

WRITING AND FORMATTING GUIDANCE

for Report, Thesis and Project papers

RULES are for all MS in Biology Students

**If Ancha Baranova is on your Committee,
the rules are double-important 😊**

- 1. Library-approved formatting is a MUST for all works submitted through the University library. This includes PhD dissertation and MS thesis manuscripts. However, the following additional improvements to your scientific manuscript should be used with the library's format:**
 - Use function "Justify" on all paragraphs. This includes references and the Abstract. "Justified" text looks EVEN on both left and right edges.
 - Use Font 11 or 12 on all Figure and Table Captions (not Font 9).
 - In captions to Figures and Tables, you do not have to use Interval "2". Use Interval "1". It ensures that captions are standing out of the body of text, and are easily distinguished by eye.
 - ADD one empty line between Caption and the top/bottom of Table or Figure.
 - ADD one empty line before each subchapter, and make sure there is some space between the Title of subchapter and the text of subchapter. You may use "paragraph" function to do that.
 - In References section, you do not have to use interval "2". Use Interval "1", but add 6 pt spaces between the references. You may use "paragraph" function to do that. Start each reference with an indent, as a paragraph.
- 2. All Tables should be done in Word. Picture snapshots of Excel or .pdf excerpts are NOT acceptable. In tables, use smaller fonts and "interval 1" so the text will look tight. Please "center" each cell. You may use "bold" if needed.**
- 3. If you are using figures published by somebody else, the best policy is to EDIT or re-draw these pictures. If modifications are minimal, always include the reference to the original source of the figure.**

4. If you are using your own Figure from a paper where you are a co-author, this is not a problem. However, often these figures need “un-crowding”. If you have panels a,b,c,d,e,f,g you may want to break the figure into separate figures.
5. Each figure should be large enough to see all the details and CENTERED.
6. If you are using Excel graphs as figures, do NOT duplicate the title within the figure. USE CAPTIONS for this purpose.
7. When putting together references, choose ANY format but be CONSISTENT. Use the same format for all references.

Examples of reference format:

Selma, M.V., Espín, J.C., and Tomás-Barberán, F.A. (2009). Interaction between phenolics and gut microbiota: role in human health. *J. Agric. Food Chem.* 57, 6485–6501.

Shannon, P., Markiel, A., Ozier, O., Baliga, N.S., Wang, J.T., Ramage, D., Amin, N., Schwikowski, B., and Ideker, T. (2003). Cytoscape: A Software Environment for Integrated Models of Biomolecular Interaction Networks. *Genome Res.* 13, 2498–2504.

Shawcross, D.L., Davies, N.A., Williams, R., and Jalan, R. (2004). Systemic inflammatory response exacerbates the neuropsychological effects of induced hyperammonemia in cirrhosis. *J. Hepatol.* 40, 247–254.

8. When naming a human gene, use *italic*. Example: *PANX1*, *TP53*, *RB1*.
9. When naming the protein expressed from the gene, use regular font: PANX1, TP53, RB1.
10. When describing any qRT-PCR, microarray, RNAseq or other experiments dealing with gene expression, use the following grammar constructs:

CORRECT FORM: “The levels of mRNA encoded by gene *PANX1* were increased in the brain as compared to the liver”.

INCORRECT FORMS: “PANX1 increased in brain”. “PANX1 mRNA was increased in brain”. “mRNA for PANX1 was increased” **and all other grammar shortcuts**. Genes cannot increase. Similarly, humans cannot increase. Human population may increase. Or “the density of human population may increase”... same with genes.

Below are a few examples of other common sentences showing correct construct. Use the examples if your experiments have any similarities to ones described below.

“Figure 1: The Changes in PGC-1a mRNA Levels Following the Treatment with Butyric Acid. This assay quantified the effects of exposure to butyric acid at a final media concentration of 800uM and 250uM on PGC-1a mRNA levels.”

“In HeLa cells, TFAM mRNA levels were significantly altered in response to....”

“In cells exposed to 250uM butyric acid, the TFAM mRNA levels were higher than that in untreated controls”

“Correlation of AST levels and percent of the liver tissue stained for collagen was positive and significant ($p=0.0025$).”

“Similarly, when patients with mild abnormal changes in liver parenchyma were compared to patients with NASH, the extents of collagen deposits were different ($p=0.00824$)”.

When writing, make sure that each sentence makes sense! Read it **three times** after you write it. Then have someone else in your lab read it again.