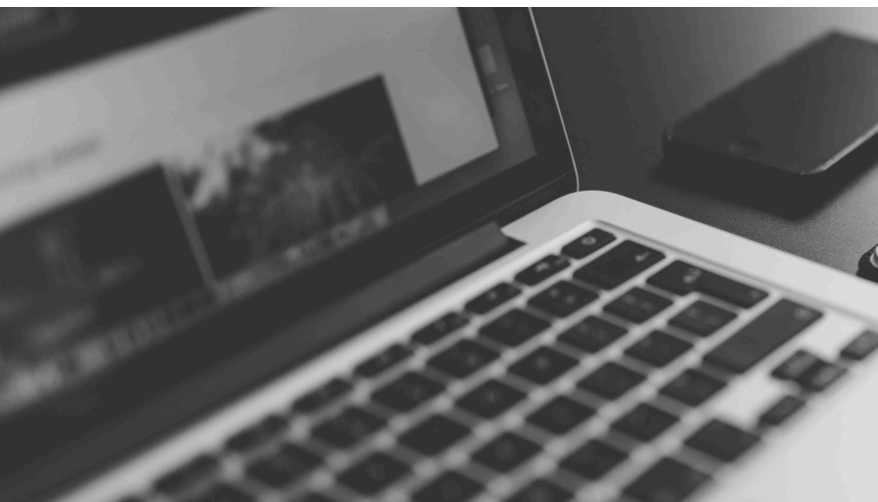




# The BELS Letter

Board of Editors in the Life Sciences

Maintaining and promoting editorial proficiency in the life sciences



## From the President

October and November are my favorite months. Along with March, they are the best months for weather in Houston. Plus, they have Halloween, the Day of the Dead, and Thanksgiving. Day of the Dead's signature flower is the marigold, and the Texas Medical Center always plants them this time of year, making cheerful patches of yellow and orange on streetcorners and medians.

November is, among other things, the month of Veterans Day in the US. Called Armistice Day or Remembrance Day in some countries, this day falls on November 11, when World War I was formally ended by the signing of the armistice at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918.

*Continued on page 2*

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- Monthly Poll Results
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- Certification Maintenance

### *The BELS Letter*

Kim Mankiewicz, PhD, ELS  
Managing Editor

Erin Reyes  
Communications Coordinator

# From the President

Continued from page 1



In honor of that day, I thought I'd tell a story about my dad.

During World War II, my father was a lieutenant in the US Army Air Corps (later to become the US Air Force), where he served as a navigator/bombardier on a B-24. His squadron was bombing a train yard in Hungary when his plane was shot down. He and the rest of the crew parachuted out and landed safely but were immediately captured. My dad then spent 10 months in German prison camps until his camp was liberated by US forces.

Of the things my dad told me about his time in prison camp, my favorite was the story about his birthday cake. He turned 21 during his imprisonment, and although food in the prison camp was scarce, the guy who was the self-appointed cook in his cell (which held about 14 men) made him a cake. He crushed crackers to make flour, used tooth powder (which contained baking soda) to make it rise, and melted chocolate bars on it for frosting. I imagine you or I would find that cake pretty horrible, but my dad thought it was wonderful.

The lesson I take from this is that even in the worst of times, there's always a way to make yourself or someone else feel better. Even if it seems lame or inadequate, it can make a real difference.

Steve Palmer, PhD, ELS  
BELS President

## Fall in love with the \*NEW\* BELS Merch Store!

The BELS Merchandise store has received a makeover! NEW logo items are now available for you to show your BELS pride everywhere you go. They make great gifts for colleagues, employees, friends, and family. Why not treat yourself, too? The deadline to ship for the holiday season is December 6th, so get your orders in today! U.S. and international shipping is available.

[Start Shopping!](#)



# BELS Annual Business Meeting



**BELS**  
Board of Editors in the Life Sciences

## ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING and Networking Event

**DECEMBER 11, 2024  
5:00 pm CST via Zoom**

It's that time of year! Join us for the BELS Annual Business Meeting!  
Hear from the BELS Board of Directors about the state of our organization and where we plan to go in 2025. You could win some \*NEW\* BELS merchandise all while meeting your peers during our speed networking event

**Wednesday, December 11, 2024, 5:00 PM CST via Zoom**

[Register Now](#)

## Discounts and Rewards through BenefitHub

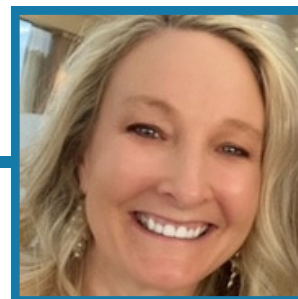
The new BenefitHub portal is available exclusively to BELS members and provides valuable discounts and rewards in various sectors: rental cars, hotels, and travel; insurance; technology, electronics, and software; office supplies; and more! The BenefitHub portal currently has deals and discounts in 16 different countries. We hope you enjoy this exclusive BELS member benefit!

[Start Saving!](#)



# BELS Professional Development Webinar Recap

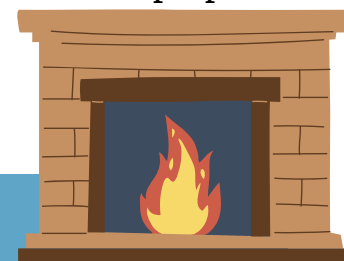
By Howard M. Fried, ELS



On September 19, the BELS Professional Development Committee hosted a webinar titled “Navigating the Scientific Editor Job Market: Insights from Experts.” The presenters were Steve Palmer, current BELS President and author’s editor; Wim DHaeze, regulatory editor; and recruiter Heather Langley.

In this outstanding webinar, the panelists offered invaluable advice and wisdom for scientific editors navigating the job market. Despite their different roles, the three panelists were of one mind about the many factors that make an applicant stand out. Here are some notable tips: Nearly all organizations require applicants to take an editing test (and your ELS certification will not free you from that requirement). When preparing a CV, don’t include everything you’ve done since high school; instead, limit your CV to items relevant to the target job and, along with editing functions you’ve had, include writing activity and experience. Finally, establish your ability to connect with authors and to respect cultural differences. As Steve Palmer stated, the Senior Editor will not be your boss; the Author is the boss. In sum, regardless of your editing career objective, this webinar will prepare you well.

A [recording](#) is available for members to watch on-demand.



## Member Event Recordings

Find members-only event recordings in the [Member Resources hub](#)! Login to view resources from nearly 20 past events, including Professional Development webinars that count towards BELS Certification Maintenance.

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# September Monthly Poll Results



In September's Poll, we asked which of these uses of "only" you like best.

- *She is one of the only scientists to study it.*
- *This flowering pattern is unique to only a few plants.*
- *Big brown bats are big only relative to other small bats.*
- *Its human diversity is only matched by its ecology.*

The poll generated 114 responses. The most popular (36.8%) answer was "This flowering pattern...", but "Its human diversity..." (28.1%) and "She is one of..." (26.3%) were fairly close behind the most popular answer. "Big brown bats..." was the least liked of the four sentences.

"Only" is a rather special word. According to the *New Oxford American Dictionary* (2001), it can be an adverb or an adjective, or even a conjunction (an informal use, according to that source). *New Oxford* also lists only as part of many phrases. According to the online OneLook collection of dictionaries, it can be a noun in "only child." *Garner's Modern English Usage* (2016) begins its listing of "only" with this statement: "Only is perhaps the most frequently misplaced of all English words." Farther down it says, "...the strong tendency in [American English] is to stick only right before the verb or verb phrase regardless of the illogic." Its advice is to place only "before the words intended to be limited."

In the poll choices, in only the last choice ("Its human diversity...") is only stuck in the middle of a verb ("is only matched"). In the first two choices, only is placed before, respectively, a noun ("scientists") and an adjective modifying a noun ("a few plants"). It seems to me that, in those two choices, the words after only are indeed the words that are limited by only. The words before only in these two choices, however, seem to complicate the use of only. In the first choice, only is preceded by the phrase "one of the," and replacing only with "few" might be preferable. In the second choice, only is preceded by the phrase "unique to," which usually refers to only one and might be replaced by "seen in." In the third choice ("Big brown bats..."), only is placed before a phrase ("relative to") and not before something that is limited by only. Apparently none of the choices is perfectly correct.

Thanks to Jane Krauhs, PhD, ELS(D), for analyzing the poll results. The BELS poll is posted monthly on [www.bels.org](http://www.bels.org). To suggest a poll question, email us at [info@bels.org](mailto:info@bels.org).

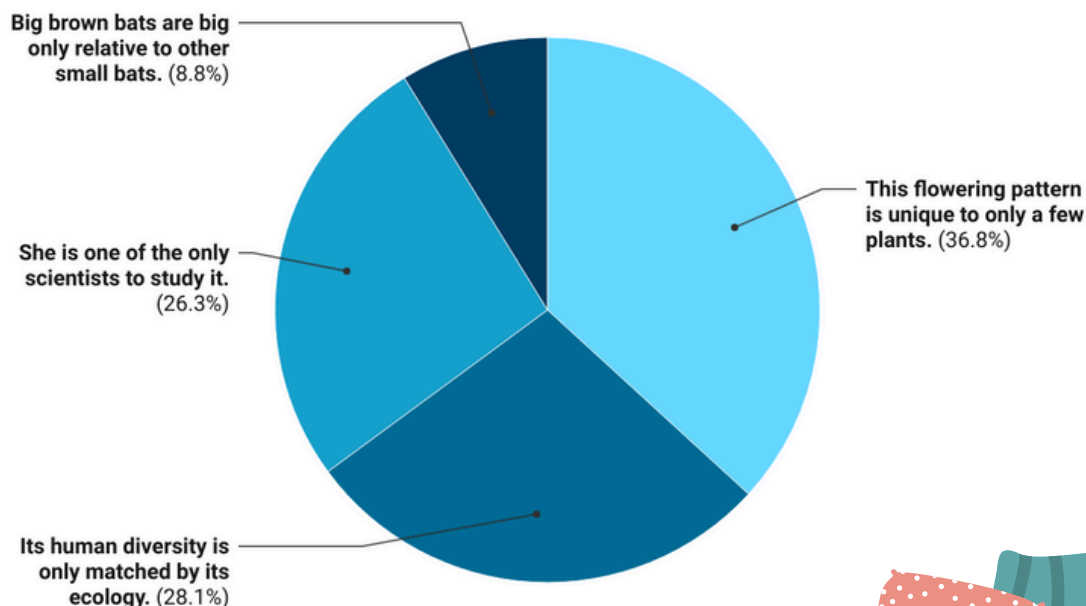


# September Monthly Poll Results



## Which use of "only" do you like best?

BELS September 2024 Poll Results



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## Cozy up with these 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:

- 30% discount on a single license of PerfectIt software
- 20% discount on reference books from The University of Chicago Press
- 20% discount on Draftsmith AI, offered by Intelligent Editing *New in 2024!*
- \$50 discount on a single-user perpetual license for EndNote 21 *New in 2024!*

Members, [visit the website](#) to claim your exclusive discounts today!

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THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE  
FOR WRITERS, EDITORS, AND PUBLISHERS

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# October Monthly Poll Results



In October's Poll, we asked you which sentence you think is most clear.

- *The district spans 130,000 acres in Montana.*
- *Cognitive benefits span from attention tasks to executive functions.*
- *The podcast spans all Nature journals.*
- *Acrophases can have circadian rhythms spanning across CT9 to CT15.*

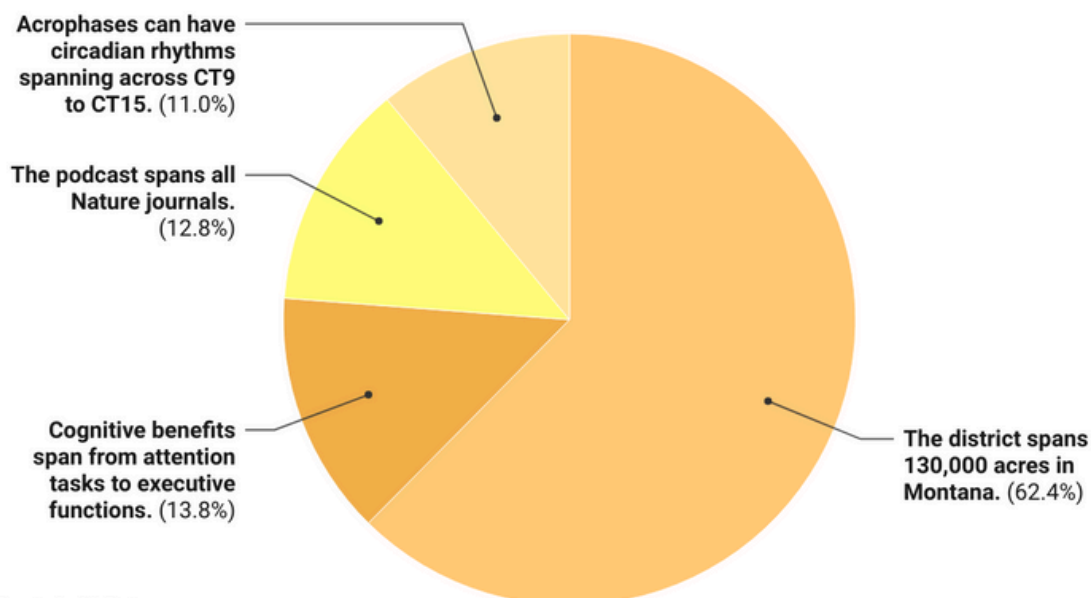
The poll generated 109 responses. The most popular (62.4%) answer by far was “The district spans...,” and the other three sentences had scores within three percentage points of each other. All four sentences contain “span,” of course, but some of them also contain a preposition (“from” or “across”).

The *New Oxford American Dictionary* (2001) definitions of “span” include prepositions: “extend from side to side of” (a bridge, for example) or “extend across” (“a period of time or a range of subjects”). According to the sample sentences printed after the definitions (“the stream was spanned by a narrow bridge” and “their interests span almost all the conventional disciplines”), no preposition needs to be added. Of the possible answers to the poll question, “The podcast spans all Nature journals” and “The district spans 130,000 acres...” are correct. However, most respondents thought “The district spans...” was the clearest sentence.

Thanks to Jane Krauhs, PhD, ELS(D), for analyzing the poll results.

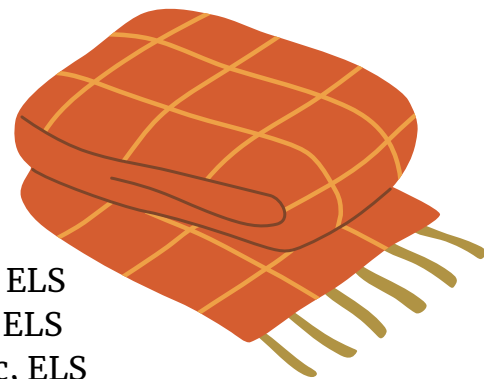
## Which sentence do you think is most clear?

BELS October 2024 Poll Results



Created with Datawrapper

## Newly Certified Editors



Alejandra Arreola Triana, ELS  
Saily Bhagwat, ELS  
Linda Daly, ELS  
Katherine Dela Cruz, ELS  
Euan Griffiths, ELS  
Elizabeth Hayes, ELS  
Ashwin Iyer, ELS  
Richa Joag, PhD, ELS  
Teresa Johnson, RDN, ELS  
Katherine Kahn, ELS  
Radhika Kamdar, PhD, ELS  
Stephanie Kinnan, MLA, ELS  
Kerry Ledbetter, ELS  
Michelle McRae, PhD, ELS  
Jude Ortiz, MA, ELS

Tara Penner, MSc, ELS  
Jennifer Peterson, ELS  
Cecilia Petrus, MSc, ELS  
Regina Raz, PhD, PMP, ELS  
Manjushree Sarda, ELS  
Cassandra Schaefer, ELS  
Amritha Shivasubramanian, MPhil, ELS  
Priyanka Singh, ELS  
Jennifer Sollenberger, ELS  
Hyo Sook Song, ELS  
Shivangi Srivastava, ELS  
Sarah Staats, ELS  
Sharon Thomas, MS, MA, ELS  
Kristine Thornley, MSc, ELS



## BELS Member Breakfast at AMWA 2024

On Friday, October 25th, a group of 20 BELS members gathered to enjoy fellowship and a delicious breakfast buffet during the AMWA Conference in New Orleans, LA. We always appreciate these opportunities to connect in person with fellow BELS editors!







# Don't Forget to Renew Your BELS Membership!

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It's time to renew your BELS membership to maintain benefits in 2025!

Did you know that, at only \$50 per year, BELS membership costs you less than \$1 a week? That's less expensive than a cup of coffee!

In 2024, we added new benefits to our ever-growing list of offerings, including free access to BenefitHub, our new corporate perks website, as well as discounts on DraftsmithAI and EndNote. More information on all of these benefits can be found in the [members-only section of the BELS website](#). Keep your eyes open for even more cool opportunities in 2025 and beyond!

Don't miss out on all the benefits membership provides!

- The ability to effect change in the organization by volunteering on a committee or holding office
- A wealth of free professional development events and webinars, as well as a library of recorded sessions
- A members-only newsletter, job board, and email discussion list
- A members-only discount on recertification
- A 30% discount on PerfectIt licenses
- A 20% discount on DraftsmithAI
- A 20% discount on several resource materials from the University of Chicago Press
- A \$50 discount on a single-user perpetual license for EndNote 21
- Rewards and discounts on thousands of brands with a free BenefitHub account

We also offer an Emeritus membership level, which costs \$25 annually. Emeritus members retain all regular membership benefits except for the freelance directory listing. This level is for certified editors who

- are age 60 or older,
- are retired from editing, and
- have paid full membership dues for the last 5 years (or 25 years in total).

To renew: [Login](#) to your BELS account and view the invoice located in your member profile.

Renew by December 31, 2024, to maximize your benefits!


Questions, concerns, or feedback to share? Please reach out to us: [info@bels.org](mailto:info@bels.org).



# BELS Certification Maintenance



**\*ULTRA\* EARLY BIRD  
CERTIFICATION MAINTENANCE  
RATE**



Did you earn your ELS or ELS(D) prior to January 2024?

Good news! You can take advantage of a deeply discounted rate for your first 5-year certification maintenance renewal cycle.

Renew today for 25 credits and a \$50 fee.

Prices and credits needed will go up next year.

Find out more at  
[bels.org/certification-maintenance](https://bels.org/certification-maintenance)

**BELS**  
Board of Editors in the Life Sciences

Take advantage of \*Ultra\* Early Bird Certification Maintenance Rate! Renew your BELS Certification NOW at a discounted rate and credit count!

If you earned your ELS or ELS(D) before January 2024, you are eligible to take advantage of a deeply discounted rate for your first 5-year Certification Maintenance renewal cycle. Renew before 2025 for only \$50 and 25 credits! Prices and credits needed will go up next year.

For information on how to renew your certification and submit your Certification Maintenance Form, go to <https://www.bels.org/certification-maintenance>

Make sure to check out these other helpful links about certification maintenance:

- Program Overview: <https://www.bels.org/program-description>
- Frequently asked questions: <https://www.bels.org/certification-maintenance-faq>
- For examples of various ways certified editors can earn credits: <https://www.bels.org/case-scenarios>
- Suggested education sources: <https://www.bels.org/learning-resources>
- Credit Tracker tool and overview: <https://www.bels.org/credit-tracker-overview>

Feel free to reach out if you have any queries; we are committed to making this process as seamless as possible. Email us at [info@bels.org](mailto:info@bels.org).



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**Melanie Ross, MSJ, ELS**  
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Chair, Nominations & Elections

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Executive Director

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.

