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# A Writer's Reference

*Fifth Edition*

Diana Hacker

# A WRITER'S REFERENCE

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Fifth Edition

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Diana Hacker

*Prince George's Community College*

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# Main Menu

## Using A Writer's Reference

The menu to the right displays the book's contents as briefly and simply as possible. The color-coded arrows lead you to the appropriate tabbed dividers, which contain more detailed menus for each section.

At the back of the book you will find other reference aids:

- a detailed menu
- a list of revision symbols
- an ESL menu
- the index

To learn more about the book's reference aids, turn to "How to use this book" (p. v), which includes tutorials that show you how to get quick answers to your questions.

## Companion Web site at [dianahacker.com/writersref](http://dianahacker.com/writersref)

Cross-referenced throughout the book, this resource includes over a thousand interactive writing, grammar, and research exercises; model papers; Language Debates; a links library; and other useful tools for writers and their instructors. To learn more about the companion site, turn to page vii.

## Note to instructors

A CD-ROM version of the text, *An Electronic Writer's Reference*, is available either as a stand-alone item or for site licensing or packaging with the text. The software covers all of the topics in this print version and includes more than a thousand interactive exercises with customized feedback written by Diana Hacker.

## Composition / Style

### **C**omposing and revising

- C1** Planning
- C2** Drafting
- C3** Revising
- C4** Writing paragraphs
- C5** Constructing arguments
- SAMPLE PAPER
- C6** Evaluating arguments

### **D**ocument design

- D1** Principles of document design
- D2** Academic manuscript formats
- D3** Business documents
- D4** Electronic documents

### **S**entence style

- S1** Parallelism
- S2** Needed words
- S3** Problems with modifiers
- S4** Shifts
- S5** Mixed constructions
- S6** Emphasis
- S7** Variety

### **W**ord choice

- W1** Glossary of usage
- W2** Wordy sentences
- W3** Active verbs
- W4** Appropriate language
- W5** Exact language
- W6** The dictionary and thesaurus

## Correctness

### **G**rammatical sentences

- G1** Subject-verb agreement
- G2** Other problems with verbs
- G3** Problems with pronouns
- G4** Adjectives and adverbs
- G5** Sentence fragments
- G6** Run-on sentences

### ESL **T**rouble spots

- T1** Articles
- T2** Special problems with verbs
- T3** Sentence structure
- T4** Other trouble spots

### **P**unctuation

- P1** The comma
- P2** Unnecessary commas
- P3** The semicolon
- P4** The colon
- P5** The apostrophe
- P6** Quotation marks
- P7** Other marks

### **M**echanics

- M1** Spelling
- M2** The hyphen
- M3** Capitalization
- M4** Abbreviations
- M5** Numbers
- M6** Italics (underlining)

## Research/Basic Grammar

### **R**esearching

- R1** Conducting research
- R2** Evaluating sources
- R3** Managing information; avoiding plagiarism
- R4** Choosing a style of documentation

### **MLA** papers

- MLA-1** Supporting a thesis
- MLA-2** Avoiding plagiarism
- MLA-3** Integrating sources
- MLA-4** Documenting sources
- MLA-5** Manuscript format

SAMPLE PAPER

### **APA** and **CMS** papers

*(Coverage parallels MLA's)*

- |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| <b>APA-1</b> | <b>CMS-1</b> |
| <b>APA-2</b> | <b>CMS-2</b> |
| <b>APA-3</b> | <b>CMS-3</b> |
| <b>APA-4</b> | <b>CMS-4</b> |
| <b>APA-5</b> | <b>CMS-5</b> |

SAMPLE PAPER

SAMPLE PAGES

### **B**asic grammar

- B1** Parts of speech
- B2** Parts of sentences
- B3** Subordinate word groups
- B4** Sentence types

*Index*

# *How to use this book*

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*A Writer's Reference* has been carefully designed to save you time. As you can see, the book lies flat, making it easy to consult while you are revising and editing a draft. And the book's twelve section dividers will lead you—in most cases very quickly—to the information you need.

Here are brief descriptions of the book's major reference aids, followed by a chart summarizing the content of the book's companion Web site.

**The menu system.** The main menu inside the front cover displays the book's contents as briefly and simply as possible. Each of the twelve sections in the main menu leads you to a color-coded tabbed divider, on the back of which you will find a more detailed menu.

Let's say you have a question about the proper use of commas between items in a series. Your first step is to scan the main menu, where you will find the comma listed as the first item under section P (Punctuation). Next flip the book open to the red tabbed divider marked P. Now consult the detailed menu for the precise subsection (P1-c) and the exact page number.

**The index.** If you aren't sure what topic to choose from the main menu, consult the index at the back of the book. For example, you may not realize that the issue of whether to use *has* or *have* is a matter of subject-verb agreement (G1 on the main menu). In that case, simply look up "*has* vs. *have*" in the index and you will be directed to specific pages and given a cross-reference to the general topic of subject-verb agreement.

**The Glossary of Usage.** When in doubt about the correct use of a particular word (such as *affect* and *effect*, *among* and *between*, or *hopefully*), flip to section W1 and consult the alphabetically arranged glossary for the word in question. If the word you are looking for isn't in the Glossary of Usage, try the index instead. For example, you won't find an entry for "*I* vs. *me*" in the glossary because the issue is too complicated for a short glossary entry. The index, however, will take you straight to the pages you need.

**The directories to documentation models.** When you are writing a research paper, there is no need to memorize all of the technical details about handling citations or constructing a list of the works you have cited. Instead, you can rely on one of the book's directories to documentation models. If you are using the Modern Language Association (MLA) system of documentation, flip the book open to the tabbed section marked MLA to find the appropriate directory. If you are using the American Psychological Association (APA) or the *Chicago* (CMS) system, flip to the tabbed section marked APA/CMS.

**List of ESL boxes.** If you are a nonnative speaker of English, you will find most of the ESL (English as a second language) advice in the tabbed section marked T (for ESL Trouble Spots). Other ESL advice appears in boxed ESL notes throughout *A Writer's Reference*. For quick reference, a list of these ESL notes is given near the end of the book, after the index and before the revision symbols.

**Revision symbols.** Some instructors mark student papers with the codes given on the main menu or detailed menus, such as S1 or G3-c. If your instructor uses standard revision symbols instead, consult the list on the very last page of the book, right before the endpapers.

**Detailed menu (inside the back cover).** A menu more detailed than the main menu appears inside the back cover.

**Companion Web site.** The following chart describes resources for students that appear on the book's companion Web site at <[www.dianahacker.com/writersref](http://www.dianahacker.com/writersref)>. The electronic exercises (over one hundred sets on writing, grammar, and research) can be used for self-study. After answering each exercise item, you receive specific feedback for correct and incorrect answers; you do not need to wait until the end of an exercise set to know how you are doing.

**ON THE WEB**

Throughout *A Writer's Reference*, Fifth Edition, On the Web boxes direct you to relevant resources on the book's companion Web site.

Simply go to **[www.dianahacker.com/writersref](http://www.dianahacker.com/writersref)** and click on

► **Electronic Writing Exercises**

Interactive exercises on topics such as choosing a thesis statement and conducting a peer review

► **Electronic Grammar Exercises**

Interactive exercises on grammar, style, and punctuation

► **Electronic Research Exercises**

Interactive exercises on topics such as integrating quotations and documenting sources in MLA, APA, and CMS (*Chicago*) styles

► **Language Debates**

Mini-essays by Diana Hacker that explore controversial issues of grammar and usage, such as split infinitives

► **Links Library**

Carefully selected and annotated links to additional online resources for every part of the book

► **Model Papers**

Annotated sample papers in MLA, APA, CMS (*Chicago*), and CBE styles

► **Research and Documentation Online**

Advice on finding sources and up-to-date guidelines for documenting print and online sources in MLA, APA, CMS (*Chicago*), and CBE styles

► **Additional Resources**

Print-format exercises for practice; "Looking at Yourself as a Writer" charts that encourage reflection



# Tutorials

The following tutorials will give you practice using the book's menu system, the index, the Glossary of Usage, and the directory to the MLA documentation models. Answers to all tutorials appear on pages xi–xiii.

## TUTORIAL 1 Using the menu system

Each of the following “rules” violates the principle it expresses. Using the menu system, find the section in *A Writer's Reference* that explains the principle. Then fix the problem. Examples:

*has*  
A verb ~~have~~ to agree with its subject. G1  
^

*Tutors in*  
~~In~~ the writing center/ ~~they~~ say that vague pronoun reference is  
^  
unacceptable. G3-b

1. Each pronoun must agree with their antecedent.
2. About sentence fragments. You should avoid them.
3. Its important to use apostrophe's correctly.
4. Watch out for *-ed* endings that have been drop from verbs.
5. Discriminate careful between adjectives and adverbs.
6. Be alert for irregular verbs that have came to you in the wrong form.
7. If your sentence begins with a long introductory word group use a comma to separate the word group from the rest of the sentence.
8. Don't write a run-on sentence, you must connect independent clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction or with a semicolon.
9. A writer must be careful not to shift your point of view.
10. When dangling, watch your modifiers.

## TUTORIAL 2 Using the index

Assume that you have written the following sentences and want to know the answers to the questions in brackets. Use the index at the back of the book to locate the information you need, and edit the sentences if necessary.

1. Each of the candidates have agreed to participate in tonight's debate. [Does the subject *Each* agree with *have* or with *has*?]
2. We had intended to go surfing but spent most of our vacation lying on the beach. [Should I use *lying* or *laying*?]
3. We only looked at two houses before buying the house of our dreams. [Is *only* in the right place?]
4. In Saudi Arabia it is considered ill mannered for you to accept a gift. [Is it okay to use *you* to mean "anyone in general"?]
5. Joanne picked up several bottles of Vermont maple syrup for her sister and me. [Should I write *for her sister and I*?]

### TUTORIAL 3 Using the menu system or the index

Imagine that you are in the following situations. Using either the menu system or the index, find the information you need.

1. You are Ray Farley, a community college student who has been out of high school for ten years. You recall learning to punctuate items in a series by putting a comma between all items except the last two. In your college readings, however, you have noticed that most writers use a comma between all items. You're curious about the current rule. What does *A Writer's Reference* tell you?
2. You are Maria Sanchez, an honors student working in your university's writing center. Mike Lee, who speaks English as a second language, has come to you for help. He is working on a rough draft that contains a number of problems involving the use of articles (*a*, *an*, and *the*). You know how to use articles, but you aren't able to explain the rather complicated rules on their correct use. Which section of *A Writer's Reference* will you and Mike Lee consult?
3. You are John Pell, engaged to marry Jane Dalton. In a note to Jane's parents, you have written, "Thank you for giving Jane and myself such a generous contribution toward our honeymoon trip to Hawaii." You wonder if you should write *Jane and I* or *Jane and me* instead. What does *A Writer's Reference* tell you?
4. You are Selena Young, a supervisor of interns at a housing agency. Two of your interns, Jake Gilliam and Susan Green, have writing problems involving -s endings on verbs. Gilliam tends to drop -s endings; Green tends to add them where they don't belong. You suspect that both problems stem from nonstandard dialects spoken at home.

Susan and Jake are in danger of losing their jobs because your boss thinks that anyone who writes "the tenant refuse" or "the landlords agrees" is beyond hope. You disagree. Susan and Jake are more intelligent than your boss supposes, and they have asked for your help. Where in *A Writer's Reference* can they find the rules they need?

5. You are Joe Thompson, a first-year college student. Your friend Samantha, who has completed two years of college, seems to enjoy correcting your English. Just yesterday she corrected your sentence "I felt badly about her death" to "I felt bad about her death." You're sure you've heard many educated persons, including professors, say "I felt badly." Upon consulting *A Writer's Reference*, what do you discover?

## TUTORIAL 4 Using the Glossary of Usage

Consult the Glossary of Usage (section W1) to see if the italicized words are used correctly. Then edit any sentences containing incorrect usage. Example:

*an*

The pediatrician gave my daughter *a* injection for her allergy.

1. The *amount* of horses a Comanche warrior had in his possession indicated the wealth of his family.
2. This afternoon I plan to *lie* out in the sun and work on a tan.
3. That is the most *unique* floral arrangement I have ever seen.
4. Changing attitudes *toward* alcohol have *effected* the beer industry.
5. Jenny *should of* known better than to attempt that dive.
6. Everyone in our office is *enthused* about this project.
7. George and Pat are selling *there* house because now that *their* children are grown, *their* planning to move to Arizona.
8. Most sleds are pulled by no *fewer* than two dogs and no more than ten.
9. It is the nature of *mankind* to think wisely and act foolishly.
10. Dr. Newman and *myself* have agreed to arrange the party.

## TUTORIAL 5 Using the directory to MLA works cited models

Assume that you have written a short research paper on the growth of gambling operations on Indian reservations. You have cited the following sources in your paper, using MLA documentation, and you are ready to type your list of works cited. Flip the book open to the tabbed section marked MLA Papers and use the MLA directory to locate the appropriate models. Then write a correct entry for each source and arrange the entries in a properly formatted list of works cited. *Note:* Do not number the entries in a list of works cited.

A book by Jeff Benedict entitled *Without Reservation: The Making of America's Most Powerful Indian Tribe and the World's Largest Casino*. The book was published in New York by Harper in 2000.

An article by Jerry Useem entitled "The Big Game: Have American Indians Found Their New Buffalo?" from the biweekly magazine *Fortune*. The article appears on nonconsecutive pages beginning with page 22 of the October 2, 2000, issue of the magazine.

An e-mail with the subject line "Casinos on reservations in the Northeast," sent to you by Helen Codoga on April 10, 2001.

A journal article by Susan Johnson entitled "From Wounded Knee to Capitol Hill." The article appears in *State Legislatures*, which is paginated by issue. The volume number is 24, the issue number is 9, and the year is 1998. You found this article using the InfoTrac database *Expanded Academic ASAP* at the University of Pittsburgh library on April 6, 2001.

A short Web document entitled "Tribal Gaming Myths and Facts" written by the National Indian Gaming Association and published in 2000 on the group's Web site at <http://www.indiangaming.org/info/pr/myths.shtml>. You found the document on April 4, 2001.

A radio segment entitled "Indian Gaming" from the program *All Things Considered* hosted by Robert Siegel. The program was produced by National Public Radio on March 5, 2001. You listened to the program on WDUQ in Pittsburgh.

## Answers to Tutorial 1

1. Each pronoun must agree with its antecedent. (G3-a)
2. You should avoid sentence fragments. (G5)
3. It's important to use apostrophes correctly. (P5-c and P5-e)
4. Watch out for *-ed* endings that have been dropped from verbs. (G2-d)
5. Discriminate carefully between adjectives and adverbs. (G4)
6. Be alert for irregular verbs that have come to you in the wrong form. (G2-a)
7. If your sentence begins with a long introductory word group, use a comma to separate the word group from the rest of the sentence. (P1-b)
8. Don't write a run-on sentence; you must connect independent clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction or with a semicolon. (G6)
9. A writer must be careful not to shift his or her [not their] point of view. Or Writers must be careful not to shift their point of view. (S4-a)
10. Watch out for dangling modifiers. (S3-e)

## Answers to Tutorial 2

- 1. The index entry “*each*” mentions that the word is singular, so you might not need to look further to realize that *has* [not *have*] is correct. The first page reference leads you to section G1-e, which explains in more detail why *has* is correct.
- 2. The index entry “*lie, lay*” takes you to the Glossary of Usage and to section G2-b, where you will learn that *lying* (meaning “reclining or resting on a surface”) is correct.
- 3. Look up “*only*” and you will be directed to section S3-a, which explains that limiting modifiers such as *only* should be placed before the words they modify. The sentence should read *We looked at only two houses before buying the house of our dreams.*
- 4. Looking up “*you, inappropriate use of*” leads you to the Glossary of Usage and section G3-b, both of which explain that *you* should not be used to mean “anyone in general.” You can revise the sentence by using *a person* or *one* instead of *you*, or you can restructure the sentence completely: *In Saudi Arabia, accepting a gift is considered ill mannered.*
- 5. The index entries “*I vs. me*” and “*me vs. I*” take you to section G3-c, which explains why *me* is correct.

## Answers to Tutorial 3

1. Section P1-c notes that although usage varies, most experts advise using a comma between all items in a series—to prevent possible misreadings or ambiguities. To find this section, Ray Farley would probably use the menu system.
2. Maria Sanchez and Mike Lee would consult section T1, on articles. This section is easy to locate on the main menu.
3. Section G3-c explains why *Jane and me* is correct. To find section G3-c, John Pell could use the menu system if he knew to look under “Problems with pronouns.” Otherwise, he could look up “*I vs. me*” in the index. Pell could also look up “*myself*” in the index or he could consult the Glossary of Usage, where a cross-reference would direct him to section G3-c.
4. Selena Young’s employees could turn to sections G1 and G2-c for help. Young could use the menu system to find these sections if she knew to look under “Subject-verb agreement” or “Other problems with verbs.” If she wasn’t sure about the grammatical terminology, she could look up “*-s, as verb ending*” or “*Verbs, -s form of*” in the index.
5. Section G4-b explains why “*I felt bad about her death*” is correct. To find section G4-b, Joe Thompson could use the menu system if he knew that *bad* versus *badly* is a choice between an adjective and an adverb. Otherwise he could look up “*bad, badly*” in the index or the Glossary of Usage.

**Answers to Tutorial 4**

1. The *number* of horses a Comanche warrior had in his possession indicated the wealth of his family.
2. Correct
3. That is the most *unusual* floral arrangement I have ever seen.
4. Changing attitudes *toward* alcohol have *affected* the beer industry.
5. Jenny *should have* known better than to attempt that dive.
6. Everyone in our office is *enthusiastic* about this project.
7. George and Pat are selling *their* house because now that *their* children are grown, *they're* planning to move to Arizona.
8. Correct
9. It is *human* nature to think wisely and act foolishly.
10. Dr. Newman and *I* have agreed to arrange the party.

**Answers to Tutorial 5**

Benedict, Jeff. Without Reservation: The Making of America's Most Powerful Indian Tribe and the World's Largest Casino. New York: Harper, 2000.

Codoga, Helen. "Casinos on reservations in the Northeast." E-mail to the author. 10 Apr. 2001.

"Indian Gaming." All Things Considered. Host Robert Siegel. Natl. Public Radio. WDUQ, Pittsburgh. 5 Mar. 2001.

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National Indian Gaming Association. "Tribal Gaming Myths and Facts." 2000. 4 Apr. 2001 <<http://www.indiangaming.org/info/pr/myths.shtml>>.

Useem, Jerry. "The Big Game: Have American Indians Found Their New Buffalo?" Fortune 2 Oct. 2000: 22+.



# *Preface for instructors*

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When Bedford and I invented the quick-reference format—with its main menu, tabbed dividers, and lie-flat binding—more than ten years ago, we had no idea that *A Writer's Reference* would become so popular (or so widely imitated). My goals were more modest. I hoped that the format and the title would send a clear message: *A Writer's Reference* is meant to be consulted as needed; it is not a set of grammar lessons to be studied in a vacuum. I also hoped that the book would support and promote modern pedagogy, which places students' own texts at the center of writing instruction. These hopes have been realized: Instructors across the country tell me that their students can and do use the book on their own, keeping it flipped open next to their computers.

Like the book itself, this preface is organized for quick reference. It has three main parts: What's new, below; What's the same, page xvi; and What's on the companion Web site, page xvii.

## ***What's new***

Most of my revisions respond to technological change. In addition to updating the book for the digital age, I have improved the sections on critical thinking and made the book more useful for writers across the curriculum. Here, briefly, are some highlights.

***Integration of the book with its companion Web site.*** Because most students are now working online, I've extended my book beyond its paper covers by linking it explicitly to its Web site. Throughout the book, On the Web boxes take students to locations on the Web site where they will find a variety of supplements to the book: model papers, essays called Language Debates, Research and Documentation Online, a links library, and more than one hundred electronic exercises on writing, grammar, and research. Because the Web site is an extension of the book, I have written nearly all of its content myself. For more about these Web features, see pages xvii–xix.

**Updated advice on finding and evaluating sources.** With the help of reference librarian Barbara Fister, I have revised the sections on finding and evaluating sources with the awareness that the library and the Web now depend on one another. I encourage students to enter the Web through a library's portal or another "juried" venue that assures some sort of quality control. Also, I emphasize the need for evaluation throughout the research process—from choosing a search engine or database to selecting reliable sources to reading those sources.

The sections on finding and evaluating sources are more cross-curricular than before: They are now illustrated with examples linked to the topics of the book's MLA, APA, and CMS (*Chicago*) papers.

**Discipline-specific rhetorical advice for MLA, APA, and CMS (*Chicago*) styles in color-coded sections.** Handbook advice on drafting a thesis, avoiding plagiarism, and integrating sources has traditionally been illustrated only with MLA examples. To make the fifth edition of *A Writer's Reference* more useful for students writing APA and CMS papers, I now present discipline-specific advice on these important matters in three color-coded sections. Students in social science or history classes no longer need to "translate" the examples, mentally replacing MLA's in-text citations with APA's quite different in-text citations or with CMS's notes. In all three sections, examples are tied to topics appropriate to each discipline.

**Expanded MLA guidelines, especially for Web sources.** Because many Web sources have corporate or unknown authors and because most lack stable page numbers, I now pay special attention to authorship and pagination in my presentation of MLA's in-text citations. It is easier for students to document both print and Web sources if they focus on a clear first step: identifying the author of a source. Once students grasp that the author's name links an in-text citation to an entry in the list of works cited, they can better understand the intricacies of MLA style: how to handle multiple authors, for example, or corporate authors or unknown authors. As for the issue of page numbers, I explain the MLA guidelines, along with their implications, in more detail than before.

The works cited models now cover a wider range of multimedia and Web sources because students are relying more heavily on such sources in their papers.



**New sample papers.** A new MLA paper that advocates regulating the use of cell phones while driving is paired with a paper opposing such regulation; the second paper appears on the book's companion Web site. Each paper draws on both print and electronic sources.

Pages of a new CMS paper appear in the book. The full version of the paper is posted on the companion Web site.

**Revised advice on constructing and evaluating arguments.** The section on argument devotes more attention to audience and the need to build credibility. A new section on evaluating arguments shows students how argumentative tactics, such as generalizing and appealing to emotions, can work either to build or to undermine a writer's credibility.

**More attention to writing in online environments.** The section on document design includes new advice about creating scannable and online résumés as well as updated and expanded advice about designing Web sites.

### ***What's the same***

Although technology has led to a number of changes in the book, many of the book's features will be familiar to users of the previous edition. The features that have most contributed to the book's success are detailed in this section.

**Color-coded main menu and tabbed dividers.** The main menu points unmistakably to teal, red, black, and white sets of tabbed dividers, making it easy for students to identify and flip to the section they need. The documentation sections are now also color-coded: red for MLA, teal for APA, and blue for CMS.

**A user-friendly index.** In the index of the fifth edition, I include the letter of the tabbed section (in boldface) before the page number of the indexed word, such as G: 151 or P: 234–35. That way users can flip directly to the correct tabbed divider, such as G (for Grammatical sentences) or P (for Punctuation), before tracking down the page number.

The index (which I write myself) helps students find what they are looking for even if they don't know grammatical terminology. When facing a choice between *I* and *me*, for example, students may not know to look up "Case" or even "Pronoun case." They are more likely to look up "*I*" or "*me*," so I have included index entries for "*I*