Journal of Extension Guidance for Terminology, Usage, and Spellings

This document is a supplement to style and grammar resources associated with the *Journal of Extension* (*JOE*). It offers guidance relative to terminology and language frequently used in *JOE* articles.

The Terminology and Usage section is a glossary of problematic words and phrases. Entries are in alphabetical order; entries that are pairs or sets of words are listed according to the word in the pair or set that comes first alphabetically. In general, usage is not addressed by the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, Sixth Edition (APA manual)—the source on which *JOE* style and standards are based. Therefore, most usage notes presented here are from *The Chicago Manual of Style*, a supplemental style source for *JOE*. For questions about usage not addressed herein, prospective authors should consult the current edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

In general, in manuscripts submitted to *JOE*, prospective authors should use the first spelling of a word as indicated in *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (current edition). However, in some cases, *JOE* style prescribes use of a spelling that is not the first spelling in this dictionary or prospective *JOE* authors use discipline-specific terms not included in this dictionary. The Preferred Spellings section in this document addresses cases such as these.

Because this document is updated as needed, prospective *JOE* authors should check it regularly for new information.

Terminology and Usage

Age, aged Use *aged* not *age* in an adjective phrase (e.g., "aged 65 years and older").

Based on, on the basis of Take care not to misuse the phrase *based on*. The phrase *based on* has two legitimate uses. It may have verbal force (e.g., "we based this finding on respondents' answers to the first question") or, in a passive sense, adjectival force (e.g., "a new approach based on a decades-old theory"). *Based on* should not have adverbial force (e.g., "one can infer competencies based on existing research") or prepositional force, which causes it to become a dangling participle (e.g., "based on this finding, we suggest"). In these cases, the correct wording is *on the basis of* (e.g., "one can infer competencies on the basis of existing research" and "on the basis of this finding, we suggest").

Compose, comprise Use *compose* and *comprise* correctly in discussing the parts of a whole. A whole is *composed of* parts or *comprises* parts (e.g., "the focus group was composed of five adults and four teens" or "the focus group comprised five adults and four teens").

Current It is preferable to avoid use of the word *current* when discussing something that already has occurred (e.g., a study). *Current* has the connotation "occurring at the moment," whereas *existing* can have the connotation "in existence at the time under consideration." (For example, say, "Respondents were asked to compare their existing habits with their goals for the future" rather than "Respondents were asked to compare their current habits with their goals for the future.")

Data Use plural verbs and plural pronouns with the word *data*, which is a plural noun.

Focus group A focus group is a group of people. Do not use the term *focus group* to mean focus group research, focus group session, focus group interview, and so on.

Healthful, healthy Use *healthful* to mean promoting or causing health (e.g., "healthful habits") and *healthy* to mean in good health (e.g., "a healthy person").

If, whether Avoid substituting *if* for *whether* (e.g., "we wanted to know whether practitioners were implementing the program correctly" not "we wanted to know if practitioners were implementing the program correctly"). The word *if* is conditional; the word *whether* introduces an alternative.

Impact Avoid using *impact* as a verb; instead, use a word such as *affect* or *influence* (e.g., "science affects everyone" not "science impacts everyone").

In order to, to Use *to* instead of *in order to* wherever doing so preserves (or even heightens) the rhythm and readability of the sentence.

In, within Avoid using *within* when *in* will suffice. Often when *within* is used, it is just a bulkier way of saying *in*; using *in* instead improves readability.

Like, such as Per APA style, use *such as*, not *like*, wherever doing so is appropriate. (For more information, see APA manual section 3.09.)

LISTSERV In most cases, use the term *electronic mailing list* or another appropriate generic term instead of *LISTSERV*. As noted in the APA manual, *LISTSERV* is a trademarked name for a particular software program.

On, upon In most cases, use *on*. Use *upon* rather than *on* only when introducing an event or a condition (e.g., "upon completing data collection, we paid all participants for their time").

Post- Do not use the prefix *post-* as a stand-alone word.

Pre- Do not use the prefix *pre-* as a stand-alone word.

Proved, proven Use *proved* as the past-participial form of *prove* (e.g., "it was proved to be true"). Use *proven* as an adjective (e.g., "a proven success").

Rank, rate Use *rank* to refer to the action of putting items in order, as in "Respondents ranked the information sources from most useful to least useful." Use *rate* to refer to the action of determining the level of something, as in "Respondents rated each information source on a scale of 1 (*not at all useful*) to 5 (*very useful*)."

Retrospective evaluation/retrospective "post-then-pre" design Use the terminology *retrospective evaluation* or *retrospective "post-then-pre" design* to describe a particular type of program evaluation design in which participants complete a questionnaire/survey instrument after completing a program. Specifically, for each relevant issue, topic, or area of focus, respondents report what their knowledge, attitude, or so on is after participating in the program and then evaluate retrospectively and report what their knowledge, attitude, or so on was before participating in the program. Refer to the questionnaire or survey instrument used as a *retrospective "post-then-pre" questionnaire* or *retrospective "post-then-pre"*

survey instrument. (Although the term *post-then-pre* is frequently included in Extension publications, it is jargon. Therefore, if you use the term, enclose it in quotation marks on first use.)

Since, while For precision (and per APA guidance), restrict the use of the words *since* and *while* to their temporal meanings. Otherwise, use *because* or *as* rather than *since* and *although* or *whereas* rather than *while*.

Toward, towards Use *toward* not *towards* (to align with American usage versus British usage). This directive applies to other such words (e.g., *afterward*, *backward*, *downward*, *forward*, *upward*) as well.

Usage, use, utilize When considering word choice related to the words *usage*, *use*, and *utilize*, choose the simplest appropriate word. In most situations, the word *use* (noun) is preferable to *usage* and the word *use* (verb) is preferable to *utilize*.

Yes-no question To describe a question for which the respondent is to answer yes or no, use the term *yes-no question*.

Youth In general, use *youths* as the plural of the noun *youth*. If you are talking about a very broad collective group, use *youth* (e.g., "the youth of the United States"). However, if you are talking about specific individuals, even a large number of specific individuals, use *youths* (e.g., "youths involved in the state's 4-H programs").

Preferred Spellings

For each term listed here, use the spelling/capitalization style indicated.

- 4-H'er
- advisor
- afterschool (adjective)
- Big Data
- crowdfunding
- e-learning
- email
- farmers' market
- GAP (always singular when used to abbreviate good agricultural practices)
- GHP (always singular when used to abbreviate good handling practices)
- google (verb, lowercase)
- grandfamily/grandfamilies
- infographic
- Internet of Things (IoT)
- Latina/o (may be used at author's choosing)
- LGBT (can be used without explanation)
- LGBTQ (can be used without explanation)
- makerspace
- m-learning
- onboarding

- placemaking
- Q&A
- Q methodology
- radiuses
- symposiums
- telehealth
- telework
- timeline
- waterlogging
- webcast
- Wilcoxon rank-sum test
- Wilcoxon signed-rank test