

# DELAWRITER

The quarterly newsletter of AMWA-DVC

Delawriter Editors

Summer Edition, 2020

## Contronyms: Which Meaning did You Intend?

By Katherine Molnar-Kimber

Medical and health writers strive to write clear concise text. In the English language, some words and phrases have two opposite meanings: they are called contronyms (or contranymy). Sometimes the context can clarify the intended meanings, such as this example showing the two different meanings of the contronym "left." "After the party, two were left to clean up while most of us left for the safety meeting." Here's a second example: "We buckled the very obese patient to the operating table for a hip replacement, and after 10 minutes of creaks from the table, the table buckled."

However, the context does not always remove ambiguity. "The Executive Committee consulted with the project leaders, provided oversight to the project annually, and sanctioned the developed mutants." Did the authors mean that the Executive Committee (EC) provided advice to the project leaders, received advice from the project leaders, or both? As the EC oversaw the project annually and viewed its progress, did the EC approve the validity of its developed mutants? Alternatively, was the annual EC oversight too sparse, and the developed mutants did not have the proper controls so the project approvals (and final funding) were delayed until controls were developed or performed? Or did the annual EC oversight notice errors but overlooked the missed controls and still approved the validity of the mutants, with reservations? Note that the two or three peer-reviewers of a grant application may interpret the sentence differently, and thus their reviews may be very disparate.

Many contronyms are used in everyday conversations and thus can often be found in documents written in plain language. Some contronyms are used in our business practices as well. Identifying the intended meaning of a contronym can be challenging for anyone, especially people with English as a second language. Whether you are writing for the general public in plain language or a professional audience, use only one meaning of the contronym throughout a document. Check to ensure that the context supports the intended meaning of the contronym, or choose a different word with the intended meaning. The opposing meanings of 29 contronyms are listed below.

- **Bill:** an invoice for payment or a cash payment (paid with a \$20 bill).
- **Buckle:** to connect (buckle the seat belt or fasten patient to table) or to break/collapse (as in a bridge, or equipment that failed under too much weight.) or to bend (The runner's knee buckled after finishing the race.)
- **Consult:** to provide advice (as a scientific consultant) or to obtain advice from subject matter experts (or AMWA Engage or business attorney).
- **Custom:** a common practice (The custom here is for...) or a personalized treatment (They developed a customized protocol for his set of uncommon symptoms.)
- **Execute:** to kill (A prisoner on death row will be executed) or to sign a document (Please send the executed document.)
- **Fast:** quick/rapid (move fast) or to be made stable (the clips held the assay plate fast despite the rocking motion.)
- **Finished:** ended (the race finished), or destroyed/exhausted (after the marathon, I was finished for the day), or completed (...finished the report).
- **First degree:** least severe (first degree burns cause redness but not blisters on the skin) or most severe (murder charge).
- **Fix:** to repair (fix a flat tire) or to inappropriately change the outcome (fix a ticket, race) or to remove male

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### Quick Notes

#### Join the DELAWRITER

If you would like your byline to be seen by hundreds of AMWA-DVCers, consider volunteering to write an article for the Delawriter. Enjoy crafting emails for clients? Interested in learning how to format a newsletter and have samples? Consider volunteering to become a designer and/or communication lead. Send your interest to [volunteers@amwa-dvc.org](mailto:volunteers@amwa-dvc.org).

#### Quarterly Quotes

*"A great enough writer seems to be born with knowledge. But he really is not; he has only been born with the ability to learn in a quicker ratio to the passage of time than other men and without conscious application, and with an intelligence to accept or reject what is*

genitalia (castrate).

- **Give out:** to provide something (give out resources) or to stop providing possibly due to a supply problem.
- **Go:** to physically move/advance or to wear out and fail (The Porsche could really go until it crashed into the tree at the curve-then it couldn't go.)
- **Handicap:** a disadvantage that may hinder equal success (eg, blindness) or a score that allows competitors of different abilities to compete fairly against each other (eg, handicap in golf, sailing, bowling, billiards).
- **Hold up:** to rob (a bank or store), to support weight (The nurse holds me up as I'm getting on my feet), or to delay/obstruct/deter (The late arrival of the prescription held up the start of the clinical trial.)
- **Left:** stayed/remained or moved to another location.
- **Mean:** average (a statistical calculation) or an unpleasant behavior.
- **Off:** deactivated (The lights were turned off) or not in proximity (High cytosine methylation density in a promoter keeps the transcription machinery off the DNA until gene...) or turned on (alarm went off.)
- **Out:** to be visible (the stars are out) or to become invisible (the lights went out.)
- **Overlook:** to supervise or to ignore/miss.
- **Oversight:** monitoring/surveillance or a mistake that was not detected.
- **Refrain:** to avoid doing something or to repeat (as a chorus in a song).
- **Sanction:** to approve the validity of a product/action or to disapprove the behavior with addition of a penalty or specific conditions.
- **Sign:** to provide a signature as approval, or to indicate/gesture (for deaf people).
- **Stakeholder:** person who directly participates in an organization or a bystander who keeps track of other people's bets.
- **Strike:** to hit (The birthday child used a stick to strike the hanging piñata) or a miss (Three strikes and you're out.)
- **Throw out:** to present (an idea) for contemplation or to discard in the trash/recycling.
- **Transparent:** see through clearly/invisible (glass in a window) or obvious (communications of decisions were transparent.)
- **Variety:** a specific type of a living thing/object or a group of many types.
- **Wear:** to persist or to deteriorate.
- **Weather:** to withstand some challenge (The business weathers the shutdown due to COVID-19) or to erode away, usually by small increments (The writing on the old gravestones were weathered and hard to read).

In your writing, consider choosing the most common meaning of the contronym for the target audience.

Katherine Molnar-Kimber, PhD., is the owner of KMK Consulting Services of Kimnar Group LLC in Worcester, PA and writes predominantly scientific publications, Continuing Medical Education Needs Assessments and programs, and white papers.

## AMWA-DVC Online Summer Social Tuesday Aug 18th

by Katherine Molnar-Kimber

AMWA-DVC took a virtual summer break for 90 minutes of lively discussion on medical writing. Three AMWA-DVC volunteers led consecutive 15-minute discussions on new developments in writing publications, regulatory documents, and Continuing Medical Education (CME).

Kathy Molnar-Kimber, PhD, spoke about the strong interest in bite-size content for publications as it appears to be increasing article metrics. For example, the journal Cell publishes not only an abstract written in prose, but also an infographic abstract that highlights the main points of the article. A survey of healthcare practitioners (HCP) indicated that more than 3 of 4 participating physicians accessed the following information monthly: diagnostic tools, treatment guidelines, treatment strategies, CME content, drug data, and medical images (EPG Health media, Pharmaceutical Industry HCP Engagement 2015). In this same survey, more than half of the physicians desired more and better access for these same topics. In some cases, the authors use their social media account(s) to spread the news about the articles.

Dan Benau, PhD, mentioned several presentations on regulatory writing, regulatory writers, and their management at the virtual 2020 DIA meeting. Professional knowledge and confidence helps medical writers to motivate their colleagues to stay on schedule with their contributions.

In the CME genre, Don Harting, MA, MS, ELS, CHCP, mentioned that Outcomes Reports can vary widely among providers which makes comparisons among different providers difficult. Towards improving consistency of Outcomes Reports between different providers, Gilead and CE Outcomes developed a standardized evaluation tool (2 pages) which measured the participants' key educational take-aways and learners' satisfaction with relevance and accuracy of content and achievement of learning objectives for a specific topic. Furthermore the tool also assessed participants' planned modifications to practices and anticipated challenges in implementation of the educational objectives. The standardization tool supported analyses of pooled data and comparative analyses of effectiveness of the CME hosted by the different CME providers.

Afterwards, the 30 participants were placed in their requested breakout rooms, which had lively discussions on current issues in writing publications, regulatory documents, or CME. We thank Don Harting, the AMWA-DVC Program Chair, for providing the Zoom platform and both Don and Helen Fosam for the smooth IT handling of

of a subject what is already presented as knowledge."  
Ernest Hemingway

"Life is choices, and they are relentless. No sooner have you made one choice than another is upon you."  
Atul Gawande

"Words can be medicines; they can also be poisons. Words can heal; they can also kill... It all depends on how, when and where they are used and against whom! Let us not abuse our words. It's a misuse of the tongue!"  
Israelmore Ayivor

### Quarterly Pun

"Statistically.... 9 out of 10 injections are in vein."

the Zoom meeting and managing the breakout rooms.

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## Status of Legislature that affects Freelance and Independent Contractors

The State of California passed AB5 in 2019, and it went into effect on January 1, 2020. The CA law places new regulations on companies wanting to hire freelancers and independent contractors or start-ups. Many freelancers and independent contractors in CA have indicated major drops in income due to postponement or cancelation of numerous projects. For more background, AMWA.org published a position statement in Jan 2020 with the full statement here:

<https://www.amwa.org/news/486591/AMWA-statement-on-legislation-affecting-freelance-medical-communicators.htm>

On Feb 6, 2020, the United States House of Representatives passed H.R. 2474 (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/2474/text>), which is considered to mimic AB5 in most regulations. For H.R. 2474 to become law, the United States Senate would have to pass its companion bill, S.1306 - if passed, these bills would affect the business regulations between clients and freelancers or independent contractors nationally. If you are interested, the vote of each US House of Representative on H.R.

2474 is listed in the roll call here: <https://clerk.house.gov/Votes/202050>. The companion bill, S.1306, was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions in February 2020. The 41 cosponsors of the senate bill are listed here:

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/1306/cosponsors?searchResultViewType=expanded>

If you are a freelance or independent contractor, the passing of these bills, though well-intentioned, has the potential to impact your work. Likewise, if passes, the bill may impact the hiring options of clients and/or quantity of administrative tasks for clients hiring freelancers and independent contractors. There is still time to request changes and voice your opinion of the bill or its Senate version, S. 1306.

## Friends of AMWA-DVC email list

AMWA-DVC has launched a new email list called "Friends of AMWA-DVC." In the past, several colleagues have asked to receive AMWA-DVC event announcements, despite not being members of our chapter of AMWA. Now they can join this Friends of AMWA-DVC email list and receive all AMWA-DVC event announcements. Sign up here: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/bJQa0vc/FriendsofAMWADVC>.

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### October 1, 2020, The 2020 MAACME Annual Conference (8:25 am to 1:30 pm EDT).

This virtual conference is hosted by the local Mid-Atlantic Alliance of CME (MAACME) Chapter. The sessions include an update of ACCME processes and commendation criteria. Integrating Interprofessional CME/CE and Quality Improvement, Creating Online Materials on a Shoestring, The Amazing Race for Six Years, and The Future of Posters in CME. Cost is \$15 for members and \$50 for nonmembers. For more information, visit:

[https://maacme.clubexpress.com/content.aspx?page\\_id=22&club\\_id=144025&module\\_id=357761](https://maacme.clubexpress.com/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=144025&module_id=357761)

### October 14, 2020, Fall 2020 CMEpalooza

Tune in to <https://cmepalooza.com/fall-2020/> for a day full of continuing education for writers of Continuing Medical Education (CME). Sessions are virtual and free. Each session dissects and analyzes one topic that ranges from identifying the missing pieces in rejected grants requests to tips for project management to revamping the long-term planning amid the pandemic to the CME glossary to building long-term competencies, agility, and resilience.

### October 20 to October 22, 2020, The 2020 AMWA National Conference (Virtual)

Registration is now open at <https://www.amwa.org/event/2020annualconf>. The schedule can be viewed at

[https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.amwa.org/resource/resmgr/Session\\_schedule\\_for\\_website.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.amwa.org/resource/resmgr/Session_schedule_for_website.pdf)

The schedule of roundtables will be coming shortly.

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