

## Editing the thesis



Te Kaitiaki  
ki Pōwhiri  
MASSEY UNIVERSITY

Dr Julia Rayner  
Centre for Teaching & Learning

## Singular or plural?

- Axis
- Crises
- Criterion
- Nuclei
- Phenomenon
- Stimuli
- Stratum
- Matrix

Forever discovering

Te Kaitiaki  
ki Pōwhiri



MASSEY UNIVERSITY

## Consistency in singular/plural

- |              |           |
|--------------|-----------|
| • Axis       | Axes      |
| • Crisis     | Crises    |
| • Criterion  | Criteria  |
| • Nucleus    | Nuclei    |
| • Phenomenon | Phenomena |
| • Stimulus   | Stimuli   |
| • Stratum    | Strata    |
| • Matrix     | Matrices  |

The data are / show / indicate – data as a group of different factors  
The data is / shows / indicates – data as a whole unit (datum).

NB: foreign words ending in 'a' typically refer to plural forms, so require a verb that is plural. Es/i/

(Venolia, 1995)

Forever discovering

Te Kaitiaki  
ki Pōwhiri

MASSEY UNIVERSITY

## Consistency in spelling

### American or British?

- Labour
- Centre
- Fiber
- Organize
- Realise
- Dialog
- Analogue
- Traveler
- Anesthesia
- Programme

(Venolia, 1995)

Forever discovering

Te Kaitiaki  
ki Pōwhiri



MASSEY UNIVERSITY

## Consistency in spelling

| American   | British     |
|------------|-------------|
| Labor      | Labour      |
| Center     | Centre      |
| Fiber      | Fibre       |
| Organize   | Organise    |
| Realize    | Realise     |
| Dialog     | Dialogue    |
| Analog     | Analogue    |
| Traveler   | Traveller   |
| Anesthesia | Anaesthesia |
| Program    | Programme   |

(Venolia, 1995)

Forever discovering

Note:

American shortened version/as sounds

Use of z rather than s

Which ever you use be consistent

Te Kaitiaki  
ki Pōwhiri

MASSEY UNIVERSITY

## Common misspellings

- |                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| • Accomodate    | Accommodate  |
| • Definitely    | Definately   |
| • Occurrence    | Occurence    |
| • Independent   | Independant  |
| • Questionnaire | Questionaire |
| • Recommend     | Reccommend   |
| • Compulsary    | Compulsory   |
| • Catagories    | Categories   |

Forever discovering

Te Kaitiaki  
ki Pōwhiri



MASSEY UNIVERSITY

## Commonly confused words

Clients were given good advise/advice about the procedure  
This population has been effected/affected by droughts  
The knock on effect/affect was a drop in house prices  
Fish oil provides an alternate/alternative source of essential minerals  
Participants took the medication on alternate/alternative days  
Three discreet/discrete measurements were recorded  
The interviewer was very discreet/discrete in addressing these difficult issues  
Oatmeal serves as a complement/compliment to the babyfood  
Following the group therapy session we observed an increased number of complements/compliments

### TASK 1

Forever discovering

Ti Kaitiaki  
ki Pāwhiri  
MASSEY UNIVERSITY

## Subject-verb agreement

- Understanding of these concepts has/have been difficult
  - Writing a report and submitting it is/are important
  - The introduction and conclusion of the thesis has/have been corrected
- Need to identify
- Subject

Forever discovering

Ti Kaitiaki  
ki Pāwhiri  
MASSEY UNIVERSITY

## Subject-verb agreement

- Every infant, toddler and child is/are tested
- One in four participants has/have a score of ..
- Neither of the responses is/are correct
- The student's combined scores, excluding errors, is/are 126
- Cromewell & Sales specialise/s in ..

Need to identify Number

Two subjects joined by and = plural  
unless preceded by each/every  
company names

(Venolia, 1995)

Forever discovering

Ti Kaitiaki  
ki Pāwhiri  
MASSEY UNIVERSITY

## Collective nouns

- Majority/percent/group/family-take either singular or plural
- The majority is/are Latin American
- A 52% majority is/are considered sufficient
- The group is/are finishing the task
- A group of students is/are waiting in the foyer
- A number of indicators suggest (s)
- The number of users has/have dropped

(Venolia, 1995)

Forever discovering

Ti Kaitiaki  
ki Pāwhiri  
MASSEY UNIVERSITY

## Subject-pronoun agreement

- Each participant put their details on the form
- The third group nominated their leader
- Not one of the respondents mentioned their family background
- Five of the participants mentioned his or her experience of ...

Forever discovering

Ti Kaitiaki  
ki Pāwhiri  
MASSEY UNIVERSITY

## Parallel constructions

- In Britain, Spain and USA the majority of people use the ....
- This study aimed to find out people's views on euthanasia, measure their responses to the scenarios and collecting background information
- The use of mixed methods allows richness of data, control over questions and more robust
- There were many advantages of this approach, such as being easy to use, highly dependable, kept the questions relevant, downloaded quickly, and the responses very informative
- We collected 200 responses, grouped them and an analysis of themes carried out
- Participants were contacted, interviews were carried out and we did a follow up evaluation

Forever discovering

Ti Kaitiaki  
ki Pāwhiri  
MASSEY UNIVERSITY

## Anthropomorphism

(attributing human actions to inanimate objects)

- **This article argues**
  - Smith (1999) argues
  - This article reports
- **The report tests**
  - The report identifies / highlights
- **The results found**
  - The results showed / demonstrated
- **The research concludes**
  - The research findings lead to the conclusion
  - The researchers conclude

**The framework points out** (highlights/illustrates)

*Mining alerts people to the finite resources we have ..*

*Carbon footprinting tax divides people in their beliefs for*

Forever discovering

To Kaitiaki  
ki Pāwhiri  
MASSEY UNIVERSITY

## Verbs for referring to sources

**Pattern 1:** reporting verb + **that** + subject + verb

|             |         |             |         |           |
|-------------|---------|-------------|---------|-----------|
| acknowledge | admit   | agree       | allege  | argue     |
| assert      | assume  | believe     | claim   | conclude  |
| consider    | decide  | demonstrate | deny    | determine |
| discover    | doubt   | emphasise   | explain | find      |
| hypothesise | imply   | indicate    | infer   | note      |
| object      | observe | point out   | prove   | reveal    |
| say         | show    | state       | suggest | think     |

1. Da Souza **argues that** previous researchers have misinterpreted the data.
2. Researchers **have demonstrated that** the procedure is harmful.
3. Smith admits that aggregating the data limits the possible variations

Forever discovering

(Smollet, Proctor & Plotnick,  
2004)  
MASSEY UNIVERSITY

**Pattern 1:** reporting verb + **that** + subject + verb

### Common errors

**Incorrect:**

The researchers expressed that...

**Correct:**

**must be followed by a**

The researchers **expressed the view that**

**Incorrect:**

Jones discussed that...

**Correct:**

**must be followed by a**

Jones **discussed the use of**...

Forever discovering

To Kaitiaki  
ki Pāwhiri  
MASSEY UNIVERSITY

## Some Useful Resources

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Becker, H.S., & P. Richards. (1986). *Writing for social scientists. How to start and finish your thesis, book or article*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Day, R.A. (1998). *How to write and publish a scientific paper* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Phoenix, AZ: The Oryx Press.

Evans, D.G. (2000). *How to write a better thesis*. Carlton: Melbourne University Press.

Rountree, K. (1996). *Writing by degrees. A practical guide to writing theses and research papers*. Auckland: Longman.

Swales, J & Feak, C. (1994) *Academic writing for graduate students : essential tasks and skills*. University of Michigan Press

Swan, M. (2002). *Practical English Usage*. Oxford University Press

Venolia, J. (1995). *Write right. A desktop digest of punctuation, grammar and style*. California: Ten Speed Press

Forever discovering

To Kaitiaki  
ki Pāwhiri  
MASSEY UNIVERSITY