Case Background / Writing

We'll start today by continuing to take questions about the case in progress. Remember that the goal will be to understand the background well enough to write 3–5 sentences describing the background, so take good notes! As your group arrives, review with each other what you've learned so far, and discuss what questions you still want to ask.

Again, here's the initial information you got. "I'm a veterinary student studying coagulation abnormalities in dogs with septic peritonitis. Can you tell me what my sample size should be? Thanks."

Planning: Together with your group, do some planning for the background and goals section for the case study we've been discussing. (Don't draft anything yet!)

Drafting: Write 2–3 sentences about the background and goals of this study.

Revising (Part I)

Here are some principles to keep in mind when revising. They are not hard and fast rules! See `https://cgi.duke.edu/web/sciwriting/` for more details.

Principle 1: Put actions in verbs

Verbs are action words: they describe motion, like to explore, to examine, or to observe. Verbs can be turned into nouns, which changes the word from an action to a thing. This is called a nominalization. Nominalizations are nouns that contain a hidden action. There is nothing inherently wrong with nominalizations, but many scientific writers misuse them by using abstract nouns to convey action. This creates a disconnect between structure and meaning — the intended action is no longer found in the verb. **Most readers expect the main action of a clause to be found in a verb.** If you fail to put your intended action in a verb, your reader must work to determine where the action is. *Revision Technique:* Find the verbs in each sentence of your draft. For each, ask yourself this question: Does this verb capture the action in the sentence?

Surgical techniques for septic peritonitis, a type of contamination within the abdomen, have

been subject to different improvements, modifications, and extensions over the years.

Principle 2: Keep subjects near verbs

The two primary pieces of information a reader looks for are 1) who is the sentence about? and 2) what are they doing? When these two pieces of information are far apart, that usually means one of them isn't arriving until the end of the sentence. This confuses readers, because they can't piece together the whole picture without answers to these questions. *Revision Technique:* How far apart are your subjects and verbs? Can you bring them closer together?

In dogs, there are several important factors, including platelet count, mean platelet volume,

platelet distribution width, and platelet crit, that affect coagulation.

Name: _____

What planning/prewriting techniques did you use today?

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_____

_____

Which revision principle was more interesting or applicable to you? Why?

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Please leave this sheet, your nametag, and your playing card on the tables by the door.
The other handouts are for you to keep; this sheet will not be returned except by request.