Tip #12   Formal Style

Formal written English differs from spoken, conversational style which is much more tolerant of rule variations. Writers must be careful of their sentence structure, word choice, logic patterns, and other elements to communicate the intended message with the goal of having the reader understand, and eventually believe that your hypothesis is the solution to the identified problem.

Formal English Basics
1.   use standard (written) English grammar
2.   minimize idioms
3.   avoid contractions

Standard English is generally considered to be the language that educated people generally accept as proper and suitable. It is the language used in technical reports and scientific documents. It is found in reputable newspapers, magazines, and books. It is also the English used and tested in standardized tests such as TOEFL, GRE, and others. The important thing in writing is to find a balance between words that are heavy, abstract, or dignified (polysyllabic) (too formal.) and excessively casual, slangy, or idiomatic (too informal)

1a. use proper subjunctive styles: "if"   仮定法

Subjunctive forms deal with doubt, supposition, condition, contingency and the like. Three basic patterns to be familiar with:

	Time ↓	Possibility ↓
Pattern 1 ***If we <u>obtain</u> geological data about the surface of Mars, then scientists <u>will be</u> better able to understand how the universe actually began.***	future	possible
Pattern 2 ***If we <u>obtained</u> geological data about the surface of Mars, then scientists <u>would be</u> better able to understand how the universe actually began.***	now	contrary to fact
Pattern 3 ***If we <u>had obtained</u> geological data about the surface of Mars, then scientists <u>would have been</u> better able to understand how the universe actually began.***	past	contrary to fact

*One caution: be careful to notice that "time"（時間）and "tense"（時制）differ in English; that is, present tense（現在形）is not necessarily present time. Present continuous tense （現在進行形）indicates present time much more specifically.

1.   ORIGINAL

If the globally economic cost of extreme weather and flood catastrophes <u>rose</u> due to climate change, it <u>will hit</u> poorest nations the hardest.

1. REVISED

If the globally economic cost of extreme weather and flood catastrophes <u>rises</u> due to climate change, it <u>will hit</u> poorest nations the hardest.

2.   ORIGINAL

> *Accordingly, if larvae rarely <u>showed</u> optogenetical response, the following points should be checked and corrected: ...*

2. REVISED

> *Accordingly, if larvae rarely <u>show</u> optogenetical response, the following points should be checked and corrected: ...*

3.   ORIGINAL

> *On the contrary, if the present artificial system <u>is</u> composed of only necessary components, it <u>might result</u> in low activity.*

3. REVISED

> *On the contrary, if the present artificial system <u>were</u> composed of only necessary components, low activity <u>might result</u>.*

4.   ORIGINAL

> *If these senses <u>were inhibited</u> or stimulated, subjects <u>tend</u> to change their posture.*

4. REVISED

> *If these senses <u>are</u> inhibited or stimulated, subjects <u>will tend</u> to change their posture.*
>
> (stresses the cause-and-effect relationship directly observed in your experiment or research.)
>
> ---
>
> *If these senses are inhibited or stimulated, subjects <u>tend</u> to change their posture.*
>
> (stresses the cause-and-effect relationship is one that will likely repeat itself in similar situations; that is, one that is generally true without a reference to a specific time)

5. ORIGINAL

> *The prolonged EK-recognition-sequence at the N-terminal end of the (A) or (B) can be removed by EK processing <u>if </u>they are properly integrated.*

Just because a writer uses the word "if" does Not necessarily, mean that is the one and only condition necessary to produce the effect. I may be; however, it may not. To clearly communicate that a certain cause is the only cause that produces the desired effect, use "only if" or "only when". Better yet, in writing consider using the word "provided". The phrase "if and only if" is more conversational.

5. REVISED

> *The prolonged EK-recognition- sequence at the N-terminal end of the (A) or (B) can be removed by EK processing <u>only if</u> they are properly integrated.*
>
> ---
>
> *The prolonged EK-recognition- sequence at the N-terminal end of the (A) or (B) can be removed by EK processing <u>provided</u> they are properly integrated.*
>
> ---
>
> *The prolonged EK-recognition- sequence at the N-terminal end of the (A) or (B) can be removed by EK processing provided <u>proper integration occurs</u>.*

1b. use proper subjunctive styles: "that" phrases　仮定法

These forms usually involve suggestions recommendations, demands, and similar forms. Notice the British English may vary from the American style.

✕	*We <u>recommend</u> that the government allo<u>ts</u> more funds to scientific research.*
○US	*We recommend that the government allot more funds to scientific research.*
○UK	*We recommend that the government should allot more funds to scientific research.*

✕	*I <u>suggest</u> he stud<u>ies</u> harder.*
○US	*I suggest he study harder.*
○UK	*I suggest that he should study harder.* (<u>he had better study harder is</u> more conversational)

Whichever style you use, be sure to be uniform and consistent; that is, avoid mixing the American and British systems.

1c. use the standard rules of written English

✓ use proper sentence structures, and avoid incomplete sentences. Always check for complete subjects and complete verbs.

✓ use the proper conjunctions and/or punctuation to join sentences.

✓ use the parts of speech properly

✓ ensure that subjects and verbs agree with each other

✓ ensure that pronouns and the antecedents agree with each other

✓ avoid overusing pronouns

✓ ensure proper spelling at all times

✓ use the proper preposition to communicate the functional relationship

✓ and all the other points of English that you has likely learned once already.

2a. minimize idioms: avoid using "get"

The word "get" is informally by definition and has more than 20 definitions.

6.   ORIGINAL

> ***To <u>get</u> achievements <u>about</u> our aims and targets, …***

6. REVISED

> ***To <u>achieve</u> our aims and targets, …***

7.   ORIGINAL

> ***Firstly, to monitor outdoor fields and to <u>get</u> environmental information over long periods of time, …***

7. REVISED

> ***Firstly, to monitor outdoor fields and to <u>obtain</u> environmental information over long periods of time, …***

(see file ***"13 GET"*** for a complete list of examples)

2b. avoid using idiomatic verbs
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8.   ORIGINAL

> ***Furthermore, individuals, groups and organizations have to agree to contribute their physical energy and <u>throw in</u> more ideas and investment to conserve Nan more actively and efficiently.***

8. REVISED

> ***Furthermore, individuals, groups and organizations have to agree to contribute their physical energy and <u>develop</u> more ideas and investment to conserve Nan more actively and efficiently.***

9.   ORIGINAL

> ***These natural events can <u>wipe out</u> development gains and accumulated wealth in hazard prone areas.***

9. REVISED

> ***These natural events can <u>eliminate</u> development gains and accumulated wealth in hazard prone areas.***

2c. avoid using "a lot of" or "lots of"

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10. ORIGINAL

> There are <u>lots of</u> stakeholders such as the local government, the community, businesses, non-governmental organization, and others.

10. REVISED

> There are <u>numerous</u> stakeholders such as the local government, the community, businesses, non-governmental organization, and others.

11. ORIGINAL

> Millions of bytes of data resulted from <u>lots of</u> experiments.

11. REVISED

> Millions of bytes of data resulted from <u>numerous</u> (many) experiments.

2d. avoid using idiomatic phrasing used in conversation

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12. ORIGINAL

> This zone is <u>very, very essential</u>.

12. REVISED

> This zone is <u>essential</u>.

13. ORIGINAL

> Our novel approach is <u>very unique</u>.

13. REVISED

> Our novel approach is <u>unique</u>.

2e. Avoid using "till" → "until"

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14. ORIGINAL

> Data on fishing activities from GPS and reported landings of Indian mackerel has been collected on 10 boats from May 2011 <u>till</u> March 2012, and maps of the distribution of fishing activities and productive fishing grounds has been made.

14. REVISED

> Data on fishing activities from GPS and reported landings of Indian mackerel has been collected on 10 boats from May 2011 <u>until</u> March 2012, and maps of the distribution of fishing activities and productive fishing grounds has been made.

15. ORIGINAL

From 1998 <u>till</u> now, eco-industries have developed with rapid speed.

15. REVISED

From 1998 <u>until</u> now, eco-industries have developed with rapid speed.

From 1998 <u>until</u> now, eco-industries have developed rapidly.

(more concise)

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3. never use contractions　縮約（形）

can't	cannot, can not
didn't	did not
don't	do not
he'd	he had
I'm	I am
isn't	is not
it's	it is
mustn't	must not
shan't	shall not
she'd done	she had done
shouldn't	should not
that's	that is
there're	there are
there's	there is
they're	they are
won't	will not
wouldn't	would not

16. ORIGINAL

correctness of the calculation could<u>n't</u> be estimated.

16. REVISED

correctness of the calculation <u>could not</u> be estimated.

17. ORIGINAL

But there are problems with the assumption that any magnetic islands <u>don't</u> exist is used or constraints of calculation are unknown.

17. REVISED

But there are problems with the assumption that any magnetic islands <u>do not</u> exist is used or constraints of calculation are unknown.

18. ORIGINAL

This antibody <u>doesn't</u> react with soluble fibrin, but only reacts with insoluble stabilized fibrin (fibrin clot).

18. REVISED

This antibody <u>does not</u> react with soluble fibrin, but only reacts with insoluble stabilized fibrin (fibrin clot).

19. ORIGINAL

Therefore, <u>it's</u> difficult to comprehend the influences from other areas.

19. REVISED

Therefore, <u>it is</u> difficult to comprehend the influences from other areas.

(see "01 Weak Subjects)

Therefore, <u>comprehending</u> the influences from other areas is difficult.

(stronger subject)

20. ORIGINAL

What's more, the order of magnitude can be easily controlled by selected PC.

20. REVISED

<u>What is more</u>, the order of magnitude can be easily controlled by selected PC.