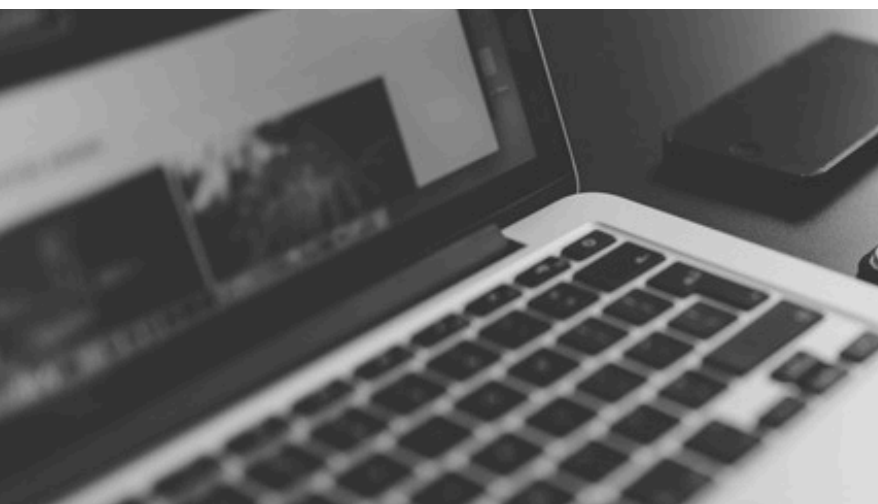




Maintaining and promoting editorial proficiency in the life sciences



## From the President

Hello, all. It's been quite a couple of months for BELS. We finished out July with the Summer Book Chat event, in which BELS members Stephen Bublitz, Barbara Gastel, and Claire Levine each talked about a book they liked or didn't like that was in some way related to the subject of editing. Right now, I'm in the middle of one of the recommended books—Carol Fisher Saller's *The Subversive Copy Editor: Advice from Chicago (or, how to negotiate good relationships with your writers, your colleagues, and yourself)*. And John McWhorter's *Nine Nasty Words: English in the Gutter: Then, Now, and Forever* is in my queue.

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### *The BELS Letter*

Kim Mankiewicz, PhD, ELS  
Managing Editor

Alex Rudie  
Publications Coordinator



# From the President

Continued from page 1

In mid-September, we had a Professional Development panel titled “Navigating the Scientific Editor Job Market: Insights from Experts.” Wim DHaeze represented the regulatory field, I represented academic publications, and Heather Langley provided her insights as a professional recruiter. The participants posed a lot of good questions, which we did our best to answer.

Now, October is almost upon us (along with the annual BELS Member Breakfast at AMWA – [registration is now open](#), and space is limited). Growing up in the Northeast, I loved October because it was when the leaves would change color. Now, I love it because it’s when the heat of Texas summer finally abates. Stay cool, everyone.

*Steve Palmer, PhD, ELS  
BELS President*



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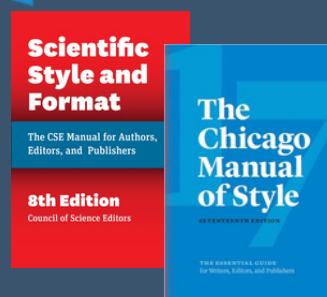
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[Click here](#) to access the members-only webpage for additional information, FAQs, and the members-only referral code to set up your BenefitHub account (this code is reserved for use by current BELS members only; do NOT share or forward the referral code). You can also view the video tutorial to learn how to use the portal.

We hope you enjoy this new BELS member benefit! Don't hesitate to get in touch with us at [info@bels.org](mailto:info@bels.org) if you have any questions. [Start Saving!](#)

# Monthly Poll Results



In July's Poll, we asked which of these substitutions you like best.

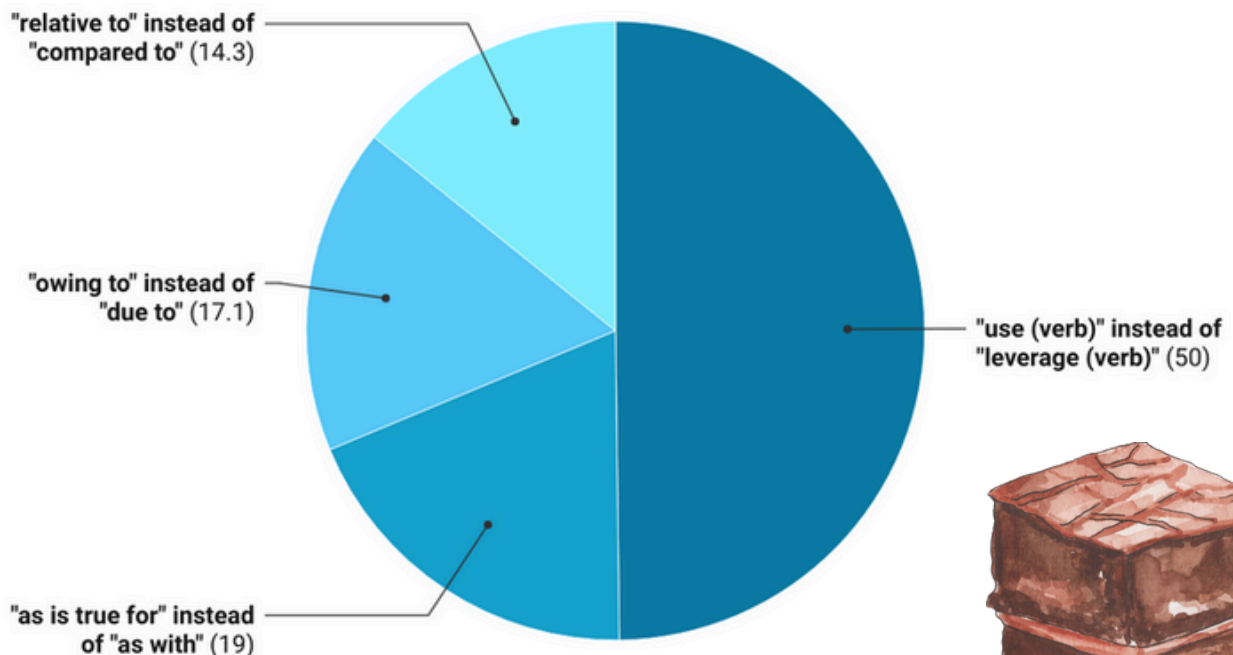
- *as is true for* instead of *as with*
- *relative to* instead of *compared to*
- *owing to* instead of *due to*
- *use (verb)* instead of *leverage (verb)*

We had 70 responses. The most popular answer was “*use instead of leverage*” and, at 50% of responses, it received as many votes as the other three options combined! The least popular response was “*relative to instead of compared to*” (14.3%).

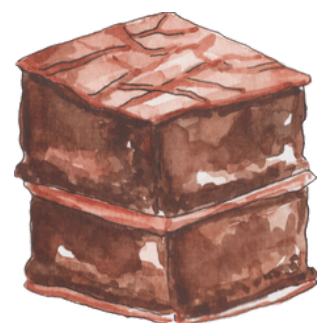
“Leverage” as a verb may have declined in popularity since its peak, so a substitute for it may not be needed as often as it was perhaps 10 years ago. “Relative to” seems to be used far less than “compared to,” and *Garner’s Modern English Usage* (4th edition, 2016) states that “relative to” can be replaced “to good advantage” with phrases such as “in relation to” or “in comparison with.” Neither “as with” nor “as is true for” seems very popular now, and neither is discussed in *Garner’s* 4th edition (but 5th edition is available).

## Which of these substitutions do you like best?

BELS July 2024 Poll Results

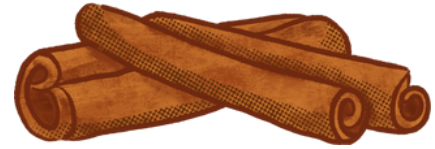


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# Monthly Poll Results



In August's Poll, we inquired which pronoun is most likely to NOT have an antecedent?

- such (20.4%)
- this (18.4%)
- we (51.0%)
- which (10.2%)

We had 49 votes. As in July, the most popular answer “we” received as many votes (50%) as the other three responses combined! The least popular response was “which” at 10.2%. Here's some info about each of these words as an antecedent and examples of how to use them:

## We

“We” is very often used without an antecedent. The antecedent may be mentioned several paragraphs before “we,” but often it is not mentioned at all but is understood to mean something like “all humans” or “the authors”:

Light wavelengths we can see are those from 400 to 700 nanometers.

The process creates maps that we can use to control invasive species.

## Such

*Garner's Modern English Usage* states that in “as such,” “such” is used as a pronoun and requires an antecedent. However, “such” in “as such” is often not a pronoun with an antecedent. In the following examples, I think “as such” could have been omitted or replaced by a phrase such as “for this reason”:

Our work is guided by our focus on health equity. **As such**, our programs integrate social determinants of health.

Some of the enzymes may have antitumorigenic roles. **As such**, they have been referred to as “anti-targets.”

## This

In my reading experience, “this” is usually used as an adjective. However, I have seen “this” used to refer to one or more sentences preceding or following the sentence containing “this.”

# Monthly Poll Results



This is how to tell if you have a canker sore.

This will allow researchers to perform more simulations.

## Which

“Which” is sometimes used similarly to “this,” referring to a sort of sentence within a sentence:

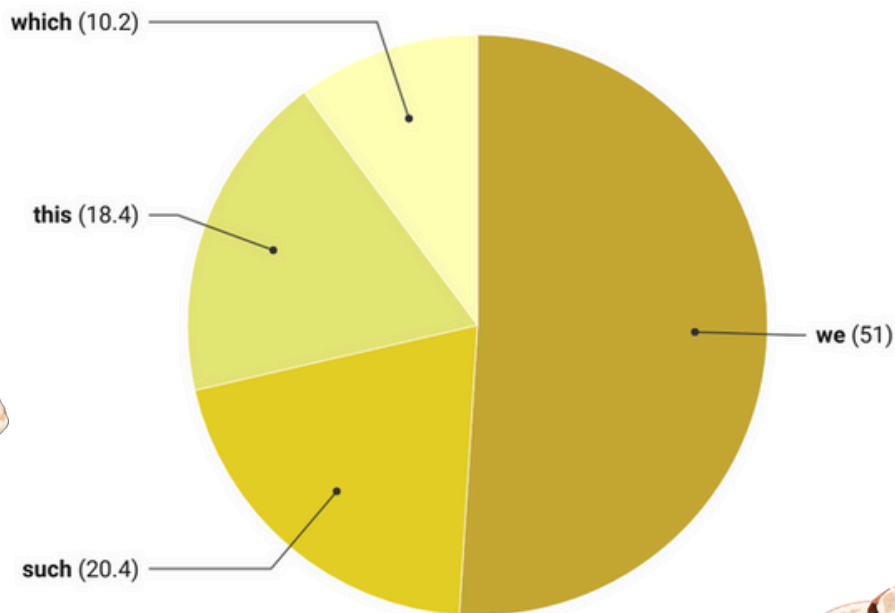
Mulching returns nutrients to the lawn, which assists in “fertilizing” the turf.

In the example above, “which” might be the mulching or the return of nutrients.

Thanks to Jane Krauhs, PhD, ELS(D), for creating the monthly poll questions and analyzing the responses! Head over to [bels.org](https://bels.org) for the new monthly poll.

## Which pronoun is most likely to NOT have an antecedent?

BELS August 2024 Poll Results



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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.

