

The BELS Letter

Board of Editors in the Life Sciences

Maintaining and promoting editorial proficiency in the life sciences



From the President

Happy October!

If you are planning to attend the American Medical Writers Association's Medical Writing & Communication Conference in Baltimore this month, we'd love to see you at our BELS Breakfast. This gathering is a tradition we're so happy to return to, and it will be a wonderful opportunity to connect with our fellow editors, whether you are a longtime member or a newly minted ELS. Come learn more about our new certification maintenance process, network, and share ideas with each other as we collaborate on our shared mission of advancing our profession. We'll meet at 7:15 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 28 in the

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The BELS Letter

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From the President

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Apropoes restaurant private dining room in the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel. Check your inbox for an email with more details, or see page 3 in this issue. I hope to see you there!

In other news, this month we shared information about the creation of an Emeritus membership level, now available. This category is for certified editors aged 60 years or older who are retired from editing and have paid full membership dues for the past 5 years (or 25 years in total). For just \$25 annually, they will retain full membership benefits, with the exception of the freelance directory listing. These benefits include our email discussion list, access to free virtual events, and discounts on software and other resources.

Speaking of membership, you should have recently received your BELS renewal notice for 2024. Please make sure to renew your membership by Dec. 31 to ensure no interruption in your benefits, discounts, and networking opportunities.

*Melanie Fridl Ross, MSJ, ELS
BELS President*

Be There With BELS On!

BELS branded merchandise is now available! Now you can proudly display the BELS logo on your tote bag, mug, travel tumbler, sweatshirt, laptop case, or mouse pad. They make great gifts for colleagues, employees, friends, family, and yourself! Please visit www.bels.org/store to order.



2023 BELS Member Breakfast at AMWA

Join us at the BELS Member Breakfast for updates on what's new and exciting within the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences. If you are attending AMWA, please make time for the BELS breakfast on Saturday, Oct. 28 from 7:15–8:30 a.m. We will be dining in the Apropos Restaurant Private Dining Room, located at the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel. Registration is open to BELS members only and costs \$30. Registration will close Oct. 26. You can [register here](#).

Breakfast buffet items may include eggs, omelets, waffles, pancakes, biscuits and gravy, pastries, fruit, coffee, tea, assorted juices, and milk.



BELS Member Discounts

BELS has partnered with resource providers to offer valuable members-only discounts on products and services that help make your job easier. These offers are exclusive to BELS members and should not be shared with any non-member.

BELS member discounts include a **30% discount** on a single license of PerfectIt software. PerfectIt improves consistency, ensures quality, and saves time. BELS members also receive a **20% discount** on reference books such as *Scientific Style and Format: The CSE Manual for Authors, Editors, and Publishers* and *The Chicago Manual of Style*. The discount can be applied to both online and print versions of these books. Visit bels.org and click on Member Resources to claim your discounts today!



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Take the Next Step – ELS(D)



By: Bryan Tutt, MA, ELS(D)

Are you ready to take the next step in your professional development? If so, you should consider applying for diplomate status, which is indicated by the post-nominal “ELS(D).” While your ELS credential demonstrates your expertise as a biomedical editor, the ELS(D) shows that you are among the upper echelon of our profession.

Editors eligible to apply for ELS(D) status must have at least 6 years of editing experience, including 2 or more years with ELS status. The initial application requires the completion of an online form and documentation of editing experience (e.g., letters of reference). Once the application is accepted, the candidate must submit a portfolio of scientific text that shows the editor’s contributions. Details about the Diplomat Program and portfolio are available at <https://www.bels.org/diplomate-program>.

If you’ve been considering applying for diplomate status, now is the time to act. Effective January 1, 2024, the total cost will increase from the current rate of \$400 (\$100 application fee plus \$300 portfolio fee) to \$450 (\$100 application fee plus \$350 portfolio fee). Portfolios submitted by December 31, 2023, will be assessed at the current rate.

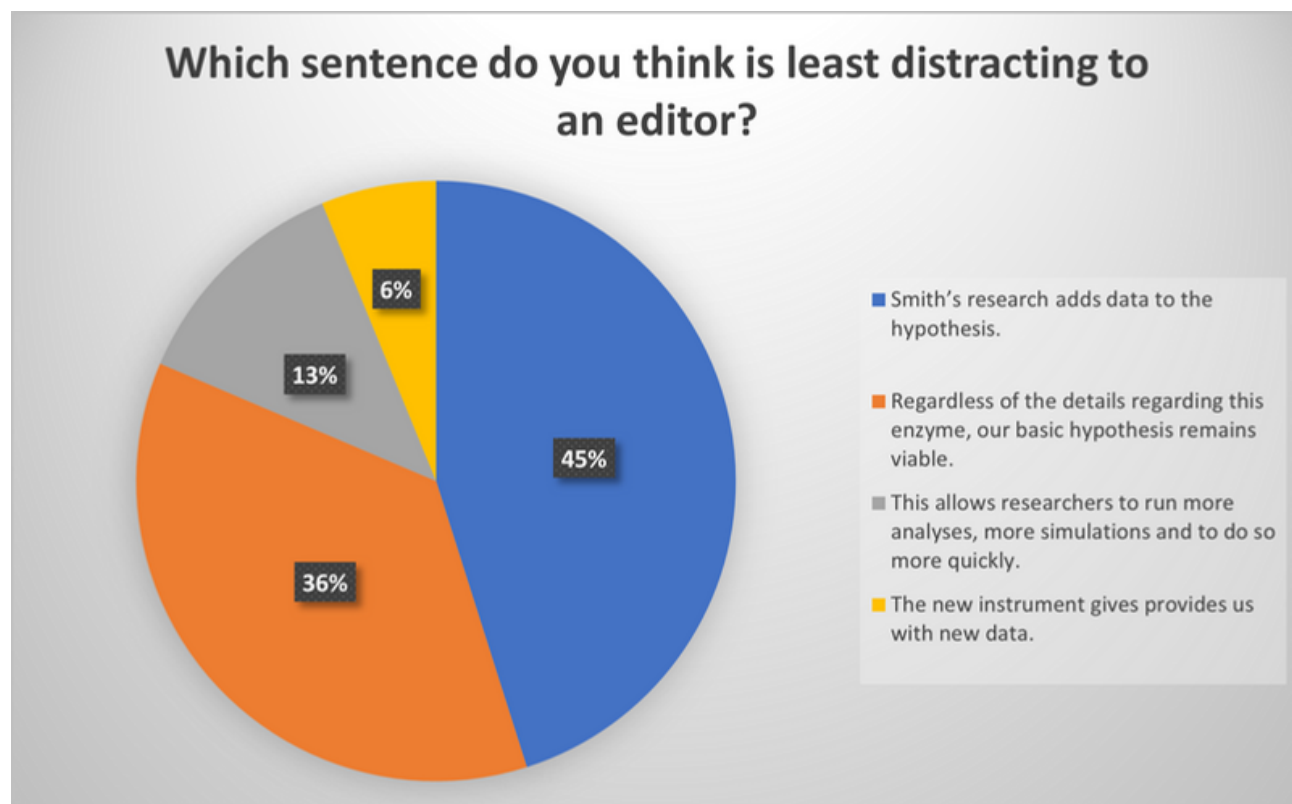


Monthly Poll Results

Our monthly polls often ask you to pick the most egregious error from a list of sentences or phrases. In a new twist, September's online poll asked you to choose the least distracting sentence from a group of sentences with errors similar to those we typically see in manuscripts.

The most votes went to “adds data to the hypothesis,” followed by “regardless of the details regarding.” Less distracting was a sentence that lacked parallel structure and one with the word “new” repeated.

Visit bels.org to participate in this month's poll, which asks you to select the phrase expressing comparison that is most likely to lead to error.



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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.

