

Things to do in order

not to not irritate

your thesis mentor.

- 1) *The word “data” is plural.*
- 2) *Pay attention to tenses and be consistent. The crystal was measured. The data were analyzed. The data are unique. The crystal is green. Water boils at 100 °C.*
- 3) *Water boils at 373 K.*
- 4) *Voice and person: “It was found” and “I found” or “We found” (the last is sometimes used even if there is only one author, which always seemed odd to me).*
- 5) *Shorten sentences whenever possible.
The pouring of the gel was immediate as the tendency to set was great.
The gel was poured immediately because it sets quickly.*
- 6) *Don't you use “you”. It sounds like you are ordering the reader around. You can easily see from the figure that ...
It can be seen from the figure that ... As can be seen from the figure, ...*
- 7) *Use proper units, i.e. SI. Use 5 kg or 5kg consistently with or without space.*
- 8) *Write out small numbers, e.g. “nine”, but not long numbers, e.g. 2568.*
- 9) *Don't mix numbers written in the two ways except cases like six 7 cm flasks.*
- 10) *Start sentences usually with number written out, e.g. “Three hundred geese ...”*
- 11) *A sentence could start “Professor Belanger found an error.”, but an abbreviation is appropriate in the sentence “An error was found by Prof. Belanger.”*
- 12) *Measurements were taken at 3, 5, 9 and 10 cm.*

- 13) *Don't capitalize the names of seasons when they are used generally. ("This summer was very hot", fall, autumn, winter, spring) Do capitalize seasons when they are used with another noun and function as proper nouns. (Winter Solstice, Autumn Open House) Do capitalize the names of seasons when they are personified. ("I think Spring is showing her colors", Old Man Winter) (wikipedia)*
- 14) *Eliminate words that are not needed. Think about each sentence.*
- 15) *Eliminate improper words. "Write out the sentence.", "Write the sentence."*
- 16) *Break up long sentences if the meaning can be preserved.*
- 17) *Do not go overboard with fancy words. They should not detract from the reading.*
- 18) *Use precise, correct scientific terminology.*
- 19) *Avoid repeating words. "The correct technique is to hold the screwdriver correctly."*
- 20) *Paragraph structure is important. Consider carefully where paragraphs end and don't change the topic inside paragraphs. Make paragraphs flow from one to the next.*
- 21) *Be sure your sentences do not have more than one meaning. "The author would like to thank her parents, Sinead O'Connor and Pope John-Paul II." wikipedia*
- 22) *When using more than one noun or pronoun, consider them separately. "Cindy and myself carried out the experiments." or "Cindy and I carried out the*

experiments.” “The police accused Joe and I of committing the crime.” or “The police accused Joe and me of committing the crime.”

23) *Split infinitive “To boldly go...” or “To go boldly...” - don't worry about it!*

24) *Use formal spellings, e.g. “through” not “thru”, “ do not” rather than “don't”.*

25) *Use adverbs! “Drive slowly”, not “Drive slow”.*

26) *When considering punctuation, think about how you would read the sentence. Don't use more commas than necessary for meaning and fluidity. “I turned, and examined the crystals.” or “I turned and examined the crystals.”*

27) *Dates use commas, such as February 29, 2008, is three months away.*

28) *Jones, et al., made an outrageous claim.*

29) *PhD or Ph.D. - be consistent.*

30) *Figure 6 is before Fig. 7.*

31) *Use complete sentences.*

32) *Effect a change to affect the outcome. The effect is good.*

33) *Compliments are nice. The plate complements the cup.*

34) *Ensure that you have insured the car.*

35) *Each criterion is contained in the set of criteria.*

36) *Be discreet about counting discrete objects.*

37) *He is farther away than she is, so she waited further.*

38) *The recording medium was one of many possible media.*

39) *The phenomenon is one of a large class of surprising phenomena.*

40) *Practice or practise as a verb is the same word (book distinguishes).*

41) *Premiss and premise as a noun is the same word (book distinguishes).*

42) *Avoid imprecise words such as extremely, nearly, and poorly.*