1 Nouns: plurals, countable versus uncountable ........................................ 1
  1.1 regular plurals .............................................................................. 1
  1.2 irregular plurals .......................................................................... 2
  1.3 nouns ending in -s ...................................................................... 3
  1.4 nouns indicating a group of people .............................................. 4
  1.5 number-verb agreement ................................................................ 5
  1.6 countable nouns: use with articles ............................................. 6
  1.7 singular countable nouns: use with and without a / an in scientific English ................................................................. 7
  1.8 uncountable nouns: general rules ................................................ 8
  1.9 uncountable nouns: using a different word or form ...................... 9
  1.10 uncountable nouns: more details ............................................... 10

2 Genitive: the possessive form of nouns .............................................. 11
  2.1 position of the ’s with authors and referees ................................... 12
  2.2 theories, instruments etc .............................................................. 13
  2.3 companies and politicians ............................................................ 15
  2.4 universities, departments, institutes etc ......................................... 15
  2.5 animals ....................................................................................... 16
  2.6 genitive with inanimate objects .................................................... 17
  2.7 periods of time ............................................................................ 17

3 Indefinite article: a / an .................................................................... 19
  3.1 a versus an: basic rules .................................................................. 19
  3.2 a versus an: use with acronyms, digits, and symbols .................... 20
  3.3 a / an versus one ......................................................................... 21
  3.4 a / an versus the: generic versus specific .................................... 22
  3.5 a / an versus the: definitions and statements .................................. 23
  3.6 a / an, the, possessive pronoun: parts of the body .......................... 24

4 Definite article: the .......................................................................... 25
  4.1 definite article (the): main usage .................................................. 25
  4.2 specific versus general: examples ................................................ 26
  4.3 other uses of the definite article .................................................... 27

5 Zero article: no article ....................................................................... 29
  5.1 zero article versus definite article (the): main usage ...................... 29
  5.2 other uses of the zero article ........................................................ 30
  5.3 nationalities, countries, languages ............................................... 31
  5.4 zero article and the: contradictory usage in scientific English ....... 32
5.5 zero article versus a / an ......................................................... 33
5.6 zero article and a / an: contradictory usage in scientific English ......................................................... 34

6 Quantifiers: any, some, much, many, each, every etc. .................. 35
  6.1 quantifiers used with countable and uncountable nouns ... 35
  6.2 any versus some .................................................................. 37
  6.3 any versus no ....................................................................... 38
  6.4 a little, a few vs. little, few .................................................. 38
  6.5 much, many, a lot of, and lots of ......................................... 39
  6.6 each versus every, every versus any .................................. 40
  6.7 no versus not ....................................................................... 41

7 Relative pronouns: that, which, who, whose ................................. 43
  7.1 that, which, who, whose ....................................................... 43
  7.2 that versus which and who .................................................. 44
  7.3 omission of that, which and who ......................................... 45
  7.4 avoiding ambiguity by using a relative clause in preference to the -ing form ........................................ 47
  7.5 avoid long and difficult-to-read sentences involving which . 48
  7.6 avoid ambiguity with which ............................................... 48

8 Tenses: present, past, future ....................................................... 49
  8.1 present simple vs present continuous: key rules ............... 49
  8.2 present perfect: key rules ..................................................... 50
  8.3 present perfect: problem areas .......................................... 52
  8.4 past simple: key rules ......................................................... 53
  8.5 present simple vs past simple: specific rules (aims and methods) ......................................................... 54
  8.6 present simple, present perfect and simple past: reference to the literature ........................................ 55
  8.7 present simple vs past simple: specific rules (results and discussion) ......................................................... 56
  8.8 present perfect vs present perfect continuous .................... 57
  8.9 past continuous and past perfect vs simple past .............. 57
  8.10 will .................................................................................. 58

9 Conditional forms: zero, first, second, third ................................. 59
  9.1 zero and first conditional ..................................................... 59
  9.2 second conditional .............................................................. 60
  9.3 other uses of would ........................................................... 61
  9.4 present simple versus would .............................................. 62
  9.5 third conditional ............................................................... 63

10 Passive versus active: impersonal versus personal forms .................. 65
  10.1 main uses of passive .......................................................... 66
  10.2 passive better than active: more examples ....................... 67
11 Imperative, infinitive versus gerund (−ing form) ........................................... 71
  11.1 imperative ......................................................................................... 71
  11.2 infinitive ........................................................................................... 72
  11.3 in order to ......................................................................................... 73
  11.4 passive infinitive ............................................................................... 74
  11.5 perfect infinitive ............................................................................... 74
  11.6 gerund (−ing form): usage ............................................................... 75
  11.7 by versus thus + gerund to avoid ambiguity ...................................... 76
  11.8 other sources of ambiguity with the gerund ..................................... 77
  11.9 replacing an ambiguous gerund with that or which, or with a rearranged phrase ............................... 78
  11.10 verbs that express purpose or appearance + infinitive ....... 78
  11.11 verbs that require an accusative construction (i.e. person / thing + infinitive) ........................................... 79
  11.12 active and passive form: with and without infinitive ............... 80
  11.13 active form: verbs not used with the infinitive .......................... 80
  11.14 let and make .................................................................................. 81
  11.15 verbs + gerund, recommend, suggest ........................................... 82
  11.16 verbs that take both infinitive and gerund ..................................... 83

12 Modal verbs: can, may, could, should, must etc ................................. 85
  12.1 present and future ability and possibility: can versus may ............. 85
  12.2 impossibility and possibility: cannot versus may not ................. 87
  12.3 ability: can, could versus be able to, manage, succeed ............. 88
  12.4 deductions and speculations about the present: must, cannot, should ......................................................... 89
  12.5 deductions and speculations: could, might (not) ....................... 90
  12.6 present obligations: must, must not, have to, need .................... 91
  12.7 past obligation: should have + past participle, had to, was supposed to .................................................. 92
  12.8 obligation and recommendation: should ....................................... 93

13 Link words (adverbs and conjunctions): also, although, but etc ................. 95
  13.1 about, as far as ... is concerned ....................................................... 95
  13.2 also, in addition, as well, besides, moreover ................................ 96
  13.3 also, as well, too, both, all: use with not ..................................... 97
  13.4 although, even though versus even if ........................................... 97
  13.5 and, along with ............................................................................... 98
  13.6 as versus as it ................................................................................ 99
  13.7 as versus like (unlike) ................................................................... 99
  13.8 as, because, due to, for, insofar as, owing to, since, why .............. 100
13.9 both ... and, either ... or .................................................. 102
13.10 e.g. versus for example .................................................. 103
13.11 e.g., i.e., etc. ................................................................ 104
13.12 for this reason versus for this purpose, to this end ........ 105
13.13 the former, the latter .................................................... 106
13.14 however, although, but, yet, despite, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding .................................. 107
13.15 however versus nevertheless ........................................... 109
13.16 in contrast with vs. compared to, by comparison with .... 109
13.17 instead, on the other hand, whereas, on the contrary ..... 110
13.18 thus, therefore, hence, consequently, so, thereby .......... 112
13.19 omission of words in sentences with and, but, both and or .......................................................... 113

14 Adverbs and prepositions: already, yet, at, in, of etc. ........ 115
14.1 above (below), over (under) ............................................. 115
14.2 across, through ............................................................... 116
14.3 already, still, yet .............................................................. 117
14.4 among, between, from, of (differentiation and selection) .................................................................................. 118
14.5 at, in, to (location, state, change) ................................. 119
14.6 at, in and on (time) ........................................................... 120
14.7 at, to (measurement, quality) .......................................... 121
14.8 before, after, beforehand, afterwards, first (time sequences) .............................................................................. 122
14.9 beside, next to, near to, close to (location) ....................... 122
14.10 by and from (cause, means and origin) ......................... 123
14.11 by, in, of (variations) ....................................................... 124
14.12 by and within (time) ......................................................... 124
14.13 by now, for now, for the moment, until now, so far ....... 125
14.14 during, over and throughout (time) ............................... 126
14.15 for, since, from (time) ....................................................... 127
14.16 in, now, currently, at the moment ................................. 128
14.17 in, inside, within (location) ............................................ 129
14.18 of and with (material, method, agreement) .................... 130

15 Sentence length, conciseness, clarity and ambiguity ......... 131
15.1 maximum two ideas per sentence .................................... 131
15.2 put information in chronological order, particularly in the methods section ........................................... 132
15.3 avoid parenthetical phrases ............................................ 133
15.4 avoid redundancy ......................................................... 134
15.5 prefer verbs to nouns ..................................................... 135
15.6 use adjectives rather than nouns ..................................... 135
15.7 be careful of use of personal pronouns: you, one, he, she, they ............................................................ 136
15.8 essential and non-essential use of: we, us, our
15.9 avoid informal words and contractions
15.10 emphatic do / does, giving emphasis
15.11 ensuring consistency throughout a manuscript
15.12 translating concepts that only exist in your country / language
15.13 always use the same key words: repetition of words is not a problem
15.14 avoid ambiguity when using the former / the latter, which, and pronouns
15.15 avoid ambiguity when using as, in accordance with, according to
15.16 when expressing a negative concept using a negation

16 Word order: nouns and verbs
16.1 put the subject before the verb and as near as possible to the beginning of the phrase
16.2 decide what to put first in a sentence: alternatives
16.3 do not delay the subject
16.4 avoid long subjects that delay the main verb
16.5 inversion of subject and verb
16.6 inversion of subject and verb with only, rarely, seldom etc.
16.7 inversions with so, neither, nor
16.8 put direct object before indirect object
16.9 phrasal verbs
16.10 noun + noun and noun + of + noun constructions
16.11 strings of nouns: use prepositions where possible
16.12 deciding which noun to put first in strings of nouns
16.13 position of prepositions with which, who and where

17 Word order: adverbs
17.1 frequency + also, only, just, already
17.2 probability
17.3 manner
17.4 time
17.5 first(ly), second(ly) etc.
17.6 adverbs with more than one meaning
17.7 shift the negation word (no, not, nothing etc.) to near the beginning of the phrase

18 Word order: adjectives and past participles
18.1 adjectives
18.2 multiple adjectives
18.3 ensure it is clear which noun an adjective refers to
18.4 past participles
24 Capitalization: headings, dates, figures etc. ............................................ 201
  24.1 titles and section headings .............................................................. 201
  24.2 days, months, countries, nationalities, natural languages .................. 202
  24.3 academic titles, degrees, subjects (of study), departments, institutes, faculties, universities .............................................. 203
  24.4 figure, table, section etc.; step, phase, stage etc. ............................... 204
  24.5 keywords ......................................................................................... 204
  24.6 acronyms ......................................................................................... 205
  24.7 euro, the internet .............................................................................. 205

25 Punctuation: apostrophes, colons, commas etc. ........................................ 207
  25.1 apostrophes (')................................................................. 207
  25.2 colons (:).................................................................................... 208
  25.3 commas (,): usage ................................................................. 209
  25.4 commas (,): non usage .............................................................. 210
  25.5 dashes (—) .................................................................................... 211
  25.6 hyphens (-): part 1 ................................................................. 212
  25.7 hyphens (-): part 2 ................................................................. 213
  25.8 parentheses ( ) ............................................................................. 214
  25.9 periods (.) .................................................................................... 215
  25.10 quotation marks (""")...................................................................... 216
  25.11 semicolons (;) .............................................................................. 217
  25.12 bullets: round, numbered, ticked ..................................................... 218
  25.13 bullets: consistency and avoiding redundancy .................................. 219

26 Referring to the literature ........................................................................ 221
  26.1 most common styles ......................................................................... 221
  26.2 common dangers ............................................................................. 222
  26.3 punctuation: commas and semicolons ............................................. 223
  26.4 punctuation: parentheses ................................................................. 223
  26.5 et al. ............................................................................................... 224

27 Figures and tables: making reference, writing captions and legends .................................................. 225
  27.1 figures, tables .................................................................................. 225
  27.2 legends ......................................................................................... 226
  27.3 referring to other parts of the manuscript ......................................... 227

28 Spelling: rules, US versus GB, typical typos ........................................... 229
  28.1 rules .............................................................................................. 229
  28.2 some differences in British (GB) and American (US) spelling, by type .................................................. 231
  28.3 some differences in British (GB) and American (US) spelling, alphabetically ........................................ 232
  28.4 misspellings that spell-checking software does not find ........................ 234