| Grammar and Punctuation Terms | Explanation and Example |
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| Apostrophe | When documenting, be sure to use apostrophes properly to convey proper meaning.<br><br>Use apostrophes in possessives and contractions, but not plurals.<br><br>• A possessive shows ownership of an object or idea.<br>  o Its is a possessive form of it.<br>  o Whose is a possessive form of "who" or "which."<br><br>• A contraction is the combination of two terms.<br>  o It's is a contraction of "it is" or "it has."<br>  o Who's is a contraction of "who is" or "who has."<br><br>Examples:<br><br>*Correct:* The manager's decision (one manager made the decision)<br><br>*Correct:* The managers' decision (more than one manager made the decision)<br><br>*Incorrect:* mens', childrens', its' (intended to be possessive)<br><br>*Incorrect:* Video's, photo's (intended to be plural, not possessive) |

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| Period | A period is used after numbers and letters in outlines.<br>Example:<br>*Correct:* A. This is the first line of an outline.<br>1. This is the first indented line of an outline.<br>*Incorrect:* B This is the second line of an outline.<br>1 This is the first indented line of an outline.<br>Periods are used to end most abbreviations except for acronyms.<br>Examples:<br>*Correct:* Dr.<br>*Incorrect:* etc<br>When a sentence ends with an abbreviation, no additional period is needed.<br>Examples:<br>*Correct:* Please make the check out to Ben Jones, D.D.S.<br>*Incorrect:* Please make the check out to Ben Jones, D.D.S..<br>(The second period at the end of the sentence is not needed.) |
| Comma | Commas are needed for clear communication. Comma errors can cause ambiguity or misunderstanding. For example, these pairs of sentences convey quite different messages:<br>Examples:<br>Injured and abandoned by their traveling companions, they managed to stagger to a ranger station.<br>• This sentence states that the companions injured and abandoned the travelers.<br>Injured, and abandoned by their traveling companions, they managed to stagger to a ranger station.<br>• This sentence states that the travelers were injured and then the companions abandoned them. |

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| "I" Versus "Me" | Many people mix up the personal pronouns "I" and "me." To avoid trouble, delete the other person from the equation and see if the sentence still makes sense.<br>Examples:<br>*Correct:* Sandra and I like milk.<br>*Incorrect:* Sandra and me like milk.<br>Take away Sandra and you are left with: Me like milk.<br>*Correct:* The baby giraffe took a liking to Ephraim and me.<br>*Incorrect:* The baby giraffe took a liking to Ephraim and I.<br>Take away Ephraim and you are left with: The baby giraffe took a liking to I. |
| That/Which/Who | The word "who" refers to people, whereas "that" and "which" refer to animals or things.<br>Examples:<br>*Correct:* Tom Jones, **who** is retiring today, has worked here ten years.<br>*Incorrect:* Tom Jones, **which** is retiring today, has worked here ten years.<br>*Correct:* Companies **that** fund basic research must expect some delays.<br>*Incorrect:* Companies **who** fund basic research must expect some delays.<br>*Correct:* The road, **which** is the longest in town, is five miles long.<br>*Incorrect:* The road, **who** is the longest in town, is five miles long. |
| Agreement | The number of the subject determines the number of the verb.<br>Examples:<br>• Each surveyor is to have her own surveyor notes. (singular)<br>  ○ (subject: surveyor) (verb: is)<br>• All surveyors are to have their own surveyor notes. (plural)<br>  ○ (subject: surveyors) (verb: are)<br>• Every surveyor knows to write in active voice. (singular)<br>  ○ (subject: Every surveyor) (verb: knows)<br>• Surveyors must write using active voice. (plural)<br>  ○ (subject: surveyors) (verb: write) |

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| Quotation | Quotation marks are used when a person is quoted word-for-word.<br>Examples:<br>*Correct:* The resident said, "I can go to the bank."<br>*Incorrect:* The resident said, I can go to the bank.<br>*Correct:* The nurse indicated the linen needed to be changed.<br>*Incorrect:* The nurse indicated "the linen needed to be changed."<br>*Correct:* "Look at that!" he shouted.<br>*Incorrect:* Look at that! he shouted.<br>Do not use quotations when using the substance but not the exact wording.<br>Example:<br>*Correct:* The resident said "I cannot reach my call light when I sit up to watch television."<br>*Incorrect:* The resident said they "could not reach" their call light.<br>Note: Commas and periods always go inside the quotations marks.<br>Example:<br>*Correct:* The resident stated "No, I cannot reach my call light."<br>*Incorrect:* The resident stated "No, I cannot reach my call light". |
| Do not use subjective words. | Subjective words are not exact and may be misinterpreted.<br>Examples:<br>About, adequate, almost, appropriate, around, cluttered, damaged, dirty, several, small, some, sufficient, timely, and very<br>*Correct:* The nurse used three bandages to cover the wound.<br>*Incorrect:* The nurse used the appropriate bandages to cover the wound. |

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| Do not use proper names. | Do not use proper names for patients and residents in order to maintain confidentiality. Do not use proper names for equipment, which follows the plain language guidelines.<br>Examples:<br>Bunny Boots, Foley, Hoyer, and Ted Hose<br>*Correct:* The nurse used a bandage to cover the wound.<br>*Incorrect:* The nurse used a Band-Aid to cover the wound. |
| Parenthesis | A sentence that requires a parenthesis requires a period after the parenthesis.<br>Example:<br>*Correct:* The institute was founded by Harry Denman (1902-1972).<br>*Incorrect:* The institute was founded by Harry Denman (1902-1972.) |
| Passive Voice vs. Active Voice | The Principles of Documentation (POD) state that surveyors must document in active voice.<br>Active voice means the subject performs the action.<br>Passive voice is when the one performing the action is not the subject of the sentence.<br>Examples:<br>*Active Voice:* On 05/20/08 at 3:10 PM, the Director of Nursing said, "I would expect the nurse to notify the physician of a fall with injuries."<br>*Passive Voice:* During an interview with the Director of Nursing at 3:10 PM on 05/20/08, the Director of Nursing was heard to say, "I would expect the nurse to notify the physician of a fall with injuries." |