefinite article].

Snow: In winter, the roads are often blocked by snow [no article].
The snow in February brought the railways to a halt [definite article].

Weather: The importance of weather cannot be ignored as a determinant of prices on the oil futures market [no article].
Bad weather has ruined the Russian grain harvest on a number of occasions [no article].
The Russian grain harvests are susceptible to the vagaries of the weather [definite article].

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(Incidentally, this last sentence is an example of the use of *the* in a general sense, against the 'rule' – see 3.B.23 below.)

6. No article is used before calendar months:
   e.g. Tax returns are filed in April in the UK.

7. No article is used before a particular theory (e.g. trade theory, Arrow's theory, general equilibrium theory):
   e.g. John von Neumann invented game theory.

8. No article is used in commonly-paired structures:
   e.g. guns and butter (**not**: the guns and the butter)
   supply and demand (**not**: the supply and the demand)

9. The article is dropped after genitive nouns constructed with apostrophes ('s or s'):
   e.g. Ricardo's work (**not**: the Ricardo's work, or Ricardo's the work)

10. The definite article is dropped before expressions indicating amount and number:
   e.g. 100 years
   6^0 C
   80 per cent
   an amount of *money* [**not**: of the money]
   a number of *people* [**not**: of the people]

11. The definite article can often be dropped after *both* and *all*:
   e.g. Both countries are underdeveloped (**not**: Both the countries).
   All economists agree that interest rates are a powerful instrument (**not**: All the economists).

12. The indefinite article is missed out after the expressions *kind of*, *sort of*, *type of*, *variety of* (in formal writing):
   e.g. The Rover is an outdated type of car [**not**: type of a car].

13. In general, no article is used before place names (e.g. cities/countries), certain institutions, buildings, and companies:
   e.g. Vancouver is a booming city [**not**: The Vancouver].
   Britain is not in the Eurozone [**not**: The Britain].
   Lake Baikal is the world's deepest lake. Buckingham Palace is in Central London.
   Cambridge University leads in science teaching.
   Shell is leading the way in carbon capture storage (CSS) technologies.

However, there are a few exceptions:
e.g. The Hague, the United Kingdom

And, unlike lakes, rivers take the definite article:
e.g. the Thames.

Also note the alternative to names like Cambridge University – the University of Cambridge. Another interesting exception to the 'Rule' that *the* is not generally used before place names is:
e.g. The Moscow of the Soviet era is not the Moscow of today.

This, in fact, conforms to the main rule for using the definite article when referring to particular known things (see 3.B.23 below).

14. No article is used when 'Man' and 'Woman' are used in general:
e.g. Man was a hunter-gatherer in prehistoric times.
'Man's love is of his life a thing apart, 'Tis woman's whole existence' (Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, 1812–1818).

15. No article is used before job titles:
e.g. Head of Department; Chairman of the Board of Directors
No article is used before people's names, or names preceded by a title:
e.g. Boris Johnson is the current Mayor of London (**not**: The Boris Johnson).
President Bush is the President of the United States (**not**: The President Bush).
Mrs Thatcher was the first woman to be a British Prime Minister (**not**: The Mrs Thatcher).
Later she was elevated to the peerage and became Lady Thatcher (**not**: the Lady Thatcher).
Lord Desai is a British economist who currently sits in the House of Lords (**not**: The Lord Desai…).
But: The Lord Chancellor presides over the House of Lords.
Here the article is used before 'Lord' because no specific *name* is mentioned.

Also note: The UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon.
The Dalai Lama.

16. Often there are no articles before names of NGOs:
e.g. Greenpeace, Oxfam, Worldwatch Institute.
e.g. 'This involved the production of a report by Greenpeace Netherlands detailing the types of E & S [Environmental & Social] problems associated with the palm oil industry in Indonesia and the nature of Dutch banks' involvement with various plantation companies operating there between 1994 and 1999.'

(Niamh A. O'Sullivan, *Social Accountability and the Finance Sector: The Case of Equator Principles (EP) Institutionalisation*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2010, p. 110).

(See also Rule 30 for the use of *the* before organisations' names.)

17. No articles are used before short headings and titles in books and papers, as in this side-heading:

    e.g. *Most widely-used constructions using the definite and indefinite articles* (not, as is usual in writing: The most widely-used constructions…).

    Nor are articles used when referring to specific chapters, etc.:

    e.g. Please turn to Chapter (Table, Figure) 1 (**not**: the Chapter 1, etc.).

18. The definite article is not used with certain abbreviations that, if written in full, would need the article:

    e.g. At one time, President Yeltsin expressed the wish for Russia to join NATO.

    as opposed to:

    At one time, President Yeltsin expressed the wish for Russia to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

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19. The definite article is dropped before *next* and *last* when these words are not preceded by *in the*:

    e.g. Next month, the balance of payments figures should improve.
    Last month, unemployment rose by 1%.

    (See 3.B.43, where *the* is used before *next* and *last*.)

20. The *definite* article is omitted when a noun with a particular meaning is converted into an adjective with what Swan (1995) calls a 'half-general' sense.
    This process can best be explained by the following examples using:

    1) the noun phrase *the nineteenth century*, and
    2) the adjective derived from this, *nineteenth-century*

    e.g. (1) Though Ricardo and Walras are economists of the nineteenth century, they are still influential today.
    (2) The works of nineteenth-century economists continue to be studied in twenty-first-century universities.

    In (2), *nineteenth-century* is 'half-general' because it does not describe all economists but only those writing in the nineteenth century (the same applies to twenty-first century universities), so the *definite* article is omitted.
    However, the *indefinite* article is *not* omitted before such an adjective, as in:
    Ricardo is a nineteenth-century economist.

    This refers to a general class (see 3.C.50).

21. The indefinite article is dropped before a nationality when the adjective derived from the proper noun is used:

    e.g. He is a Russian (an American) [proper noun with indefinite article].
    He is Russian (American) [adjective with no indefinite article].

    In this case, the related adjective is the same as the proper noun, which is the usual situation, but in some cases it is not:

    e.g. She is a Dane/Swede/Dutchwoman/ Briton/Turk/Pole/Frenchwoman
    [all proper nouns].
    She is Danish/Swedish/Dutch/British/Turkish/Polish/French
    [all adjectives].

22. As a *general* rule, the articles are not used before an adjective or an adverb on their own:

    e.g. It is difficult (**not**: It is a difficult).

    But, in the English language there is always a 'however'. (In this last sentence, note the unusual use of the indefinite article before the adverb *however*). So see 3.A.21 above and 4.80 for exceptions to this 'Rule'.

This completes the list of situations where it is not appropriate to use any article. Now let us turn to a discussion of the circumstances in which the definite (Section 3.B) and the indefinite (Section 3.C) articles are used.

3.B When to use the definite article

23. Use the definite article when referring to particular known things, persons, organizations, institutions or major events:

    e.g. The financial advisor you recommended gave poor advice.
    I went to the professor for a reading list.
    The IMF's statements are taken very seriously by national governments.
    The Industrial Revolution began in the 18th century.
    The Bachelor's degree course at the University of Amsterdam takes three years.
    The Kyoto Protocol
    The Maastricht Treaty

    Compare the last whole sentence above, referring to a particular degree, with Section 3.A.1 above, where no article is required if the noun or noun phrase has a general meaning, when referring to Bachelor's degrees in general. Likewise, in the final Key Reference Essay and Test in Part 5 of this chapter, you will see at one point: '*the adaptation* to climate change', and later on 'In the case of *adaptation*'.

Reminder:

1. When referring to the various works written on a certain subject call this 'the literature' or 'the marketing literature' (for instance). Often 'the' is incorrectly omitted by authors with EFL.
2. Except as a heading, do not write 'results', without the definite article:

e.g. *Incorrect*: 'Results of the study suggest that managers act more opportunistically while trading in their options than in their shares' (David Veenman, *Insider Trading. The Interrelation between Accounting Information, Stock Prices, and Reported Insider Trades*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Amsterdam (2010), p. 164).

Correct: 'The results of the study…'

24. Use the definite article when referring to an *entire* class in general:
    e.g. The computer has made it much easier to conduct a barrage of statistical tests.
    The dollar is up today.
    Kahn invented the multiplier.

    (See Section 3.C.50 below, where the indefinite article is used when referring to a member of a class.)

25. Use the definite article when referring to the physical environment:
    e.g. the sea, the mountains, the climate, the weather, the North

    (See 3.A.5 above.)

26. Use the definite article when referring to physical features:
    e.g. the Rocky Mountains, the North Atlantic, the River Seine, the Grand Canyon

27. Use the definite article sometimes when referring to landmark buildings:
    e.g. the London Stock Exchange, the London Eye
    the Swiss Re building, the Chrysler building
    the Bank of England, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank
    the Statue of Liberty

    (See also 3.A.13).

28. Use the definite article when referring to nationalities *in general*:
    e.g. the Russians, the Australians

    (See III.C.64 below for nationalities *in particular*.)

29. Use the definite article when referring to a social group:
    e.g. the poor (rich):
    A government should take tax from the rich to distribute the revenue to the poor.

30. Use the definite article when referring to many political groups:
    e.g. the Greens, the Conservative Party. the LibDems, the Reds, the Monster Raving Loony Party
    but note:
    e.g. the Labour Party is often simply referred to as 'Labour' with no definite article; likewise, the United Kingdom Independence Party is commonly called 'UKIP'; and see also 3.A.16 for NGOs with no preceding article.

31. Use the definite article with *certain* place names:
    e.g. The Hague, the Netherlands, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, the Baltic States, the World

    (The definite article is not used with place names within countries – see 3.A.13 above.)

32. Use the definite article in the expressions 'the rest', 'the same', 'the only':
    e.g. The rest of the sample is not representative.
    GNP is not the same as GDP.
    The UK and Denmark are not the only EU countries that are not in the Eurozone.

33. Use *the* before the adjective 'well-known':
    e.g. The well-known economist Maynard Keynes was a Professor at Cambridge University in the thirties.

    (See also 3.B.54 below.)

34. Use *the* in italics in place of the expression *the most well-known*:
    e.g. Is it *the* Bjørn Lomborg who is lecturing on climate change in the Faculty today?

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35. Use *the* in italics (or underlined) for emphasis in general:
    e.g. The existence of a laboratory for economic experiments is *the* (or: the) indicator of an up-to-date Economics Department.

36. Use the definite article in the expression 'in *the* case of'.
    This is one of the most common omissions of *the* by EFL students.
    In the case of (meaning 'concerning a particular instance') is quite distinct from *in case of* (meaning 'in the event of', or 'if there is a possibility of'), or *in case* (meaning 'if there is'):
    e.g. Concerning EU regional employment in the last decade, in the case of the UK unemployment went down, but in the case of Germany it went up.
    In case of a recession, measures will be taken to help the unemployed.
    In case a Member State does not meet its targets under the EU's Stability and Growth Pact, heavy fines will be imposed.

37. Another common expression which incorrectly loses the definite article in texts written by EFL authors is 'on the one hand…on the other hand'.
    A similar expression is 'the one…the other'.

38. Use the definite article in the expression *the…of* (even if the meaning is general):
    This is one of the most common expressions using *the* in the English language, as is demonstrated in the test texts in Sections 2 and 5 of this chapter:
    e.g. '…the most important centres of urban activity…'

    For more details, see the entry **The…of** in the List of Common Errors in Chapter 1 of this grammar guide.

39. The definite article is sometimes used in American English when it is not used in British English:

American English:	He is at the university [meaning: he is studying at a university].
British English:	He is at university [meaning the same as the previous example].

    In both British and American English, 'He is at the university' also means 'He can be found today at a particular university', as opposed to being somewhere else (e.g. at home). In American English, 'He is at the University of London', the definite article indicates that he is studying at a specific university.

40. The definite article is used with certain abbreviations:
    e.g. the WTO, the IMF, the EU, the UN, the FTSE

    (See 3.A.15 for cases where no article is used.)

41. The definite article is repeated to make two different items clearly distinct, e.g. when referring to two colours:
    e.g. the black and the blue cars [two cars of different colours]
    the black and blue car [one car painted in two different colours]

42. In certain cases, the use of one *the* can suffice for two separate groups:
    e.g. the rich and poor inhabitants

43. The definite article must be used with *next* and *last* in certain phrases:
    e.g. In the last century, production rose [not 'in last century'].

    A frequent mistake by non-native English speakers is to omit *the* in such phrases. 'In the last century/year/decade/month/week' is a phrase used when speaking from the vantage of the present, looking back in time. The same applies to 'In the next century, etc.', looking forward to a future trend. 'Last month/week, etc.' and 'Next month, week, etc.' refer more to short-term results and expectations and omit the article.

    The same rule also refers to expressions like 'the coming decade', 'the early years', or 'the present day'.

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44. Similarly, when referring to dates, use the definite article:
    e.g. The 1980s/the 21st century/the 1st of May

45. The definite article is used for 'second mention':
    e.g. They have a government grant to build a factory [first mention].
    The factory [second mention] will provide employment for 2000 workers.

46. The definite article is used before statistical tests and names of indexes:
    e.g. the T-test, the Chi square test, the Moran's I statistic, the Dow Jones index, the Environmental Sustainability Index (ESI)

47. The definite article is sometimes an integral part of the official title of a newspaper or journal, and has a capital 'T':
    e.g. *The Times*, *The Independent*, *The Economist*

    But note *Financial Times* (usually referred to as *the Financial Time*: here *the* has a small 't').

3.C When to use the indefinite article

General instruction:

a/*an* is used with singular nouns or noun phrases:
e.g. a discussion, an analysis [but see exception in 4.75 below]
a heated discussion, an in-depth analysis

Sometimes EFL students write 'an analyses', combining the singular article with a plural noun, but probably meaning 'an analysis'.
(See the entry ***analyse** in **Confusion between words** in the **Alphabetical List of Common Errors** in Chapter 1 of this guide.)

48. *a* is used before nouns or noun phrases beginning with a consonant (a dollar, a WTO ruling, a national strategy) or with a voiced vowel (a university, a UN resolution, a once-and-for-all payment, a hotel (pronounced with a voiced 'h' – see 4.72).

49. *an* is used before nouns and noun phrases beginning with an unvoiced vowel (an economist, an umbrella, an IMF decision, an hotel – with the 'h' silent: an -otel (archaic) – see 4.72).

50. *a*/*an* is used when referring to a member of a general class:
    e.g. He is an industrial economist [i.e. one member of a general class].

51. The indefinite article is used before expressions of quantity:

e.g. There were a number of recessions in the 20th century.
a hundred, a thousand, a million

This rule does *not* apply if these numbers are written in figures or as percentages, when no article is used (see also 3.A.10):

e.g. It costs 1000 euros.
It costs 1 million euros [note the combination of a number and a word – one would not write 'It costs 1,000,000 euros'].
Today, 80 per cent of the world's population lives in urban areas.

However, if the number concerned is used as an adjective, then the indefinite article is used, whether or not the number is written in figures or numbers:

e.g. a two-step method [Here 'two' is an adjective.]
a 10-dollar bill [Here '10' is an adjective.]

The indefinite article is also used if a number is used after an adjective:

e.g. an extra six votes, an extra 50 dollars
a fake 20-euro note

(Note: numbers 1–10 are usually written in words and numbers 11 onwards in figures, or part figure, part word (2 million). The number 10 is transitional – it can be either a word or a figure. But the Cambridge University Press Style Guide instructs the use of words for numbers 1–100. Figures are used for units of currency, however large or small (1 pound, 30 pounds), and in percentages (30 per cent).

52. The indefinite article is used before singular nouns that come after a negative statement:

e.g. Under the Stability Pact, EU countries should not have a budget deficit [**not**: have budget deficit].

53. The indefinite article is used after a preposition that comes before singular nouns and noun phrases:

e.g. The bank manager asked the entrepreneur to come to his office *with a* business plan.
Without a doubt, sea levels are rising.
GNP can be used *as an* indicator of a country's prosperity.

54. The indefinite article is used with fractions:

e.g. a quarter-pound steak, a half turn
But: half a pound of tomatoes

55. The indefinite article is used to indicate a part of a whole (using *of a*, or *of the*):

e.g. three-quarters of an hour

But: ¾ hour

Here *of a* is not used after the fraction when it is written as a figure.

e.g. six of the best

e.g. Now that the car factory has to close down, a considerable proportion of the workforce will be made redundant.

A higher percentage of the respondents were female.

Note: When the definite article is used before such words of proportion, the definite article after *of* is omitted:

e.g. In recent years, the percentage of workers employed in manufacturing industry has declined [**not:** 'the percentage of the workers'].

56. The indefinite article is used with countable nouns:

As in the case of the definite article, countable nouns can be preceded by the indefinite article (a tonne, a car).

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57. The indefinite article can *sometimes* be used with uncountable nouns:

In general, abstract and uncountable nouns cannot be used with the indefinite article (i.e. it is incorrect to say, for instance, a wool, an advice, an information), but when uncountable nouns refer to aspects of thought or feelings, then the indefinite article is used, but often an adjective is interposed between the article and the noun.

e.g. A deep knowledge of economic theory is essential before forecasting can be attempted.
It is a universal truth that the equilibrium price is determined by the interaction of supply and demand.
A sadness came over him when he thought of the poor.

58. The indefinite article can be used in a particular sense.

Just as the definite article can be used atypically in a general sense (see 3.B.24 above), so too can the indefinite article be used atypically in a particular sense.

e.g. It has been a difficult week [referring to a particular week] for the world stock markets.

59. The indefinite article is used after 'quite', 'rather', 'such', 'many' and 'what':

e.g. Quite a few students drop out of university.
Rather a lot of waste is generated in modern countries.
Such an enormous amount of investment is needed to host the Olympic Games.
Many a business plan has come to grief.
What an expensive house they have bought.

60. The position of the indefinite article can change the meaning:

e.g. The local Council was not in a position to make a big investment [meaning *a big* investment in general].
The local Council could not make that big an investment [meaning an investment of a particular size].

61. The indefinite article is used in comparisons:

e.g. He is not as good a lecturer as his predecessor.
The Matterhorn is not as high a mountain as Mount Everest.

In these examples note the inversion of the adjective and the indefinite article ('good a', 'high a') compared with the *usual* order with the adjective placed after the indefinite article (a high mountain – see A.13 in Section 1 of this chapter).

In the more common form of the comparison, after 'as', 'as… as', or 'like', the usual rules for not using/using the definite and indefinite articles apply as in 3.A, B, and (the rest of this section) C:

e.g. High speed trading is as fast *as lightning* (3.A.5).
The stock market is as unpredictable as *the weather* (3.B.23).
Phillips devised a hydraulic contraption to show that the economy could be treated *like a machine* (3.C.48).

62. The indefinite article is used with the expressions 'a few', and 'a little', according to the nature of the noun concerned.
Use 'a few' with countable nouns:
e.g. a few countries

Use 'a little' with uncountable nouns:
e.g. a little coal

(See A.15 in Part I of this chapter)

63. The indefinite article can be used to mean 'per':
e.g. He earns €2000 a week.

64. The indefinite article is used before nationalities:
e.g. an American, a Swede, a Spaniard, an Australian

(but see 3.A.21, which deals with circumstances where the article is dropped:
e.g. He is American. She is Swedish.)

The use of the indefinite article before nationalities is similar to its use before members of a general class (see 3.C.50 above):
e.g. He is an economist.

65. The indefinite article is used in front of a name, if the person concerned is not very familiar:
e.g. A Professor Smith rang this afternoon, but no one knows who he is.

66. Note that *some/any* are the plural forms of *a/an*:
e.g. He needs a book from the library today [singular: a book].
He needs some books from the library today [plural: some books].
The latter sentence is positive in meaning, so the form *some* is used. If the meaning is negative, then *any* is used:
He doesn't need any books from the library today [plural: any books].

Section 4: Final remarks on the use of *the* and *a/an* (not always as articles)

For completeness, the following examples show further interesting constructions following on from Rule 66 in Section 3.C using *the* and *a/an*, and illustrate queries that often arise. Rules 67–71 relate to *the*; Rules 72–78 to *a/an*; and Rules 79 and 80 concern both *the* and *a/an*. In some of these Rules: 67, 69, 77, 78, and part of 79, *the* and *a/an* are not used as articles, per se, but may be mistaken for articles.

67. *The* used in comparative constructions:

e.g. According to happiness research, *the older* people get, *the happier* they are.
The faster the Chinese economy grows, *the greater* the danger of a hard landing.

In these examples, *the* is used not as an article but 'adverbially…to indicate how one amount or degree of something varies in relation to another' (*COED*, 2004).

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The can also be used adverbially with the comparative (*more*, *better*, *less*):

e.g. Global warming means that it is *all the more* important to reduce carbon emissions, *none the better* than by reducing car ownership. *Nonetheless*, car ownership is rising. However, because of improved technology in car design, this does not necessarily mean that there will be *any the more* carbon emissions.

68. *The* used in superlative constructions:

e.g. China has *the fastest* growing economy in the world.
This textbook is *the best* I have ever read.
Some people do not think global warming is *the most* important change we face today.
It is of *the utmost* importance to read all the books and articles on the reading list.

(Note: EFL students often omit *the* in the expression 'of the utmost importance'.)

69. *The* can be used in place of *enough*:

e.g. The government does not have the money [i.e. enough money] to build an Olympic Stadium.

70. The expression 'What is the matter':

This is a common expression meaning 'What is wrong?'

e.g. What is the matter with the Russian economy?

71. *The people* and *people* have completely different connotations:

e.g. 'Government of the people, by the people, for the people' (Abraham Lincoln).

Here, 'the people' means 'the collective mass of people' in a country.

e.g. People say that the rich pay too little tax.

Here 'people' refers to some people.

72. The vexed question of whether to use *a* or *an* before words like 'hotel' and 'historical':

Official opinions are divided. According to the 11th edition of the *COED* (2004):

> 'It is better to use "a" rather than "an" before words such as "hotel" and "historical" that begin with a sounded "**h**". "An" was common in the 18th and 19th centuries because the initial "**h**" was then often not pronounced.'

The revised Third edition of *The New Fowler's Modern English Usage* (ed. R.W. Burchfield, 1990: 2) both agrees *and* disagrees with the *COED* about whether to choose *a* or *an*.

In *informal* speech:

> '(…) the thoroughly modern thing to do is to use a (never an) in a habitual, a heroic, a historical, a hypothesis (…) an hotel is now old-fashioned (…) but by no means extinct.'

However:

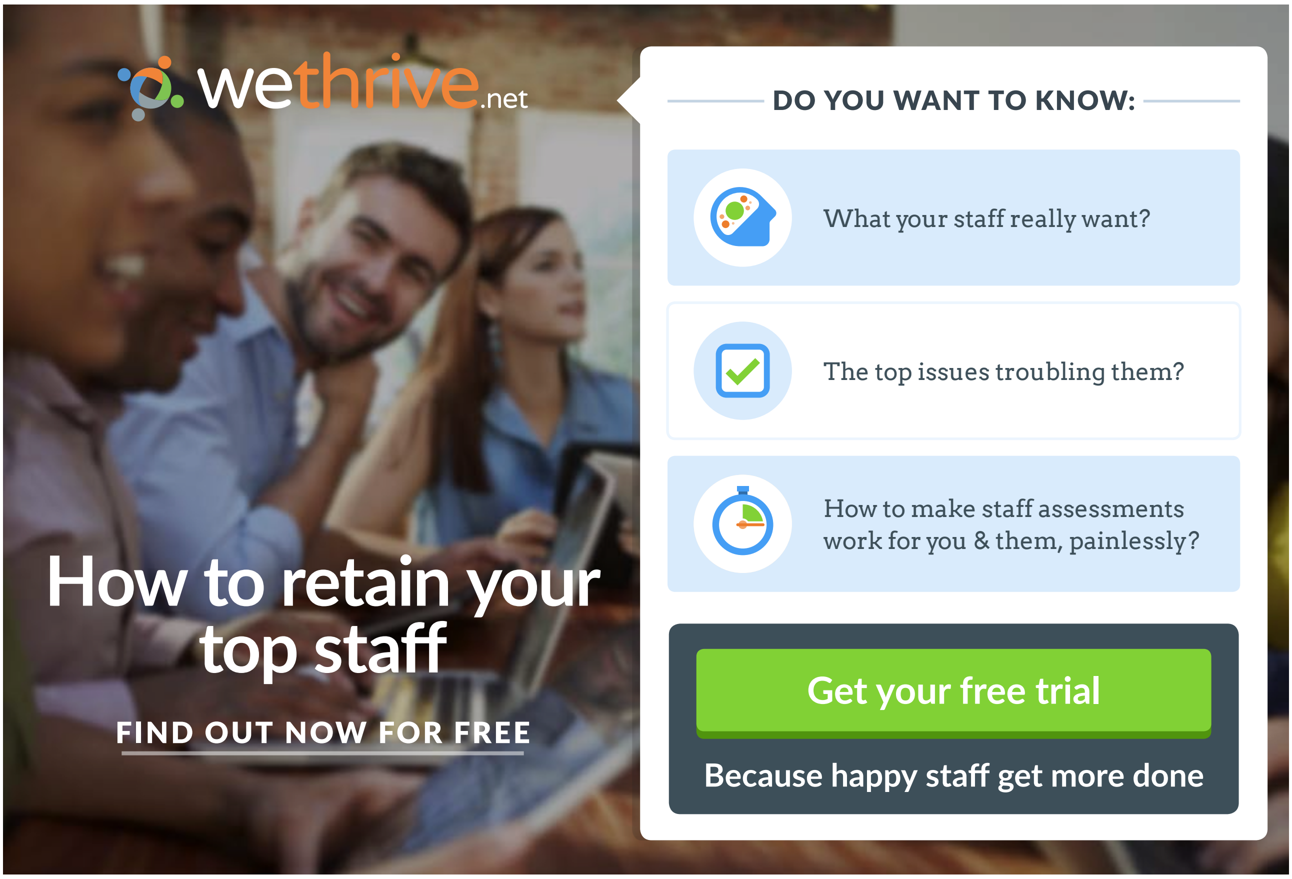
> 'At the present time, especially in *written* English there is abundant evidence for the use of "an" before habitual, historian, historic(al), horrific, *but the choice of form remains open*' [my italics – PE].

Of these two sources, the *COED* is the more up-to-date, so follow that in your own writing, i.e. use *a*, but do not be surprised to see *an* in written work especially by authors of an older generation.
Avoid at all costs a new American development in informal speech: *a* apple.

73. An optional aspect concerning the placing of *a*:
Sometimes, the position of *a* changes in expressions involving the constructions *a too* or *to…a/an*, but this has no effect on the meaning:

e.g.	either	a too strict regime
	or	too strict a regime
	either	a too detailed analysis
	or	too detailed an analysis

In fact, both these formulations are correct.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74. Usually, the indefinite article comes before an adjective:
    e.g. a strong economy

    But sometimes (as in Spanish) the indefinite article can be used in English as an adjective that describes a noun:
    e.g. Germany does not have as successful an economy as the UK.

    Also note the difference between:
    that big investment
    that big an investment

    Here the use of the indefinite article after the adjective transforms the statement from the particular to the general.

75. Surprisingly, the indefinite article can be used with the plural:
    e.g. an estimated €200,000
    an extra £5000
    a $700 billion bail-out
    a further three
    a good few [which means 'many'!]

    Note: a hundred years, 100 years; a million pounds, £1,000,000.

76. Also take care with the use of the indefinite article before percentages:
    e.g. When Tony Blair was the British Prime Minister, he aimed for a 60 per cent reduction in carbon emissions. The succeeding British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, was more ambitious, aiming for an 80 per cent reduction.
    Note: a 60 per cent increase
    a $700 increase
    an 80 per cent increase

    In the first two cases, 60 per cent and $700, when voiced (said out loud), begin with a consonant (i.e. **s**ixty, **s**even hundred), so the *a* form of the indefinite article is used. In the third case, 80 per cent, when voiced, begins with a vowel (i.e. **e**ighty) so the *an* form of the indefinite article is used.

For completeness, in this final collection of 'oddities', the following examples are special constructions involving the use of *a* but *not* as an article.

77. e.g. *A-hunting we will go* (Traditional English folk song)
A frog he would a-wooing go (Traditional English folk song)
The times they are a-changing (1960s song by Bob Dylan)

This is a rather archaic construction, dating back to at least Elizabethan times, where the use of *a* as a *prefix* adds what Burchfield calls 'whimsicality'. It still crops up in everyday speech (e.g. 'go a-begging'). Only recently, an article in the *Wall Street Journal* (20 January 2014:32) began: 'Shell's new broom is a-sweeping' (Helen Thomas, *Shell needs a sea change*). This usage could have been imported by the Pilgrim Fathers from England.

78. There is also the case where *a* is used as a *prefix of privation or negation*, to mean 'not':
e.g. amoral, asocial, asymmetrical, atypical

79. Increasingly, in rapid informal speech, *a* is being used as a *suffix*, either as an indefinite article stuck on to the end of words or to replace 'of', 'have', and 'to', telescoping two words into one:
e.g. loadsamoney [loads of money]
coulda, mighta, woulda, shoulda [could have, etc.]
gonna, wanna, oughta [going to, want to, ought to]
gotta lotta [got a lot of]
whata lotta [what a lot of]

Language purists like The Queen's English Society deplore such corruption of the language, but the former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, sometimes resorted to this kind of language when addressing certain groups (e.g. the young MTV audience or members of a trade union), recognizing it as a way to communicate with 'the masses'. Moreover, he abandoned his refined 'Oxford accent' on these occasions and adopted the infamous 'glottal stop' of 'Estuary English' (widespread in the counties around the Thames Estuary). This means that the 't' in 'got a' and 'lot a' is not pronounced so the words sound like 'go-a', 'lo-a'. In England, there is a Northern version of 'gotta lotta', which is 'gorra lorra', found particularly in the Liverpool area (Beatles country). The current Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer has been known to be populist in this way.

Even academics like Kate Burridge, Professor of Linguistics at Monash University in Australia, in her book *Weeds in the Garden of Words: further observations on the Tangled History of the English Language*, 2005, regards 'gonna' as a word that is likely to be perfectly acceptable at some future time. And Professor Jean Aitchison, Emeritus Professor of Language and Communication at Oxford, agrees.

Finally:

80) An atypical example of the use of *the* and *a/an* with a lone adjective:

Normally, the definite and indefinite articles are not seen in the company of free-standing adjectives (see 3.A.22 above), but there are a few instances where this can happen in formal academic writing, as well as in informal speech.

e.g. In Figure 1, the green line shows the trend of agricultural employment from 1990–2000, the red the trend for manufacturing employment, and the blue the trend for service industry employment.

Of course, here the noun 'line' is understood after the adjectives 'red' and 'blue'.

Another example like this is:

'Would you like a red or a green apple?' 'I'll have a green.'

Again, the noun 'apple' is understood after 'red' and also after 'green', though there the 'missing' noun could be 'one' (a green one).

There are two famous novel titles that have articles with lone adjectives:

'The Red and the Black' (Stendal)
'The Red and the Green' (Iris Murdoch)

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However, let us close the discussion of this anomaly with an example from economics of the indefinite article used with an adjective and no noun:
e.g. Refined oil is a good. Environmental pollution caused by oil refining is a bad.

In the *COED*, the word 'good' is primarily an adjective (6 meanings), and secondarily a noun (2 meanings):
'**1** that which is morally right; righteousness. **2** benefit or advantage.'

The first of these two meanings has nothing to do with 'a good' in the economic sense, and the second does not completely capture the essence of the economic 'good', which is something that has positive marginal utility. The word 'bad', on the other hand, is only an adjective in the *COED*. So, it would appear that economists have, for their own purposes, transformed the adjectives 'good' and 'bad' into two unofficial nouns 'a good' and 'a bad'.

Section 5 will now illustrate all the examples of article usage in Sections 3 and 4 above, by means of a short essay on the subject of global warming. Some common usages will occur more than once, as is usual in 'real' texts not designed as 'tests'. For instance, Rules **1, 23, 38, 48, 49** occur many times, reflecting the basic, particular/general dichotomy of article usage discussed in Chapter 1.

Section 5: Reference essay: A key to the application of the 80 Rules for using/not using the articles

The final part of this extensive Chapter 5 is a short essay. Within this compact framework, writers with EFL will be able to see, at a glance, how or whether to use articles in the most common situations. To serve different purposes, the one essay is presented in different formats:

Format 1 is the key text in the form of a test (like the first short Diagnostic Test in Section 2), where all the articles are deleted and replaced by (underlined) blank spaces. Readers can see how much of the information they have absorbed from this Chapter 5 by attempting to fill in the blanks. After completing the test, readers can refer to Format 2 to check their answers.

Format 2 is the full text of the essay with all the examples of article usage/non-usage. Readers can use this essay as a template, where they can locate the answers to all their queries about using articles.

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Format 3 is, again, the complete essay, but this time with the addition of superscripts 1–80 (with hyperlinks to Sections 3 and 4 of this chapter), indicating which of the 80 Rules (as listed in those sections) have been applied in the essay. In the course of the text, there are a number of examples of the same rule, as it was impractical to produce a short essay using just one example of each rule. Moreover, in reality, some constructions which involve the use of articles will inevitably occur more frequently than others. This was demonstrated earlier in the less complex test in Section 2 of this chapter, which covered a more limited range of article usage.

Caveat: Rules 77, 78 and 79 are not incorporated in the test essay. These are 'curiosities', included in this guide for completeness. Rule 77 concerns the archaic 'pseudo-article' in words like 'a-hunting', where *a* means 'in the process of doing something'. This use of *a* as a prefix also occurs in more modern words like 'afloat'. Rule 78 refers to words like 'atypical', where sometimes EFL writers incorrectly treat the *a* part of the word like the indefinite article and write 'a typical'. But it is in fact a prefix, meaning 'not'. While in Rule 78 the *a* may be erroneously divorced from the whole word, as a false article, in Rule 79 the *a* is a real article which has become attached to the previous word as a suffix (e.g. wotta = what a). Rule 79 refers to the ubiquity of *a* in rapid, informal, corrupted English speech, e.g. whata lotta, worra lorra, wo-a-lo-a (all meaning 'what a lot of'). This is slang use of *a*, with the latter expression including the uncultured 'glottal stop'. Nevertheless, although the essay concerns the serious subject of global warming, its general tone is light, so I have showcased the usage of Rule 79 in the sub-title of the basic essay. Although this usage is certainly not, as the main title of this book says, *English Grammar for Economics and Business*, you may encounter it at oral presentations, as young people from all strata of British society may speak this 'Estuary English' dialect these days.

The topic of global warming is not just the terrain of climatologists, but has repercussions from both an economics and a business perspective. Firms are now beginning to adopt the concept of *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR), which aims to safeguard the environment from the effects of their activities.

The Key test essay which now follows contains sentences that use the articles in most conceivable contexts.

Key to article usage (1)

Format 1 – Text with blank spaces to be filled in or not filled in according to the Rules for the use/non-use of the definite and indefinite articles. (Of the 80 Rules, Rules 77, 78 and 79 are used but not tested, as these are, respectively, archaic, a false article, and slang. They do, however, make an appearance in the full text Format 2, and, are flagged, like the other Rules, in Format 3.).

[Note: If no article is required at the beginning of a sentence, then the first letter of the first word of that sentence must be changed to a capital letter (unless it is a proper noun which already begins with a capital letter). In the text below, where this latter choice has to be made, the first letter of this word is placed in square brackets.]

__ [d]ilemma of __ Global Warming

Wotta Lotta (or Worra Lorra) Water (or Wa-a)

Only as recently as __ 1980s, __ climatologists were predicting that __ World was heading towards another Ice Age. But now in __ 21st century, __ latest apocalyptic vision for __ future of __ Planet comes in __ form of __ global warming (GW) threat. According to __ *Guardian Weekly* (17 May, 2013), __ International Energy Association (IEA) has forecast that there will ultimately be __ estimated 6°C of __ GW, '__ level that would lead to __ chaos'. However, __ most recent IEA report (June __ 2013) actually anticipates 3.6–5.3°C of __GW over the __ coming century. All these estimates might seem too high __ figure, given that only __ 0.76°C increase in __ warming has been recorded over __ last two centuries.

__ GW, of whatever degree, is associated with __ increasing amounts of __ carbon dioxide (CO_2) in __ atmosphere. Indeed, in __ May 2013, there was __ first indication that __ CO_2 concentration had reached __ critical tipping point of __ 400 parts per million (ibid.). This figure is, however, based on __ samples taken for half __ century at __ single, somewhat atypical, location – __ Hawaiian volcano. Whether this increase of __ CO_2 is due to __ works of __ Humankind since __ Industrial Revolution of __ 18th century, or to __ natural causes, or to __ combination of both, is hotly debated. Some __ people would deny __ existence of __ GW altogether. What is required is __ in-depth knowledge of all __ influencing factors.

Nevertheless, there is already compelling __ evidence of __ GW. If __climate were not changing there would not be such __ massive reduction of __ Polar ice, with __ corresponding increase of 19 cm in __ global sea level since 1900. __ [c]onsiderable proportion of __ ice cap has already melted. __ [g]laciers of both __ Arctic and __ Antarctic are melting at __ exponential rate. Quantifying __ melt can be used as __ indicator of __ GW. Indeed, __ melting ice is considered to be __ indicator of __ climate change. Last year (2012) was __ record period of __ ice loss. __ [i]cebergs, some weighing __ megaton, are breaking off __ glaciers when they reach __ sea. When __ polar bears go a-hunting for __ food they may be stranded on __ ice floe.

However, while, on __ one hand, __ Greenland glaciers, which discharge into __ North Atlantic, are melting, on __ other, in __ Eastern Arctic, __ ice is reported to be getting thicker. So it is __ difficult to be certain about __ average trend. At __ beginning of __ long cold winter of January to late __ May 2013, __ well-known London Mayor __ Boris Johnson, in __ article in __ *Daily Telegraph* (21 January 2013), wrote: 'It really feels like __ start of a __ mini-ice age.' But, __ few days later, __ Professor Haigh, __ Head of __ Physics at __ Imperial College London, refuted this, saying, amongst other things, that __ Boris was confusing __ short-term variability of __ weather with __ long-term trend of __ climate (ibid., __ 'Letters' page, 23 January 2013). Even so, in __ June 2013 __ Meteorological Office (MO) in __ UK announced that, over __ last decade, __ global temperatures had remained stable. Yet, __ MO still refuses to conclude that __ GW trend has halted for good. And, meanwhile, __ CO_2 levels continue to rise, though __ rate of __ increase is slowing down.

Notwithstanding this, __ kind of consensus has arisen that __ GW is really happening. Only __ few scientists do not believe in __ climate change. Both __ climatologists and physicists agree that __ facts on __ ground and in __ air point to __ GW. Their mouthpiece is __ IPCC (__ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). For many years, __ Americans refused to acknowledge __ reality of __ GW. (__ President George W. Bush was __ climate change denier.) But, now, even they cannot ignore its existence. __[p]lanning for __ climate change can be delayed no longer. Some __ governments, like that of __ UK, want to see __ 80 per cent reduction in emissions by 2050. Like __ MO, __ IPCC regards __ 15-year 'pause' in __ GW as __ mere blip in its inexorable progress.

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But, it is not all __ doom and __ gloom, as demonstrated by both __ pluses and __ minuses of __ climate change. Some __ regions will benefit, while others will be disadvantaged, but there is not any part of __ globe that will not be affected, both __ well-endowed and __ less well-endowed regions. The __ [m]ore __ ice melts, and __ volume decreases, __ quicker __ remaining ice will melt. As __ considerable proportion of __ Polar ice has already disappeared, __Verkhoyansk may no longer be __ Cold Pole, and there is __ high chance that over __ next 20 years __ Arctic waters will be ice-free. This will open up __ North West Passage and revolutionize __ economies of those countries bordering __ Arctic.

__ concept of change not only applies to __ climate but also to __ development of __ primary sector. Some __ geologists have discovered that __ Greenland has __ vast reserves of __ mineral resources under its currently impenetrable ice cap, but for __ future there is __ plan to exploit them. __ [p]lan will be realized if __ GW continues. Across the Arctic regions, __ Russians, __ Canadians and __ Chinese are competing for __ rich reserves. Moreover, __ land in __ Northern Russia, __ Greenland and __ Northern Canada could become available for __ agriculture. Further South, __ single-cropped areas could become double-cropped. In more temperate zones, __ English farmers, for example, could grow __ Mediterranean fruits, and __ supply channels will be disrupted less often as there will be less __ snow and __ ice. However, __ climate change will bring, and indeed some say is already bringing, __ increase in __ extreme weather. __ [s]ummers will become too hot, __ winters too cold. __ [f]loods will alternate with __ droughts in __ same area. In __ most alarmist scenario, during __ freak flood, __ sea level is predicted to rise as high as __ top of __ Statue of Liberty or __ Nelson's Column.

While __ governments are becoming convinced about __ climate change, __ social surveys show that __ public scepticism is growing. __ [p]eople are not convinced. Nevertheless, __ enormous amount of __ information about __ GW is gradually building up. There has been __ great number of __ academic books and __ papers on __ subject, which provide __ deeper knowledge of __ GW mechanism. __ [c]limate theory is __ new and expanding field, which has been developed by __ 20th and 21st century scientists. In __ recent decades, __ computer has made it easier to run __ models which can attempt to forecast __ climate change. Even so, __ Professor of Climatology at __ Climate Research Institute of __ University of East Anglia had to defend his research staff when __ email came to light that admitted to using __ 'statistical trick' to demonstrate __ GW trend. This was, in fact, __ acceptable scientific method.

__ Figure 1 below illustrates how __ raw statistics might be misleading, and especially so depending on how they are presented. __ [f]igure is __ historical analysis of __ occurrence of __ long-distance outdoor Dutch ice-skating race, __ '*Elfstedentocht*' (__ 11 towns route) which dates from 1909. It can only be held in those years when __ winter ice is thick enough. Sometimes it occurs in two consecutive years but it has never occurred more than once __ year. __ [f]igure clearly shows that there were considerably more *Elfstedentochts* (11) in __ first 50 years after 1909 than in __ next 50 years right up to __ present day (4), which might 'prove' __ existence of __ GW. However, as __ race became increasingly popular over __ century, __ explanation for __ decrease in __ number of races may be that it became necessary for __ canal ice to be much thicker than it was in __ early years, to bear __ weight of __ extra competitors.

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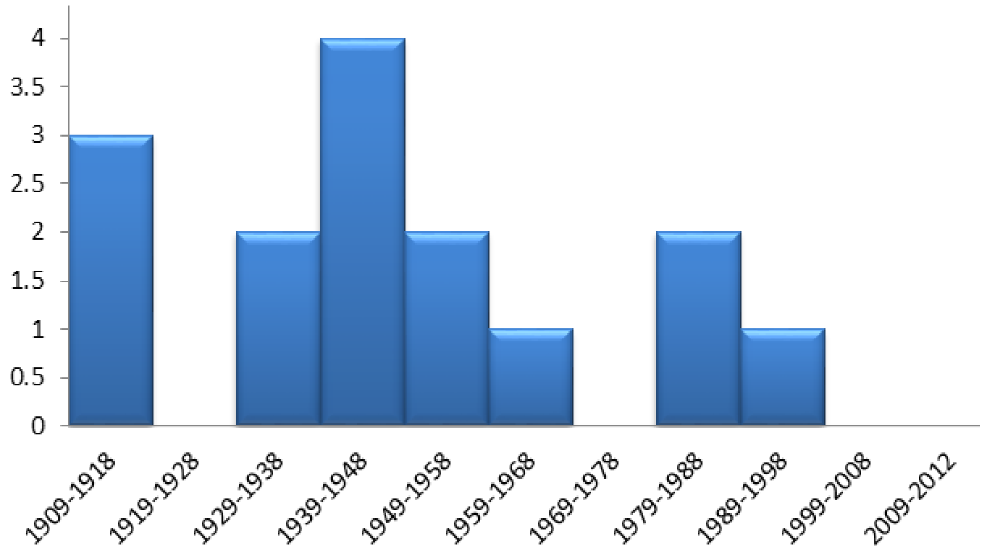


Figure 1: __ [n]umber of *Elfstedentochts* (__ natural canal-ice races) per decade in __ Netherlands since 1909 (__ 1st *Elfstedentocht*)

Note: So far, up to late 2013, in __ decade beginning 2009 there have been no *Elfstedentochts*, as was also __ case for __ previous decade 1999–2008, because of __ mild winters. Even __ prolonged winter weather of early 2013, which lasted till __ end of __ May was not cold enough. Perhaps __ cold winter of early 2013 just reflected __ 'pause' in GW.

Although most __ climate research seems to prove __ existence of __ GW, there is no general agreement on its cause, although, on __ 30 May 2013, __ *Daily Telegraph* (*DT*) reported that 'one recent survey of 12,000 academic papers agreed that __ human activists were causing __ planet to warm'. However, __ next day, this interpretation of __ figures was corrected on __ 'Letters' page (*DT*, 31 May 2013):

> 'It is not true that 97 per cent of academic papers __ supported the __ Anthropogenic Global Warming (AGW) theory. Around __ 37 per cent of papers endorsed __ AGW while __ 60 per cent stated no position for or against AGW.'

__ [r]est of the papers, __ 3 per cent, reject __ idea of __ AGW, or even GW as __ whole concept.

__ [h]ypothesis put forward by both __ AGW and GW deniers is that, over __ course of __ geological time, __ Earth has undergone __ natural cycle of __ warming and cooling. Indeed, it is true that __ 'several million years ago… __ Arctic was ice-free, savannah spread across __ desert and __ sea level was up to __ 40 metres higher than today' (__ *Guardian Weekly*, 17 May 2013). Recently, __ fossil evidence of __ camels has been found in __ frozen Arctic wastes. However, this kind of __ refutation of __ GW as __ recent phenomenon, does not always hold when we recall that, __ 200 million years ago, __ current Northern countries, like __ UK and __ Sweden, were situated South of __ Equator, where __ tropical climate might be expected, so it is not surprising that their geological strata record __ different climate from today, now they have migrated with __ continental drift to __ Northern climes.

Nevertheless, whatever __ cause of __ GW, it is of __ utmost importance for __ future of __ Planet to take some practical steps to mitigate __ GW effects. __ Bjørn Lomborg is __ statistician, who is perhaps __ climate change sceptic because of his book __ *Skeptical Environmentalist* (Lomborg 1998). In fact, he is not __ climate change denier, and does believe that:

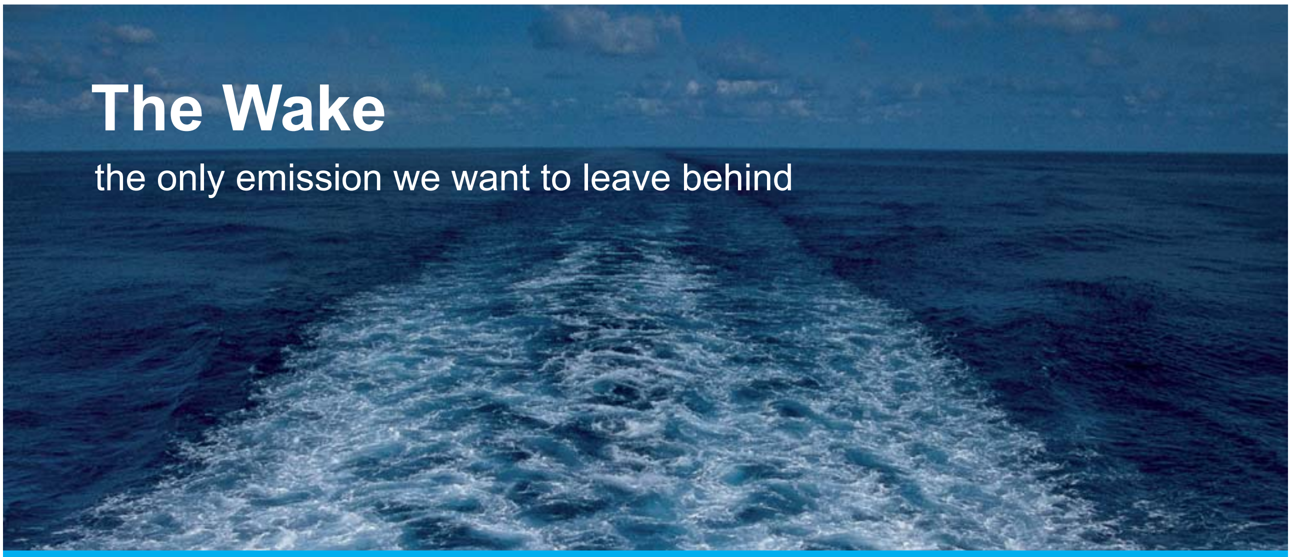
> ‘__ [g]lobal warming, though its size and future projections are unrealistically pessimistic, is almost certainly taking place’ (ibid., __ Part 1, __ Chapter 1: 4).

But he also believes that:

> ‘__ [g]*lobal warming is not anywhere near __ most important problem facing __*’
> [__ Lomborg’s own italics] (ibid., __ Part V, __ Chapter 24: 243).

Moreover, he is convinced that __ correct response to __ GW is not __ prevention of, but __ adaptation to, __ climate change, which is __ less costly option by far. When his book was denounced by __ Danish Committee for __ Scientific Dishonesty, he wrote to __ *Wall Street Journal* (‘Why are __ Greens afraid of me?’, 23 January 2003):

> ‘I am __ Danish… __ former member of __ Greenpeace; and I used to believe in __ litany of our ever-deteriorating environment…this litany doesn’t seem to be backed up by __ facts…This is most obvious in __ discussion over __ global warming… __ economic analyses show that it will be far more expensive to cut __ carbon dioxide emissions radically than to pay __ costs of __ adaption to __ increased temperatures.’



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He feels __ governments cannot make that big __ investment in preventing __ change. But many of his critics are of __ opinion he is not as good __ statistician as he thinks. In particular, __ Lomborg is criticized for not rigorously subjecting his raw data to __ tests of __ statistical significance (e.g. __ chi square test), and for ignoring __ existence of scientific uncertainty (Van den Bergh 2010).

But what can realistically be done? In __ case of __ adaptation, __ worldwide recession means that __ governments do not have __ money for __ large amount of __ investment that would be necessary for such ambitious measures as __ global system of __ 'space sunshades' (*Wikipedia*, accessed 1/6/13). But, apart from __ cost, what else is __ matter with such important ideas? __ [d]ifficulty is that they are not __ politically acceptable solutions. They require __ unique effort of __ cooperation on __ international scale, and there is too big __ risk there might be __ unintended consequences. __ [m]ore economically viable and sustainable option is __ carbon capture and storage (CCS). So far, no such facility is in operation, but __ Shell has taken __ decision to build __ CCS plant in __ Canada.

In __ meantime, __ firms are beginning to practise __ Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) so that their activities will be carbon neutral and therefore sustainable (Pinkse & Kolk 2009).

So __ debate about __ GW continues. It is __ difficult time for __ humanity. At __ time of writing (__ June 2013), __ towns along __ Rhine and __ Danube are awash with __ record floods. Had __ Benjamin Franklin, __ American, still been alive today, perhaps he would, unlike many of his recent political successors, have extended his short list of __ life's certainties to read:

> '__ Death, __ Taxes, and __ Climate Change'.

__ References

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Lomborg, Bjørn (1998). __ *Skeptical Environmentalist*, __ Cambridge University Press, __ UK.

Pinkse, J. & A. Kolk (2009). __ [I]international Business and __ Global Climate Change, Routledge, __ London and __ New York.

Van den Bergh, J.C.J.M. (2010). '__ [a]ssessment of Lomborg's __ *Skeptical Environmentalist* and __ ensuing debate', __ *Journal of __ Integrative Environmental Sciences*, 7(1):34.

Key to article usage (2)

Format 2 – A clean copy of the text against which you can check your answers to the test in Format 1, where the articles were deleted. As in the short Diagnostic Test in Section 2 of this chapter, a few instances are highlighted* where it is correct to use either no article or the definite article.

The Dilemma of Global Warming
Wotta Lotta (or Worra Lorra) Water (or Wa-a)

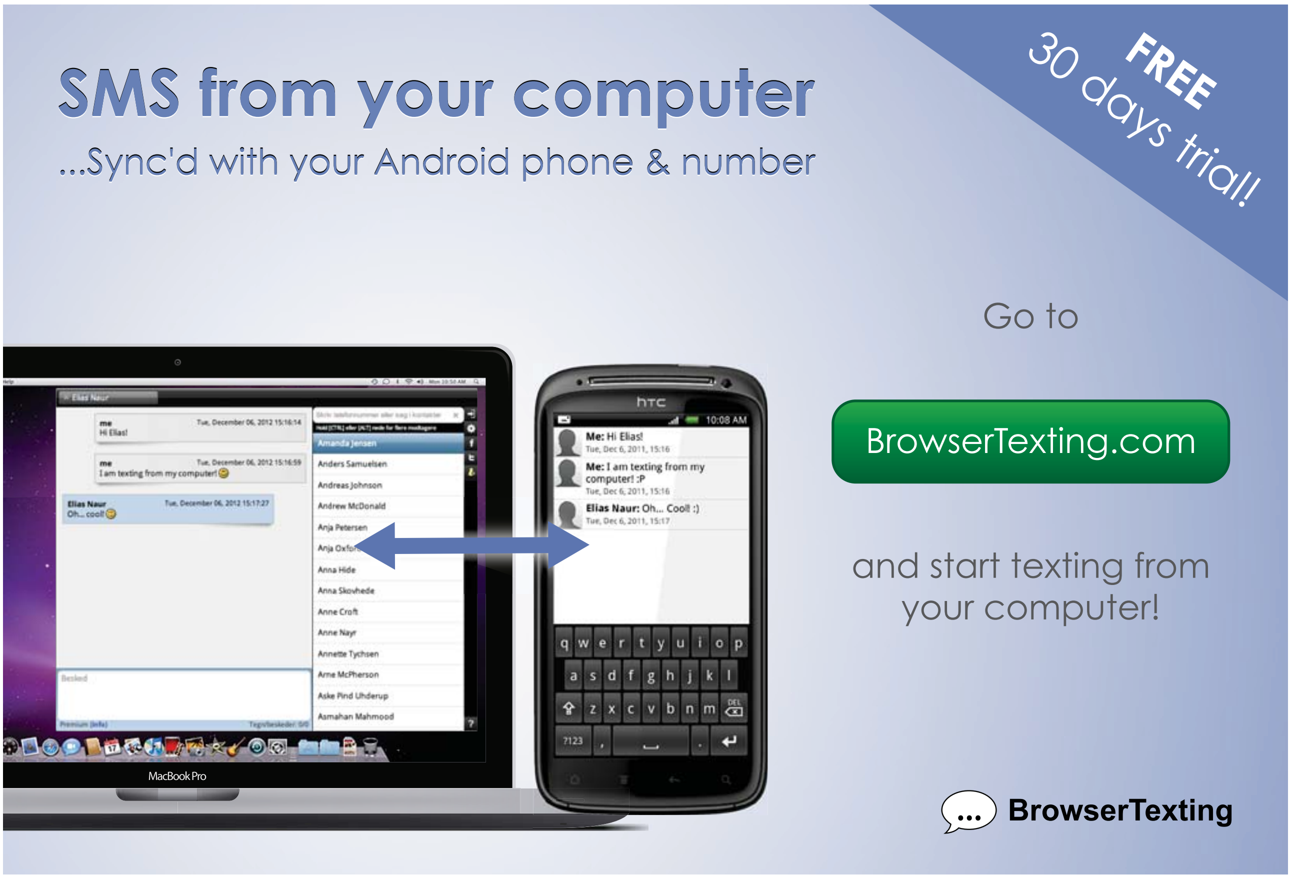
Only as recently as the 1980s, climatologists were predicting that the World was heading towards another Ice Age. But now in the 21st century, the latest apocalyptic vision for the future of the Planet comes in the form of the global warming (GW) threat. According to *The Guardian Weekly* (17 May, 2013), The International Energy Association (IEA) has forecast that there will ultimately be an estimated 6°C of GW, 'a level that would lead to chaos'. However, the most recent IEA report (June 2013) actually anticipates 3.6–5.3°C of GW over the coming century. All these estimates might seem too high a figure, given that only a 0.76°C increase in warming has been recorded over the last two centuries.

GW, of whatever degree, is associated with increasing amounts of carbon dioxide (CO_2) in the atmosphere. Indeed, in May 2013, there was the first indication that CO_2 concentration had reached the critical tipping point of 400 parts per million (ibid.). This figure is, however, based on samples taken for half a century at a single, somewhat atypical, location – a Hawaiian volcano. Whether this increase of CO_2 is due to the works of Humankind since the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century, or to natural causes, or to a combination of both, is hotly debated. Some people would deny the existence of GW altogether. What is required is an in-depth knowledge of all the influencing factors.

Nevertheless, there is already compelling evidence of GW. If the climate were not changing there would not be such a massive reduction of Polar ice*, with a corresponding increase of 19 cm in global sea level since 1900. A considerable proportion of the ice cap has already melted. The glaciers of both the Arctic and the Antarctic are melting at an exponential rate. Quantifying the melt can be used as an indicator of GW. Indeed, the melting ice is considered to be *the* indicator of climate change. Last year (2012) there was a record amount of ice loss. Icebergs, some weighing a megaton, are breaking off the glaciers when they reach the sea. When polar bears go a-hunting for food they may be stranded on an ice floe.

However, while, on the one hand, the Greenland glaciers, which discharge into the North Atlantic, are melting, on the other, in the Eastern Arctic, the ice is reported to be getting thicker. So it is difficult to be certain about the average trend. At the beginning of the long cold winter of January to late May 2013, the well-known London Mayor Boris Johnson, in an article in *The Daily Telegraph* (21 January 2013), wrote: 'It really feels like the start of a mini-ice age.' But, a few days later, a Professor Haigh, Head of Physics at Imperial College London, refuted this, saying, amongst other things, that Boris was confusing the short-term variability of weather with the long-term trend of climate (ibid., the 'Letters' page, 23 January 2013). Even so, in June 2013 the Meteorological Office (MO) in the UK announced that, over the last decade, global temperatures had remained stable. Yet, the MO still refuses to conclude that the GW trend has halted for good. And, meanwhile, CO_2 levels continue to rise, though the rate of increase is slowing down.

Notwithstanding this, a kind of consensus has arisen that GW is really happening. Only a few scientists do not believe in climate change. Both climatologists and physicists agree that the facts on the ground and in the air point to GW. Their mouthpiece is the IPCC (the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). For many years, the Americans refused to acknowledge the reality of GW. (President George W. Bush was a climate change denier.) But, now, even they cannot ignore its existence. Planning for climate change can be delayed no longer. Some governments, like that of the UK, want to see an 80 per cent reduction in emissions by 2050. Like the MO, the IPCC regards the 15-year 'pause' in GW to be a mere blip in the inexorable progress of GW.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But, it is not all doom and gloom, as demonstrated by both the pluses and the minuses of climate change. Some regions will benefit, while others will be disadvantaged, but there is not any part of the globe that will not be affected, both the well-endowed and the less well-endowed regions. The more the ice melts, and the volume decreases, the quicker the remaining ice will melt. As a considerable proportion of the Polar ice has already disappeared, Verkhoyansk may no longer be the Cold Pole, and there is a high chance that over the next 20 years the Arctic waters will be ice-free. This will open up the North West Passage and revolutionize the economies of those countries bordering the Arctic.

The concept of change not only applies to climate[15*] but also to the development of the primary sector. Some geologists have discovered that Greenland has vast reserves of mineral resources under its currently impenetrable ice cap, but for the future there is a plan to exploit them. The plan will be realized if GW continues. Across the Arctic regions, the Russians, the Canadians and the Chinese are competing for the rich reserves. Moreover, land in Northern Russia, Greenland and Northern Canada could become available for agriculture. Further South, single-cropped areas could become double-cropped. In more temperate zones, English farmers, for example, could grow Mediterranean fruits, and supply channels will be disrupted less often as there will be less snow and ice. However, climate change will bring, and indeed some say is already bringing, an increase in extreme weather. Summers will become too hot, winters too cold. Floods will alternate with droughts in the same area. In the most alarmist scenario, during a freak flood, sea level is predicted to rise as high as the top of the Statue of Liberty or Nelson's Column.

While governments are becoming convinced about climate change, social surveys show that public scepticism is growing. The people are not convinced. Nevertheless, an enormous amount of information about GW is gradually building up. There has been a great number of academic books and papers on the subject, which provide a deeper knowledge of the GW mechanism. Climate theory is a new and expanding field, which has been developed by 20th and 21st century scientists. In recent decades, the computer has made it easier to run models which can attempt to forecast climate change. Even so, a Professor of Climatology at the University of East Anglia had to defend his research staff when an email came to light that admitted to using a 'statistical trick' to demonstrate the GW trend. This was, in fact, an acceptable scientific method.

Figure 1 below illustrates how raw statistics might be misleading, and especially so depending on how they are presented. The figure is a historical analysis of the occurrence of a long-distance outdoor Dutch ice-skating race, the '*Elfstedentocht*' (the 11 towns route) which dates from 1909. It can only be held in those years when the winter ice is thick enough. Sometimes it occurs in two consecutive years, but it has never occurred more than once a year. The figure clearly shows that there were considerably more *Elfstedentochts* (11) in the first 50 years after 1909 than in the next 50 years right up to the present day (4), which might 'prove' the existence of GW. However, as the race became increasingly popular over the century, the explanation for the decrease in the number of races may be that it became necessary for the canal ice to be much thicker than it was in the early years, to bear the weight of the extra competitors.

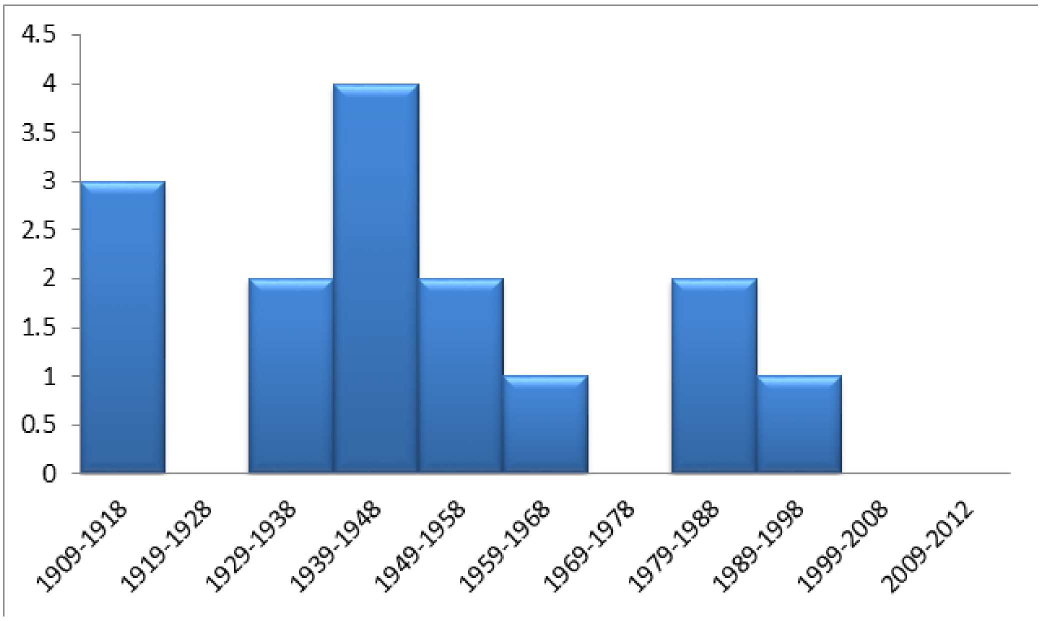

Figure 1: Number of *Elfstedentochts* (natural canal-ice races) per decade in the Netherlands since 1909 (the1st *Elfstedentocht*)

Note: So far, up to late 2013, in the decade beginning 2009 there have been no *Elfstedentochts*, as was also the case for the previous decade 1999–2008, because of the mild winters. Even the prolonged winter weather of early 2013, which lasted till the end of May was not cold enough. Perhaps __ cold winter of early 2013 just reflected __ 'pause' in GW.

Although most climate research seems to prove the existence of GW, there is no general agreement on its cause, although, on 30 May 2013, *The Daily Telegraph* (*DT*) reported that 'one recent survey of 12,000 academic papers agreed that human activists were causing the planet to warm'. However, the next day, this interpretation of the figures was corrected on the 'Letters' page (*DT*, 31 May 2013):

> 'It is not true that 97 per cent of academic papers supported the Anthropogenic Global Warming (AGW) theory. Around 37 per cent of papers endorsed AGW while 60 per cent stated no position for or against AGW.'

The rest of the papers, 3 per cent, reject the idea of AGW, or even GW as a whole concept.

A hypothesis put forward by both AGW and GW deniers is that, over the course of geological time, the Earth has undergone a natural cycle of warming and cooling. Indeed, it is true that 'several million years ago…the Arctic was ice-free, savannah spread across the desert and sea level[16*] was up to 40 metres higher than today' (*The Guardian Weekly*, 17 May 2013). Recently, fossil evidence of camels has been found in the frozen Arctic wastes. However, this kind of refutation of GW as a recent phenomenon, does not always hold when we recall that 200 million years ago, current Northern countries, like the UK and Sweden, were situated South of the Equator, where a tropical climate might be expected, so it is not surprising that their geological strata record a different climate from today.

Nevertheless, whatever the cause of GW, it is of the utmost importance for the future of the planet to take some practical steps to mitigate GW effects. Bjørn Lomborg is a statistician, who is perhaps *the* climate change sceptic because of his book *The Skeptical Environmentalist* (Lomborg 1998). In fact, he is not a climate change denier, and does believe that:

> 'Global warming, though its size and future projections are unrealistically pessimistic, is almost certainly taking place' (ibid., Part 1, Chapter 1: 4).

But he also believes that:

> *'Global warming is not anywhere near the most important problem facing the world'* [Lomborg's own italics] (ibid., Part V, Chapter 24: 243).

Moreover, he is convinced that the correct response to GW is not the prevention of, but the adaptation to, climate change, which is the less costly option by far. When his book was denounced by the Danish Committee for Scientific Dishonesty, he wrote to the *Wall Street Journal* ('Why are the Greens afraid of me?', 23 January 2003):

> 'I am Danish…a former member of Greenpeace; and I used to believe in the litany of our ever-deteriorating environment…this litany doesn't seem to be backed up by the facts…. This is most obvious in the discussion over global warming…economic analyses show that it will be far more expensive to cut carbon dioxide emissions radically than to pay the costs of adaption to increased temperatures.'

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He feels governments cannot make that big an investment in preventing change. But many of his critics are of the opinion he is not as good a statistician as he thinks. In particular, Lomborg is criticized for not rigorously subjecting his raw data to tests of statistical significance (e.g. the chi square test), and for ignoring the existence of scientific uncertainty (Van den Bergh, 2010).

But what can realistically be done? In the case of adaptation, the worldwide recession means that governments do not have the money for the large amount of investment that would be necessary for such ambitious measures as a global system of 'space sunshades' (*Wikipedia*, accessed 1/6/13). But, apart from the cost, what else is the matter with such important ideas? The difficulty is that they are not politically acceptable solutions. They require a unique effort of cooperation on an international scale, and there is too big a risk there might be unintended consequences. A more economically viable and sustainable option is carbon capture and storage (CCS). So far, no such facility is in operation, but Shell has taken the decision to build a CCS plant in Canada.

In the meantime, firms are beginning to practise Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) so that their activities will be carbon neutral and therefore sustainable (Pinkse & Kolk 2009).

So the debate about GW continues. It is a difficult time for humanity. At the time of writing (June 2013), towns along the Rhine and the Danube are awash with record floods. Had Benjamin Franklin, an American, still been alive today, perhaps he would, unlike many of his recent political successors, have extended his short list of life's certainties to read:

'Death, Taxes, and Climate Change'.

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Key[17] to article usage (3)

Format 3 – With superscripts 1–80, which relate to the 80 Rules of article usage (including curiosities 77, 78 and 79) and, equally important, non-usage, as described in Chapter 5, Sections 3 and 4. Press Ctrl & Click to easily navigate between each superscripted number and the relevant Rule on article usage.

The[23, 38] Dilemma of Global Warming[5]

Wotta Lotta[79] (or Worra Lorra)[79] Water (or Wa–a[79])

Only as recently as the[44] 1980s, climatologists[1] were predicting that the[31] World was heading towards another Ice Age. But now in the[42] 21st century, the[68] latest apocalyptic vision for the[23, 38] future of the[31] Planet comes in the[23, 38] form of the[23] global warming (GW) threat. According to *The*[47] *Guardian Weekly* (17 May, 2013), The[25] International Energy Association (IEA) has forecast that there will ultimately be an[49, 75] estimated 6°C of GW[5], 'a[48] level that would lead to chaos'[2]. However, the[68] latest IEA report (June[6] 2013) actually anticipates 3.6–5.3°C[10] of GW over the[43] coming century. All these estimates might seem too high a[73] figure, given that only a[47] 0.76°C increase in warming[3] has been recorded over the[43] last two centuries.

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GW[5], of whatever degree, is associated with increasing amounts of carbon dioxide[3] (CO_2) in the[25] atmosphere. Indeed, in May[6] 2013, there was the[43] first indication that CO_2 concentration[3] had reached the[23] critical tipping point of 400 parts[1] per million (ibid.). This figure is, however, based on samples[1] taken for half a[54] century at a[48] single, somewhat atypical[78], location – a[48, 72] Hawaiian volcano. Whether this increase of CO_2[3] is due to the[23, 38] works of Humankind[14] since the[23, 38] Industrial Revolution of the[44] 18th century, or to natural causes[1], or to a[48] combination of both, is hotly debated. Some[66] people would deny the[23] existence of GW[5] altogether.

Nevertheless, there is already compelling evidence[4] of GW[5]. If the[25] climate were not changing there would not be such a[48, 52, 59] massive reduction of Polar ice[5], with a[48] corresponding rise in global sea level[1] since 1900. A[55] considerable proportion of the[25] ice cap has already melted. The[25, 38] glaciers of both the[26] Arctic and the[26] Antarctic are melting at an[49] exponential rate. Quantifying the[25] melt can be used as an[49, 53] indicator of GW[5]. Indeed, the[25] melting ice is considered to be *the*[35, 38] indicator of climate change[5]. Last year[19] (2012) was a[58] record perijod of ice loss[1]. Icebergs[1], some weighing a[56] megaton, are breaking off the[25] glaciers when they reach the[25] sea. When polar bears[1] go a-hunting[77] for food[3] they may be stranded on an[49] ice floe.

However, while, on the[37] one hand, the[23] Greenland glaciers, which discharge into the[26] North Atlantic, are melting, on the[37] other, in the[26] Eastern Arctic, the[25] ice is reported to be getting thicker. So it is difficult[22] to be certain about the[23] average trend. At the[23,38] beginning of the[23] long cold winter of January[6] to late May[6] 2013, the[33] well-known London Mayor Boris Johnson[15], in an[49] article in *The*[47] *Daily Telegraph* (21 January 2013), wrote: ‘It really feels like the[23, 38] start of a[48] mini-ice age’. But, a[62] few days later, a[65] Professor Haigh, Head[15] of Physics[3] at Imperial College London[13], refuted this, saying, amongst other things, that Boris[15] was confusing the[23, 38] short-term variability of weather[5] with the[23, 38] long-term trend of climate[5] (ibid., the[23] ‘Letters’ page, 23 January 2013). Even so, in June[6] 2013 the[23] Meteorological Office (MO) in the[40] UK announced that, over the[43] last decade, global temperatures[1] had remained stable. Yet, the[40] MO still refuses to conclude that the[23] GW trend has halted for good. And, meanwhile, CO_2 levels[1] continue to rise, though the rate[23, 38] of increase[1] is slowing down.

Notwithstanding this, a[12] kind of consensus[2] has arisen that GW[5] is really happening. Only a[60, 62] few scientists do not believe in climate change[5]. Both[11] climatologists and physicists agree that the[23] facts on the[25] ground and in the[25] air point to GW[5]. Their mouthpiece is the[40] IPCC (the[23] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). For many years, the[28] Americans refused to acknowledge the[23, 38] reality of GW[5]. (President[15] George W. Bush was a[48] climate change denier.) But, now, even they cannot ignore its existence. Planning[3] for climate change can be delayed no longer. Some[66] governments, like that of the[40] UK, want to see an[76] 80 per cent reduction in emissions by 2050. Like the MO[40], the IPCC[40] regards the[23] 15-year ‘pause’[23] in GW to be a[48] mere blip in the[23] inexorable rise in GW[5].

But, it is not all doom and gloom[8], as demonstrated by both the[41] pluses and the[41] minuses of climate change[5]. Some[66] regions will benefit, while others[1] will be disadvantaged, but there is not any part of the globe that will not be affected, both the[29] well-endowed and the[29] less well-endowed regions. The[67] more the[25] ice melts, and the[23] volume decreases, the[67] quicker the[25] remaining ice will melt. As a[55] considerable proportion of the[25] Polar ice has already disappeared, Verkhoyansk[13] may no longer be the[26] Cold Pole, and there is a[48] high chance that over the next 20 years the[25] Arctic waters will be ice-free. This will open up the[26] North West Passage and revolutionize the[23, 38] economies of those countries bordering the[31] Arctic.

The[23] concept of change[2] not only applies to climate[5] but also to the[23, 38] development of the[23] primary sector. Some[66] geologists have discovered that Greenland[13] has vast reserves[1] of mineral resources[1] under its currently impenetrable ice cap, but for the[23] future there is a[48] plan to exploit them. The[45] plan will be realized if GW continues. Across the[26] Arctic regions, the[28] Russians, the[28] Canadians and the[28] Chinese are competing for the[23] rich reserves. Moreover, land[3] in Northern Russia[13], Greenland[13] and Northern Canada[13] could become available for agriculture[3]. Further South, single-cropped areas[1] could become double-cropped. In more temperate zones, English farmers[1], for example, could grow Mediterranean fruits[1], and supply channels[1] will be disrupted less often as there will be less snow[5] and ice[5]. However, climate change[5] will bring, and indeed some say is already bringing, an[49] increase in extreme weather[5]. Summers[1] will become too hot, winters[1] too cold. Floods[1] will alternate with droughts[1] in the[23] same area. In the[68] most alarmist scenario, during a[48] freak flood, sea level[1] is predicted to rise as high as the[23, 38] top of the[27] Statue of Liberty or Nelson's Column[13].

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While governments[1] are becoming convinced about climate change[5], social surveys[1] show that public scepticism[2] is growing. The people[71] are not convinced. Nevertheless, an[49, 51] enormous amount of information[4] about GW[5] is gradually building up. There has been a[48] great number of academic books[10] and papers[1] on the[23] subject, which provide a[57] deeper knowledge of the[23] GW mechanism. Climate theory[7] is a[48] new and expanding field, which has been developed by 20th and 21st century scientists[20]. In recent decades[1], the[24] computer has made it easier to run models[1] which can attempt to forecast climate change[5]. Even so, a[48] Professor of Climatology at the[23, 38] Climate Research Unit of the[39] University of East Anglia[13] had to defend his research staff when an[49] email came to light that admitted to using a[48] 'statistical trick' to demonstrate the[23] GW trend. This was, in fact, an[49] acceptable scientific method.

Figure 1[17] below illustrates how raw statistics[3] might be misleading, and especially so depending on how they are presented. The[23] figure is a[72] historical analysis of the[23] occurrence of a[48] long-distance outdoor Dutch ice-skating race, the[48] '*Elfstedentocht*' (the[23] 11 towns route) which dates from 1909. It can only be held in those years when the[25] winter ice is thick enough. Sometimes it occurs in two consecutive years but it has never occurred more than once a[63] year. The[23] figure clearly shows that there were considerably more *Elfstedentochts* (11) in the[43] first 50 years after 1909 than in the[43] next 50 years right up to the[43] present day (4), which might 'prove' the[23, 38] existence of GW[5]. However, as the[23] race became increasingly popular over the[23] century, the[23] explanation for the[23] decrease in the[23, 38] number of races may be that it became necessary for the[25] canal ice to be much thicker than it was in the[43] early years, to bear the[23, 38] weight of the extra competitors.

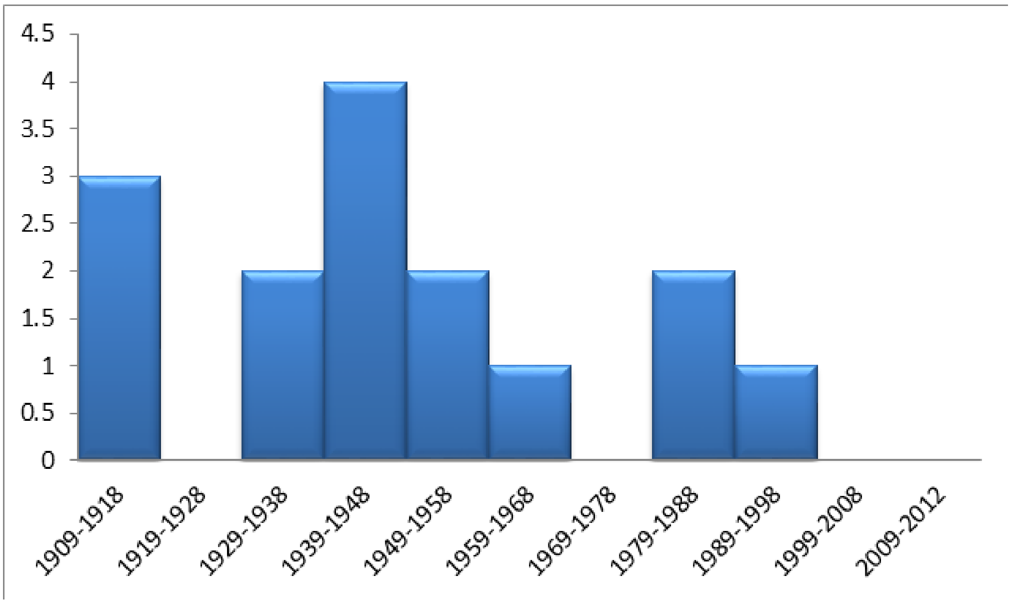

Figure 1: Number[17] of *Elfstedentochts*[1] (natural canal-ice races[1]) per decade in the[31] Netherlands since 1909 (the[23] 1st *Elfstedentocht*)

Note: So far, up to late 2013, in the[23] decade beginning 2009 there have been no *Elfstedentochts*, as was also the[23] case for the[23] previous decade 1999–2008, because of the[23] mild winters. Even the[23, 8] prolonged winter weather[5] of early 2013, which lasted till the[23] end of May[6] was not cold enough. Perhaps the[23] cold winter of early 2013 just reflected the[23] 'pause' in GW.

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> 'It is not true that 97 per cent[1] of academic papers[1] supported the[23] Anthropogenic Global Warming (AGW) theory. Around 37 per cent[1] of papers endorsed AGW[5] while 60 per cent[10] stated no position for or against AGW.'

The[32, 38] rest of the papers, 3 per cent[10], reject the[23] idea of AGW[5], or even GW as a[48] whole concept.

A[72] hypothesis put forward by both[11] AGW and GW deniers is that, over the[23, 38] course of geological time[2], the[31] Earth has undergone a[48] natural cycle of warming and cooling[8]. Indeed, it is true that 'several million years[1] ago…the[31] Arctic was ice-free, savannah[1] spread across the[26] desert and sea level[1] was up to 40 metres[10] higher than today' (*The*[43] *Guardian Weekly*, 17 May 2013). Recently, fossil evidence[4] of camels[1] has been found in the[25] frozen Arctic wastes. However, this kind of refutation[4] of GW[5] as a[48] recent phenomenon, does not always hold when we recall that 200 million years[10] ago, current Northern countries, like the[40] UK and Sweden[13], were situated South of the[31] Equator, where a[48] tropical climate might be expected, so it is not surprising that their geological strata record a[48] different climate from today, now they have migrated with continental drift[1] to Northern climes.

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Nevertheless, whatever the[23, 38] cause of GW[5], it is of the[68] utmost importance for the[23, 38] future of the[31] Planet to take some[66] practical steps to mitigate GW effects[1]. Bjørn[15] Lomborg is a[50] statistician, who is perhaps *the*[34] climate change sceptic because of his book *The*[23] *Skeptical Environmentalist* (Lomborg 1998). In fact, he is not a[48] climate change denier, and does believe that:

> ‘Global warming[5], though its size and future projections are unrealistically pessimistic, is almost certainly taking place’ (ibid., Part 1[17], Chapter 1[17]: 4).

But he also believes that:

> ‘*Global warming*[5] *is not anywhere near the*[67] *most important problem facing the*[30] *world*’ [Lomborg’s[9] own italics] (ibid., Part V[17], Chapter 24[17]: 243).

Moreover, he is convinced that the[23] correct response to GW[5] is not the[23, 38] prevention of, but the[23] adaptation to, climate change[5], which is the[67] less costly option by far. When his book was denounced by the[30,80] Danish Committee for Scientific Dishonesty[2], he wrote to the[47] *Wall Street Journal* (‘Why are the[30] Greens afraid of me?’, 23 January 2003):

> I am Danish[21]…a[48] former member of Greenpeace[16]; and I used to believe in the[23, 38] litany of our ever-deteriorating environment…this litany doesn’t seem to be backed up by the[23] facts… This is most obvious in the[23] discussion over global warming[5]…economic analyses[1] show that it will be far more expensive to cut carbon dioxide emissions[3] radically than to pay the[23, 38] costs of adaption[1] to increased temperatures[1].

He feels governments[1] cannot make that big an[74] investment in preventing change[5]. But many of his critics are of the[48] opinion he is not as good a[61] statistician as he thinks. In particular, Lomborg[15] is criticized for not rigorously subjecting his raw data to tests[1] of statistical significance[2] (e.g. the[46] chi square test), and for ignoring the[23, 38] existence of scientific uncertainty[2] (Van den Bergh 2010).

But what can realistically be done? In the[36, 38] case of adaptation[1], the[23] worldwide recession means that governments[1] do not have the[69] money for the[23, 38] large amount of investment[10] that would be necessary for such ambitious measures as a[48] global system of ‘space sunshades’[1] (*Wikipedia*, accessed 1/6/13). But, apart from the[23] cost, what else is the[70] matter with such important ideas? The[23] difficulty is that they are not politically acceptable solutions[1]. They require a[48] unique effort of cooperation[2] on an[49] international scale, and there is too big a[73] risk there might be unintended consequences[2]. A[67] more economically viable and sustainable option is carbon capture and storage[1] (CCS). So far, no such facility is in operation, but Shell[13] has taken the decision to build a[48] CCS plant in Canada[13].

In the[23] meantime, firms[1] are beginning to practise Corporate Social Responsibility[2] (CSR) so that their activities will be carbon neutral and therefore sustainable (see Pinkse and Kolk 2009).

So the[23] debate about GW[5] continues. It is a[48] difficult time for humanity[14]. At the[23] time of writing (June[6] 2013), towns[1] along the[26] Rhine and the[26] Danube are awash[77] with record floods[1]. Had Benjamin Franklin[15], an[64] American, still been alive today, perhaps he would, unlike many of his recent political successors, have extended his short list of life's certainties[2] to read:

> 'Death[2], Taxes[3], and Climate Change[5]'.

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Section 6: Concluding remarks to Chapter 5

It may seem that a disproportionate amount of space has been devoted to the use of the definite and indefinite articles, but for EFL authors in many parts of the world, this is their major difficulty, and most of these 80 Rules relate to the actual mistakes they make. When Matthew Norman (*Daily Telegraph*, 19 January 2013: B9) wrote a column in pretend 'Chinglish' (i.e. English supposedly written by an educated Chinese person), for authenticity, he omitted the articles, as in [missing articles shown in square brackets]: 'In [an] ideal world, there would be [an] even more efficacious solution to [the] problem of getting paid for no work.'

This chapter with its detailed classification of the articles has come a long way from the basic assertion that *the* is used when referring to particular persons or things, and *a*/*an* is used in general contexts. Nevertheless, in spite of the lengthy unpacking of the grammar of *the* and *a*/*an* in this discussion, it still cannot be claimed that no stone has been left unturned in the exploration of this linguistic minefield, where surprises keep popping up even for native speakers.

The hallmark of a well-written English text by EFL students is the correct use of *the* and *a*/*an*, either as the definite and indefinite articles or as other parts of speech. This final chapter has aimed to bring all this together with illuminating examples and two tests that teach as well as assess. If all this explanation still seems complicated, the reader should be comforted by the knowledge that modern English has moved on from the Old English of the Dark Ages, with its far more complicated matrix of genders and declensions of cases, from which the present three little words have evolved.

Postscript

One last complication: there may be some instances where, even after studying all the rules here, you just cannot decide whether to use *the*, *a*/*an*, or no article. Such is the eccentricity of the English language, however, that sometimes it may not really matter what you do. That is why in Chapter 5, in the first Diagnostic Test in Section 2, and in the more extensive test in Section 5, very occasionally more than one 'correct' answer is possible. Nevertheless, in most cases, there is no ambiguity, and the final reference essay should help EFL authors to use the articles correctly in their own sentences, in any context.

Those who may feel daunted by all this detail may wish to try an even simpler ‘starter’ test that can be used to practise the use of the definite and indefinite articles, and which is reasonably relevant for students and professors of economics and business studies. This is the group of exercises in Section 36 of *Oxford Business English and Practice* (Michael Duckworth, Oxford University Press, 2004). These exercises are not backed up by any explanation, but could be used in conjunction with the information contained in this chapter.

* * *

For a list of References related to works on English grammar quoted in this guide, see pages 8 to 12. Details of other works referred to in the text are provided where these works are mentioned.

Answer to the question in Note 5 on p. 30:
In the entry Learner, E.E. 1979, there is an inconsistent colon (:) after the date, instead of a full stop.

6 About the Author

For the past 33 years Patricia Ellman has been involved with improving the English of students and professors with English as a foreign language. She was part of a team teaching an English-language Writing Skills course at the University of Amsterdam, and has edited many Ph.D. theses, academic articles, and books, for a global clientele. She is a Chartered Town Planner and has worked in planning in London, Glasgow and Cambridge. Her Applied Geography work at the London School of Economics was published in a research study for the Royal Commission on Local Government in England. She has a B.A. in Geography (with Geology) from University College London, and an M.Sc in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, and spent a postgraduate year at Moscow State University. She lives close to an Amsterdam canal with her husband.

7 Endnotes

1. British Prime Minister, 1868, 1874–1880.
2. From Robert Blake *Disraeli* (1996, Ch.2).
3. For a more detailed account of how to use the definite and the indefinite article, and when not to use them, see Chapter 5, Sections 1–4, essential reading for EFL students with no articles in their mother tongue.
4. That said, I am informed that some journals request from the author all of the following: 'a summary', 'a brief summary', and 'a very brief summary'. (Personal communication (20 August 2010) with Professor Jeroen van den Bergh).
5. Personal communication (20 August 2010) from Professor Jeroen van den Bergh.
6. The phrase 'same difference' is an English colloquialism, meaning 'there is no difference'.
7. Professor Peter Wakker's *aide-memoire* on points of grammar, p. 67.
8. Nowadays, with word processing programs like Word, you can very easily check for double spaces.
9. *Proper nouns* are words beginning with a capital letter, e.g. people's names (John) or positions (the President), and place names (Leeds).
10. Section 5 of this Chapter 5 is an attempt to provide such a comprehensive text, with all the examples of article usage discussed in Sections 1, 3 and 4.
11. F.H.W. Green, *Geographical Journal*, 16 (1950): 64–81.
12. C.B. Fawcett, *The Provinces of England*, 1921 (revised 1960).
13. F.H.W. Green, *Geographical Journal*, 16 (1950): 64–81.
14. C.B. Fawcett, *The Provinces of England*, 1921 (revised 1960).
15. It would also be correct to write 'the climate'.
16. It would also be correct to write 'the sea level'.