

# Guidelines for Authors and Reviewers

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## Preparation

### General Points on Composition.

Authors are strongly encouraged to analyze their final draft with both software (eg, spelling and grammar programs) and colleagues who have expertise in English grammar. References listed at the end of this section provide a more extensive review of rules of English grammar and guidelines for writing a scientific article. Always remember that clarity is the most important feature of scientific writing. Scientific articles must be clear and precise in their content and concise in their delivery because their purpose is to inform the reader. The Editor reserves the right to edit all manuscripts or to reject those manuscripts that lack clarity or precision or that have unacceptable grammar or syntax. The following list represents common errors in manuscripts submitted to the Journal of Endodontics:

a. The paragraph is the ideal unit of organization. Paragraphs typically start with an intro-

ductory sentence that is followed by sentences that describe additional detail or examples. The last sentence of the paragraph provides conclusions and forms a transition to the next paragraph. Common problems include one-sentence paragraphs, sentences that do not develop the theme of the paragraph (see also section "c," below), or sentences with little to no transition within a paragraph.

b. Keep to the point. The subject of the sentence should support the subject of the paragraph. For example, the introduction of authors' names in a sentence changes the subject and lengthens the text. In a paragraph on sodium hypochlorite, the sentence, "In 1983, Langeland et al, reported that sodium hypochlorite acts as a lubricating factor during instrumentation and helps to flush debris from the root canals" can be edited to: "Sodium hypochlorite acts as a lubricant during instrumentation and as a vehicle for flushing the generated debris (Langeland et al, 1983)." In this example, the paragraph's subject is sodium hypochlorite and sentences should focus on this subject.

c. Sentences are stronger when written in the active voice, that is, the subject performs the action. Passive sentences are identified by the use of passive verbs such as "was," "were," "could," etc. For example: "Dexamethasone was found in this study to be a factor that was associated with reduced inflammation," can be edited to: "Our results demonstrated that dexamethasone reduced inflammation." Sentences written in a direct and active voice are generally more powerful and shorter than sentences written in the passive voice.

d. Reduce verbiage. Short sentences are easier to understand. The inclusion of unnecessary words is often associated with the use of a passive voice, a lack of focus, or run-on sentences. This is not to imply that all sentences need be short or even the same length. Indeed, variation in sentence structure and length often helps to maintain reader interest. However, make all words count. A more formal way of stating this point is that the use of subordinate clauses adds variety and information when constructing a paragraph. (This section was written deliberately with sentences of varying length to illustrate this point.)

e. Use parallel construction to express related ideas. For example, the sentence, "Formerly, endodontics was taught by hand instrumentation, while now rotary instrumentation is

the common method," can be edited to "Formerly, endodontics was taught using hand instrumentation; now it is commonly taught using rotary instrumentation." The use of parallel construction in sentences simply means that similar ideas are expressed in similar ways, and this helps the reader recognize that the ideas are related.

f. Keep modifying phrases close to the word that they modify. This is a common problem in complex sentences that may confuse the reader. For example, the statement, "Accordingly, when conclusions are drawn from the results of this study, caution must be used," can be edited to "Caution must be used when conclusions are drawn from the results of this study."

g. To summarize these points, effective sentences are clear and precise, and often are short, simple and focused on one key point that supports the paragraph's theme.

h. Authors should be aware that the JOE uses iThenticate, plagiarism detection software, to ensure originality and integrity of material published in the journal. The use of copied sentences, even when present within quotation marks, is highly discouraged. Instead, the information of the original research should be expressed by the new manuscript author's own words, and a proper citation given at the end of the sentence. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and manuscripts will be rejected or papers withdrawn after publication based on unethical actions by the authors. In addition, authors may be sanctioned for future publication.

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It is important that the file be saved in the native format of the wordprocessor used. The text should be in single-column format. Keep the layout of the text as simple as possible. Most formatting codes will be removed and replaced on processing the article. In particular, do not use the wordprocessor's options to justify text or to hyphenate words. However, do use bold face, italics, subscripts, superscripts etc. When preparing tables, if you are using a table grid, use only one grid for each individual table and not a grid for each row. If no grid is used, use tabs, not spaces, to align columns. The electronic text should be prepared in a way very similar to that of conventional manuscripts (see also the Guide to Publishing with Elsevier: <http://www.elsevier.com/guidepublication>). Note that source files of figures, tables and text graphics will be required whether or not you embed your figures in the text. See also the section on Electronic artwork.

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