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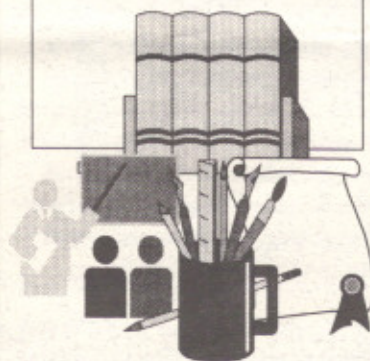
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Doing what's right isn't
the problem. It's
knowing what's right.

Lyndon B. Johnson

KEEPING AN EYE ON WASHINGTON

Through a number of subcommittees, a few key congressional committees have legislative and financial jurisdiction over all matters of interest to life scientists (and their editors). For instance:

- The House Resources Committee has jurisdiction over the National Parks System; all wilderness areas, forest preserves, and public lands outside Alaska; wildlife resources and refuges; fisheries; and the protection, research, and management of coastal and marine environments.
- The House Science Committee oversees all matters relating to energy and environmental research and development, including the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. In addition, the committee has legislative jurisdiction over all matters relating to science policy; the National Science Foundation; the Office of Technology Assessment; the Office of Science and Technology Policy; government-owned, non-military laboratories; and science and engineering research, development, and education, including health, biomedical, agricultural, geological, biological, and life sciences issues.
- The House Transportation Committee presides over the Clean Water Act and wetlands protection; Superfund; groundwater; and the Soil Conservation Service.
- The House Committee on Agriculture has jurisdiction over agricultural research; water, soil, and natural resource conservation; forestry; pesticides; and nutrition.
- Counterparts of the above committees in the Senate include the Environment and Public Works Committee; Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee; Energy and Natural Resources Committee; and Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee.
- Committees on Appropriations in both the House and Senate will allocate funds for USDA research, Interior agencies, USDA's Forest Service, NIH, NSF, NASA, and EPA.

Of particular concern to environmentalists are changes in the goals and philosophy of the House Resources Committee. Among the many issues the committee will consider are proposed alterations to the Endangered Species Act that would require peer review of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service studies; a requirement that recovery plans be in place when a species is listed; risk-assessment and cost-benefit analyses of regulations; and compensation for property owners whose land values decrease over 10%.

Over the next few months, these congressional committees will be holding hearings and relying on reports from the various subcommittees for their budget recommendations. One committee chair has reportedly asked all who testify before his committee to come prepared only with lists of potential cuts.

A bill is being introduced in Congress to create a new, cabinet-level science department that would combine much of federal science and technology research

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BOOK REVIEW

The New York Public Library Writer's Guide to Style and Usage A Stonesong Press Book. New York, Harper Collins, 1994; 838 pages.

Scientific Style and Format, The CBE Manual for Authors, Editors and Publishers 6th Edition, Style Manual Committee, Council of Biology Editors. New York, Cambridge University Press, 1994; 825 pages.

Reviewed by Shirley Peterson, ELS

Many features of the two new style manuals are comparable, and excellent. Both style guides define the various classes of words that make up the English language and illustrate their proper use in a sentence. The NYPL book has a long and particularly fine section on points of style, as opposed to grammar, and they both contain thorough discussions of electronic typography and publishing.

The NYPL guide introduces the chapter headed "Articles, Prepositions, and Conjunctions" with the observation that nearly all prepositions and conjunctions, as well as the 200 most-used words in the English language, can be traced to Germanic roots. (An NYPL note in the chapter on spelling points out that mnemonic devices are not completely reliable—with the exception of *deductible*, which "takes an i as in IRS.") These comparisons are symptomatic of the difference in approach of the two books: the CBE manual is generally straightforward while the NYPL guide occasionally slips into playfulness.

Similar sections devoted to easily confused words reflect the narrower CBE specialization, but several of the NYPL entries could be beneficially included in the next edition of the CBE manual. For example, the NYPL guide distinguishes between *ability*, which is innate or acquired, *capacity*, which is inherent potential or volume, and *capability*, which means possessing the necessary attributes. Likewise, NYPL usefully differentiates between *apt*, *likely*, *liable*, and *prone*. A note near the page on which the prefixes *ante-* and *anti-* are elucidated illustrates a characteristic of the NYPL guide that will be judged a strength by some and a weakness by others. Here the book cites *antipasto* (before pasta, with a variant spelling of *ante-*) and *antimacassar* (against hair oil, originally a toiletry formula derived from the seeds of a tree in the Macassar area of Indonesia), as like-sounding and -looking

constructions with very different meanings. The NYPL notes delightfully divert a browser but annoy someone reading the text for specific information, because the text often breaks off in midsentence to go around a long, ill-marked note. Half a page into the note the reader realizes that s/he has been led down a byway yet again and has lost the thread of the original topic, not to mention the beginning of the sentence. Notes in the CBE manual are fewer, shorter, clearly marked, and not shoehorned into the text.

The opinions expressed in the manuals differ about hyphenation and the use of numerals in the text. The CBE manual's experimental use of numerals beginning with "1" is, I submit, jarring. In a letter to a friend one might scribble a sentence with "1st" in it, but the numeration of one and two, first and second, seems too casual in a formal text. Moreover, writing a numeral for one is not possible without a "1" key, and older typewriters, which do not have this key but must rely on the lower case "l," are still in use over much of the world. An "l" isolated in the middle of a sentence will give a reader or typographer even more pause than a "1"; either way, the flow of information will be interrupted.

The NYPL guide's section on editing graphs and charts draws heavily from Edward Tufte's remarkable *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information* and offers several instructive examples. The same section of the CBE manual is oddly bereft of illustrations, but the unit on tables is better than its less specialized counterpart in the NYPL guide. Incidentally, the lovely typewriter symbols that were formerly used in a hierarchical manner for table notes have vanished. Not only has mention of the convention disappeared from the CBE manual, but the symbols themselves are not found on a standard computer keyboard.

The brief, new English-as-a-second-language (ESL) section in the CBE manual reminds editors of potential hazards often encountered in the works of nonanglophone writers. And if the pages and pages of title abbreviations found in the CBE manual appear overwhelming and of little relevance, consider the 50 pages of abbreviations in the NYPL guide. The lists include just about any word that can be shortened, even in the fields of medicine, chemistry, and computers.

The index of the CBE manual beats that of the NYPL guide hands down. The CBE index even has chemical and taxonomic suffixes standing alone, so one can get at them. Despite some curious omissions (e.g., no entry for bullets or for punctuation marks around superscripts, two items which I suspect are not covered in the book), it is a lovely index, and I'm grateful. A tiny quibble: The instructional paragraph that heads the index

Freedom is what you do with what's been done to you.

Jean-Paul Sartre

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NEWS

The American Institute of Biological Sciences is currently available to Internet users. The gopher server, accessible through *aibs.org*, will provide information regarding AIBS, its affiliate societies, the annual meeting, BioScience, education programs, and professional opportunities. In addition, legislative activities of the 104th Congress can be monitored, including reauthorizations of the Endangered Species Act, the Farm Bill, and the Clean Water Act.

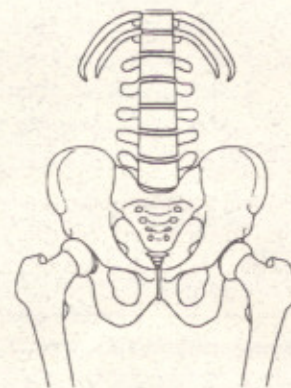


Editors with access to the Internet can also avail themselves of Copyediting-L, an electronic hotline run by Beth Goelzer Lyons at Cornell University. You can pose your question(s) to an electronic mailing list, and messages are automatically sent to all subscribers, who may respond publicly by posting a reply to the list, or privately by sending E-mail to the originator of the message. Your call for help is likely to be read almost instantly by some of the 400-or-so participating copyeditors in the U.S., Canada, the U.K., and even Israel. To subscribe to Copyediting-L, send an E-mail message to listserv@cornell.edu and leave the subject line blank. Your message should read as follows: "SUBSCRIBE COPYEDITING-L First name Last name."

The mistake you don't catch in proofreading will be in 18-point, boldface type.

Norman Grossblatt, ELS(D)

Scientists report a new treatment that could hasten healing of bone fractures. The technique consists of inserting a thin tube into the injured area and injecting a soft paste of carbonated apatite, or dahllite, a mineral that occurs naturally in the human skeleton. The introduced biomaterial crystallizes and within 12 hours is as hard as normal bone. Researchers claim that the body treats the dahllite as if it were bone, growing blood vessels into it and remodeling the crystals to match natural bone structure. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved a clinical trial in 12 hospitals. The procedure is already used in Holland to repair fractures.



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contains the word *infix*. From the context it is clear that an infix is letters inserted to change a word's meaning. The infixes listed in the index, with dashes on both ends, are found in protein names, to specify particular connections or orientations of the molecular parts—fair enough. Nevertheless, the example of infix given in the *American Heritage Dictionary* is a Tagalog word, the *Random House Dictionary's* example is Latin, and my 1954 *Webster's New World* offers an Arabic example.

The CBE manual's copious and turgid directions for citing references, based on the *National Library of Medicine Recommended Formats for Bibliographic Citation* (1991), exceed necessity. The level of detail may be justified by the almost universal use of electronic databases and by the growing practice among scientists of incrementally recording and maintaining a personal stock of computerized bibliographic citations. Still, most people who will turn to the CBE manual are users of these large databases, not contributors to them. Perhaps the imposition of the NLM guidelines is one of the burdens of computerization.

In summary, *The New York Public Library Writer's Guide to Style and Usage* serves as a reference feast and as a source of word snacks; I recommend it. *Scientific Style and Format, The CBE Manual for Authors, Editors, and Publishers*, with its inclusion of new fields ranging from the infinitesimal to the astronomical, its excellent treatment of small but important topics (international postal codes, for instance), and its aim at a global readership, reflects the committee's and Frances Porcher's sensitivity and hard work. I proudly recommend it, too.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Fourth Annual Meeting of BELS will be held on May 6 at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center in Kansas City. Cocktails will be served at 7:30 p.m., dinner at 8. After brief committee reports, Maeve O'Connor, ELS(H), will speak to us about the future of our profession and the role of BELS in it, or the *raison d'être* for our kind of editor. The banquet is being sponsored by Diagnostek, Inc., an Albuquerque firm specializing in pharmacy management services. Please contact Karen Phillips at (201) 538-4750 if you have not received your invitation in the mail.

BELS members who will be attending the CBE meeting can find budget-conscious lodging at the Ramada Inn Kansas City North, 1600 NE Parvin Rd., Kansas City, MO 64116, telephone (816) 453-5210. The hotel is the site of the BELS certification examination scheduled for May 6, and is offering reduced rates (\$43 single, \$47 double, plus tax) for people who identify themselves as related to BELS. The Ramada is supposedly 10 minutes by car from the Hyatt Regency, headquarters of the CBE conference.

If you plan to arrive in Kansas City on Friday, May 5, between 6 and 7 p.m., you may wish to call Grace Darling at (214) 824-0154 to share a ride from the airport. A return trip is scheduled for Tuesday, May 9, between 4 and 5 p.m.

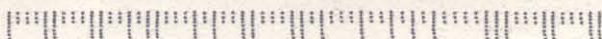
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under a single roof. The proposed new department would assimilate research programs currently sponsored by the National Science Foundation, the Environmental Protection Agency, NASA, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Department of Energy's energy and nuclear weapons divisions, and several other federal agencies. The National Institutes of Health and defense research would remain independent.

Proponents of this bill say such a department would cut costs and red tape, improve coordination of research, eliminate redundancy, and give the scientific community a stronger voice in influencing science policy. Critics contend that the proposal could make federal research more vulnerable to budget cuts and subject to politics as administrations change. In addition, it would destroy a unique aspect of American science: that a scientist can usually find support for a good idea, even if the first agency he or she talks to isn't interested in the research. On the other hand, if Congress proceeds with its plan to eliminate four departments, including Commerce and Energy, a science department might provide a lifeline for the research arms of those departments. Stay tuned.

Be thankful we're not
getting all the government
we're paying for.

Will Rogers



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