



ARTICLE SPECIFICATIONS GUIDE

For Article Contributors

(JANUARY 2015)

Thank you for participating in the newsletter! This is a basic guideline for ensuring your article is published in our Education Community of Interest newsletter. [The Purdue OWL](#) has some great tips for writing a good article with depth and relevance. Great writing increases your chances of getting published and attracting readership. Please review and apply the tips below before submitting your article.

We're now introducing Peer mentors to assist our article contributors with their article development process. The Peer mentors are former article contributors that have your best interest to guide you before your article reaches the office. If you're interested in a Peer mentor please send me an email. You can also find some of their articles on the Ed COI website: <http://www.tecom.marines.mil/resources/coi.aspx> in the "View Newsletter Archive".

- 1) **Word doc format:** Ensure you have a title, introduction, body and conclusion. Each paragraph should have supporting statements of the article.
- 2) **Page Length:** Please limit your article from one page only to up to three pages only (this allows space consideration for other article contributors). Basically, you can submit a one page document or two or three page article).
- 3) **Line Spacing:** Single spaced preferred
- 4) **Font:** Arial or Times New Roman **Font size:** 10 or 11 point (use BOLD and italics to emphasize key points or headings)
- 5) **Audience & Creativity:** Determine and remember your audience throughout your article and try not to lose focus. Think "Who are you talking to?" to get the idea across in your article. In terms of creativity, try to have fun with your writing and always remember that creative writing keeps readers interested.
- 6) **Title:** Create a "catchy" title (use a different font) this is a sure way to grab a reader's attention and to encourage further reading (Ex: "Top 10 adult learning theories on...")
- 7) **Add your Name:** Include your full name or your first name and initial after the title (also add your career series and title - Ex. Jane Doe, Career Specialist/1750 or Jane D., Career Specialist/1750)
- 8) **Contact Information :** We highly encourage networking between fellow community members – however this is optional this encourages communication and networking with fellow community members. Please include your email and phone number after your name.
- 9) **Create an outline:** An outline is typically helpful to identify steps to assist you in breaking the task into manageable pieces of information.
- 10) **Use simple and plain language:** Minimize the use of big words this may ensure that you keep their attention and read the entire article.
- 11) **Structure:** Use headings, subheadings, bullet points, and numbering whenever possible to break up the text. An article that's easy to scan will get read more often than a document with long, dense paragraphs of text.

Basic Paragraph Structure – A paragraph consists of several sentences that are grouped together. This group of sentences together discusses one main subject, theme or central idea.

- Topic sentence – motivates the reader to want to read more
 - Body sentence – (supporting sentences) a good rule of thumb is to have at least five to seven sentences in your paragraph.
 - The first main point - proves, backs up, or explains the topic sentence
 - The second main point – usually provide a reason for the first point made
 - The third main point – can help prove the topic sentence or back up the first or second main point of the paragraph
 - Concluding sentence - (summarizes the information that has been presented) This is often what a reader remembers best. Your conclusion should be the best part of your article. Show your readers why your article was important. Show them that your article was meaningful and useful. **Don't simply repeat things that were in your article. Consider challenging your readers and redirect the information in the paper and how they may apply it to their own lives.
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- Pronoun Usage – review [Grammar Book.com](http://GrammarBook.com)
 - Comma Usage – [Rules for Comma Usage](#)
 - Content Flow – make sure your content flows easily through each main point. Also, provide useful and professional appropriate information to your readers
 - Transitional Words and Phrases – [The Writer's Handbook](#) (it brings out the logical relation between ideas) You want your people to read continuously which good transitions help to facilitate. They provide coherence by helping the reader understand the relationship between ideas.
 - Graphs & Charts- These visual aids is a smart way to break up text also. It will keep the readers engaged, but they can communicate important information much more quickly than text.
- 12) Cite References: Most of our writing requires gathering the work of others. Ask yourself the following – have you appropriately cited quotes, paraphrases and ideas you got from various sources? When you draw upon the work of others, you must give proper credit. See the [Online Purdue Writing Lab](#) for assistance.
- 13) Other Considerations: Whenever you can include; who, why, where, what and how and you can answer these questions you're almost there to a good article
- Spelling and Grammar – Use Spell check and edit thoroughly. Avoid using all CAP.
 - Hyperlinks – Readers usually want more information consider adding hyperlinks to useful data
 - Collect tools and resources – Find out which writing tools works best for you. Keep a stockpile of writing resources, books and mentors you can use when needed.
 - Passive Sentences – Try to avoid as much as possible the use of “to be” and its conjugations (is, was, were, are, am). Typically, it appears weak and unconvincing.
 - Adding Relevant facts and examples – This is sometimes the missing ingredient to many article by simply providing facts and examples. You authenticate and provide credibility to your readers through the use of providing facts and examples
 - Humor – It's used in everyday exchanges and it can be added into your writing as well. You'll have the readers engaged with your use of creativity. Ensure your humor is work appropriate as to not offend anyone. (Here's a way to contact a Peer mentor for advice regarding humor)
- 14) Peer Evaluation – Have someone take a look at your draft. Most of us are not objective about our work. This provides an opportunity to receive constructive feedback and improve in areas that are needed.
- Read the Article Out Loud – This approach encourages you to go more slowly, so that you're more likely to catch mistakes.
 - Start at the end of your document – Proofread one sentence at a time, working your way from the end to the beginning. This helps you focus on errors, not the content.
 - Review Some Common Misused Word(s) Chart (below)

Misused Word(s)	Rule	Examples
Who/Whom	<p>“Who” is subjective and is used when the pronoun acts as the object of a clause</p> <p>Usage depends on whether you are referring to the subject or object of a sentence.</p> <p>To test substitute “he” or “she” for “who,” and substitute “him” or “her” for whom.</p>	<p>Who Loves you? (She loves me.)</p> <p>I consulted with a nurse whom I met in school. (I consulted with him.)</p>
Which/That	<p>“That” is a restrictive pronoun, which means the phrase following it is needed to understand the preceding statement.</p>	<p>I don’t like buying products that aren’t made in the USA.</p> <p>You should only buy clothes made locally, which are usually sold at malls.</p>
Since/Because	<p>“Since” refers to time.</p> <p>“Because” refers to causation.</p>	<p>Since I saw you last, I’ve gotten a new position.</p> <p>Because I saw you, I looked into that new job you recommended.</p>
Whether/If	<p>“Whether” expresses a condition where there are two or more alternatives.</p> <p>“If” expresses a condition where there are no alternatives.</p>	<p>I don’t know whether I will meet up with you later.</p> <p>I will meet up with you tomorrow if I finish my homework.</p>
That/Who	<p>Whenever you write about people, use “who” to refer to them.</p>	<p>Sara is the girl who lives above me.</p>
Than/Then	<p>“Than” is used when comparing things.</p> <p>“Then” is used when referring to time.</p>	<p>She is much taller than me.</p> <p>I will see you first and then go to the store.</p>
It’s/Its	<p>“It’s” is a contraction of “it is.”</p> <p>“Its” is a possessive pronoun or adjective.</p>	<p>It’s going to rain tomorrow.</p> <p>The dog licked its paw.</p>
There/Their/They’re	<p>“Their” is used when referring to ownership or possession.</p>	<p>Their dog was barking so loudly, I couldn’t sleep.</p> <p>They’re going to go the store later.</p> <p>There is that sock I was looking for.</p>
Complement/Compliment	<p>“Complement” refers to something that adds to completes something else.</p> <p>“Compliment” is something nice said about you.</p>	<p>The fresh meat really complements the salad.</p> <p>She complimented me and said she liked my shoes.</p>
People/Persons	<p>People is a mass noun referring to an undetermined number of humans.</p> <p>Persons is appropriate in legal and other formal contexts.</p>	<p>I’ve meet a lot of people like that.</p> <p>Police are seeking persons of interest.</p>
Then/Than	<p>Than is used to make comparisons and only to make comparisons.</p> <p>If you cannot make comparisons you probably use “then”.</p>	<p>I’m taller than everyone in my team.</p> <p>First, preheat the oven to 350. Then, grease the muffin pan.</p>

ADDITIONAL WRITING RESOURCES

[Guide to Grammar & Writing](#)

Information on word and sentence level, paragraph level, essay and research paper level and more

[The Center for Writing Studies \(University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign\)](#)

This comprehensive handbook explains and illustrates the basic grammatical rules concerning parts of speech, phrase, clauses sentences and common problems. You will find this online handbook organized by subject and user-friendly.

[LearningPath.org](#)

Online Creative Writing Courses Offered Free by Top Universities and Educational Websites

[The Writing Center \(The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill\)](#)

Handout that explains the foundation of the article system in terms of writing

[Paragraph Unity, Coherence, and Development \(Wheaton College\)](#)

Resources on writing paragraphs that are unified and coherent. Check out some other resources such as formatting, intro, transitional, concluding paragraphs, active and passive voice and comma plus more.

[Strategies to Improve Summary Writing](#)

Resource for formatting a summary and improve your summary writing skills.

[Transitions \(Online Writing Lab: Aims Community College\)](#)

Information about using transitions in your writing depending on the type of transition that is needed.

****Submit article to: terra.eidinger@usmc.mil or usmc_ed&trng_coi@usmc.mil (in the subject line write: "Article Submission").

Note: Your article will be reviewed and subject to editing. You may receive comments or suggestions for a high quality article. If the article does not meet our expectations it may not be published in our newsletter and you will be notified via email. **These specification guidelines are subject to change at any time on behalf of the Education Community of Interest. Our ultimate goal is to maintain the spirit and forum of communicating relevant and positive professional development information to our community members at all times.