CHAPTER 5

Hurdles

AVOIDING CLASHES AND CRASHES
NOW YOUR TEXT FOLLOWS BASIC FORMAT CONVENTIONS (CHAPTER 1), IS well structured and coherent (Chapter 2), and is well supported by an accurately represented reference base (Chapter 3). You have even expressed your work in clear, efficient, correctly punctuated sentences (Chapter 4). There are a few hurdles left, however—professional hurdles. A reader can understand your text if quotations are handled incorrectly: At least the words are still there. But professionals (including professors) will not be impressed with your performance; the sloppiness is somewhat comparable to arriving on the other side of the hurdle but knocking it over in the process. And there are some slips with handling quotations that can get you sidelined with ethics issues as well. Correct handling of lists and series and of verb forms and tenses are not so risky with ethics, but errors often result in a sprawling jumbled mess that does not represent you well. Like the hurdler, you need a clean, skillful performance, with no sloppy distractions to discredit you. Mechanics is the least important aspect of writing, but errors can prejudice a reader and interfere with the ways the more important aspects are received.

Quotations 1: Keeping Bounds Safe and Accurate

It's a good thing that not more than 10% of your masterpiece will be in the form of direct quotations (see Chapter 6), because there are so many little details to keep track of when quoting someone else's words. There are a number of hazards—conventions that are easy to miss. Also there are a number of tools—devices you can use to make quotations more applicable to your text and clearer to your reader.

CHALLENGE 1: SELECT QUOTATIONS CAREFULLY AND BE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND THEM

When you recognize that an author is using key words from your topic, it's tempting to take a nice-sounding sentence or two and just slip it into a skimpy paragraph. But this isn't very safe. Be sure you understand not only what the words mean but what the author means by them.

Engage in mental practice. Don't quote to avoid having to paraphrase. Don't quote anything you haven't paraphrased first in your own mind in terms of your approach and in consideration of the other information you plan to use around it.
CHALLENGE 2: FORMAT QUOTATIONS CORRECTLY

In formatting quotations, you are playing a numbers game. For APA format, you will incorporate quotations of less than 40 words as part of your paragraphs. You will block quotations of 40 words or more.

Incorporated quotations are introduced coherently, set off by quotation marks, and typed carefully into the paragraph. They may be handled in several ways.

- Set off with a speaker tag. Smith commented,
- Embedded in the sentence. Rothman’s opinion was

Quote is introduced by complete statement. It is preceded by a colon. The first word is capitalized, whether it was capitalized in the original or not.

Williams (2004) expressed the perspective effectively: “Trust is a catalyst for innovation” (p. 11).

From the perspective of 20 years of administrative experience, Williams (2004) wrote, “Trust is a catalyst for innovation” (p. 11).

Williams (2004) referred to trust as “a catalyst for innovation” (p. 11).

Quote is introduced by a speaker tag. It is preceded by a comma. The first word is capitalized, whether capitalized in the original or not.

Citations come after quotation marks and before period. This is discussed below.
Quotations of 40 words or more are blocked: indented on the left 5 to 7 spaces, the same number of spaces as the paragraphs. Quotation marks are not used in a blocked quotation. The blocking takes the place of quotation marks.

Goodlad (1990a) calls attention to the universality of the teaching enterprise:

Most people teach during their lives. Some teach a great deal—parents in particular, and people paid to teach in schools, colleges, and various other institutions and enterprises. Indeed, teaching is so pervasive that perhaps all of us should be taught something about it. (p. 3)

Use common sense in choosing the introduction and thus the punctuation marks that precede block quotes. Some authors occasionally embed a long quotation within a sentence and as a result have a block without punctuation or capital. But it looks a little weird, and some handbooks explicitly discourage it. For the sake of your reader’s sense of visual balance, just introduce with a complete statement or a speaker tag. It doesn’t take too much energy to type in “Jones concluded” or “Smith explained.”

Longer quotations may stand by themselves, but they should still be worked into the text smoothly.
APA format requires that blocked quotations be double spaced in articles submitted to journals, as well as books, book chapters and other writings that are to be published. In student papers, theses, and dissertations, blocked quotations can be single spaced if the student, committee, department chair, deans, and anybody else involved agree that the single spacing improves readability. If you have a large number of long quotations in small space, you may want to consult with your chair about using this option.

CHALLENGE 3: INTRODUCE QUOTATIONS CAREFULLY

An unlabeled quotation is at best awkward and at worst confusing. If you're tired of using the same old "he said" speaker tags, here are a few others—courtesy of the author's memory, along with a number of thesauruses (or thesauri, if you like Latinate plurals).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPEAKER TAGS AND OTHER USEFUL QUOTE LABELS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>acknowledges</td>
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<td>advocates</td>
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<td>explains</td>
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<td>enlightens</td>
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<td>gives an opinion</td>
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<td>gives a summary</td>
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<td>gives an explanation</td>
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<td>gives a justification</td>
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<td>gives an analysis</td>
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<td>implies</td>
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<td>makes a statement</td>
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<td>makes an observation</td>
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<td>makes a case</td>
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<td>makes note of</td>
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<td>makes reference to</td>
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<td>makes sense of notes</td>
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<td>makes reference to records</td>
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<td>makes reference to refers</td>
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<td>makes reference to references</td>
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<td>makes reference to remarks</td>
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<td>makes reference to reviews</td>
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<td>makes reference to shares</td>
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<tr>
<td>makes reference to states</td>
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<tr>
<td>makes reference to says!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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CHALLENGE 4: PLACE CONCLUDING PUNCTUATION AND CITATIONS CORRECTLY

Getting out of quotations can be as sticky as getting into them. There are conventions that need to be followed—not because they are particularly striking or sensible, but because they are ethical and/or expected.

Give page numbers for all direct quotations.
- For quotations incorporated in paragraphs, the most common position is at the end of the quotation immediately following quotation marks, preceding the period.
- For quotations that are blocked, place the page number outside the period.

For incorporated quotations that do not end in a citation, usage specifies placement of end punctuation with quotation marks.

Periods go inside quotation marks. → One of the teachers responded that the program had “made a world of difference in the way children treat one another.”

Commas go inside quotation marks. → She explained that her students showed “more compassion for each other’s feelings,” as well as “more patience with each other’s mistakes.”

Semicolons go outside quotation marks unless part of the quotation. → Another teacher emphasized “increased learning because of a safe and cooperative classroom”; he explained that children are able to learn more when they feel free to express themselves.

Colons go outside quotation marks unless part of the quotation. → Students said that they liked “the BFG time”: the opportunities for “big friendly groups” to participate in pro-social activities.

Remember that the little ones go inside, and the tall ones go outside. Actually this is the reason, not a teacher’s memory device. Printers thought the text looked better.
It's a matter of interpretation. As often happens, question marks and exclamation points are in a class by themselves. They go inside or outside the quotation marks depending on whether the overall statement or just the quoted material is a question or exclamation.

Just the quotation is a question.

The entire sentence is a question.

Just the quotation is an exclamation.

One of the parents raised a troubling question: "What happens when our children return to standard methods and approaches the following year?"

How can teachers refuse to continue with a program that they admit "changes the children's feelings about cooperating and learning"?

One teacher exclaimed angrily, "It works, but it just takes too much time!"

CHALLENGE 5: USE SINGLE QUOTATION MARKS CORRECTLY

Use single quotation marks ONLY for a quotation within a quotation that is enclosed in standard double marks.

Rumors have started somewhere that single quotation marks are a more artistic alternative to standard marks or that they should be used for short quotations. But neither is true. Single marks are only for internal quotes that would require confusing sets of marks. You can think of them as the piggyback set.

Single marks are only for piggybacking quotes.

Goodlad (1990) discusses the importance of teachers reflecting on and engaging in dialogue regarding moral principles. "Such teachers and their calling," he comments, "warrant the designation 'professional'" (p. 28).
Use standard quotation marks for quotations within blocked quotations, since there is no outer set of marks (no conflict of interest, if you want to look at it that way).

Quotations 2: Making Necessary Adaptations

Adaptation 1: Use Square Brackets for Necessary Additions and Changes

Use brackets to fill in necessary information that does not appear in the segment you quote.

Goodlad (1990) acknowledges that “they [educators] must examine and rework the structures and practices that have always been out of sync for some students” (p. 2).

Goodlad (1990) acknowledges that “[educators] must examine and rework the structures and practices that have always been out of sync for some students” (p. 2).

Use brackets to keep things sorted and make things straight.

Use brackets to make minor changes in the text that will help it fit better into your use of it.

Goodlad’s original statement was written in plural: “They must examine and rework.” However, as the student is using the context of the individual educator, she has changed to singular pronouns, using brackets to show that she has made this change.

Any educator would be wise to take Goodlad’s (1990) advice and “rethink what education is, what schools are for; and [he or she] must examine and rework the structures and practices that have always been out of sync for some students and are now revealed to be inappropriate for many” (p. 2).
- Brackets are often used to change tense to fit more coherently with the text.
- Changes in singulars and plurals are also often made in this way.

**Use brackets to acknowledge added emphasis to a quotation.**

As Goodlad (1990) affirms, "Educators must rethink what education is, what schools are for [italics added]" (p. 2).

**Use [sic] to indicate an error in the original.**

Even authors and publishers have bad days, and sometimes you will find a mistake in a text that you are quoting. If this is likely to confuse your readers, use *sic* (Latin for *thus*) in brackets to show that the error isn't yours. You do not need to do this if you are quoting dialogue or presenting something written by a young child or a person with a language disability. In such cases the source of the error is obvious.

As R.J. Frumpmeyer (2003) found, "The gains were immediate and striking; however, weather [sic] the differences will be lasting is not evident" (p. 70).

**ADAPTATION 2: USE ELLIPSIS TO OMIT UNNECESSARY BULK FROM QUOTATIONS**

Sometimes defenders and advocates get overly repetitious and wordy. And often they veer off in directions that don't interest you at all. When you're dealing with their words in print, you can eliminate unnecessary bulk or irrelevant comments by using ellipsis (three spaced periods) to indicate your omission.

Don't burden your sentences with "stuff" they don't need to carry.
Use three spaced periods (...) to indicate that words have been left out of the middle of a sentence.

Use four spaced periods (ellipsis plus period) to indicate that the words left out have ended a sentence.

Original quotation:
Most people teach during their lives. Some teach a great deal—parents in particular, and people paid to teach in schools, colleges, and various other institutions and enterprises. Indeed, teaching is so pervasive that perhaps all of us should be taught something about it. (Goodlad, 1990, p. 3)

In discussing the pervasive nature of the teaching enterprise, Goodlad suggests, “Indeed...perhaps all of us should be taught something about it” (Goodlad, 1990, p. 3).

Goodlad affirms, “Most people teach during their lives.... Indeed, teaching is so pervasive that perhaps all of us should be taught something about it” (Goodlad, 1990, p. 3).

Goodlad explains, “Most people teach during their lives. Some teach a great deal.... Indeed, teaching is so pervasive that perhaps all of us should be taught something about it” (Goodlad, 1990, p. 3).
Do not use ellipsis to indicate something left out at the beginning or end of a quotation.

Ellipsis used to be used before or after a quotation to indicate that the writer had broken into the middle of a sentence or stopped before the end of a sentence. This was changed about 20 years ago. Neither opening or closing ellipsis is currently used.

**Correct**
Goodlad (1990) proposes that since almost all of us teach, “perhaps all of us should be taught something about it” (p. 3).

**Out of Date**
Goodlad (1990) proposes that since most of us teach “...perhaps all of us should be taught something about it” (p. 3).

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**Just a word on ethics:** You can’t use ellipsis or brackets to make an author say something he or she did not intend. You can’t say—
The Bible says, “Thou shalt ... commit adultery.”
The Bible says, “Thou shalt [not] love thy neighbor as thyself.”

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**Seriation: Handling Appropriate and Inappropriate Alliances**

As humans we tend to clump things into groups and series. Doing so seems to give us a sense that we are in control. Sometimes this is true; other times we are just clumping things. In an important paper, thesis, or dissertation, the writer must manage clearly and efficiently—clumping is not an option for those who do not like rewriting and resubmitting. Here are a few hints for both managing and presenting potential series items.

**MANAGEMENT FACTOR 1: BE SURE THAT SERIES ITEMS ACTUALLY BELONG IN THE SERIES**

The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* uses the phrase “conceptually parallel” (2001, p. 117). Basically this means that you don’t make a series
out of apples, oranges, and broccoli—or worse still, apples, oranges, and automobiles. The meaning represented by the series items must be comparable.

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**Not Conceptually Parallel**

Innovative administrators were perceived by their colleagues as hard working, dependable, and willing to take risks.

**Conceptually Parallel**

Innovative administrators were perceived by their colleagues as hard working, dependable, and competent.

Innovative administrators were perceived by their colleagues as being willing to accept challenges, to take risks, and to collaborate with others.

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Some things just don't go together.

The first two items are general characteristics; the third is something the person is willing to do.

All three items are characteristics.

All items are things the administrators are willing to do.
MANAGEMENT FACTOR 2: PUT SERIES ITEMS IN GRAMMATICALLY PARALLEL FORM

Try to adapt the pattern of expression to make the items fit.
- If you can’t make them fit, check to see if they should fit—if they really belong as part of the series.
- If an item or items do not belong, split the series.

Series is nonparallel grammatically, but all are qualities.

Series is parallel conceptually and grammatically.

Series is nonparallel conceptually and grammatically.

List is split so that the two that are conceptually parallel are grammatically parallel. The nonparallel item is placed in a separate statement.

Innovative administrators were perceived by their colleagues as hard working, dependable, and capable of making changes.

Innovative administrators were perceived by their colleagues as hard working, dependable, and flexible.

Innovative administrators were perceived by their colleagues as hard working, dependable, and willing to take risks.

Innovative administrators were perceived by their colleagues as hard working and dependable; they were willing to take risks in order to bring about constructive change.

Does it matter? Actually it does.

People respond consciously or subconsciously to rhythm in thought and in language. William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White, whose 1959 book The Elements of Style is still the “Bible” for many skilled writers, explained, “The likeness of form enables the reader to recognize more readily the likeness of content and function” (p. 26).
Readers might not have the terminology or the inclination to think, "Yuk—nonparallel," but they won't process as smoothly or recall things as well. Nonparallel seriation just "feels" wrong. People who can't tell you the musical intervals involved in a dischord can still tell that something is wrong with the way the notes go together. Same thing.

**MANAGEMENT FACTOR 3: SELECT THE MOST EFFECTIVE FORMAT FOR SERIES AND LISTS**

Short, relatively simple series can usually be put in a horizontal list.

Respondents were asked to supply demographics, rate a series of statements on a scale of 1-5, and respond to three open-ended questions.

Series items that are more complex or need more emphasis—but still are not terribly long or detailed—can be numbered in a horizontal list in general practice.

However, APA format specifies that series items within a sentence of paragraph should be lettered rather than numbered.
Respondents were asked for three types of information: (a) demographics, including education, position, and number of years in practice; (b) their responses to a series of statements on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest ranking and 5 being the highest; and (c) their thinking in response to three open-ended questions.

Items are basically parallel in structure, although they are not matched word for word. All use a noun to classify the kind of information followed by description.

Lists that are quite long and complex will be clearer and more emphatic if set off in hanging indent form.

- Use numbers rather than letters, and consider each item as a separate paragraph.
- Items on the list need to be parallel in concept and function, and at least basically parallel in grammatical form. As with shorter lists, if they are conceptually parallel, they should be reasonably easy to cast in parallel structure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nonparallel List Compiled as Notes From Survey Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helpful in innovation projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeks out for instructional innovations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person to think with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovator who gets support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical to my innovation success</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This list seems to go in a number of different directions. The differences in grammatical structure of the hastily compiled inferences from data seem to reflect different kinds of information, although all were obtained in response to the same question. All seem to be characteristic actions; thus they could possibly be cast in parallel form as actions.
CHAPTER 5

Colleagues revealed that they could expect the following behavior of innovative administrators:

1. To seek out instructional innovations
2. To think collaboratively with colleagues
3. To attract the support of other innovators
4. To offer help willingly on innovative projects
5. To make critical contributions to innovation success

Introduce indented lists with complete statement and colon.

Number list items consecutively.

In each item, indent each line after the first (hanging indent form).

Use end punctuation only if items are complete sentences.

If items on the list are short and are clearly grammatical continuations of the sentence, they may be listed without capitalization and followed by commas or semicolons (as appropriate), with a period after the final item. This format is allowed by APA but not used by as many writers as the one above. Do not combine the formats and use commas or semicolons after capitalized fragments (see Chicago Manual of Style, 2003).

MANAGEMENT FACTOR 4: REMEMBER THAT A PAIR IS ALSO A SERIES

Pairs must be parallel as well. Remember that a series of two still represents items with the same function and thus requires the same grammatical format. Be sure that the conjunction (or pair of conjunctions) is the balance point between the parallel items.

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Items are a pair conceptually but are not grammatically parallel.

Items are parallel:
Both consist of a verb followed by an object.

When a word pair such as both...and, either...or, or not only...but also connects the series, the first of the joining words comes right before the parallel structure and the second comes exactly between.

(NOT) Colleagues respected innovative administrators and were seeking their input.

(BUT) Colleagues respected innovative administrators and sought their input.

(NOT) Innovative administrators could either function as leaders or followers.

(BUT) Innovative administrators could function as either leaders or followers.

(OR) Innovative administrators could either function as leaders or act as followers.

(ANOTHER ONE) Innovative administrators not only listened carefully but also responded respectfully.

Verb Use: Keeping Verbs and Verb Forms Straight

CONSIDERATION 1: USE ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE APPROPRIATELY

Learn the distinction between active and passive voice.
- In active voice, the subject acts: Jones and Brown conducted the experiment.
- In passive voice, the subject receives rather than initiates action: The study was conducted by Jones and Brown.
Recognize common misconceptions. If you’ve heard that research should never be reported in passive voice or that research must be reported mostly in passive voice, use your mental eraser. Both are somewhat common conceptions, and both are misconceptions.

Learn appropriate uses for active and passive voice.
- Active voice emphasizes agent and action.
- Passive voice deemphasizes or even conceals agent.

Active voice should be used for most sentences; however passive voice can be useful when you know what you are doing. Do not overuse passive voice.

Fairly common use of passive,—can be easily avoided if there is already much passive in the section.

Active—is usually preferable to the passive shown above.

Awkward passive—generally should be avoided.

Active—is much better than passive shown above.

Common use of passive,—puts emphasis on results rather than researchers.

The subjects were asked to complete the 60-item assessment instrument.

The subjects completed the 60-item assessment instrument.

Individual interviews were conducted by the first and second author.

We interviewed 25 of the 200 participants.

When survey results had been analyzed, five major themes were identified.

Don’t let your writing become too weighted down. It’s sometimes tempting to let passive predominate, particularly in methods sections. But too much passive voice makes your writing flat and wordy. Even if you are trying to avoid first person, use active voice as much as you can.
CONSIDERATION 2: SELECT YOUR VERB TENSES CAREFULLY

If you can't keep track of your time sequences, you can't really expect your readers to do so.

Select basic tenses for the sections by applying APA suggestions.

In reading a variety of books and articles on your topic, you will see tenses and tense sequences handled in different ways. The American Psychological Association suggests the following general guidelines (see Publication Manual, 2001, pp. 33, 42-43):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE</th>
<th>TENSE</th>
<th>REASON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Something that has occurred at definite time in the past</td>
<td>Past</td>
<td>What is reported has already happened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of literature</td>
<td>Past or present perfect</td>
<td>Research has already taken place either at one time (past tense) or continuously over time (present perfect).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td>Past or present perfect</td>
<td>Procedures have already taken place (past) or began in the past and continue (present perfect).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Past</td>
<td>Results were discerned and analyzed in the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Present tense invites the reader to join deliberation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vary tenses as necessary for shades of meaning; be aware of how to use the perfect tenses as well as simple past, present, and future.

Use present perfect for something that began in the past and extends into the present.

During the three years of the experiment, subjects have shown steady progress in their ability to master the target skills.

Since the turn of the century, researchers have undertaken a variety of studies concerned with this topic.
CONSIDERATION 3: BE SURE THAT VERBS AGREE WITH THEIR SUBJECTS

Sometimes when you are dealing with multiple individuals and/or complex actions, you have to stop and figure out what the real subject is.

Intervening words or phrases do not change the subject-verb relationship.

Use past perfect for something that happened prior to past time being discussed.

After the subjects had completed the preliminary assessment instrument, the researchers began to implement treatment conditions.

After Stein had publicized his findings, additional researchers undertook further experimentation.

Use future perfect for something that will have happened prior to a predicted future time.

By the time the procedures specified in the grant have been completed, more than 4,000 children will have had an opportunity to participate in a science fair project.

We predict that when the students have completed the treatment program they will have progressed at least two grade levels in reading.

Interview Subject 4, among the 47 assigned to the control group, was able to advance almost a full grade level during the first 3 months of the study.

The first teacher to implement the program, as well as many of her colleagues who were later inducted into the study, was enthusiastic about the results in her classroom.
Compound subjects are plural.

The first author *and* the trained undergraduate assistant were responsible for taking extensive field notes during all classroom sessions.

Both the self-report questionnaire and the interview transcription were used to assess each participant’s reaction.

Collective nouns (class, group, or other unit) can be treated as singular or plural depending on whether it is the group as a unit or members of the group as diverse individuals who are affected.

The faculty was united in enthusiasm for the intervention (unit together).

The group of parents were diverse and unsettled in their thinking (group functioning as individuals).

If subjects are joined by *or* or *nor*, and one is singular and the other plural, the verb agrees with the subject that is closer.

Neither the teacher *nor* the students were adequately prepared for the project.

The parents *or* the teacher has to assume responsibility for reporting.

If you can handle quotations, seriation/parallelism, and verb problems, you should be able to avoid some of the most common errors made by students and graduate students—and some more experienced academic writers as well. These conventions and uses may seem to be superficial distinctions that should be relatively unimportant in completing your paper, article, thesis, or dissertation. Compared to your content, of course, they are. But failing to follow the conventions of good grammar and usage can make you appear clumsy and non-professional—labels none of us can afford.
None of these rules or distinctions is difficult. All are relatively easy to apply during the drafting and/or editing process.

The next chapter goes into some of the smaller, stickier grammatical distinctions. Many of them are sets of practices and rules that you will want to be able to look up when you need them rather than memorizing them all. Just use the handbook as a handbook. Memorize the rules and distinctions that you need most and use most frequently. Learn approximately where to find the others so you can look them up when you need them.