

DAQ Grammar Guide

Frequently misused words

Affect/effect

- Affect: to influence, to change
Paralysis affected his limbs.
- Effect: (noun) outcome, result (thE/Effect)
The effect of their statement was to incite anger.

Among/between

- Among: used for more than two
He divided the money amongst his three sons.
- Between: used in connection with two persons or things (beTWeen/TWo)
He divided the money between his two sons.

Appraise/apprise

- Appraise: to assess
He appraised the damage after the fire
- Apprise: to inform
He was apprised of the consequences before he lit the fire

Continuous/continual

- Continuous: action that occurs without interruption (continuuousssssss)
The roar of the waterfall was continuous.
- Continual: action that occurs frequently, with intervals between
The photocopy continually breaks down.

Complement/compliment

- Complement: well-contrasted
Cream is the perfect complement for strawberries
- Compliment: favourable remark
He complimented her singing

Disinterested/uninterested

- Disinterested: impartial, unbiased
To serve on a jury, you must be a disinterested party.
- Uninterested: bored or lacking interest
He was uninterested and took no part in the meeting.

Farther/further

- Farther: refers to physical distance
It is farther to Glasgow from here than it is to Edinburgh
- Further: refers to degree or extent
Further time is needed to complete the task.
The police have ordered further investigations.

Imply/infer

- Imply: to throw out a hint or suggestion
The President implied that the army had revolted against the government.
- Infer: to take in a hint or suggestion (take IN/Infer)
I inferred from her manner that she was unhappy with me.

Less/fewer

- Less: used for quantities
I have less money in my account than I did at the start of the month.
- Fewer: used for individual units, numbers
He will need to make fewer mistakes in his report.

Principle/principal

- Principal: (adjective) main
(noun) head of a school/college
The principal cause of my success
The principal of Castle College is Nick Lewis
- Principle (noun): fundamental truth or law
'Have you no principles?'

Stationery/stationary

- Stationery: (noun) pens, envelopes
Please order more stationery for our office.
- Stationary: (adverb) parked
The car remained stationary whilst at the red light

For commonly misspelled words, see attached sheet

Punctuation

Apostrophes

There are four simple rules to follow:

1. They show that one or more letters have been omitted:
 - *I can't do the report by Friday.*
 - *It's her fault we're late.*
2. They show ownership, with an apostrophe before the 's' where the owner is single:
 - *The dog's bone*
 - *The company's logo*
 - *Jones's bakery*

*N.B. The possessive form of **it** does not take an apostrophe, i.e. the bone is in **its** mouth*
3. And an apostrophe immediately after the 's' where there is more than one owner
 - *The dogs' bones*
 - *The companies' logos*
4. They are also used when the owner's name ends in an 's' and you don't want to use another 's':
 - *Peter Williams' computer*

Semicolons

Semicolons are used in two ways.

1. They are used to separate independent clauses:
 - *I like you; John likes you, too.*
 - *Hector was a Trojan; Achilles, on the other hand, was an Achaean.*
2. When the items in a series themselves contain commas, separate the items with semicolons:
 - *We visited Erie, Pennsylvania; Buffalo, New York; and Toronto, Ontario.*

Colons

There are two main rules to follow.

1. A colon is used before a list, which expands on the sentence that precedes it:
 - *There are many reasons for poor written communication: lack of planning, poor grammar, misuse of punctuation marks and insufficient vocabulary.*
 - *For their anniversary they went to the following places: Aruba, St. Martin, Jamaica, and the Bahamas.*
2. A colon is used before quotations:
 - Where the quotations are formal or lengthy - *Dickens wrote: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."*
 - Where the quotations do not begin with a "he said/she said" - *Alexandra took the microphone: "Your honour, I object."*

Tenses

There are 12 basic tenses in the English language (4 present, 4 past, 4 future) but in this section I have focused on the 5 tenses that I believe are used most frequently when writing minutes and reports. As a basic rule, always use the past tense for minutes and use either the present or past tense (or, if appropriate, a combination of the two) for report writing. However, the key to the use of tenses in writing reports is to BE CONSISTENT!

Present Tense (I do do, I do)

Example:

- The panel *recommends* that the programme team consider the appropriateness of the programme title.

Present Continuous Tense (I am doing, I am doing tomorrow)

Example:

- The panel was pleased to note that the programme team *is planning* a moderation day to be held at the end of the first session, to which all collaborative partner colleagues will be invited.

Present Perfect Tense (I have done)

Example:

- The programme team *has carried out* extensive market research.

Present Perfect Continuous Tense (I have been doing)

With the **present** perfect continuous tense, there is usually a connection with the **present** or now. There are basically two uses for the present perfect continuous tense - an action that has just stopped or recently stopped, or an action continuing up to now.

Example:

- The panel was pleased to note that the programme team *has been working* closely with colleagues in the colleges on this development, and that as a result, all staff due to be involved in delivery of the programme are familiar with the structure and learning outcomes.

Past Tense (I did do, I did)

We use the **simple past tense** to talk about an action or situation – an event - in the past. The event can be short or long and can have taken place two seconds ago, or several years ago. We use the simple tense when:

- the event is **in the past**
- the event is **completely finished**
- we say (or understand) the **time** and/or **place** of the event

Examples:

- The committee *approved* the minutes as an accurate record.
- The Head of Department of Academic Quality *reported on* the outcome of the Collaborative Provision Audit.

Past Continuous Tense (I was doing)

The **past continuous tense** expresses action at a **particular moment** in the past. We use it to say what we were in the middle of doing at a particular moment in the past – the action started before that moment but has not finished at that moment.

Examples:

- The Head of Department of Academic Quality reported that the University *was preparing* for Collaborative Provision Audit.
- The Quality Officer (Monitoring) *was reviewing* the current arrangements for programme monitoring.

Past Perfect Tense (I had done)

The past perfect tense expresses action in the **past** before another action in the **past**. This is the **past in the past**. For example:

- It was noted that the proposal *had been presented* to the committee in May and approved.
- The Servicing Officer *had reported* a summary of the Committee's findings to the development team.

Past Perfect Continuous Tense (I had been doing)

The past perfect continuous tense is like the past perfect tense, but it expresses longer actions in the **past** before another action in the **past**. For example:

- The Committee noted that the Department of Academic Quality **had been working** on revisions to the DAQ Guide to Validations, with a view to publishing an up to date version at the start of the session.

Miscellaneous

Who/which/that: who - for people; which - for animals/objects; that - for either

c v. s: nouns = c, eg licence, advice, practice; verbs = s, eg to license, to advise, to practise

'I' before 'e' except after 'c', when the sound is 'eee' (exceptions: seize, protein, weird)

me v. I: *Jane and I went to the shop; My mother gave Jane and me money for sweets*

Who v. whom: *(he) who = subject; (him) whom = object*