

The BELS Letter

Board of Editors in the Life Sciences

Maintaining and promoting editorial proficiency in the life sciences



From the President

As another calendar page turns, we are poised to move into a new time of the year, my personal favorite—fall. And while I no longer live somewhere where the changing leaves are a signature of the season, I always appreciate this moment. Students are heading back to school, and it's a reminder that it's never too late to learn something new or sharpen our skills.

The BELS Fall Extravaganza is set for Oct. 19, and I hope you make time to join us to enjoy some social time and also to share your best ideas for hunting down editing-related material online. Swap tips for

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The BELS Letter

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From the President

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verifying hard-to-spell words and finding grammar rules on the web. This is also your chance to let your colleagues know more about your fall plans, whether you are off on an adventure with family and friends or have plans to dress your pet in a spooky-cute costume.

Looking ahead to November, we are working to solidify plans for BELS members to meet up at some point during the American Medical Writers Association conference the first week of November in Denver. Stay tuned for more information.

As always, I would love to hear from you. Send us story ideas for the newsletter, or feel free to reach out with other suggestions at any time. Wishing you all a happy fall!

*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.



BELS Member Profile

Ann Tennier, BS (English), BA (Computer Science), ELS
Managing Editor
The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center
BELS Member since 2009



How did you first hear about BELS?

I heard about BELS as I took classes from the American Medical Writers Association for my Editing and Writing and Science Fundamentals certificates. My physician colleagues all had organizations suited to them in their specialties, and I liked that an organization was formed for people who specialize in the same work I do.

How has BELS certification or membership benefited you personally and/or professionally?

My certification gives me confidence when I work with physician authors. They have board certification in their medical specialty, and I have certification in my editing specialty. We each bring our specific expertise to a manuscript to ensure we publish the best possible work.

What gives you job satisfaction?

When I am able to answer a question or resolve a difficulty for someone else, I feel good about being helpful. I also like seeing the final published version of a manuscript, and I especially like to see all the happy emails that coauthors send around to each other when they first see the correspondence announcing the decision to accept a manuscript for publication.

What is your grammar pet peeve?

The house style at my first copy editing job had firm guidance about using *assure*, *ensure*, and *insure*, and even many years after working there, if I see any usages outside that guidance, I want to reach for a red pen.

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BELS Member Profile

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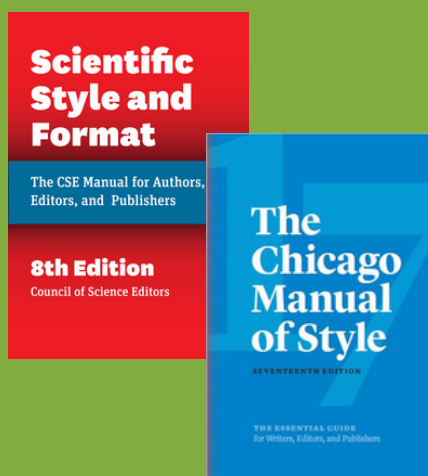
Which style guide or reference book do you use most in your work?

My work in psychiatry includes basic sciences, life sciences, clinical sciences, and social sciences, so I use a variety of guides regularly: Scientific Style and Format, AMA Manual of Style, Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, and Chicago Manual of Style.

BELS Member Discounts

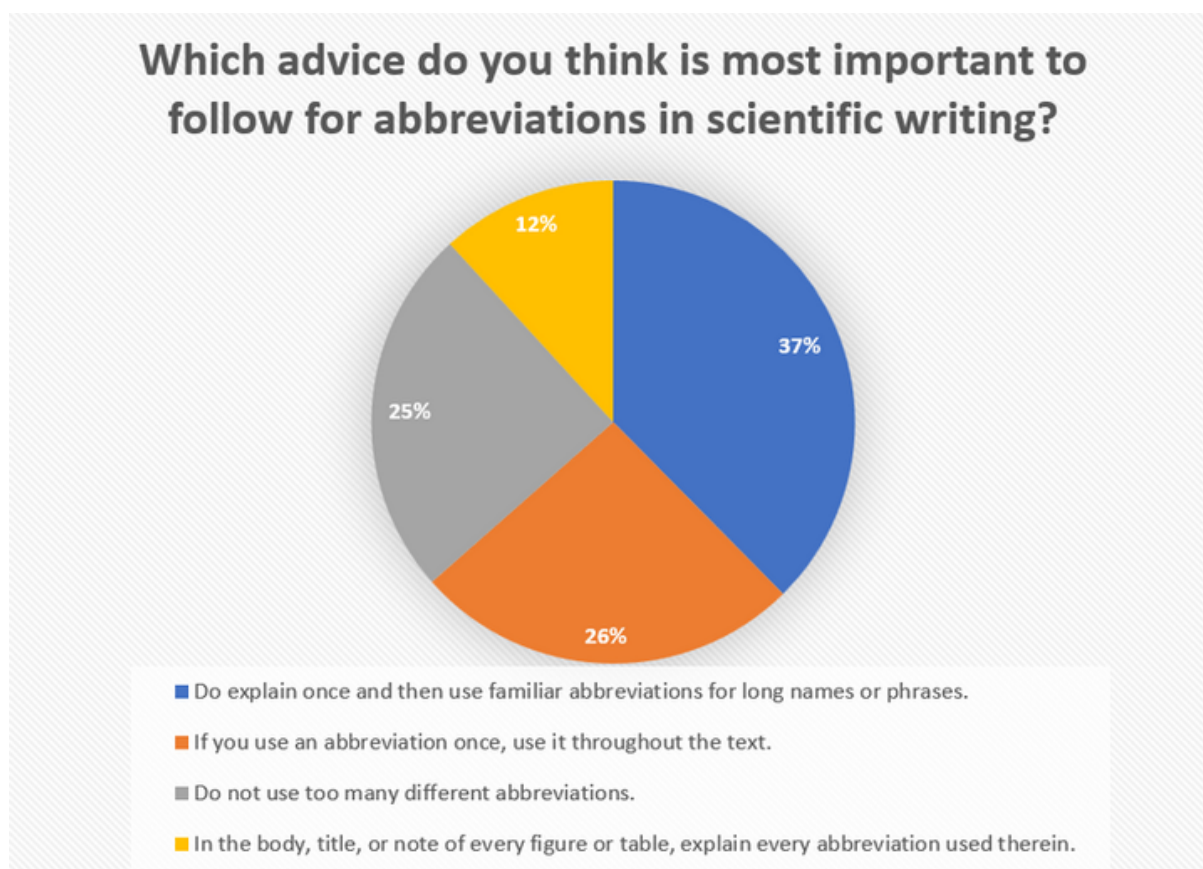
BELS has partnered with resource providers to offer valuable members-only discounts on products and services that help make your job easier. These offers are exclusive to BELS members and should not be shared with any other non-member.

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!



Monthly Poll Results

Last month, our online poll asked BELS editors to pick the most important rule to follow when using abbreviations. All the options were good advice, so it's no surprise that the poll results were close.



BELS Member Event Recordings

Did you miss any of our recent member-exclusive events? Visit the “Member Resources” section on our website to watch recordings on-demand at your convenience! Topics include consulting, editing tools, setting freelance rates, and much more. Be sure to stay tuned for announcements about upcoming events, and contact us with topic suggestions.

BELS Virtual Members-Only Event

Preprints: The First Step in Publishing

Join medical editor David Riley, MD, for a discussion of the challenges and opportunities presented by preprint servers and their increasing popularity. This virtual event, which is free to all BELS members, will take place Wednesday, September 21, at 2:00 PM CDT. [Click here to RSVP.](#)

BELS Fall Extravaganza



Are the cool temperatures and fall holidays leaving you searching for outdoor events? Pop into the BELS fall extravaganza and share your fall-themed photos, fall family events, and any pets dressed in Halloween gear! As a bonus, attendees can share their best search tips for finding editing-related material online, including hard-to-spell words and grammar rules. [Click here to RSVP.](#)

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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.