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**Some Elements of Effective Style**

Short words. Short words are preferable to long ones if shorter word is equally precise. Familiar words. Readers want information that they can grasp easily and quickly. Simple, familiar words provide clarity and impact. Specific rather than general words. Specific terms pinpoint meaning and create word pictures; general terms may be fuzzy and open to varied interpretations. Brisk opening. Plunge into your subject in the first paragraph of the article. Limited use of modifying words and phrases. Check your adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases. If they are not needed, strike them out. No unnecessary repetition. An idea may be repeated for emphasis—so long as that repetition is effective. Short sentence length. Twenty words or less is recommended. Rambling sentences cluttered with subordinate clauses and other modifiers are hard to read and may cause readers to lose their train of thought. Short sentences should, however, be balanced with somewhat longer ones to avoid monotony. Paragraphs. Break up long sections into paragraphs but avoid the use of single sentence
paragraphs. Restraint. Writers who use flamboyant words or overstate their proposition or conclusions discredit themselves. Facts speak for themselves. Clearly stated conclusions. Don’t hedge. If you don’t know something, say so.

**Objectionable Terms**
The following are selected objectionable terms and their proper substitutes. For a complete list of approved prosthodontic terminology, consult the eighth edition of the *Glossary of Prosthodontic Terms* (J Prosthet Dent 2005;94:10-92).

Or visit JPD [http://www.prosdent.org](http://www.prosdent.org) and click on Collections/Glossary of Prosthodontic Terms.

Alginate *use* Irreversible hydrocolloid *Bite use* Occlusion *Bridge use* Partial fixed dental prosthesis *Case use* Patient, situation, or treatment as appropriate *Cure use* Polymerize *Final use* Definitive *Freeway space use* Interocclusal distance *Full denture use* Complete denture *Lower (teeth, arch) use* Mandibular *Model use* Cast *Modeling compound use* Modeling plastic impression compound *Muscle trimming use* Border molding *Overbite, overjet use* Vertical overlap, horizontal overlap *Periphery use* Border *Post dam, postpalatal seal use* Posterior palatal seal *Prematurity use* Interceptive occlusal contact *Saddle use* Denture base *Study model use* Diagnostic cast *Take impressions, photographs, radiographs use* Make *Upper (teeth, arch) use* Maxillary *X-ray, roentgenogram use* Radiograph

In addition, *specimen* should be used rather than *sample* when referring to an example regarded as typical of its class.

**Additional Terminology Guidelines**

- **Acrylic**
  An adjective form that requires a noun, as in acrylic resin.

- **Affect, effect**
  Affect is a verb; effect is a noun.

- **African American**
  Spelled thus and preferred over Negro and black in both adjective (*African American patients*) and noun (*... of whom 20% were African Americans*) forms.

- **Average, mean, median**
  Mean and average are synonyms. Median refers to the midpoint in a range of items; the midpoint has many items above as below it.

- **Basic**
  Like fundamental, this word is often unnecessary. An example of unnecessary use: Dental implants consist of two basic types: subperiosteal and endosteal.

- **Between, among**
  Use between when 2 things are involved and among when there are more than 2.

- **Biopsy**
  This noun should NOT be used as a verb. A biopsy was performed on the Tissue, rather than: The tissue was biopsied.

- **Centric**
  An adjective that requires a noun, as in centric relation.

- **Currently, now, at present, etc.**
  These expressions are often unnecessary, as in: This technique is currently being used...

- **Data**
  Use as a plural, as in: The data were...

- ** Employ**
  Should not become an elegant variation of use, as in: This method is employed ...
Ensure
Preferred over insure in the sense of to make certain.

Fewer, less
Use fewer with nouns that can be counted (fewer patients were seen) and less with nouns that cannot be counted (less material was used).

Following
After is preferred.

Imply, infer
The speaker implies; the listener infers.

Incidence
The rate at which a disease occurs in a given time; sometimes confused with prevalence (the total number of cases of a disease in a given region).

Majority
Means more than half; use most when you mean almost all. Male, female
For adult humans, use men and women. For children, use boys and girls.

Must, should
Must means that the course of action is essential. Should is less strong and means that the course of action is recommended.

Numbers
Spell out numbers used in titles or headings and numbers at the beginning of a sentence. The spelled version may also be preferable in a series of consecutive numbers that may confuse the reader (eg, 2 3.5-inch disks should be written two 3.5-inch disks). In all other cases, use Arabic numerals.

Orient
Proper form; avoid orientate.

Pathologic
Use instead of pathological. Other words in which the suffix -al has been dropped include biologic, histologic, and physiologic.

Pathology
The study of disease; often mistaken for pathosis (the condition of disease)

Percent
Use the percent sign in the text, as in The distribution of scores was as follows: adequate, 8%; oversized, 23%; and undersized, 69%. But spell out when the percent opens a sentence, as in Twenty percent of the castings ... 

Prior to
Before is preferred.

Rare, infrequent, often not, etc.
Whenever possible, these vague terms should be backed up with a specific number.

Rather
Like very, this word should be avoided.

Regimen
A planned program for taking medication, dieting, exercising, etc. Not to be confused with regime, meaning a system of government or management.

Sex
Use “sex” rather than “gender” unless you are referring to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women.

**Symptomatology**
The science or study of symptoms; this word is not a synonym for the word symptoms.

**Technique**
Preferred over technic.

**Using**
Avoid the dangling modifier in sentences such as “The impression was made using vinyl polysiloxane impression material.” Write “with” or “by using” instead.

**Utilize**
Use is preferred.

**Vertical**
An adjective that needs a noun, as in vertical relation.

**Via**
Use through, with, or by means of.

**White**
Preferred over Caucasian. This is true only if the patient is from the Caucasus region of Eastern Europe. If not, use the term, white to describe the patient.

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