

Editing Your Own Work

Office of Graduate Studies

MISSOURI
S&T



NOTE

- While learning how to edit your own work is important, it is also important to have other people review your document.
- The tips in this presentation might not work for everyone.

Defining “Editing”

Comprehensive Editing



Copyediting



Proofreading

Tip 1: Determine Style Guide

- You may be requested to write in a certain style by your department or journal
- Common styles: APA, IEEE, SPE, ASCE, etc.
- These style guides often include more information than citation conventions

From The IEEE Style Guide

III. GRAMMAR AND USAGE IN TRANSACTIONS

A. Rules of Grammar

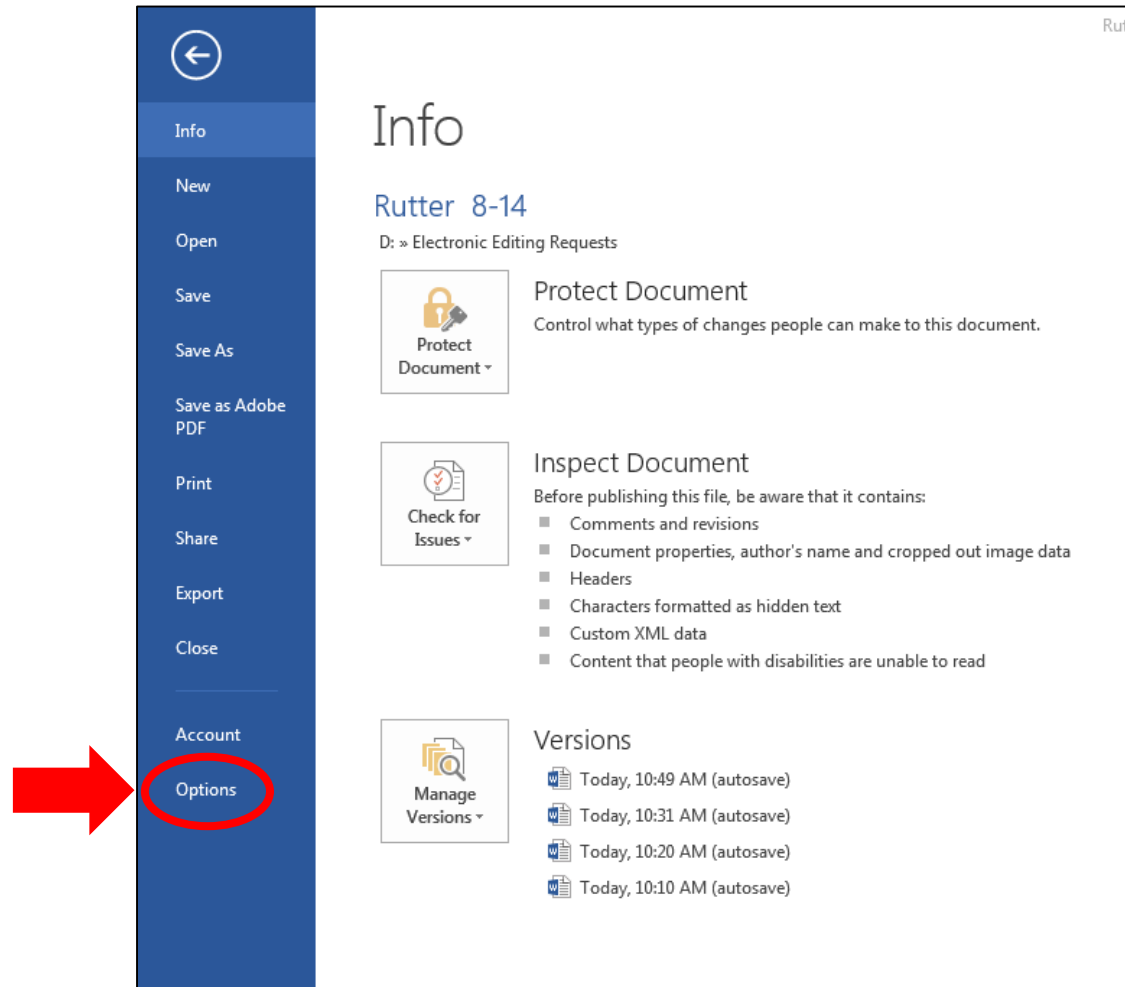
The principles of style given below aim to concentrate on fundamentals of modern usage. Particular emphasis is given to the rules most commonly violated.

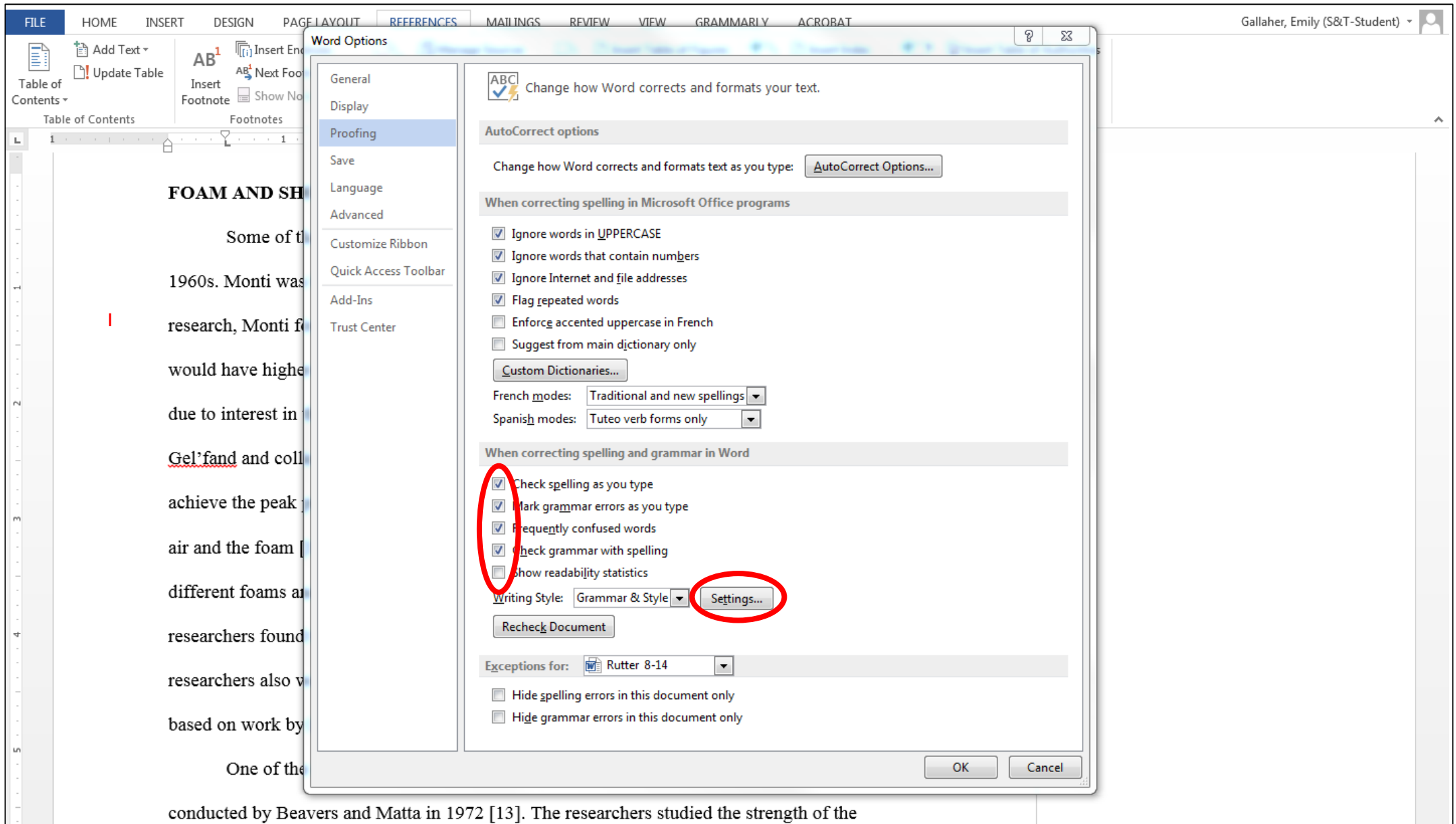
- 1) **Form the possessive singular of nouns by adding's** (*Avogadro's theorem*).
- 2) **In a series of three or more terms, use a comma immediately before the coordinating conjunction** (*usually and, or, or nor*).
- 3) **Enclose parenthetical expressions between commas.** (*Improvement, as shown in Fig. 1, is attained by the addition of the cogeneration.*).
- 4) **Use the semicolon, not the comma, to separate two complete sentences which form a compound sentence.**
- 5) **Use a colon after an independent clause to introduce a list.**
- 6) **Punctuation always goes inside quotation marks, except for the colon and semicolon.** Use single quotation marks around quotes within quotes. Quotes may be used around a new or special usage of a term the first time only, but use of quotes in this manner should be kept to a minimum.
- 7) **Do not use double parentheses in text expressions, but keep them in math.** For example, (see (10)) should become [see (10)].
- 8) **All acronyms and numerical plurals do not use apostrophes, i.e., FETs, 1980s.**
- 9) **Compound nouns made from a one-syllable verb and a short adverb are one word when found that way in the dictionary** (setup, takeoff, breakup). Compound nouns are likely to be two words, without a hyphen, or one word (bandwidth, bypass, flowchart, phase shift, sideband, standing wave). Compound nouns of more than two words can be hyphenated.
- 10) **A pair of words, modifying a third word separately, does not get a hyphen** (a tall water tower, a hot metal cylinder). If the first word modifies the second, and the pair together modify the third, there is a hyphen between the pair (a high-frequency signal, a second-order equation). The exception to this is the adverb ending in "ly," which needs no hyphen to join it to the next word.

Tip 2: Use Grammar Checkers

- Microsoft Word's built-in spellcheck is limited by default settings, but you can adjust the settings to catch more errors
- Grammarly is a popular automated editor that has free browser and Word extensions

How To Change Microsoft Word Spellcheck





Word Options

General
Display
Proofing
Save
Language
Advanced
Customize Ribbon
Quick Access Toolbar
Add-Ins
Trust Center

Change how Word corrects and formats your text.

AutoCorrect options

Change how Word corrects and formats text as you type: [AutoCorrect Options...](#)

Grammar Settings

Writing style:
Grammar & Style

Grammar and style options:

Require

Comma required before last list item: **always**

Punctuation required with quotes: don't check

Spaces required between sentences: don't check

Grammar:

- Capitalization
- Fragments and Run-ons
- Misused words
- Negation
- Noun phrases
- Possessives and plurals
- Punctuation
- Questions

Reset All OK Cancel

Writing Style: Grammar & Style [Settings...](#)

[Recheck Document](#)

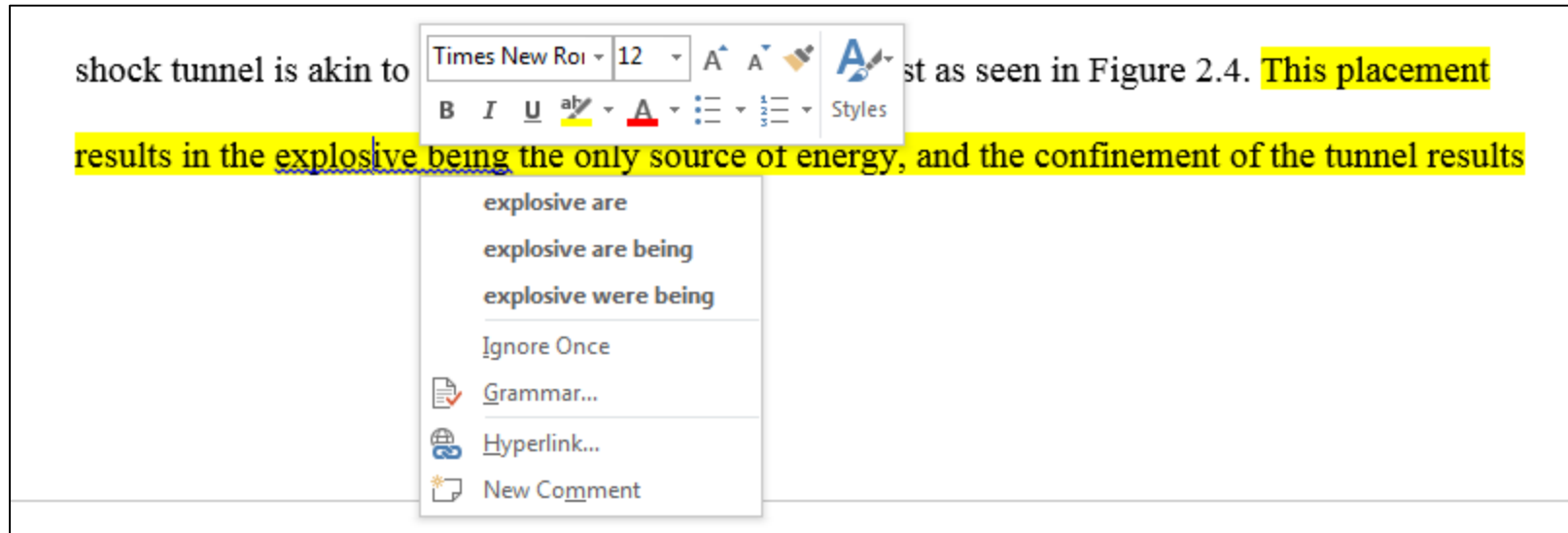
Exceptions for: [Rutter 8-14](#)

- Hide spelling errors in this document only
- Hide grammar errors in this document only

OK Cancel

Tip 3: Take Suggestions Cautiously

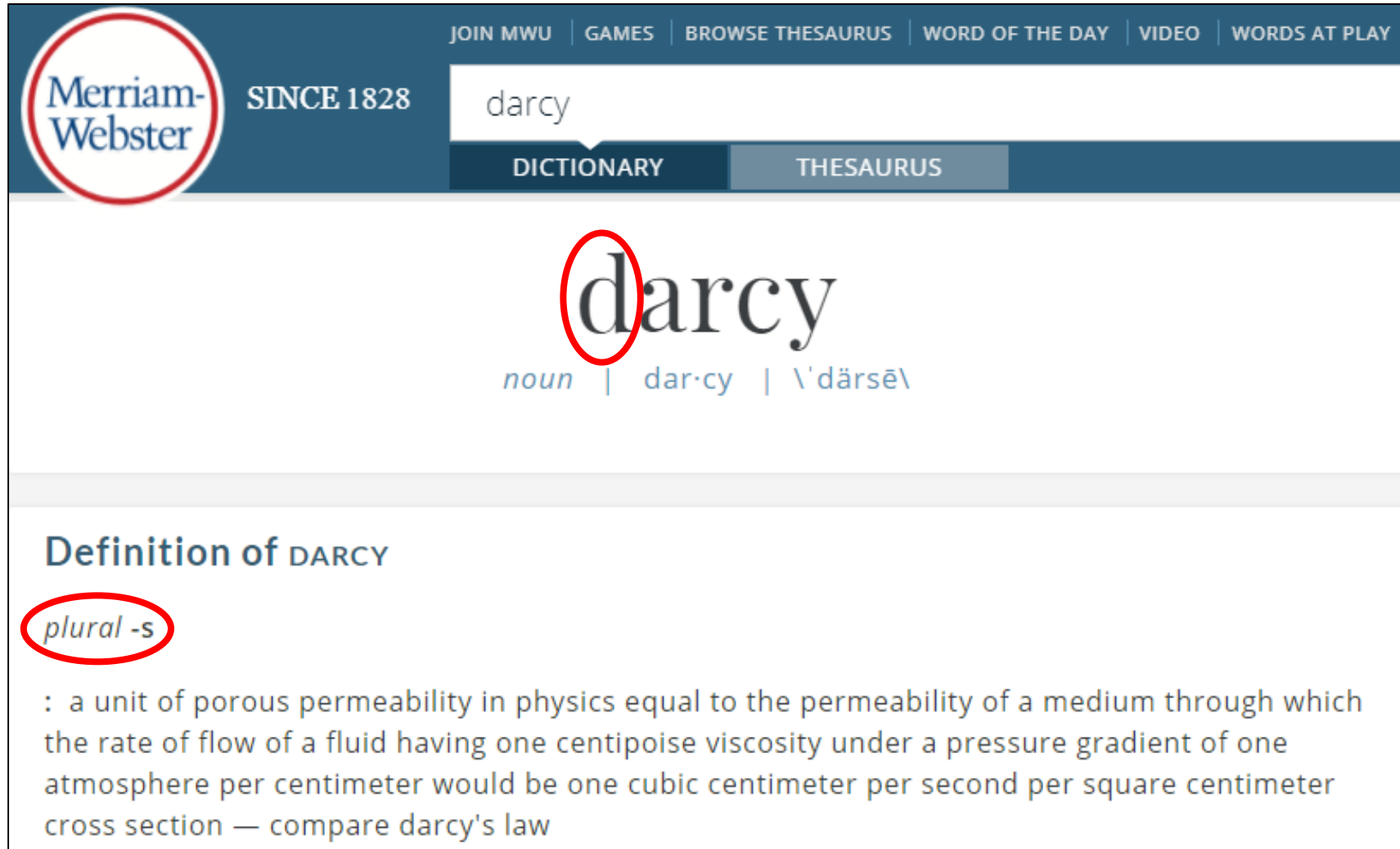
Not every suggestion marked by an automated grammar checker will be correct



Tip 4: Google It

- If you can't find answers in a style guide, first try a dictionary (for spelling, capitalization, or punctuation), then try a Google search
- Look at how the word is most often used by reputable sources. If nothing else, look at Wikipedia

From Merriam-Webster



The image is a screenshot of the Merriam-Webster website. At the top left is the Merriam-Webster logo with the text 'SINCE 1828'. To the right of the logo is a search bar containing the word 'darcy'. Below the search bar are two tabs: 'DICTIONARY' and 'THESAURUS', with 'THESAURUS' being the active tab. The main content area displays the word 'darcy' in a large serif font, with the first letter 'd' circled in red. Below the word is the part of speech 'noun' and the phonetic transcription '| dar·cy | \ 'därsē\'. A horizontal line separates this from the definition section. The section is titled 'Definition of DARCY' in bold. Below the title, the word 'plural -s' is circled in red. The definition text follows: ': a unit of porous permeability in physics equal to the permeability of a medium through which the rate of flow of a fluid having one centipoise viscosity under a pressure gradient of one atmosphere per centimeter would be one cubic centimeter per second per square centimeter cross section — compare darcy's law'.

Merriam-Webster SINCE 1828

JOIN MWU | GAMES | BROWSE THESAURUS | WORD OF THE DAY | VIDEO | WORDS AT PLAY

darcy

DICTIONARY THESAURUS

darcy

noun | dar·cy | \ 'därsē\

Definition of DARCY

plural -s

: a unit of porous permeability in physics equal to the permeability of a medium through which the rate of flow of a fluid having one centipoise viscosity under a pressure gradient of one atmosphere per centimeter would be one cubic centimeter per second per square centimeter cross section — compare darcy's law

Tip 5: Print It Out

Many people find that it is easier to catch errors if you edit in a different format.

If you wrote your paper on a computer, edit a printed copy.

Tip 6: Read Aloud

Since you're likely to be familiar with what you have already written, reading the document aloud can help you concentrate and avoid skipping over words

Tip 7: Highlight With Your Cursor As You Read

If you are editing a digital copy and can't read it out loud, highlighting the words with your cursor as you read can help you catch errors

In psychology, the Stroop effect is a demonstration of interference in the reaction time of a task.

When the name of a color (e.g., "blue", "green", or "red") is printed in a color that is not denoted

by the name (e.g., the word "red" printed in blue ink instead of red ink), naming the color of the

word takes longer and is more prone to errors than when the color of the ink matches the name of

the color. The effect is named after John Ridley Stroop, who first published the effect in English

Tip 8: Use Track Changes and Comments

- When editing in Microsoft Word, the “Track Changes” feature allows you to make changes while still viewing the original sentence
- The “Comments” feature will allow you to make notes to yourself for future reference

Document4 - Word

FILE HOME INSERT DESIGN PAGE LAYOUT REFERENCES MAILINGS **REVIEW** VIEW GRAMMARLY ACROBAT

Spelling & Grammar Define Thesaurus Word Count Translate Language Language New Comment Delete Previous Next Show Comments Track Changes Tracking Accept Reject Previous Next Compare Block Restrict Share Send by IM Authors Editing Now by IM Protect Share

In psychology, the **S**troop effect is a demonstration of interference in the reaction time of a task. When the name of a color (e.g., "blue", "green", or "red") is printed in a color that is not denoted by the name (e.g., the word "red" printed in blue ink instead of red ink), naming the color of the word takes longer and is more prone to errors than when the color of the ink matches the name of the color. The effect is named after John Ridley Stroop, who first published the effect in English in 1935.^[1] The effect had previously been published in Germany in 1929.^[2]^[3]^[4] The original paper has been one of the most cited papers in the history of experimental psychology, leading to more than 700 replications.^[4] The effect has been used to create a psychological test (Stroop test) that is widely used in clinical practice and investigation.

- Gallagher, Emily (S&T-Student)
Formatted: Font: Italic
- Gallagher, Emily (S&T-Student)
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Formatted: Font: Italic
- Gallagher, Emily (S&T-Student)
[make](#) footnotes

Track Changes Options

Show

- Comments
- Ink
- Insertions and Deletions
- Formatting
- Highlight Updates
- Other Authors
- Pictures By Comments

Balloons in All Markup view

Reviewing Pane:

Advanced Options...

Advanced Track Changes Options

Insertions:	Underline	Color:	Turquoise
Deletions:	Strikethrough	Color:	Red
Changed lines:	Outside border		
Comments:	Black		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Track moves			
Moved from:	Double strikethrough	Color:	Green
Moved to:	Double underline	Color:	Green
Inserted cells:	Light Blue	Merged cells:	Light Yellow
Deleted cells:	Pink	Split cells:	Light Orange
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Track formatting			
Formatting:	(none)	Color:	Black
Preferred width:	3.7"	Measure in:	Inches
Margin:	Right		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Show lines connecting to text			
Paper orientation in printing:			Preserve

OK Cancel

Tip 9: Use “Find” And “Replace”

- Use “Find” to simply search your document for a word or phrase
- Use “Replace” to fix consistent errors throughout your document to save time
- “Replace” also works with spaces and punctuation, but be careful what you put in to change

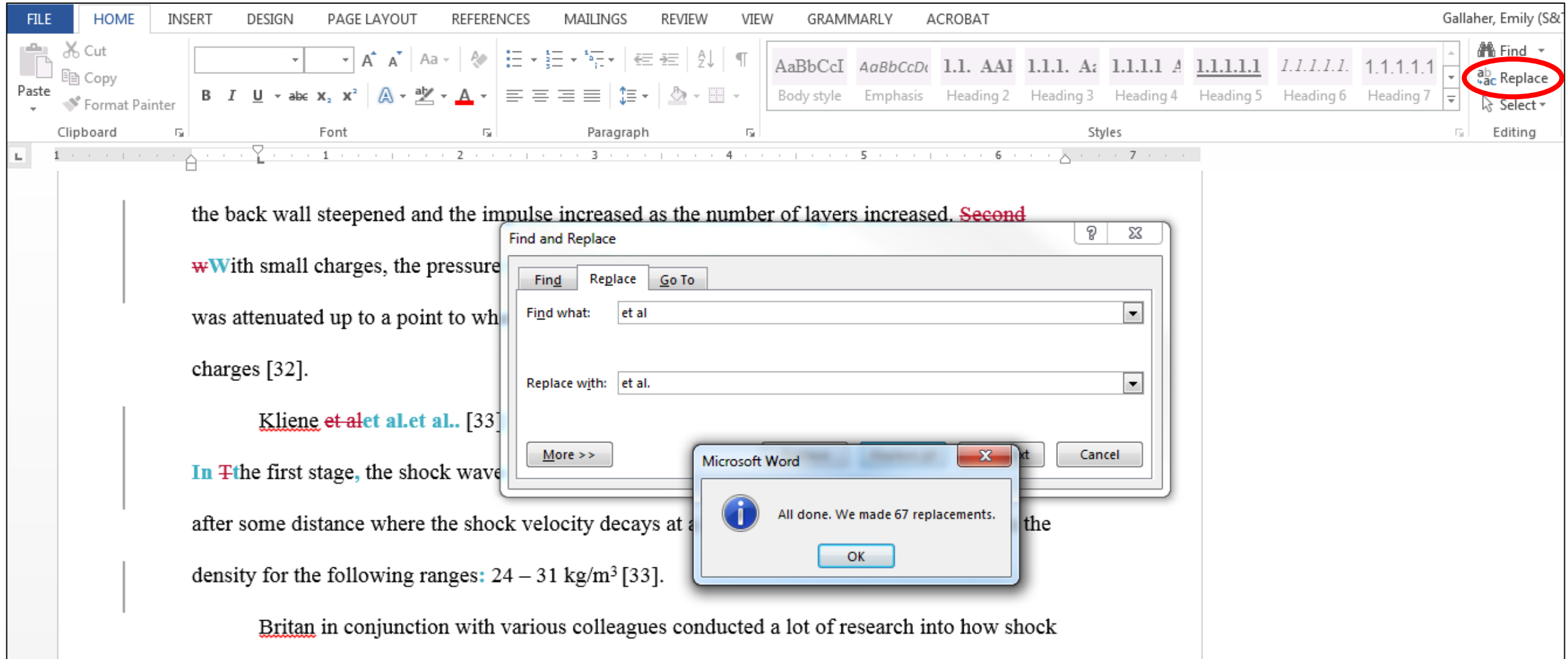
the back wall steepened and the impulse increased as the number of layers increased. **Second**

WWith small charges, the pressure was attenuated up to a point to which charges [32].

Kliene et al. et al. et al. [33]

In the first stage, the shock wave after some distance where the shock velocity decays at a density for the following ranges: 24 – 31 kg/m³ [33].

Britan in conjunction with various colleagues conducted a lot of research into how shock



The image shows a Microsoft Word document with a Find and Replace dialog box open. The dialog box has tabs for Find, Replace, and Go To. The 'Find what' field contains 'et al' and the 'Replace with' field also contains 'et al.'. A 'More >>' button is visible at the bottom of the dialog. In the foreground, a smaller 'Microsoft Word' dialog box displays the message 'All done. We made 67 replacements.' with an 'OK' button. The Word ribbon is visible at the top, with the 'Replace' option in the 'Editing' group circled in red. The document text includes several instances of 'et al.' that have been replaced with 'et al.' (some in red, some in blue, some in black).

Tip 10: Read From The Perspective Of Your Audience

- Consider if your document will be read by a specialist or a layperson
- Check if jargon and abbreviations are appropriate

Tip 11: Look For Inconsistencies

- Don't use two words with one meaning interchangeably
Elastic modulus, Young's modulus, modulus of elasticity, E
- Avoid mixing US customary units and metric units
- Watch for consistent hyphenation, spacing, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
Cancelling, canceling

Tip 12: Isolate Subject And Verb

Incorrect subject/verb agreement is one of the most common writing mistakes. Keep in mind that your verb will not always be right next to your subject.

S

The accuracy of the predicted rock mechanical

properties based on empirical relationships ~~were~~ **V** was

examined by statistical analysis.

Tip 13: Identify Compound Predicates (no comma)

A compound predicate is two or more verbs that share the same subject in a sentence and are joined by a conjunction.

The **S** subjects **V** completed the first phase of the experiment and **V** returned the following week for Phase 2.

Use a Comma + Coordinating Conjunction with 2 Main Clauses

When you have two independent clauses (two subjects with verbs of their own) joined by a coordinating conjunction, use a comma.

The ^Seffect ^vwas first published in 1929 in Germany by
Erich Rudolf Jaensch, and its ^Sroots ^vcan be followed
back to works of James McKeen Cattell.

Tip 14: Don't Use Fancy Words

- Don't be afraid to use a simple word or the same word multiple times
- Your primary goal should be clarity
- Do not use a synonym to replace a simple word with something fancier

Fancy Words and Simplified Alternatives

advise	tell
ascertain	learn, find out
commence	start, begin
endeavor	try
herein	here
impact	affect
manifest	show
utilize	use

Tip 15: Simplify Your Words And Phrases

- Avoid long, wordy sentences or phrases
- “Place the main idea in the structural core”
- Use parallelism for lists
- Avoid negative constructions
- Use action verbs
- Avoid nominalizations
- Avoid ambiguous nouns (*aspects*)
- Avoid redundancies (*also* and *in addition*; *such as* and *etc.*)

Placing Main Idea In The Structural Core

original

The course of the twentieth century produced a cancer death rate that rose parallel to the advances in technology.

revised

In the twentieth century, the rise in the cancer death rate paralleled the advances in technology.

Avoiding Negative Constructions

negative

It is not possible to reduce inflation when the federal government does not reduce its spending.

positive

Inflation will decrease only if the government reduces its spending.

Wordy Phrases

a majority of

most

a number of

many

despite the fact that

although

in order to

to

it is often the case that

often

based on the fact that

because

take into consideration

consider

in the event that

if

References

“25 Editing Tips for Tightening Your Copy,” *The Write Life*
<https://thewritelife.com/edit-your-copy/>

Markel, M. (2012). *Technical communication* (10th ed.). Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Rude, C. D., & Eaton, A. (2011). *Technical editing* (5th ed.). New York: Longman.

Other Writing Resources

Grammar Girl: <http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl>

Grammarly Blog: <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/>

Grammar Bytes!: <http://www.chompchomp.com/menu.htm>

Purdue Owl: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

Chicago Manual of Style, 16th edition

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), 6th edition

Upcoming Events

Mini T/D Boot Camp	Sept 22	Toomey 140
Write-In	Oct 4	Library 203
Formatting in MS Word	Oct 18	HSS 102
Proofreading with Grammarly	Nov 1	HSS 202
