




MISTAKE	EXPLANATION
lc	Use lowercase letter
CAP or uc	Use capital (uppercase) letter
^	Insert text
	Leave space between the two characters
	Close up
	Start a new paragraph
Page break	End the current page; move subsequent text to next page. (In Microsoft Word and WordPerfect, press Ctrl + Enter where you want to end the page.)
agr	Subject and verb do not agree.
wc	Word choice. Word used is not appropriate for the situation.
.	A dotted underline means “stet,” or “let original text stand.” The correction was made in error.
1	Word usage incorrect. Look it up in the dictionary. Examples:
a.	absorbance (how much light is absorbed) vs. absorbency (how much moisture a diaper or paper towel can hold)
b.	to bind (what atoms and molecules do) vs. to bond (what glue does)
c.	complementary (DNA strands) vs. complimentary (given free as a courtesy)
d.	data = plural of “datum”; e.g. “These data show...” <i>not</i> “This data shows...”
e.	effect (noun) vs. effect (verb meaning “to cause”) vs. affect (verb meaning “to influence”)
f.	conformation (3-D shape of a protein) vs. confirmation (verification)
i.	it’s (it is) vs. its (belonging to “it”)
m.	amount (cannot count individual pieces) vs. number (can count individual pieces)
r.	ratio (proportion or quotient) vs. ration (a fixed portion of food)
s.	strain of bacteria vs. strand of DNA
t.	then (next in time) vs. than (an expression for comparing two things)
v.	varying (changing) vs. various (different)
2	Italicize Latin names.
3	Write in passive voice. Shift the emphasis from yourself to the subject of the action.
4	Use punctuation correctly.
5	Do not write awkward or incomplete sentences.
6	Do not write symbols by hand. Use Insert Symbol on the Ribbon.
7	Superscript/Subscript.
	Superscript: For 10 ⁻⁵ , for example, type “10-5”; then select “-5” and click Home Font Superscript .
	Subscript: For <i>Km</i> , for example, type “Km”; then select “m” and click Home Font Subscript .
8	Essential Abstract content is missing. Include purpose, brief description of methods, results, and conclusions or possible explanation for the results.
9	Too much detail for Abstract.
10	Cite sources when providing background.
11	State the purpose of the current experiment.
12	Wrong citation format. Use either name-year or citation-sequence format. See Chapter 4 for specific examples.
13	Do not use direct quotations in scientific writing. Paraphrase and cite the source.
14	Write Materials and Methods in past tense and in paragraph form. Do not make a numbered list.

15	Do not list materials separately in Materials and Methods section, unless the source is noncommercial or critical for the outcome of the experiment.
16	Time frame does not affect the outcome.
17	Do not refer to the container; instead emphasize the contents and give appropriate volumes, masses, and concentrations.
18	Do not describe routine laboratory procedures in detail.
19	In the Materials and Methods section, do not give a "preview" of how data will be organized in the Results section.
20	Essential details are missing in the Materials and Methods section. Provide enough detail to enable the reader to repeat the experiment.
21	Do not include raw data in the Results section; instead, summarize and organize the data.
22	Use <i>past</i> tense when describing your own results. Present tense is reserved for information already accepted by the scientific community.
23	Describe <i>each</i> table and <i>each</i> figure individually and sequentially.
24	Refer to each figure/table number in parentheses as you describe the results.
25	Do not use unnecessary introductions like "Fig. 1 shows the effect of <i>x</i> on <i>y</i> ." Instead, describe <i>how x</i> affected <i>y</i> .
26	Do not include a table when the figure(s) shows the same data.
27	Give each figure and table a number and a title.
28	Use figure and table titles that are self-explanatory without referring to the text.
29	Do not write uninformative figure titles such as "y-axis title vs. x-axis title. See Chapter 4 for examples.
30	Position the figure caption <i>below</i> the figure; position the table caption <i>above</i> the table.
31	Do not include a title above the figure. When you make the figure in Excel, leave the "Chart title" space blank.
32	Use proper spacing on the axis. Choose "XY Scatter" plot in Excel (see Appendix 2).
33	Give each data set its own distinguishable symbols and lines. Choose black for both the line and the symbol color.
34	Use scientific notation when numbers are very large or very small.
35	Include units.
36	Use correct number format. Do not start sentences with a number (write out the number). Make sure decimal numbers less than one start with zero, e.g. 0.1 mL, <i>not</i> .1 mL.
37	Give possible explanations for the results.
38	Compare your results with those in the literature. Science is not done in a vacuum!
39	Use proper reference format. See Chapter 4 for specific examples.
40	List all in-text citations in the References section.
41	Cite all end references in the text.