

EDITING THE TECHNICIAN

DIRECTIONS

All of the following sentences are from the Technician. Learn to catch these mistakes.

ORIGINAL: Thirty and Three is an established honor society that is currently trying to generate new interest and participation from students and faculty alike.

NOTES: The verb in the second clause is in present tense. So adding the word “currently” is redundant. How about: Thirty and Three, an honor society that 11 sophomores founded in 1931 to promote the success of the university, is trying to generate new interest and participation campus-wide. Combine two paragraphs into one. Editors, work with writers to tighten their writing. Writers, rewrite.

ORIGINAL: ...common goals - - academically and elsewhere -- for N.C. State.”

NOTES: Well, not to mention why we put periods in N.C. State – a violation of AP Style on acronyms, but fits with style on state names but not university style, hmm – the problem here is with the hyphens. Clearly, these should be dashes. Option + hyphen for an en dash (–) and option + shift + hyphen for an em dash (—). Most typographers prefer the em dash. However, it’s often visually unappealing. It is grammatically correct to use an em dash, however.

ORIGINAL: Herring did not believe that testing was the best way to determine the presence of mold....

NOTES: You don’t know what Romie Herring believed. People often say what they think you want to hear. Especially politicians. How about: Herring said he did not believe... .

ORIGINAL: ...our plane was delayed.... The Free Expression Tunnel was established.....the filters in the dorm rooms are changed.... Students have been given instructions....

NOTES: The list could go on and on and on and on and on. Passive voice is a sign of WEAK REPORTING or weak editing. More often the former than the later. What delayed the plane? Who established the Free Expression Tunnel? Who changes the filters? Who gives the instructions? Be reporters go find out. And then write in active voice. Check out http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g_actpass.html

ORIGINAL: ...most stdents had only been in line for ten or fifteen minutes.

NOTES: How many is most? How about this sentence from the same edition: “A number of students in Wood Hall have complained about excessive mold and mildew in their rooms. Some students have experienced health problems they believe to be due to mold.” How many students complained? The story only reports ONE. Does one student with a mold problem warrant a page one exposé? How many students reported health problems? Go find out. Walk across the street and ask the health center. Be reports. And not to mention that “ten” and “fifteen” are numbers equal to or greater than 10 and should be numbers. See AP style on numbers – many mistakes in that arena.