Tips for Authors

‘Tips for Authors’ discusses four areas of interest to authors: Grammar and Spell checking, the use of hanging indentations, true double spacing and the APA Style Guide for Electronic References.

Good writing and appropriate formatting enhance the likelihood of acceptance of your research paper by the Delta Journal of Education. While the prospect of revising a manuscript to take into account the observations and recommendations of reviewers is always there, there are several things you can do to facilitate a good review of your manuscript.

First, check your paper for grammar and spelling—poor grammatical construction and poor spelling (even if you did ‘mistype’) are signs that you are not paying attention to detail in your manuscript.

Secondly, be sure your manuscript complies with APA guidelines on referencing—check both in-text and reference section referencing for compliance with the guidelines specified in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th edition.

Third, if you cite electronic references include the Digital Object Identifier or http:// address for the article—obtain a copy of the APA style Guide to Electronic References (see below).

Grammar and Spell Checker in Word’s Review Menu

Aside from poorly conceived and poorly written manuscripts, too many authors with good papers may overlook some of the details of writing and formatting their paper. As a result, their manuscript does not fare well in the review process. Failure to pay attention to the details may result in the rejection of a manuscript, especially if the writing is not clear and concise and effectively communicates the intent of the author to the reader. The lack of clarity and the use of passive voice are too often the primary sources of problems with a manuscript, prolonging the review period and delaying the potential acceptance and publication of the manuscript. Here are some tips for avoiding some of the most common grammatical errors in manuscript preparation.

Use the Spell and Grammar Checker in Microsoft Word’s Review Menu to aide in the identification of grammatical errors. Do not assume that the Spelling and Grammar checker automatically detects common grammatical errors—you need to check to see if it is.

In Word, the specific steps involved are to select:

File (upper left hand tab of the task bar),
Options, and
Proofing (in that order)

On the following page go to Writing and Style and set it to check Grammar and Style.
Then under **Settings** make sure to select ‘passive sentences’ in the **Style** menu.

On this page, check all grammar and style components if not already selected.

In addition, since the DJE requires **two spaces between sentences** be sure to select to check for two spaces required between sentences on this same page.

Most of the early editing of articles submitted for review concerns the evaluation of the manuscript for simple APA formatting requirements, grammatical constructions (especially passive voice), spacing and the like. This process invariably adds on at least four weeks to the review process. By taking care of these issues prior to submission, an earlier review and faster decision process is highly likely.

**Hanging Indentions**

Another frequently encountered problem is the author’s failure to use hanging indentions in the reference section. Too often, we encounter manuscripts with reference sections that appear to be in hanging indentation but are not.

The two mistakes most commonly made are to type the reference using a < Enter > at the end of each line, and using the tab key (→) to indent the second and following lines. This results in a reference that looks like this:


Typing the same reference in APA-recommended hanging indentation format results in a reference that looks like this:


You will note that the < Enter > symbol (¶) and tab symbol (→) are no longer present. Do not do not place a return or <Enter > (¶) at the end of the line—let Word determine when to move to the next line of text. Then, after you have typed in all of your references, highlight the entire list of references. Next, go to the **Line and Paragraph Spacing** tool on the Word toolbar. Click to open the tool and select **Line Spacing Options**. Under **Indentation**, establish the following settings: Left: 0”, Right: 0”, Special: Hanging at .5”. Press ‘OK’. Your reference section should be in hanging indent format. Please do double check your reference section to make sure that all references are in the hanging indent format prior to submitting your paper. Any paragraph symbols (¶) and tab (→) symbols on the page may represent errors, so please examine your reference section carefully.
True Double Spacing

Another common error is not using true double spacing (true 2.0 spacing) when you type your manuscript. The Delta Journal of Education requires true double spacing for manuscripts, converting your manuscript to single spacing occurs in the final stages of the editorial production process. True double spacing makes your manuscript easier to read and edit. It is helpful when manuscript preparation considers this simple spacing matter.

Here is how to make sure you are using true double-spacing: In the Line and Spacing tool in the Word toolbar, select Line and Spacing Options. Go to Spacing, and set the ‘Spacing before and after’ a line to ‘0’. Set the Line Spacing to 2.0. To avoid adding an extra space between paragraphs (making the transition between paragraphs true 2.0 spacing) check off the ‘Don’t add space between paragraphs of the same style box.

One of the most common line spacing formats received by the Delta Journal of Education is 1.5 with 10 points after a line. While this may look like double spacing, it is not true 2.0 spacing. Apparently, most authors who submitted their manuscripts with this line spacing variation were unaware of the settings in the Word processing system, and did not realize that they needed adjustment. You can always check your manuscript for true double spacing by highlighting the entire manuscript, accessing the line spacing tool, and adjusting the settings as necessary.

Electronic References

The increased use of the internet to access electronic databases may produce some confusion about how to reference articles that appear both in print and in electronic format. The general guideline is that if you access the article via the internet, you need to use an electronic source citation along with other relevant publication information for the article.

When the article’s source is an internet http:// address, make sure that the http:// address used takes the reader to the landing page of the article. That is, the hyperlink you provide must take the reader to the first page of the article. If the provided link takes the reader to an abstract, a table of contents page where one could access the article, a primary page for the publisher of the article or the like, the reference is erroneous—it does not take your reader to the article itself.

The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association provides basic electronic referencing information in Section 6.31 (pp. 187-192) and throughout Chapter 7 in the presentation of different reference formatting examples. In addition, an APA Style Guide to Electronic References, published in 2012, provides a more detailed look at the use and appropriate referencing of sources obtained via the internet, electronic databases, and through other digital sources. Authors are encouraged to obtain this guide to ensure that their reference citations are in the correct format.