

Editing Your Own Work



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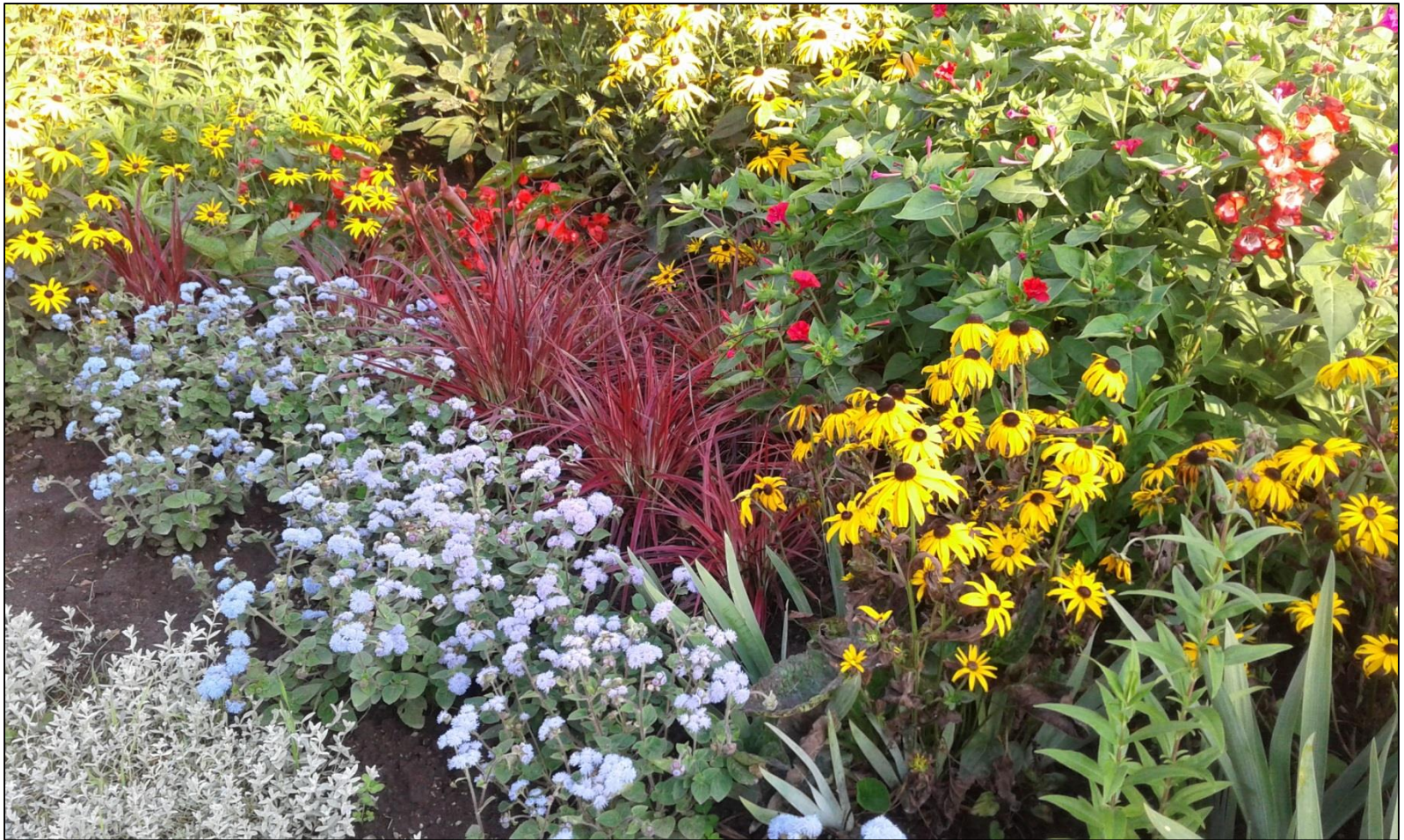
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Editing Your Own Work:

Helping to Wow Reviewers and Aid Readers

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Overview



Overview

- Background
- Preparing to edit your work
- General items to check for
- Checklists: editing papers and proposals
- Common problems to remedy
- Tips for non-native users of English
- Some items to look for when proofreading
- Some resources

A Little about My Background



Some Aspects of My Background

- Teacher of science writing and science editing
- Coordinator, science communication graduate program
- Former editor of *Science Editor*
- Lead author: *How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper*
- Recipient of fellowship to evaluate EIS course
- It's good to be back!

How About You?

- What is your main professional role?
 - Epidemiologist?
 - Laboratory researcher?
 - Administrator?
 - Writer or editor?
 - Trainee?
 - Other?
- What kinds of writing of your own do you edit?

Why bother editing your own work?

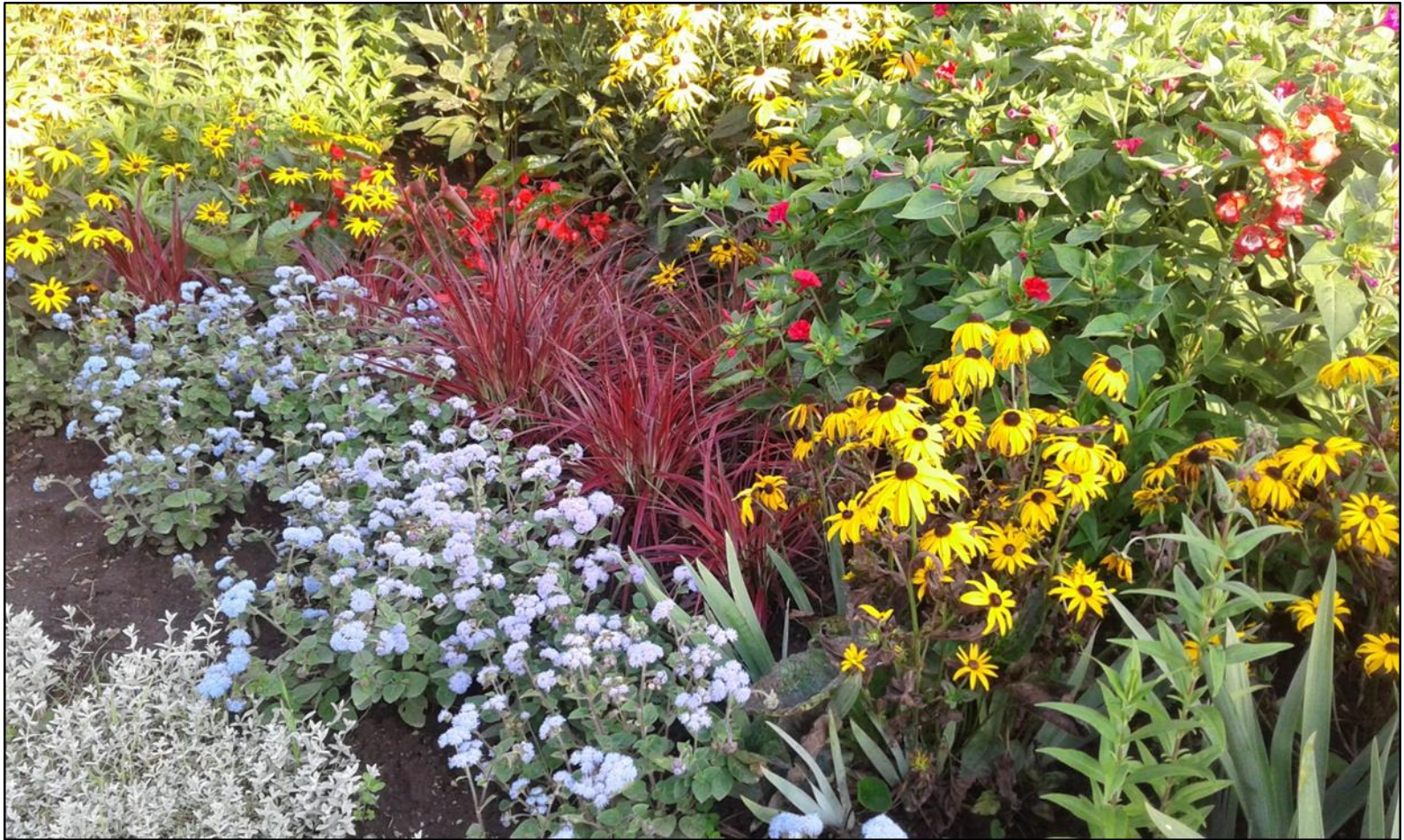
- Can increase likelihood of acceptance
 - By meeting criteria for content and style
 - By avoiding misinterpretation
 - By creating a good impression
- Can aid communication with readers
- Can minimize editing by others (and thus decrease likelihood of distortion)
- Other

The Essentials

- **Content**
- **Organization**
- **Clarity**

In editing one's own work, checking for these items is more important than polishing the language.

Preparing to Edit Your Work



Gaining Sufficient Distance

- Setting the draft aside for a while
- Printing out the draft
 - Offers a fresh view
 - Helps in noticing macro-level aspects
- Changing the look of the draft—for example:
 - Changing the typeface
 - Increasing the margins
 - Printing the draft on colored paper
- Reading the draft aloud

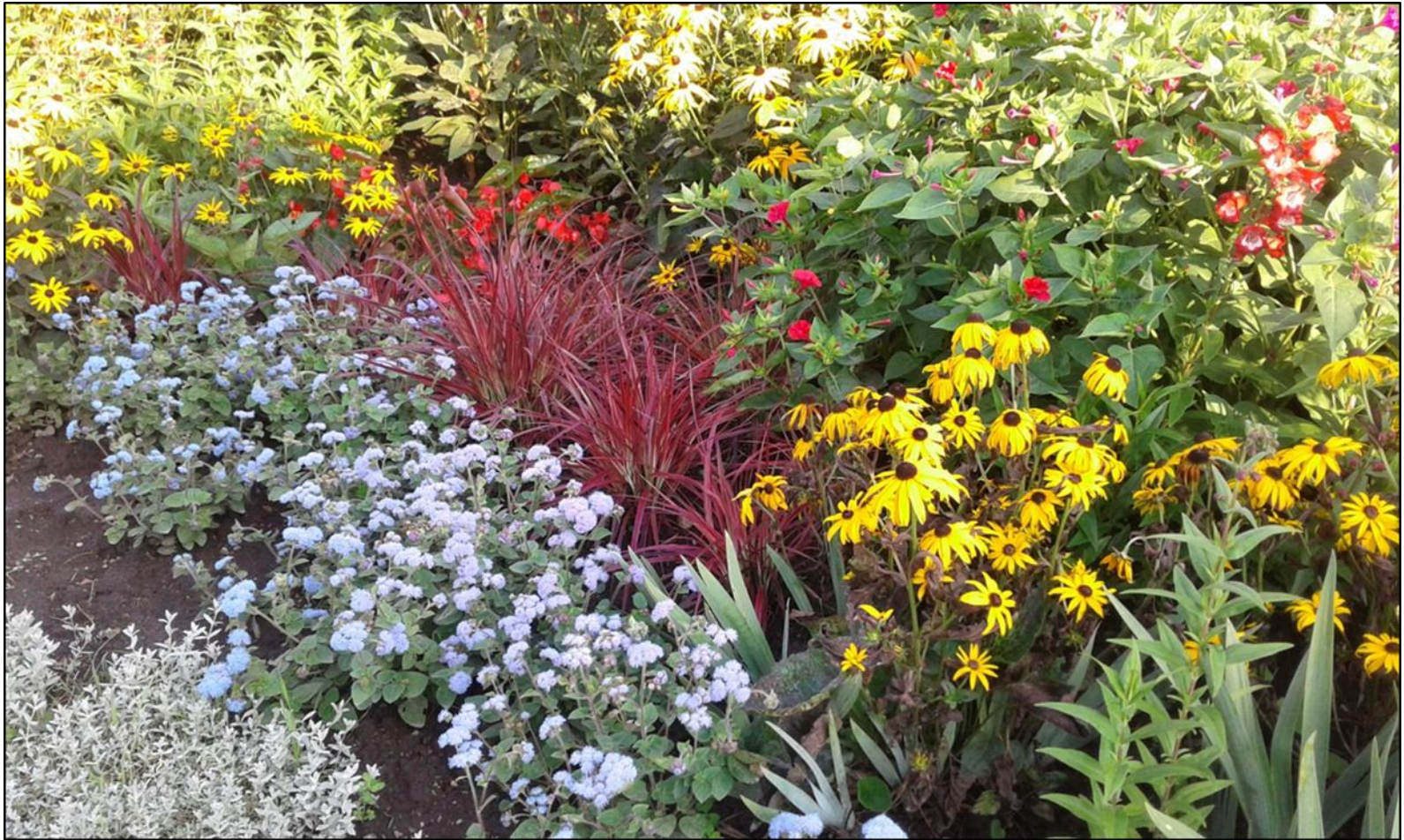
Options: Editorial Approaches

- Order of components
 - Beginning to end
 - Tables and figures first
 - References first
- Scale
 - Macro (for example, overall organization) and then micro (for example, wording)
 - Micro and then macro
 - Alternation of macro and micro

Editing: An Iterative Process

(commonly entails reviewing material
at least twice)

General Items to Check For



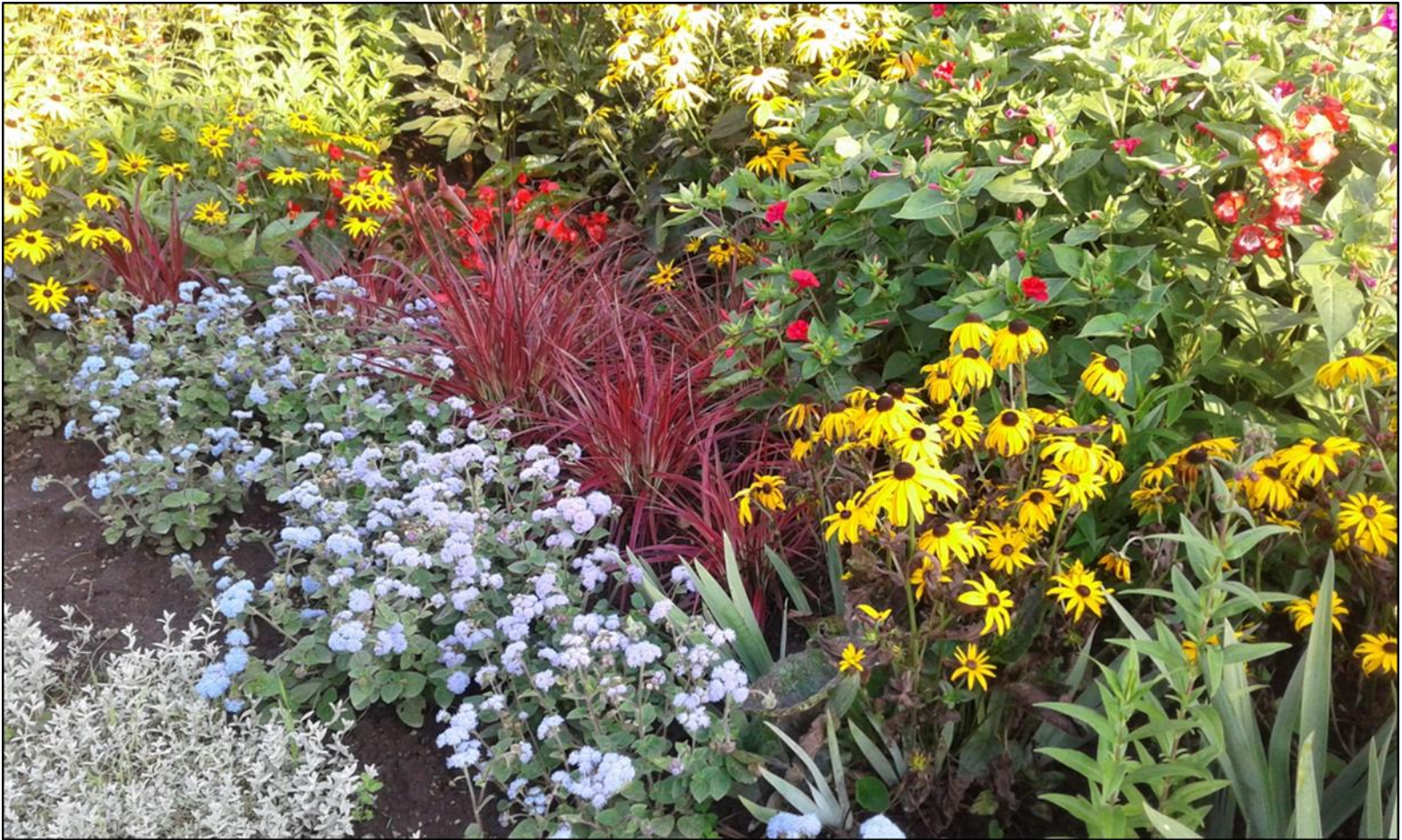
Items to Check: Crafting

1. Are ideas presented in a logical order?
2. Are there clear transitions from idea to idea?
3. Are overviews presented before details?
4. Are paragraphs an appropriate length?
5. Do paragraphs have strong topic sentences?
6. Are sentences an appropriate length?
7. Are grammar, spelling, punctuation, and word usage correct throughout?
8. Are the antecedents of all pronouns clear?
9. Are appropriate verb tenses used?
10. Are citations and references in the required formats?

Other Aspects to Check

1. Do the content and technical level suit the audience?
2. Is all the logic correct and clear?
3. Is the information consistent throughout?
4. Are all the tables and figures necessary?
5. Should any tables or figures be added?
6. Are all cited items listed in the reference list?
7. Are all items in the reference list cited in the text?
8. Are you comfortable with everything in the piece of writing?
9. If a checklist was provided, did you use it?
10. Have all instructions been followed?

Checklists: Editing Papers and Proposals



Scientific Papers: A Checklist

- Does the title accurately and concisely reflect the content?
- Are the appropriate people listed as authors?
- Does the introduction provide sufficient context?
- Does the introduction show what gap the research is to fill?
- Does the introduction indicate the hypotheses, research questions, or objectives?
- Does the methods section provide sufficient information to replicate the research?
- Does the methods section provide sufficient information to evaluate the research?
- Are sources of reagents, equipment, animals, etc identified?

Scientific Papers: A Checklist (cont)

- If humans or animals were studied, are approvals noted?
- Are the results presented in logical order?
- Are the results presented in appropriate detail?
- Were appropriate statistical methods used?
- Does the discussion address the research questions, hypotheses, or objectives posed in the introduction?
- Does the discussion put the results in sufficient context?
- If appropriate, does the discussion address strengths and limitations of the research?
- Are the appropriate parties acknowledged?
- Does the abstract accurately reflect the content of the paper?

Grant Proposals: A Checklist

- Are the goals, research questions, or hypotheses clear?
- Is the originality of the work apparent?
- Is the work clearly relevant to the funding source's mission?
- Is the importance of the proposed work explained?
- Is sufficient context provided?
- Is the amount of proposed work realistic?
- Are the people clearly capable of doing the proposed work?
- Are sufficient justifications provided for choices?
- Is sufficient supporting evidence included?
- Is sufficient justification provided for budgetary items?

Grant Proposals: A Checklist (cont)

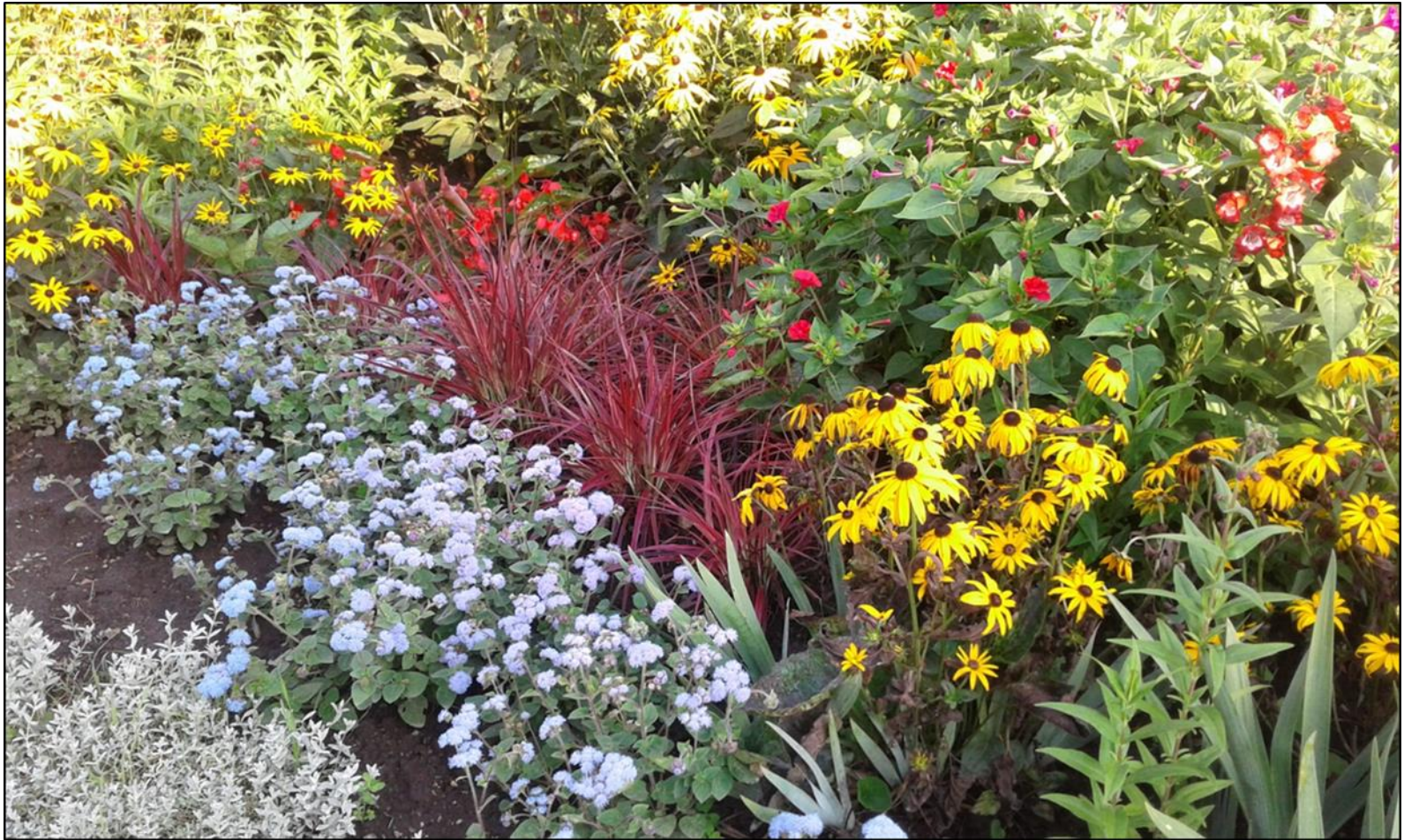
- If there will be cost sharing, is sufficient information provided about it?
- If preliminary studies are required or advisable, is there enough information on them?
- If a timeline would be advisable, is one included?
- Should any tables or figures be added or deleted?
- If evaluation plans are needed, are they sufficient?
- If dissemination plans should be included, are they sufficient?
- Does the title clearly and accurately reflect the content?
- Is the abstract informative and clear?
- Is the proposal persuasive in all regards?

A Suggestion: Customize these checklists for your own use.

For discussion or reflection:

If you were to adapt one of these checklists for your own use, what is something that you would add or delete?

Common Problems to Remedy



Common Problems to Remedy

- Disregard of instructions
- Inattention to good models
- Lack of focus
- Excessive redundancies
- Failure to make reasoning explicit
- Poor parallelism
- Excessive use of acronyms (especially newly coined ones)
- Undefined acronyms
- Overly long and convoluted sentences
- Excessive jargon
- Pompous wording
- Wordiness

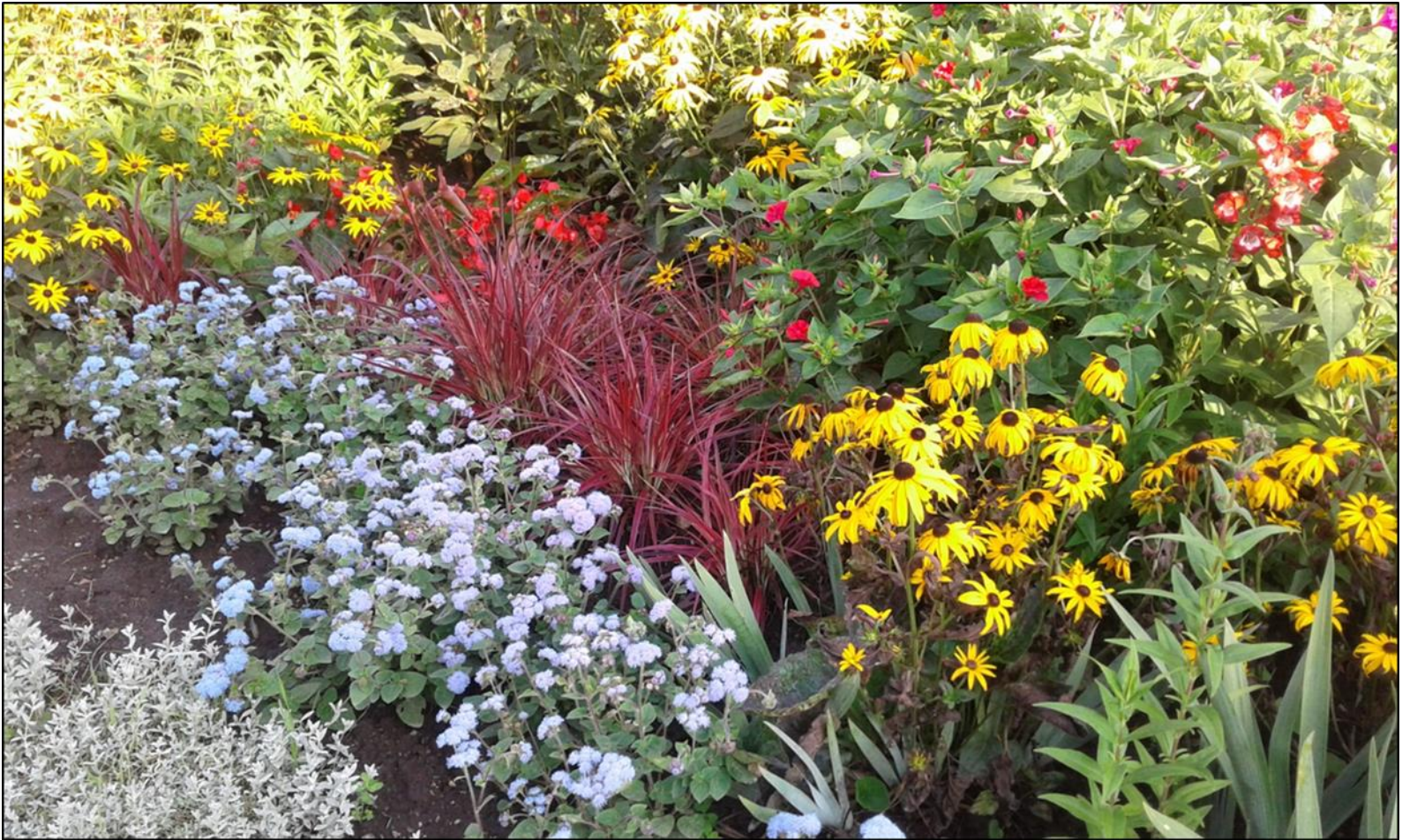
Exercise: Condensing Wording

Absolutely essential	➤ Essential
An adequate amount of	➤ Enough
Are of the same opinion	➤ Agree
At the present time	➤ Now
Consensus of opinion	➤ Consensus
Despite the fact that	➤ Although
Fellow colleague	➤ Colleague
Has the potential to	➤ Can
In an efficient manner	➤ Efficiently

Exercise: Condensing Wording

- In most instances ➤ Usually
- In the event that ➤ If
- Is similar to ➤ Resembles
- The majority of ➤ Most
- On a daily basis ➤ Daily
- Take into consideration ➤ Consider
- Whether or not to ➤ Whether to
- Was of the opinion that ➤ Believed
- Needless to say ➤ [Well, then don't say it]

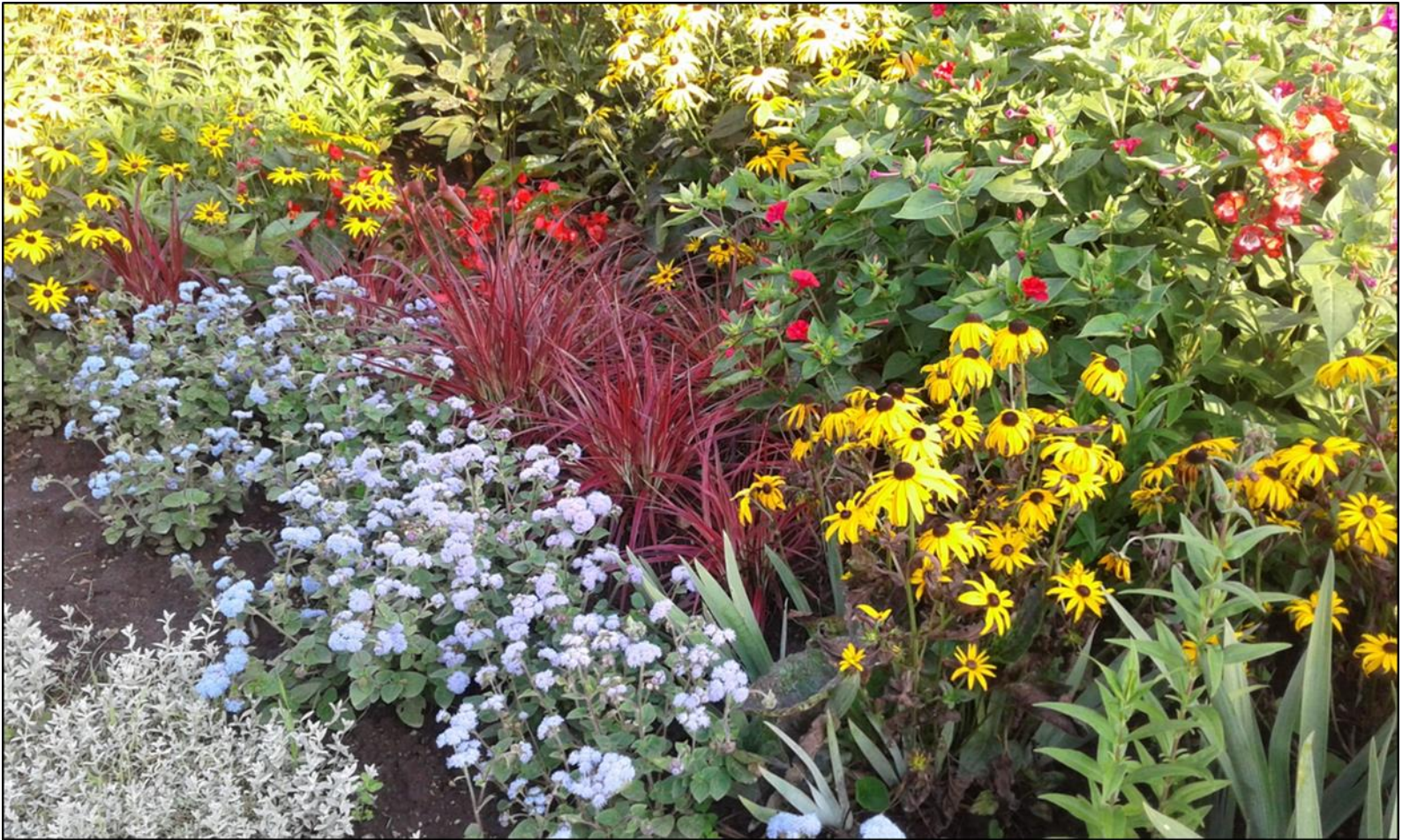
Tips for Non-Native English Users



Tips for Non-Native English Users

- Remember: Content, clarity, and organization are key.
- Prepare a personal glossary of common terms and phrases in your research area.
- Be alert for aspects of English that tend to pose problems (for example, articles, prepositions, verb tenses).
- Be aware of English-language norms for sentence structure and sentence length.
- Realize that writing in English is more direct than that in some other languages.
- Take special care to avoid plagiarism.
- Check spacing when proofreading your work.

Some Items to Look for When Proofreading

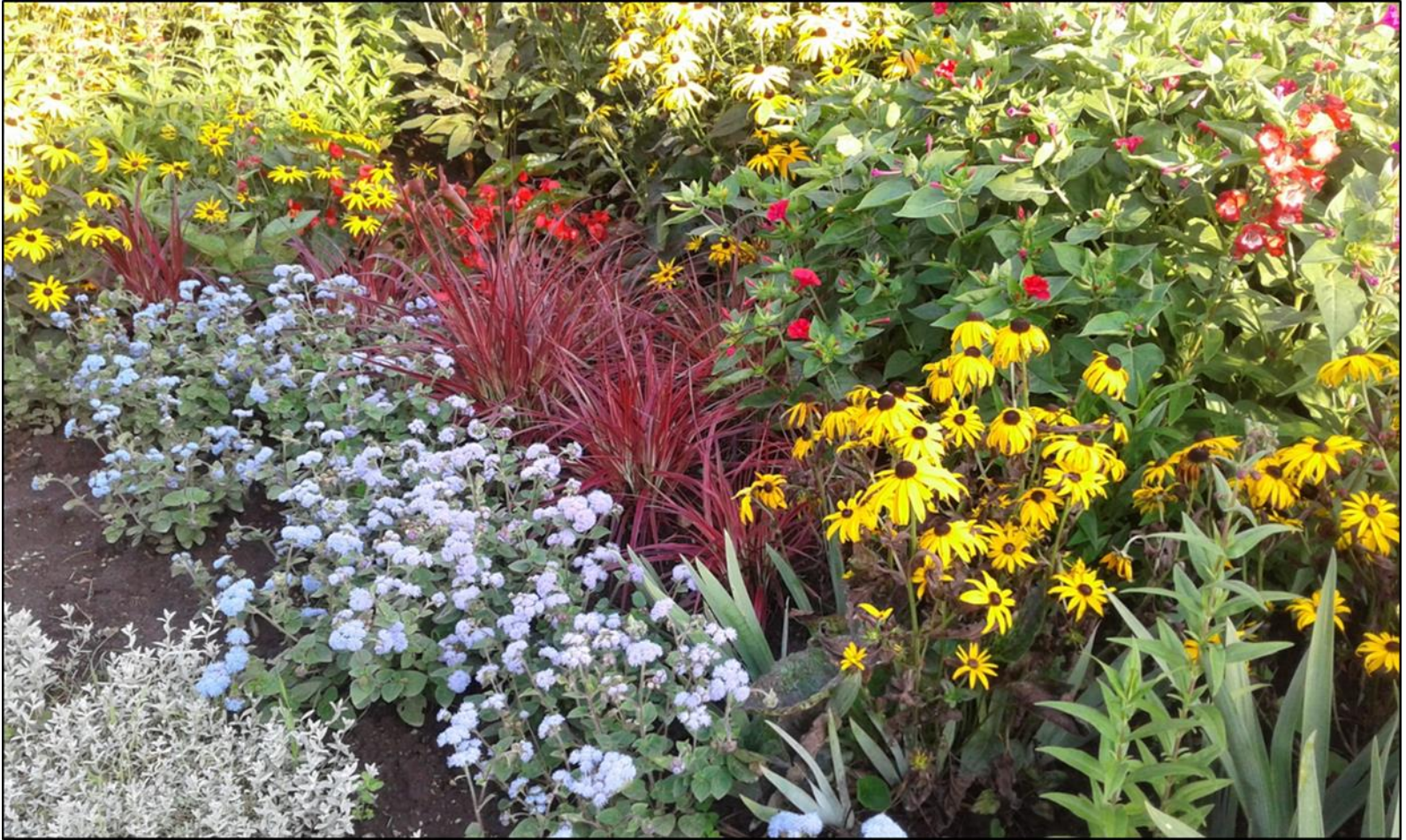


Some Items to Look for When Proofreading

- Typographical errors—for example:
 - Misspellings that mysteriously appeared
 - Greek letters that have turned into squiggles
- Incorrect **typefaces** or type sizes
- Spacing errors
- Incorrect placement of graphics



Some Resources



OneLook Dictionary Search

(<http://www.onelook.com/>)

OneLook

Dictionary Search

Word, phrase, or pattern:

Example searches

bluebird	Find definitions of <i>bluebird</i>
blue*	Find words and phrases that start with <i>blue</i>
*bird	Find words and phrases that end with <i>bird</i>
bl????rd	Find words that start with <i>bl</i> , end with <i>rd</i> , with 4 letters in between
bl*:snow	Find words that start with <i>bl</i> and have a meaning related to <i>snow</i>
bl*:adjective	Find any adjectives that start with <i>bl</i>
*:snow or _snow	Find any words related to <i>snow</i>
*:winter sport	Find words related to the concept <i>winter sport</i>
winter	Find phrases that contain the word <i>winter</i>
expand:nasa	Find phrases that spell out <i>n.a.s.a.</i>

Advanced help with [wildcards](#) and the [reverse dictionary](#) is available.

19,633,003 words in 1061 dictionaries indexed —

[Today's word](#) is [exposition](#)

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 1.5k

Basic Punctuation (Handout)

(<https://www.uvu.edu/writingcenter/docs/handouts/grammar/basicpunctuation.pdf>)

Basic Punctuation



Note: This document should only be used as a reference and should not replace assignment guidelines.

Correct punctuation is essential for clear and effective writing. The following list contains some of the most critical punctuation rules.

Commas

Commas separate parts of a sentence. They tell readers to pause between words, and they can clarify the meanings of sentences.

- Commas are used to separate three or more words or phrases in a series.
EXAMPLE: Practice will be held **before school, in the afternoon, and at night.**
- Commas are used after introductory words and introductory dependent clauses (groups of words before the subject of a sentence that do not form complete sentences).
EXAMPLES: **If your friends enjoy Chinese food,** they will love this restaurant.
Incidentally, I was not late this morning.
Hoping for a bigger fish, Rob spent three more hours fishing.
- Commas are used between **independent clauses** joined by a coordinating conjunction (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*).
EXAMPLE: My dog had fleas, so we gave him a bath.

Academic Phrasebank

(<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>)



The University of Manchester

Academic Phrasebank

Introducing Work

Referring to Sources

Describing Methods

Reporting Results

Discussing Findings

Writing Conclusions

Home Page

GENERAL LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

Being Critical

Being Cautious

Classifying and Listing

Compare and Contrast

Defining Terms

Describing Trends

Describing Quantities

Explaining Causality

Giving Examples

Signalling Transition

Writing about the Past

The Academic Phrasebank is a general resource for academic writers. It aims to provide you with examples of some of the phraseological 'nuts and bolts' of writing organised according to the main sections of a research paper or dissertation (see the top menu). Other phrases are listed under the more general communicative functions of academic writing (see the menu on the left). The resource should be particularly useful for writers who need to report their research work. The phrases, and the headings under which they are listed, can be used simply to assist you in thinking about the content and organisation of your own writing, or the phrases can be incorporated into your writing where this is appropriate. In most cases, a certain amount of creativity and adaptation will be necessary when a phrase is used. The items in the Academic Phrasebank are mostly content neutral and generic in nature; in using them, therefore, you are not stealing other people's ideas and this does not constitute plagiarism. For some of the entries, specific content words have been included for illustrative purposes, and these should be substituted when the phrases are used. The resource was designed primarily for academic and scientific writers who are non-native speakers of English. However, native speaker writers may still find much of the material helpful. In fact, recent data suggest that the majority of users are native speakers of English. More about **Academic Phrasebank**.

This site was created by **John Morley**. If you could spare just two or three minutes of your time, I would be extremely grateful for any feedback on Academic Phrasebank: Please click **here** to access a very short questionnaire. Thank you.

An enhanced and expanded version of this resource can now be downloaded in PDF:

25 Ways to Tighten Your Writing

(<https://www.prdaily.com/25-ways-to-tighten-your-writing/>)

25 ways to tighten your writing

By Betsy Mikel | Posted: September 4, 2014

 Print  E-mail

248  402  454  62 

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Writers rarely spit out their [best copy](#) on the first draft. (If you meet a writer who claims to have the secret for doing so, please let the rest of us know.)

AuthorAID

(<https://www.authoraid.info/en/>)

The screenshot shows the AuthorAID website homepage. At the top left is the AuthorAID logo with the tagline "A global network of researchers". To the right is a search bar with the text "Search for..." and a "SEARCH" button. Further right are links for "Sign in" and "Register", and a language selector for "Español". Below the header is a navigation menu with links for HOME, ABOUT, NEWS, MENTORING, COURSES, FUNDING, RESOURCES, FORUM, FAQ, and AA COURSE 2019. The main content area features a large blue banner for "Free online courses in research communication and proposal writing". This banner includes a small image of a woman at a computer, text describing the courses, and a link to the "online learning page". Below the banner are four circular navigation dots. The page is divided into three columns: "NEWS" with an article about the Global Young Academy, "RESOURCES" with a video review and a book recommendation, and "FEATURED RESEARCHERS" with profiles for Muhammad Abas and Zara Trafford.

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Free online courses in research communication and proposal writing

AuthorAID offers free online courses in research communication and proposal writing for researchers in developing countries. Courses are run twice a year via our Moodle platform.

Find out more information on our [online learning page](#)

NEWS

Applications Open! The Global Young Academy (GYA) gives a voice to young scientists around the world

Dr. Connie Nshemereirwe, co-chair of the Global Young Academy, introduces an organization for young researchers that is looking for new

RESOURCES

Video: "Get Lit: The Literature Review"

Video of presentation on preparing the literature review section of a thesis or dissertation. One of the most popular videos on our online research writing courses

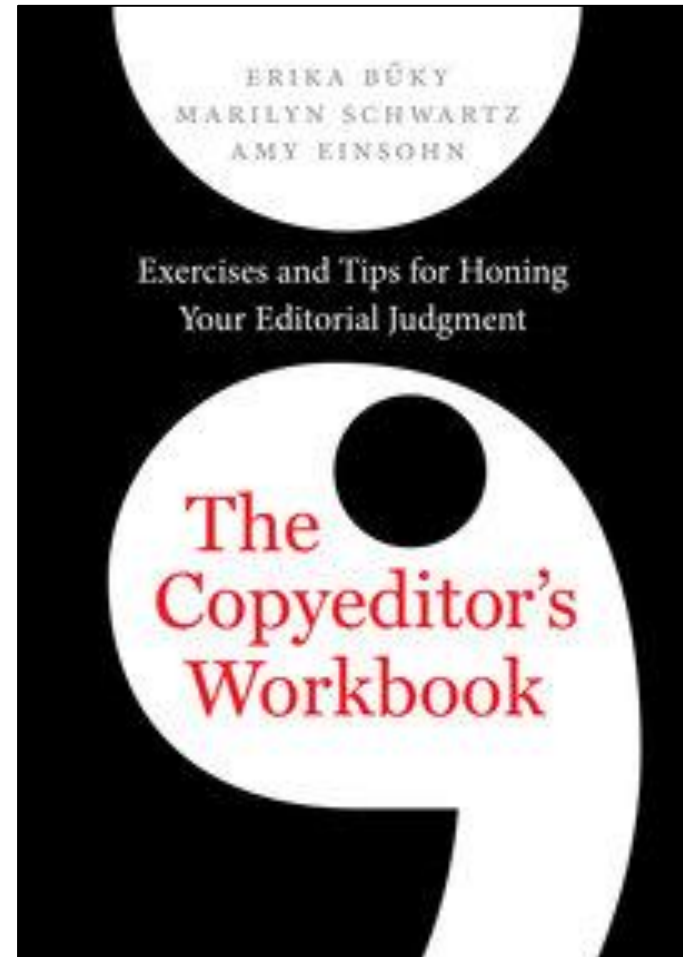
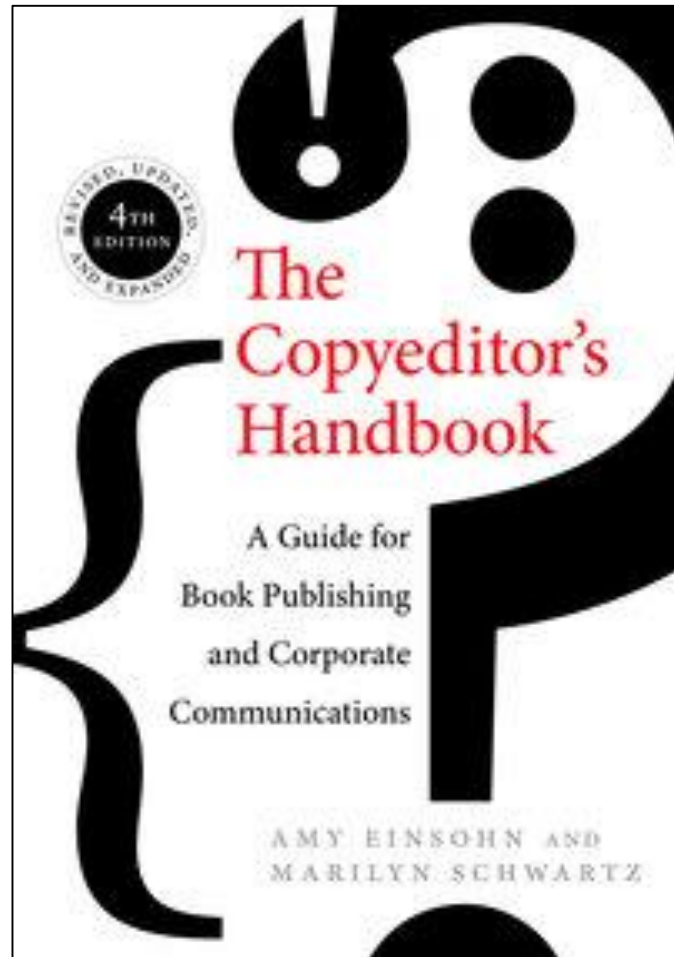
Book: Research Ethics Committees: Basic Concepts for Cap

FEATURED RESEARCHERS

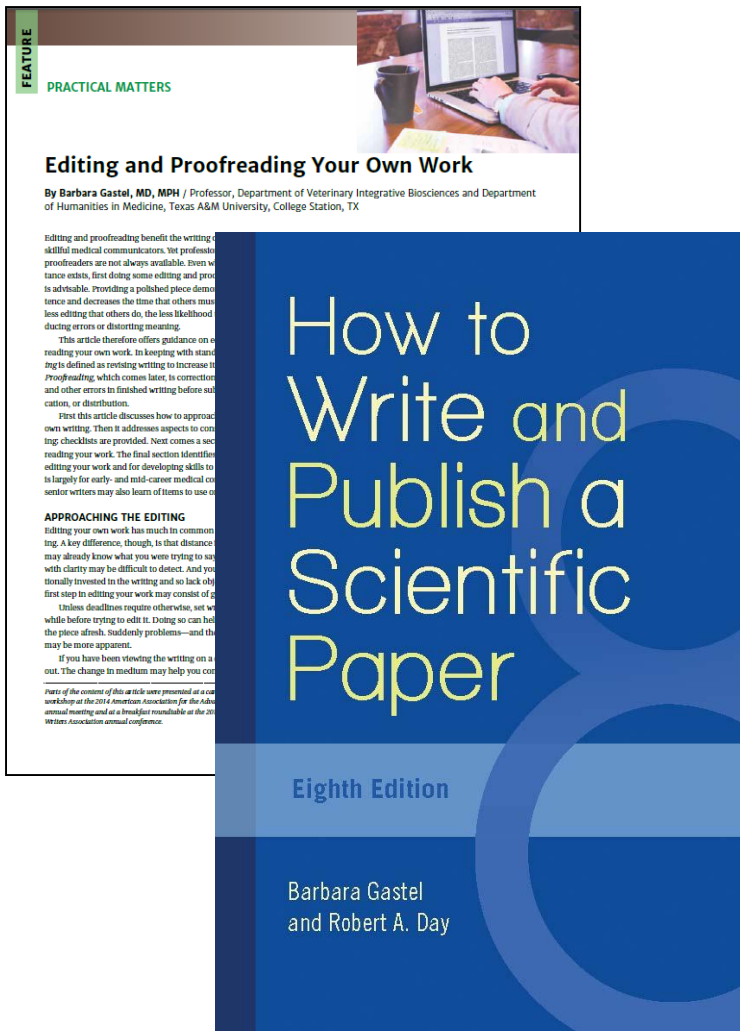
Muhammad Abas
Research interests: Nanoparticles
Open to collaboration.

Zara Trafford
Research interests: Public health, social determinants of health, primary health care, health inequalities, community

For the Editors Among You



Reading Similar to This Talk



- [“Editing and Proofreading Your Own Work” \(AMWA Journal, 2015\)](#)
- Chapter 41: “How to Edit Your Own Work,” in *How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper, 8th ed.* (chapter new to this edition)

Questions and Answers



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InQuill Medical Communications

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Thank You!

