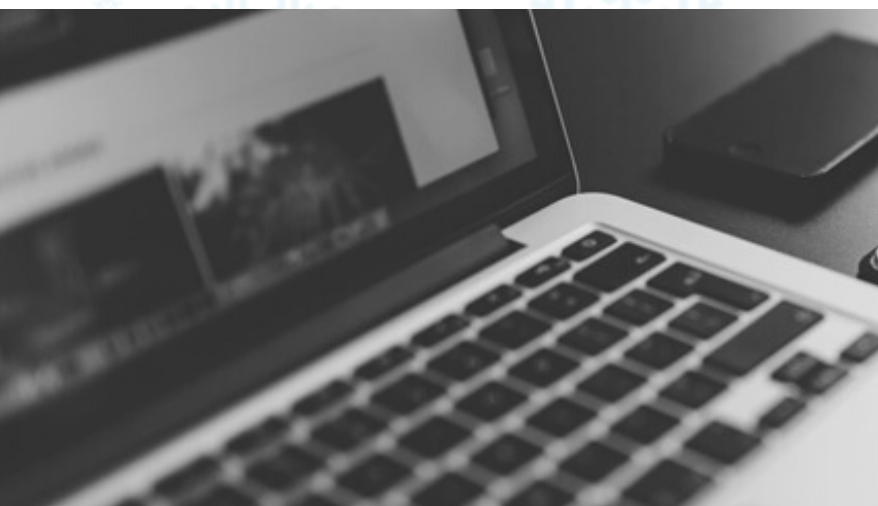




Maintaining and promoting editorial proficiency in the life sciences



From the President

As we look forward to the start of a new year and all the promise that brings us, I'd like to take a moment to briefly reflect on the past one. What a privilege it has been to serve as BELS president, especially at such an exciting time for our organization and our profession. As I prepare to hand over the reins to Stephen Palmer, PhD, ELS, on Jan. 1, I'd like to extend my gratitude to our board members and to each of you for your commitment of time on behalf of BELS in the many ways you volunteer and intersect with us and for your dedication to your craft.

This year, we welcomed many new certified editors into our ranks. We

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- Monthly Poll Results

The BELS Letter

Bryan Tutt, ELS(D)
Managing Editor

Alex Rudie
Publications Coordinator



From the President

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congratulate them on their achievement. Our members are at the heart of what we do and are key to supporting ongoing excellence in the field.

The launch of certification maintenance has been widely embraced. Our recent panel discussion and Q&A session was well attended. We hope the information shared helped clarify the path forward as we prepare to officially launch the program on Jan. 1, 2024. The session recording can be viewed on-demand [here](#), along with the [presentation slides](#). Our website also features helpful suggestions, FAQs, and other resources such as case scenarios to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible. This has been a tremendous effort on the part of many who carefully evaluated the best possible path forward to ensure the ongoing value of the ELS credential and to bring us in line with best practices.

Our committees have been hard at work all year long to bring you a series of membership and professional development offerings that we trust have added value to your BELS membership. We are always interested in your ideas for future topics, so keep them coming! Submit your suggestions [here](#).

I send my warmest wishes to you for a holiday season filled with peace and the chance to recharge. Embrace time with friends and family, celebrate your own accomplishments, and gear up for an exciting new year ahead, one I hope is both fulfilling and prosperous.

Again, it has been a tremendous honor to serve as your BELS president. I look forward to our continued success in the months and years to come.



*Melanie Fridl Ross, MSJ, ELS
BELS President*

BELS Certification Maintenance Launches Jan. 1!

Effective January 1, 2024, individuals who are certified as Editors in the Life Sciences, ELS or ELS(D), by BELS must renew their certification every 5 years. The renewal deadline will be December 31 of the fifth year from when the certification was earned or last renewed.

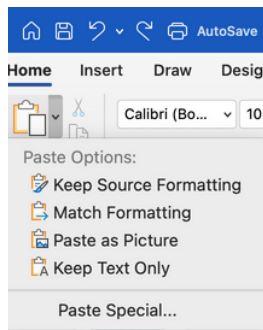
Multiple resources are available to help you prepare, including a recording of the recent panel discussion and Q&A session, FAQs, learning resource suggestions, and sample case scenarios. Find them under the “Certification Maintenance” tab.

6 Best Microsoft Word Tips For Editors

Unlock the Mysteries to Improve Productivity

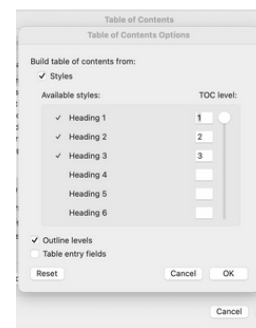
By: Colleen Walacavage, ELS, CW Editing Service

Note: The author is not affiliated with Microsoft Corporation. These tips may not apply to all versions of Microsoft Word.



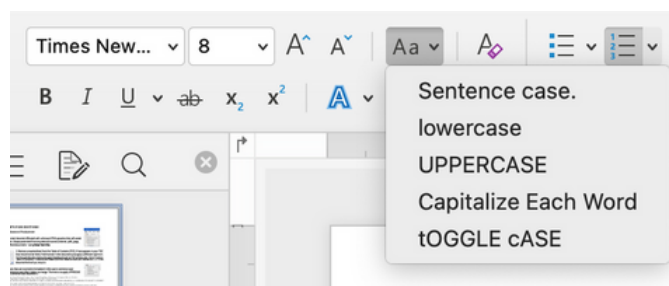
1. Avoid having your document become infiltrated with unknown HTML parasites that will wreak havoc on your document. Always paste text from any external sources (internet, PDFs, jpegs, etc.)—and even other Word documents—using **Keep Text Only**.

2. Remove unwanted text from the **Table of Contents (TOC)**. If text appears in your TOC that should not be there, find it in the document and apply a different style. Go through the document and apply the Heading # style to TOC entries only. Go to Custom Table of Contents > Options and make sure the Heading styles are marked as 1, 2, 3, etc., down to the level you require.



3. Quickly change incorrectly formatted **references** in Title case to Sentence case (example a, below). Applying a Sentence case often makes no change. The trick is to apply UPPERCASE (example b), then apply Sentence case (example c).

- a. Xu X, Wu Y, Hu M, et al. Novel Natural Product-like Caged Xanthonenes Bearing a Carbamate Moiety Exhibit Antitumor Potency and Anti-Angiogenesis Activity In vivo. Sci Rep. 2016;6:35771.
- b. Xu X, Wu Y, Hu M, et al. NOVEL NATURAL PRODUCT-LIKE CAGED XANTHONES BEARING A CARBAMATE MOIETY EXHIBIT ANTITUMOR POTENCY AND ANTI-ANGIOGENESIS ACTIVITY IN VIVO. Sci Rep. 2016;6:35771.
- c. Xu X, Wu Y, Hu M, et al. Novel natural product-like caged xanthonenes bearing a carbamate moiety exhibit antitumor potency and anti-angiogenesis activity in vivo. Sci Rep. 2016;6:35771.

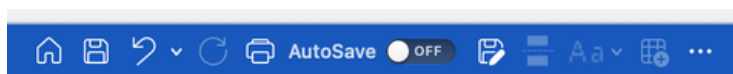




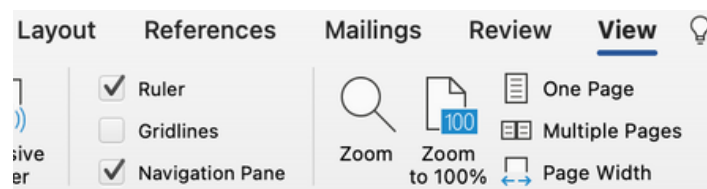
6 Best Microsoft Word Tips For Editors

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4. Set up Word to work for you! Customize your **Quick Access Toolbar** and your **Ribbon** by adding your most used functions like insert page break or change case. Add keyboard shortcuts for en dash and em dash.



In the **View** tab, check the Navigation Pane box to move easily through your document; use a split screen to check references as you encounter them in your document.



5. Using **insert caption** and **cross-reference** is a great way to keep tables and figures in the correct order and refer to them in the text. However, when a caption number updates, the text reference does not automatically update. To update in-text numbering (for tables and figures that change) quickly, select the whole document (including captions), right-click one caption (any will do), and select Update Field.

6. **Tables and graphics** are your friends!

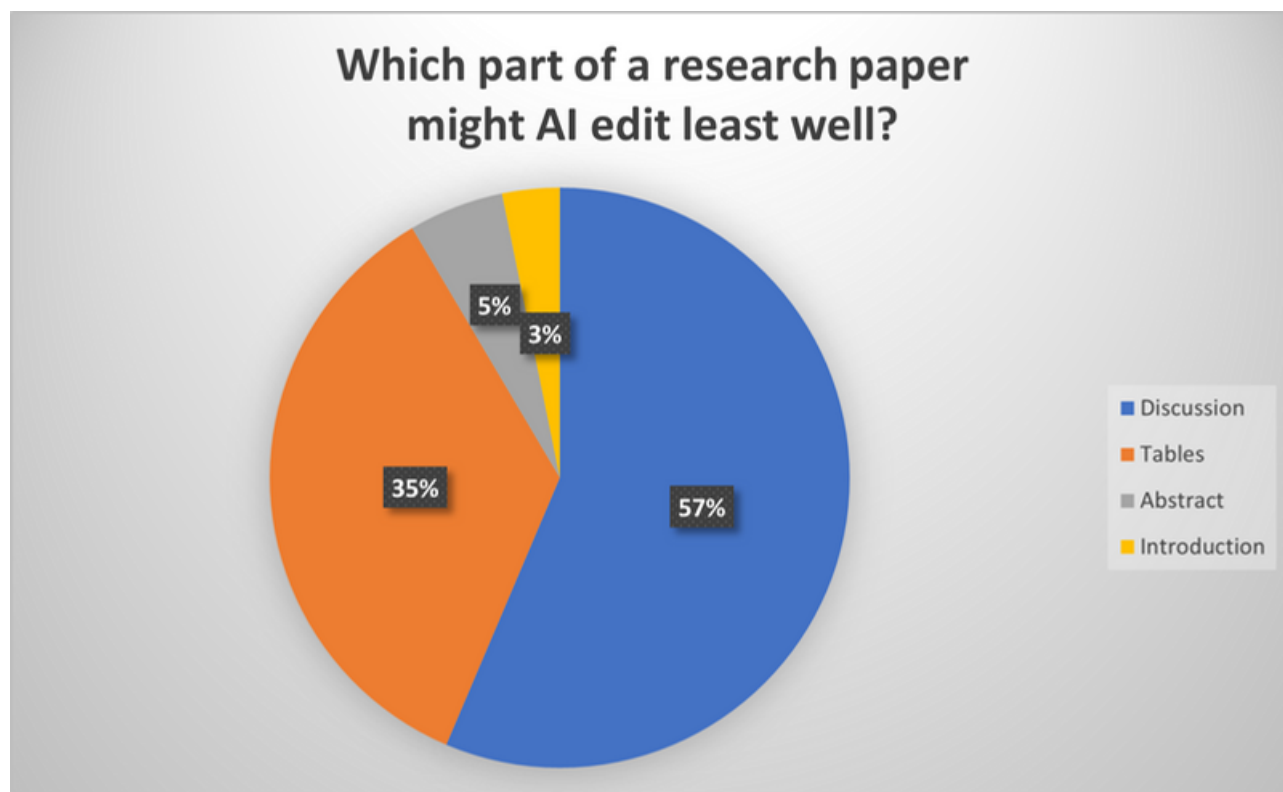
Top Tips for Tables	Top Tips for Graphics (figures and images)
Add a space above and below a table	Add a space above and below a graphic
Select the whole table or column to change the width of columns	Keep the same proportions of the graphic when changing size by holding the shift key while dragging the corner
Indent text inside a table cell using option tab (Mac) or control tab (Windows)	Use Picture Format menu to control graphic: Wrap text > use square or top and bottom
Center data vertically within a cell: go to Table Layout > Properties > Cell > Alignment and click on center	Layer graphics on top of each other then use Group function to keep together so graphic moves as a whole

Monthly Poll Results



Artificial intelligence (AI) is a hot topic in scientific publishing, as authors and publishers grapple with its practical applications and ethical issues. In November's monthly poll, we asked you which part of a research paper an AI application might struggle to edit. More than half of you said the Discussion section, and more than a third said tables.

Visit bels.org to participate in this month's poll, which asks you to select the manuscript feature you are most thankful for as an editor.



Jingle BELS!

Have you visited the online BELS Merchandise store yet? You can celebrate the holidays as you proudly display the BELS logo on your tote bag, mug, travel tumbler, sweatshirt, laptop case, or mouse pad. These items make great gifts for colleagues, employees, friends, and family, and you can ship directly to the recipient. Visit www.bels.org/store to order.



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The Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS) was founded in 1991 to evaluate the proficiency of manuscript editors in the life sciences and to award credentials similar to those obtainable in other professions.

Potential employers and clients of manuscript editors usually have no objective way to assess the proficiency of editors. For their part, editors are frustrated by the difficulty of demonstrating their ability. That is why both employers and editors so often resort to personal references or ad hoc tests, not always with satisfactory results. The need for an objective test of editorial skill has long been recognized.

To meet that need, BELS developed a process for testing and evaluating proficiency in editing in the life sciences. The Board administers two examinations—one for certification and one for diplomate status. The examinations, written by senior life-science editors assisted by testing experts, focus on the principles and practices of scientific editing in English.

