Prof. Baumgartner
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A grammar / style refresher.  If one of the following choices is not obviously superior to the others, we are all in trouble.  Keep this list handy as you write your papers in my class and make the right choices when the time comes!  Each pair or set of comparisons below contains a bad way to write and a better way.  Pick the better way.

In regards to this paper, I will be discussing…
In this paper, I discuss…
Schattschneider's theory is wrong/confirmed because it overlooks/highlights the role of targeting in issue-expansion.

In the society that we live in today, there are layers of regulations intended to prevent fraud…
Layers of regulations help prevent fraud…

A lobbyist must spend time convincing their clients…
A lobbyist must spend time convincing his clients…
Lobbyists spend time convincing their clients…

This paper is going to explore…
This paper explores…

The public at large understands little about lobbyists and they spend much of their time monitoring…
Members of the public understand little about lobbyists.  In particular, most people may not be aware that lobbyists spend much of their time monitoring…

There are many reasons why lobbying is important…
Lobbying matters for the following reasons…

The need for a land-use lobbyist is created when developers need a zoning variance.
Developers wanting a zoning variance may need a lobbyist.

This paper reviews the effect of lobbyists on…
This paper reviews the affect of lobbyists on…

This paper reviews how lobbyists effect legislation on…
This paper reviews how lobbyists affect legislation on…

…the lobbyist's role in x, y, and z, and their role in the legislative process more generally…
…the lobbyist's role in x, y, and z, and his role in the legislative process more generally …
…lobbyists' roles in x, y, and z, and in the legislative process more generally …

From the available evidence, it appears that…
Evidence suggests that…

It's clear that I don't know the difference between its as a possessive and it's as a contraction for "it is."
Its clear that I don't know the difference between its as a possessive and it's as a contraction for "it is."

Its claws exposed, the cat was going to fight back.
It's claw's exposed, the cat was going to fight back.
It's claws exposed, the cat was going to fight back.

Know the difference between adjectives that refer to continuous v. discrete quantities.
Continuous words:  much, amount, large
Discrete words:  number, many, fewer

Some of the examples below will make you cringe and no one would ever write them.  However, you'd be surprised how people forget these simple rules sometimes in other cases.

A large number of people have been affected by the flood…
A large amount of people have been affected by the flood…

Fewer dollars were spent
Less dollars were spent

Fewer money was spent
Less money was spent

A large number of dollars was raised…
A large number of dollars were raised…
A large amount of dollars was raised…
A large amount of dollars were raised…

A large amount of money was raised…
A large number of monies was raised…

A huge quantity of dollars was spent…
A huge number of dollars was spent…

There's a large amount of sand on the beach…
There's a large amount of grains of sand on the beach…

There's a large number of grains of sand on the beach…
There's a large number of sand on the beach…

Theives stole many things
Theives stole much things

Theives stole many stuff
Theives stole much stuff

Often when you use a phrase that refers to a quantity of individuals you switch from plural to singular because you have put all the individuals into a group.  Examples:

A majority of Americans supports…
A majority of Americans support…

Many/most Americans supports…
Many/most Americans support…

Washington DC is the nation's capital
Washington DC is the nation's capitol

The House and Senate meet in the capitol building
The House and Senate meet in the capital building