



THE ART OF THE QUERY

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What NOT to query

- Routine mechanical changes
- Grammatical and usage corrections
- Questions of fact that you aren't sure of but and can easily research

Ignore, fix, or query

Ignore:

- Anything outside your authority
- General statements in a piece with a short shelf life
- When time or budget does not allow for queries

Ignore, fix, or query

Fix or query:

- Inconsistencies in facts in the manuscript
- Inconsistencies between graphics and text
- Errors of fact (fix or query?)
- Arithmetic errors (fix or query?)
- Misordered steps in a how-to passage
- Confusing passages
- Confusing punctuation
- Incomplete text

The purpose and place of a query

The main purpose of an editorial query is twofold:

1. To ask the author to correct a problem or clarify the text
2. To ask the author to accept a proposed revision

Before you query

Ask yourself:

- How long will it take for the author to answer?
- Who is the reader?
- What is the purpose of the publication?
- How much does the author depend on/trust you to take care of things yourself?

Striking the right tone

1. Focus on the reader
2. Avoid imperatives
3. Say something positive
4. Don't be patronizing
5. Avoid quoting long passages from authorities
6. Be professional
7. Mind your manners

Focus on the reader

- **Instead of:**

You don't explain or define "open access." You need to write a definition here.

- **Use:**

Some readers may not be familiar with the term "open access." Please supply a brief definition.

Avoid imperatives

- **Instead of:**

Define “open access.” Explain how it is related to the economics of education.

- **Use:**

I’m having trouble understanding the concept of “open access” and its relationship to the economic argument. Can you provide an example to clarify?

Some examples

	<i>Instead of this:</i>	<i>Write this:</i>
1.	Not factually correct, at least not historically.	<i>This practice differs from what is described in the 19th century. Please reconcile.</i>
2.	Fix name of prize-winner in the photo caption.	<i>Please confirm spelling of prize-winner's name in the photo caption (compare to spelling in text, p. 43).</i>
3.	The term “average income” is unclear.	<i>Will readers understand “average income?” Consider stating a dollar range for clarity.</i>
4.	Correlation does not prove	<i>You make a compelling case that the</i>

Some examples

	<i>Instead of this:</i>	<i>Write this:</i>
5.	Surely “attitudes” is captured in “values”?	<i>“Attitudes” and “values” have been used several times as synonyms. Okay to delete “values” here?</i>
6.	I found the original ordering of the sentences in this paragraph confusing. They didn’t logically follow one after the other.	<i>Will readers understand the order of information in this paragraph? If the third sentence can be moved to the beginning, the meaning is clearer. Okay to make change?</i>
7.	If you’re selecting them, surely	<i>Edit without query.</i>

Some examples

	<i>Instead of this:</i>	<i>Write this:</i>
9.	What is the transition between the previous paragraph (about the board) and this paragraph (about culture)? They are completely separate topics.	<i>Will readers understand how these two paragraphs relate to each other? Suggest replacing the existing first sentence of the second paragraph to read “Another critical influence on enterprise risk management is culture.” Okay?</i>
10.	I’m not comfortable with the labels of “good people” and “bad people.” Didn’t the	<i>I’m concerned that some readers may take offence at the labels of “good people” and “bad people.” Did you get</i>

Clear and concise

A query that is too short:

may not be clear — e.g., “Revise”

may result in poor tone — e.g., “Is this logical?”

A query that is too long may not get answered.

- Query concisely, but remember your tone
- Offer choices in an answer (two at most) — as was shown in examples.
- Avoid questions that can be answered “yes” or “no.” Ask a specific question.

Clear and concise

- **Offer choices (two at most)**

The terms “real estate agent,” “realtor,” and “selling agent” are all used in this section. If they are synonymous, let’s use just one for clarity. Please choose one.

- **Avoid queries that can be answered “yes” or “no.” Ask a specific question.**

Don’t ask:

Are the terms “real estate agent,” “realtor,” and “selling agent” synonymous?

Ask:

Please briefly explain the difference between “real estate agent,” “realtor,” and “selling agent.”

Process

- Ask editorial coordinator what process to follow
- Learn how to use comments in Word
- Review your queries before sending

Using Word comments feature

ideas. For just a little taste of what's in store, check out keynote speaker Robin Esrock, a best-selling author, global adventurer, and dynamic presenter ¶

(Insert Video Here) ¶

2. Best bang for your buck ¶

REALTOR® XCHANGE offers a lot for just \$59—a much lower price than most major conferences. First, you get to attend world-class seminars covering a wide range of topics. Second, you will receive a free catered breakfast and lunch. Last, you will receive three PDP credits for attending. There's no better value out there! ¶

3. You could win big ¶

This year we're hosting a Twitter contest that could see one lucky attendee win big. The rules are simple: snap a shot of yourself checking

Deleted: top-notch experts that

Deleted: outside of the box,

Comment [RW2]: I changed this a bit because the original could read to local realtors that they weren't "top-notch" enough. My editing changes the emphasis to say that speakers from outside the industry are offering something new. Also, see my short identification of Robin Esrock. Okay? ¶

Deleted: .

Comment [RW3]: Change okay? I don't think I've ever attended a "major" conference for twice that price—\$160! (What deal!) ¶

Deleted: almost half the

Deleted: of

Deleted: of all

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When the author replies

- Choose your battles
- Adopt a helpful attitude
- Be prepared to compromise