

Policy for Use of Edited Standard Written English

Adapted from Walvoord, Barbara F. and Anderson, Virginia Johnson. *Effective Grading*. San Francisco: Josey-Bass, 1998.

Why ESWE?

Suppose a group of people were living on an island, all using the same language, until one day the island broke in two, separated by impassable water. In one hundred years, with no contact, would the people on both halves still use the same language forms? No. Human language is always changing. Language on each half of the island would evolve with different forms and rules. Neither would be better in any absolute sense, just different. Similarly, in the English-speaking world, language variations have developed among people separated by culture, socioeconomic status, or geography. These varieties are merely different, not bad. Each form of English has its own rules.

One of the tasks of a good education is to make students aware of this fact about language. Another task of education, however, is to prepare students to function effectively in the world. In the United States, the “standard” of communication is the language of the white middle and upper classes. Readers generally expect writers to use Edited Standard Written English (ESWE). Thus, in this class, you must use ESWE.

Standard

Finished, final, formal papers (not drafts, in-class writings, or writing that I specifically label as informal), should conform to ESWE in all of the following areas:

- End-of-sentence punctuation (avoid run-on sentences, comma splices, fragments, or misuse of semicolon). Occasionally you may use a fragment or comma splice for a special effect. Label it in the margin.
- Nonstandard words or nonstandard word meanings. Occasionally you may use such constructions for a special effect. Denote such occurrences by placing them in quotes.
- Verb forms (use ESWE rules for adding *-ed* and *-s*, for using helping verbs, and so on).
- Verb tense (avoid confusing shifts in verb tenses).
- Agreement of subject and verb.
- Pronoun form (use ESWE rules to choose between *I* and *me*, *she* and *her*, *who* and *whom*, and so on).
- Agreement of pronoun with antecedent (the antecedent is the word the pronoun replaces).
- Use of apostrophe *s* and the suffix *-es*.
- Use of quotation marks for all quoted words.
- Spelling (a typographic error counts as a misspelling).
- Proper sentence sense (no words omitted, scrambled, or incomprehensible).

Note again that the policy applies *only* to finished, final, formal writing. It does *not* apply to drafts, in-class writing, or writing that I specifically label as informal.

ESWE Multiplier

The ESWE multiplier is a factor adjusting the numerical score of finished, formal writings in this class. The score for the writing determined independently of ESWE considerations is multiplied by the ESWE multiplier to obtain a final score.

For example, suppose a writing assignment is worth 50 points. Suppose further that a particular submission receives a score of 45 points without taking ESWE into account, and that its ESWE multiplier is 0.9. Then the final score for the submission is $(45 \text{ points}) \times (0.9) = 40.5 \text{ points}$.

The formula for determining the ESWE multiplier is

1	The flow of reading is not hindered by departures from ESWE.
0.9	Occasional departures from ESWE arrest the flow of the reading.
0.6	Frequent departures from ESWE impede the reading, requiring deliberate effort to interpret its meaning.
0	Tremendous effort is necessary to interpret the departures from ESWE to understand the reading.

Resources

The Writing Center at UW

The Writing Center provides free assistance at any stage of the writing process, from decoding an instructor's assignment to proofreading the final version of a paper. For more information, see http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/ctl/writing_center/.

The Writing Center is located in Coe 302. Their hours are weekdays 9–4. They can also be contacted through their web site.

Web Resources

The UW Writing Center's web site links to some selected on-line grammar and punctuation resources at http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/ctl/writing_center/GrammarAndPunctuation.htm.

San Antonio College (Texas) has links to numerous helpful resources at <http://www.accd.edu/sac/lrc/john/writing.htm>.

Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) contains numerous writing guide sheets at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>.

Me

I will pre-read papers if submitted to me more than 48 hours before they are due. When you give me a paper to pre-read, also make an appointment with me to discuss what I find in time for you to generate a cleaned-up copy if needed.