

A Word From The Writing Team (May 2018)

GRAMMAR TIME

One constant in the life of the researcher is the word “data.” Another constant in the life of the researcher is deciding whether “data” correctly takes a singular or plural verb (data is *versus* data are). Officially the word “data” is the plural form of “datum,” and furthermore, researchers usually use the word to represent multiple data points. So according to [APA style](#), data should take a plural verb, as in “These data provide insight.”

However, “data” *sounds* singular, and you are [more likely to see and hear it paired with a singular verb than with a plural one](#). As a result, some style guides now accept data’s potential to take either a plural or singular verb.

The unfortunate upshot of all of this: Whether you treat data as singular or plural, someone is likely to think you’re wrong. A workaround, [according to one grammar expert](#), is to substitute other terms for data, such as the singular “database” or “evidence” or the plural “data points.”

WHAT TO DO ONCE YOUR MANUSCRIPT IS ACCEPTED

Stop. Drop (what you’re doing). Do a little dance. And then forward your acceptance email to edyta.zielinska@jefferson.edu, the science writer in Jefferson’s Office of Media Relations. Then, maybe, forward to your co-authors.

The Office of Media Relations works to entice independent journalists to write stories about Jefferson and our research. This can help your research get noticed by future collaborators, talented postdocs, and even grant officers. When you send Edyta your acceptance email, she can assess whether your research might interest a broader audience. If it has media potential, the early notification lets her take advantage of journal embargoes that often entice media coverage. (Journalists are 50% more likely to cover research on embargo—pre-publication—than already published research.)

The office can’t promote everything, but media-worthy, embargoed research always goes to the top of the queue. Email edyta.zielinska@jefferson.edu with questions and/or acceptance letters.

WRITING CAFÉ

Writing Café is open Fridays from 9am-11am. Writing Café is a quiet space where writers can gather to work on individual writing projects. It is located in room 200A of Scott Library. Drop in anytime and stay as long as you like. All you need to bring is your laptop (or just a pad of paper).

For more information:

- Contact **Jen Wilson**, 3-0441 or jennifer.wilson@jefferson.edu.
- Contact **Pam Walter**, 3-2828 or pamela.walter@jefferson.edu.
- Visit the **Office for Professional Writing, Publishing, and Communication** (formerly the Writing Center) on the web: <https://www.jefferson.edu/university/teaching-learning/office-professional-writing.html>