

# JOS Editor Guidelines

JOS articles should be well written and correct editorially as well as technically. Because the information is provided only in writing, i.e., no body language or vocal inflections are present, the written words must use proper grammar in order to ensure that readers of various educational backgrounds and geographic locations can understand the information. A logical structure of the presented information is essential. Care must be exercised to avoid errors in grammar, spelling, syntax, punctuation, abbreviations, symbols, acronyms, and format.

In general, articles should be 3 to 10 pages, although shorter or longer may be allowed on occasion. Where practical, use JOS Plus to shorten very long articles.

## 1. Formatting:

- a. The Assistant Editors do not need to format the articles. The format used for review will be most compatible with using Word for layout of the text (the inside/outside covers use a publishing program). In general, the format will be double column, the correct fonts, left/right justification (excluding centered titles, captions, etc.), and images.
- b. Authors are encouraged to achieve emphasis by effective wording. When special emphasis is desired, use “underline”. Bold type should only be used for the title, headings, and captions. The use of color for a font is only to identify when the topic is in color, e.g., the gauge mark in in red.

## 2. Punctuation:

- a. Paragraphs should be separated by “double-line spacing”; the paragraphs are single-spaced. The first sentence of the paragraph is not indented. Do not use the Word option to automatically insert spaces before or after paragraphs or other options.
- b. Use a single space after a period, comma, semicolon, or colon.
- c. Make sure that “e.g.,” and “i.e.,” are followed by a comma. Latin terms (including Latin abbreviations) are normally in italics, e.g., “*op. cit.*”, “*Ibid.*”; however, because “i.e.,” and “e.g.,” are commonly used, they do not have to be italicized.
- d. Use a period after an equation only if a complete sentence is present. Reference numbers for equations in parentheses ( ) should be after the equation, e.g., on the same line, near the right margin. Equations are entered using Word’s equation tool or MathType.
- e. The use of available fractions that appear on keyboards or in the MS Word Insert Symbol tables, i.e.,  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ , and  $\frac{3}{4}$ , is preferred, but these forms shall not be mixed with constructed fractions, e.g.,  $\frac{7}{8}$  and  $\frac{5}{16}$ , in the same sentence or mathematical expression.
- f. Lists containing three or more items shall be separated by commas, meaning there shall be a comma before the conjunction ending the list, e.g., “A, B, and C”. Use of a comma to separate two items in a list is recommended if each item is a complete sentence, e.g., “A sentence shall include a subject and verb, and the object is optional”.
- g. A dependent preceding clause that is a complete sentence (subject, verb), should have a comma separating the dependent clause from the primary sentence. Enclose parenthetic

expressions between commas.

h. Place a comma before the conjunction introducing an independent clause. Use a semicolon, not a comma, to join independent clauses, when not using a conjunction.

i. Do not put a period after a caption, e.g., use “Figure 1. Caption”, not “Figure 1. Caption.”; unless the caption is a complete sentence or there are two or more sentences or lengthy phrases in the caption.

j. Unless part of the quote, punctuation should be outside of the quotes. Generally, only periods and question marks should be within quotes if they are part of the quote, otherwise outside; commas, colons, and semi-colons should be outside of quotes.

k. URL's (Internet addresses) should be underlined and in a colored font (see 3 d below for an example) with the hyperlink enabled (so future electronic copies will have functional hyperlinks).

### 3. Grammar:

a. Maintain consistency with language use for country of origin, e.g., accept European spelling for articles written by Europeans. Often changing the “reference language” for the word in question to English UK will ensure Word does not identify the word as mis-spelled, e.g., when the words are spelled correctly in English UK the red underline is removed.

b. Use the spell-checker and the grammar checker provided in Word (noting exceptions for country of origin).

c. Use only standard abbreviations and symbols. Spell out acronyms at first usage.

d. The IEEE website (<http://www.ewh.ieee.org/soc/ias/pub-dept/abbreviation.pdf>) contains many common scientific, mathematical, and engineering abbreviations.

e. Journal of the Oughtred Society should always be used, not JOS.

f. Write unit symbols correctly (do not mix formats, e.g., symbols and words) when units are formed by multiplication and division, e.g., use kWh or N·m, not kWatthours or Newton x m.

g. Do not separate multiple symbols that represent a single unit or omit any part of the symbol, e.g., use mmHg or °C, not mm Hg or ° C.

h. Do not mix symbols and unit names in the same expression, e.g., use joules per kilogram or J/kg not joules/kg.

i. Leave a space between a number and the associated units, e.g., 35 mm, 50 V, 128 MB. Note, when used as units, the terms are symbols (e.g., mm, cm, kg), not abbreviations: therefore, they do not require a period after the symbol.

j. When a number is just a quantity, spell out numbers one through nine and use numerals for numbers  $\geq 10$  (two or more digits).

k. Distinguish between “which” and “that”. *That* is for adding an essential or restrictive clause, *which* is for adding an informative clause and is preceded by a comma; e.g., “a

technical article shall include punctuation that is essential for clarity, which is useful for those with varied educations”. If the informative or parenthetical clause is in the middle (not end) of a sentence, then the informative clause has a comma at the end of the clause.

l. Distinguish between “since” and “because”. *Since* is for time related information, *because* is for cause related information; e.g., I have not used a slide rule since 1974 because my HP-45 is easier to use.

m. Distinguish between “where” or “when” and “in which” or “that”. *Where* is an adverb for a physical location, *when* is an adverb for a point in time, *that* and *in which* are relative pronouns (phrase) to connect concepts. Where and when, like which, for non-restrictive or informative clauses, are preceded by a comma.

n. Distinguish between “while” and “although”. *While* is a substitute for the phrase “during the time that”; *although* is a substitute for the phrase “in spite of the fact that”. *Though* is another term for “however”.

o. Replace contractions, e.g., use “do not” instead of “don’t”.

p. Remove jargon, clichés, idioms, and colloquialisms.

q. Replace the indefinite pronoun “it” with the direct and unambiguous antecedent, unless there is a clear redundancy. “It” should not be used to start a sentence. “It” requires an antecedent within the same sentence or paragraph. When the antecedent is the subject or object, not the object of a prepositional phrase, then “it” may be used later in the sentence or paragraph. “It” should not be used to indicate some activity especially in the passive tense, e.g., the phrase “it is important” is circular and should not be used.

r. Pronouns should refer to the immediately preceding noun that matches in gender and number. Otherwise, the antecedent noun should be repeated.

s. Dates should be in the format of day-number, month-text, and year-number, e.g., “9 January 2013”. The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, etc. should only be used to designate a day, not a date.

t. Use a superscript number, e.g., <sup>1</sup>, to identify all Notes, including references, explanations, clarifications, or anecdotes. List all Notes in the order they appear in the text at the end of the article, using numbers and a period, i.e., no superscripts or brackets. When there are multiple Notes, use sequential identifiers, e.g., 1, 2. While the Note identifier is a superscript in the text, the reference number must be in normal format in the list at the end. A “reference” is a book, article, URL or other source of information, e.g., for a quote.

u. The passive tense should be avoided, whenever possible. The passive tense may be used to emphasize the receiving subject of the passive tense verb or the action of the verb, and the agent of action (who is doing the action described by the verb) is clear.

The following books are useful references for grammar, spelling, and punctuation:

Davidson, Mark, *Right, Wrong, and Risky*, W.W. Norton & Co., 2006.

Bryson, Bill, *Bryson’s Dictionary for Writers and Editors*, Archer Books, 2008.

Bierce, Ambrose, *Write It Right*, Neale Publishing, 1909. Somewhat dated but a personal favorite



Strunk, William Jr., White, E.B., *The Elements of Style*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Longman, 1999.