

## Writing Tips Brownfield

### **i.e. versus e.g.**

i.e. means “that is”

e.g. means “for example”

Positive social developments in children (i.e., reading ability) are more often found in children with active parental involvement (e.g., parents who read to their children when they are younger).

In the ASA/APA/Chicago style, abbreviations such as i.e., e.g., etc., and so forth are only used in parentheses.

### **Et al.** (“and others”)

The first time you give a citation with more than three authors, you must list all three authors. Each time after that, you may use the first author’s name and then put et al. Remember to include the period after al; it’s important! With two authors, always include the names of both authors.

Smith, Jones, Star, and Clark (2000) found that children enjoying reading. [Later in the paper] Smith et al. (2000) also found that children prefer fantasy.

### **Affect and effect**

Affect is a verb – education affects income

Effect is a noun – the effect of education on income is positive

### **Loose and lose**

Loose is to be free from restraints or unbound. Lose is to come to be without.

He pried the nail loose from the board.

John managed to lose his keys.

### **Plural and possessive**

Many writers have problems mixing up plural and possessive forms, particularly when contractions are introduced. A good rule of thumb to remember is that apostrophes are used with the possessive. However, this is not always the case:

Its – possessive

It’s – contraction of “it is”

## Active and passive voice

In active voice, the subject is performing the action expressed in the verb.

In sentences written in passive voice, the subject receives the action expressed in the verb; the subject is acted upon. The agent performing the action may appear in a "by the..." phrase or may be omitted.

The dog [subject] bit [verb] the boy [object].

The boy [object] was bitten [verb] by the dog [subject].

Always use active voice when possible.

## Punctuation

Vary your punctuation for effect. This will increase readability of your paper and, also, give you more complex sentences. If you are using quotes, the punctuation goes inside the quotation marks, unless the sentence ends with a citation.

James called the game "vapid;" Joan preferred to call it "childish" (Peterson 2000:145).

*Commas:*

1. Use commas when joining separate statements with *and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet*.
  - a. The game was over, yet the crowd didn't leave.
2. Use commas after introductory phrases, clauses, or words that come before the main phrase. Common starter words include *after, although, as, because, if, since, when, while*.
  - a. While I was eating, the cat scratched at the door.
  - b. However, do not use commas after the main clause if a dependent clause follows it.
    - i. INCORRECT: She was late for class, because her alarm was broken.
    - ii. CORRECT: She was still quite upset, although she had won the Oscar.
3. Use a pair of commas in the middle of a sentence to set off clauses, phrases, and words that are not essential to the meaning of the sentence. Use one comma before to indicate the beginning of the pause and one at the end to indicate the end of the pause.
  - a. If you leave out the clause, phrase, or word, does the sentence still make sense?
  - b. Does the clause, phrase, or word interrupt the flow of words in the original sentence?

- c. If you move the element to a different position in the sentence, does the sentence still make sense?
  - d. If you answer yes to any of these questions, then the element should be set off with a comma
4. Use commas to separate three or more words, phrases, or clauses written in a series.
    - a. The candidate promised to lower taxes, protect the environment, reduce crime, and end unemployment.
  5. Use commas to set off all geographical names, items in dates (except the month and day), addresses (except the street number and name), and titles in names.
    - a. Who lives at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC?
  6. DO NOT use commas after a clause that begins with *that*.

*Colons, semi-colons, and periods:*

Colons (:) are used to set off a list of items and to introduce an explanation or definition of something.

You will need to bring three things to the party: some food, something to drink, and a small gift for the hostess.

I'll tell you what I'm going to do: I'm going to quit!

"Elephant (noun): a large grey mammal found in Africa and India."

Semi-colons (;) are used to join together two independent clauses -- in other words, it joins two clauses that could be sentences but have a relationship to each other.

Mary drives a Mercedes; Joanne drives a Chevrolet.

Semi-colons can also be used to join two clauses using a *transition* such as *however*, *therefore*, *on the other hand*, and so forth.

She works all day in a store; in addition, she takes classes in the evenings.

When using quotation marks, punctuation will often go *inside* the quotation marks if that is the end of the sentence.

Dr. Bob's student evaluations consistently marked him as a "boring teacher."

If something comes *after* the end of the sentence, such as a citation, the punctuation goes outside of the quotation marks.

Dr. Bob defended his teaching methods, citing that lecture is a "nationally-used method" (Jones 2005:76).

## **In-text Citations**

ALWAYS cite your sources. ALWAYS include quotation marks if you are using their exact words. Try and only use quotes to supplement your own words, not to replace them. You will show greater understanding if you can rephrase the point of the original quote into your own words (still remember to cite properly when you do!).

For the ASA citation style, the reference is placed within parentheses in the text of the paper and includes the author's last name, year of publication of the source used and page number(s) -- for example, (Jones 2007:3). If one author has two or more publications in the same year, they are distinguished by the year of publication in both the reference and the bibliography – for example, (Jones 2005a, Jones 2005b). If two authors have the same last name, they will be distinguished by year of publication of their works unless their works happened to be published the same year. In this case, use the initials of the authors to distinguish the two – for example (B. Jones 2005, K. Jones 2005). If one work has multiple authors, the last name of each should appear in the reference: (Smith and Jones 2004) or (Smith, Jones, and Baker 1990). If you use the author's name as part of the text – According to Marx, “the decrease of variable” (1962:57) – you may omit the author's name from the parentheses. If you use a very long quote (more than 50 words or about four typed lines), it should be indented and single spaced. You do not use quotation marks:

The real barrier of capitalist production is... (Marx 1962:236).

## **Citation/Reference Page**

When using the ASA citation style, your citation page should be titled “References.” The basic forms used within a reference page are as follows:

### *Books:*

Author 1 (last name inverted), Author 2 (including full surname, last name is not inverted), and Author 3. Year of publication. *Name of publication* (italicized). Location of publisher, state (or name of country if a foreign publisher): Publisher's name.

Smith, Karen, Cassidy Jones, and Alan Wade. 2010. *The Uselessness of Referencing*. Boston, MA: Totally Imaginary Press, Inc.

### *Chapters in Edited/Collected Book:*

Author 1 (last name inverted), Author 2 (including full surname, last name is not inverted), and Author 3. Year of publication. “Title of Article/Chapter.” Pp. (with page numbers elided) in *Name of Publication* (italicized), edited by Editor1, Editor2, and Editor3 (editors' initials only for first/middle names, names not inverted). Location of publisher, state (or name of country if a foreign publisher): Publisher's name.

McAdam, Doug and Kelly Moore. 1989. “The Politics of Black Insurgency, 1930-1975.”

Pp. 255-85 in *Violence in America*. Vol. 2, *Protest, Rebellion, Reform*, edited by T.R. Gurr. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

#### *Journal Articles:*

Author 1 (last name inverted), Author 2 (including full surname, last name is not inverted), and Author 3. Year of publication. "Title of Article/Chapter." *Name of Publication* (italicized) Volume Number (Issue Number):page numbers of article.

Jones, Lucy, and Sara Mills. "Analysing Agency: Reader Responses to Fifty Shades of Grey." *Gender & Language* 8, no. 2 (2014): 225-44.

#### *Internet Sources*

When using sources from the internet, use the names of authors (whenever possible), document titles, date of publication or date of access, and a web address (URL) for each citation.

giandujakiss. 2008, "Sweet Charity Vid: "Origin Stories" (Btvs/Ats)". Retrieved 02/15/2011, (<http://giandujakiss.livejournal.com/360051.html>).

#### **More Writing Tips**

See The Elements of Style by Strunk and White. An earlier version of this manual is available online at:

<http://www.bartleby.com/141/>

#### **Proofreading**

When you have finished writing your paper, you are only halfway done. Next you need to proofread and edit what you have written. Here are some general guidelines and tips for proofreading and editing:

1. Read your paper out loud.
2. Read your paper backwards.
3. Use a spell checker or grammar checker as a first screening, but don't depend on them.
4. Have others read your paper.
5. Read your paper slowly.
6. Don't try and proof for every mistake at once; do one pass for spelling, one pass for content, one pass for grammar, and so forth.
7. Double check proper names.
8. Double check the little words; "or," "of," "if," and "it" are often interchanged.
9. Ask yourself who, what, when, where, why, and how when reading for content. Does the text answer all the questions you think it should? Highlight the sentences that best answer these questions, just so you can see if the facts flow in logical order.

10. Write at the end of the day and proof in the morning. A break will make sure that you come back to the paper with fresh eyes.
11. Read something else between edits. This will help you clear your head of what you expect to read and allow you to read what is actually on the page.
12. Make a list of things to watch for – like a “to do” list – when you edit.