

# EDITING AND PROOFREADING 101

## *Editing versus Proofreading*

- **Edit:** to prepare a document for publication by altering, adapting, and refining it (often substantive changes)
- **Proofread:** to read and mark corrections in a document (usually minor changes)

## *Commonly Asked Questions*

- What's a style guide?
- What's the correct format for citations in reference lists?
- What is an n-dash?
- What is the difference between an n-dash and an m-dash?
- How do I use a semicolon? A colon?

## *Style Guides: The Editor's Bible*

- Style guides provide a common set of rules
- Commonly used style guides include American Medical Association (AMA), American Psychological Association (APA), Associated Press (AP), and Chicago Manual of Style (CMS)
  - ACAAI educational publications follow a slightly modified AMA style
- **AMA style: 1,000+ pages condensed to 3 bullets**
  - No periods in abbreviations
    - eg
    - ie
    - MD
  - Use numerals for numbers
    - EXCEPTION: spell out when used to start a sentence
  - Use serial comma (comma before the conjunction that precedes the last term)

## *Correct Format for a Reference*

- For ACAAI publications, references should follow *AMA Manual of Style*. The following is an example of a reference for a chapter of a book :

- Fischer SP, Bader AM, Sweiter B. Preoperative evaluation. In: Miller RD, ed. *Miller's Anesthesia*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier Churchill Livingstone; 2010:1009-1010.
- **The following is an example of a journal article reference:**
  - Paloli L, Knight S, Dunn K. Facilitating scholarly writing in academic medicine. *J Gen Intern Med*. 2004;19:64-68.
- **How to list various numbers of authors within a reference:**
  - 1 author: Brown TF.
  - 2 authors: Green JM, Black LB III.
  - 6 authors: Brown TF, Green JM, Black LB III, White GA, Gray CW, Gold NM.
  - More than 6 authors: Brown TF, Green JM, Black LB III, et al.
  - More than 6 authors and a group: Brown TF, Green JM, Black LB III, et al; Research Group for New Diabetes Drug that Passed FDA Approval.
  - 1 author and a group: Brown TF; Research Group for New Diabetes Drug that Passed FDA Approval.

### **Commonly Confused Punctuation Marks: Hyphens, N-dashes, and M-dashes**

- **Dashes emphasize and clarify a certain section of material within a sentence**
  - Hyphen
    - Connects words, prefixes, and suffixes permanently or temporarily
      - Temporary compounds serving as adjectives: well-edited volume, placebo-controlled trial, low-density resolution, long-term therapy
      - Compounds formed with the prefixes *all-*, *self-*, and *ex-* whether they precede or follow the noun
  - When not to use hyphens
    - Adverb ending in *-ly* is part of the compound modifier (eg, commonly used phrase)
    - Prefixes not joined by hyphens except when they precede a proper noun, a capitalized word, or an abbreviation: *ante-*, *anti-*, *bi-*, *co-*, *contra-*, *counter-*, *de-*, *extra-*, *infra-*, *inter-*, *intra-*, *micro-*, *mid-*, *multi-*, *non-*, *over-*, *pre-*, *post-*, *pro-*, *pseudo-*, *re-*, *semi-*, *sub-*, *super-*, *supra-*, *trans-*, *tri-*, *ultra-*, *un-*, *under-*
    - Suffixes are joined without a hyphen: *-hood*, *-less*, *-like*, *-wise*

- Exceptions apply to prefixes and suffixes if clarity is at stake (eg, co-opt)
- N-dash
  - Longer than a hyphen, half the size of an m-dash: –
  - Shows relational distinction in hyphenated or compound words and phrases
    - post–World War I
    - physician-lawyer–directed section
    - multiple sclerosis–like symptoms
    - non–English-language journals
- M-dash
  - Equivalent in size to 2 hyphens: —
  - Indicates a marked or pronounced interruption or break in thought; provides more emphasis of separation than a comma or colon
    - All of these factors—age, severity of symptoms, psychic preparation, and choice of anesthetic agent—determine the patient's reaction.
  - Separates a referent from a pronoun that is the subject of an ending clause
    - Faulkner, Hemingway, and Twain—these were the authors he tried to emulate.

### *Semicolons versus Colons*

- **Semicolon**
  - Represents a more definite break in thought than commas
  - Generally used to separate 2 independent clauses, especially if 1 of the clauses has internal punctuation or the clauses are long:
    - The conditions of 52% of the patients improved greatly; 4% of the patients withdrew from the study.
    - The patient's fever had subsided; however, his condition was still critical.
  - Used to separate a series of items when the series items also contain commas
- **Colons**
  - Indicates a decided pause or break in thought, separates 2 main clauses in

which the second clause amplifies or explains the first

- Think of it as an “introductory” punctuation mark
  - Introduces a formal or extended quotation
  - Use after *thus, as follows, the following* when these phrase are part of a complete sentence:
    - Mary’s mother asked her to get the following items from the store: milk, eggs, cookies.

#### *Four Points to Keep in Mind*

- Avoid providing incorrect information
- Avoid misspelling
- Avoid convoluted paragraph and sentence structure
- Correct punctuation is key

#### *Remember*

- Typos can happen to the best of us: always reread your work
- If the same material is repeated in a document (eg, physicians’ names appear in committee listing and in disclosures list, abbreviations used throughout), cross-check the occurrences to ensure consistency