

# LISA'S GRAMMAR, STYLE, AND FORMATTING TIPS

## 1. Latin Abbreviations

**e.g.** Latin for “*exempli gratia*.” It means “for example.” Use it to give examples of something you just said. Put a comma before and after. Do not use italics.

I like candy bars, **e.g.**, Snickers, Milky Way, and Almond Joy.

**i.e.** Latin for “*id est*.” It means “in other words.” Use it to restate, clarify, or specify something you just said. Put a comma before and after. Do not use italics.

I'm going to the place where I work best, **i.e.**, the coffee shop.

WARNING: Be careful using i.e. It encourages redundancy. Why are you restating? Were you unclear the first time?

## 2. Affect vs. Effect

Affect (verb): to influence. “The 10 cookies **affected** the child.”

Effect (noun): result. “The **effect** was eye-popping.”

## 3. Then vs. Than

Than: Used to compare.

“I would rather eat Milky Way **than** Snickers.

Then: Refers to time or chronology.

“I ate the Snickers, **then** the Milky Way.”

## 4. Its vs. It's

It's: short for “it is.” If you can substitute “it is” for “it's”, then this is the correct choice. “**It's** time for Oreos.”

Its: shows possession. “The dog wagged **its** tail.” Whose tail is it? The dog's.

## 5. There, Their, or They're

“There” specifies a place. “The candy bar is over **there**.”

“Their” is a possessive form of “they.” “The neighbors will share **their** candy bars.”

“They're” is short for “they are.” “**They're** going to buy more candy bars.”

## 6. Data vs. Datum

This is a hotly debated topic. Technically, “data” is plural, and “datum” is singular. But “data” is also considered a mass noun, which is singular. Most grammar references say this:

“Data” can be either singular or plural. It is acceptable to say “The data **is**...” or “The data **are**...”

(Few technical writers use the word “datum” anymore.) This choice is a judgment call. Select the one that does not confuse your reader, but if you want to play it safe, use the plural, “data **are**.”

## 7. Be Concise. Put your writing on a diet!

Most writing can be improved with liposuction. Use fewer words. Use shorter words. Your writing will be clearer and more powerful.

### Wordy

ambulate  
commence  
endeavor  
a large number of  
in the majority of instances  
the reason why is that  
alternate choices  
completely eliminate  
connected together  
made a selection  
an analysis of the data will be made

### Better

walk  
start  
try  
many  
usually  
because  
alternatives  
eliminate  
connected  
selected  
data will be analyzed

## 7. Numbered Citations

Here is an example of how you use numbered citations.

In-text citation:

Dr. John Doe [3] states that chocolate is healthy.

Scientists state that chocolate is healthy [3].

Here is how it appears in your bibliography. Remember, it is the third item on your list, and it is the third citation in your paper.

[3] Doe, J. 2013. Benefits of Consuming Chocolate. *Chocoholic Journal* 21: 25-30.

## 8. Tables and Figures

- Figures (pictures, graphs, drawings, etc.) and tables are numbered separately in order of appearance in the paper.
- They are placed close to the in-text citation.
- Caption fonts are 2 sizes smaller than the regular text.

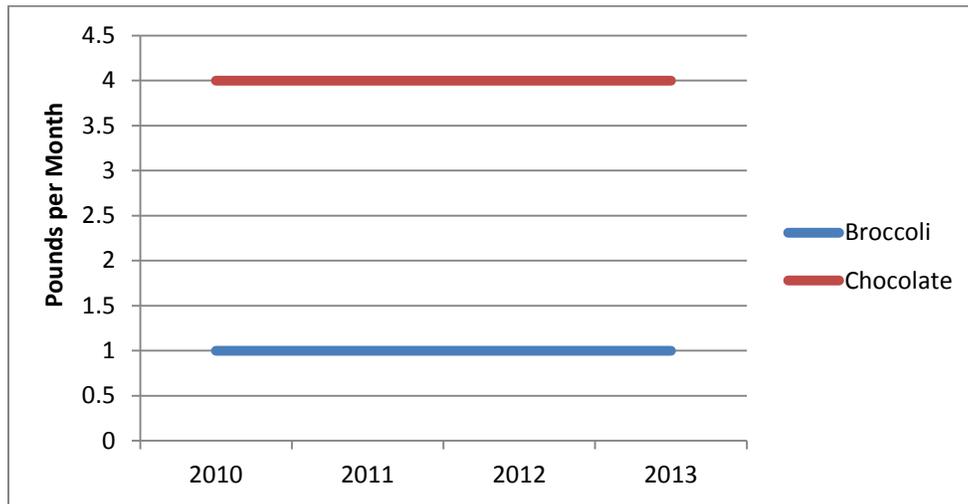
Here is an example of each and how they may be referenced in the text.

Figures:

“Figure 1 shows Lisa’s monthly rate of chocolate and broccoli consumption over the past 4 years.”

OR

“Lisa consumes more chocolate than broccoli (Figure 1).”



**Figure 1:** Lisa's monthly chocolate and broccoli consumption 2010-2013.

Tables:

“Table 1 shows Lisa's monthly rate of chocolate and broccoli consumption over the past 4 years.”

OR

“Lisa consumes more chocolate than broccoli (Table 1).”

**Table 1:** Lisa's monthly chocolate and broccoli consumption 2010-2013.

Year	Consumption (pounds/month)	
	Broccoli	Chocolate
2010	1	4
2011	1	4
2012	1	4
2013	1	4