

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.

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All of the following sentences are from the Technician. Fix them. These are actual sentences from Technician copy or approximations of those sentences, abbreviated for this exercise. What questions do you have for the reporter/writer?

1. Wolfpack coach Mark Stevenson and Tar Heel coach Derek Galvin are solely responsible for raising the two programs to national prominence.
2. The Pack is encouraged that the practice spent on the routine will lead to success in Florida.
3. Herring did not believe that testing was the best way to determine the presence of mold in the dorm's air-conditioning units.
4. In a formal ceremony with posh hor'derves, lily-white tablecloths and a red-bowtied wait staff, N.C. State officially said goodbye to outgoing chancellor Marye Anne Fox in a ceremony Tuesday in Caldwell Lounge.
5. More than half of N.C. State's funding is allocated by land grants from the state of North Carolina....
6. The filters in the dorm rooms are changed every year.
7. Students have been given instructions to enroll online.
8. Most stdents had only been in line for ten or fifteen minutes.
9. Gell is now attending Martin Community College and hopes to be a social worker.
10. Golf is often times and unreasonable sport for a college student to play.
11. I feel that Chancellor Fox could have been more involved during the debate....
12. Three NCSU students were part of the core-organizing group. Around 300 people attended the rally in Moore Square after the march, ...
13. Three apartment units were destroyed and several more had smoke and water damage, police said. No injuries were reported at the scene.
14. The group currently has around 85 members and is the oldest club sport on campus after being founded in the 1950s.