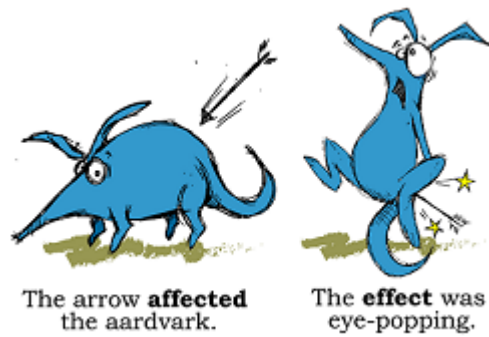


A FEW BASIC WRITING TIPS (AKA DR. STODDARD'S PET PEEVES)

1. Use a professional tone.
 - Avoid contractions (don't, haven't)
 - Avoid colloquial language ("First off," "taxpayers kick in money," "At first, I couldn't believe these results," profanity, using "&" instead of "and")
2. Use clear and precise language. Convolution sentences are confusing. They do not make you sound smart. (Reading your writing out loud helps.)
 - BAD: "The income rates of women as a result of joining the workforce and getting married likely has a large role in this comparison."
 - BETTER: "More married women have joined the workforce, raising their incomes. This contributes to the correlation."
3. Avoid passive tense when possible.
 - BAD: "As the margin of these figures is narrow, an overlap in the populations is anticipated."
 - BETTER: "The margin of these figures is narrow. This implies an overlap in the populations."
4. All statements should have factual support if you state them as facts.

BAD Examples:

 - "College is becoming the norm and young adults that do not go to high school are starting to be seen as social outcasts."
 - "As children grow up they find themselves wanting a better life that their parents."
5. Check for incomplete sentences and run-on sentences.
6. Use "affect" and "effect" correctly. See the Aardvark handout on the next page.
7. When citing a paper in the body of your paper, include the authors' names and the date the article was published. Include the page number if you use a direct quote.
 - WRONG: The paper "The impact of tax credits" finds a tax price elasticity of -.2.
 - RIGHT: Eissa (2002) finds a tax price elasticity of -.2.
8. Yes, colons can be used with a list. HOWEVER, they should only be used after a complete phrase.
 - WRONG: "Omitted variables include: race, income, and state."
 - RIGHT: "Omitted variables include the following: race, income, and state."
 - RIGHT: "Omitted variables include race, income, and state."
9. Semicolons usually stand for "and," "but," or "or." Do not use them to replace a comma or a colon. When in doubt, do not use them.



Affect—usually a VERB *Affect* with an *a* means "to influence"
 "The arrows affected Aardvark"
 "The Earned Income Tax Credit affects labor supply decisions."
 "I am affected by your grammar mistakes."

Effect—usually a NOUN *Effect* with an *e* usually has "a result" at the core
 "The effect on Aardvark was eye-popping"
 "The effect of the EITC was an increase in labor supply."
 "The effect of your grammar mistakes is a rise in my blood pressure."
 " $\hat{\beta}$ represents the effect of a one unit change in *x* on *y*."
 "The sound effects were amazing."

Rare Uses of *Affect* and *Effect*—when *affect* is a noun and *effect* is a verb

- *affect* can be used as a noun when you're talking about psychology--it means the mood that someone appears to have. For example, "She displayed a happy affect."
- *effect* can be used as a verb that essentially means "to bring about," or "to accomplish." For example, you could say, "Aardvark hoped to effect change within the burrow."