

1. *Assignment*
 - a. Are there further questions about the social organization of mathematics?
 - b. Another paper is posted on the website for discussion, with the link [Struik term paper](#). It was written for a senior-level course on history of mathematics. I copyedited it and returned it to the student with comments after making a photocopy. It was hard to scan that and make it legible. Moreover, it would be redundant to discuss the whole paper, so I only posted its first two pages. This student's native language was also not English. The paper received an A grade. Please read those pages; we'll discuss my comments on them in class.
2. *Gillman 1987 chapter 6.*
 - a. Ms. Afaga continued the discussion of this. Here are some additional comments.
 - b. Fowler 1958 is a wonderful and amusing source of lore on this subject.
 - c. Passive voice is overused as a way of avoiding writer's responsibility. That's the mark of a bureaucrat-in-training.
 - d. I can never remember what *comprise* means, so I don't use it. Same thing for many other impressive words.
 - e. My copyeditor just caught me mixing up *insure* and *ensure*.
 - f. You need to decide how to render $x \in Y$ and $X \subseteq Y$ in text. Whatever you do, do it consistently.
 - g. *Which* versus *that*
 - i. With oils I painted the clouds, which were grey. *An inessential phrase uses which and is set off with commas.*
 - ii. With oils I painted the clouds that were grey. *An essential phrase uses that but no commas.*
 - h. Last year we had a heated discussion about the order of terminal quotation marks and other punctuation. Someone said that something about logic. The following two sentences are punctuated according to some mathematicians' logic.

I asked, "Did you say 'This is *logic*.'?". Later a student asked in frustration, "How should we do it?". I replied, "Did you *really* ask, 'How should we do it?'?"!

I hope you can follow the logic. Should you admire it, think then of Victor Borge's famous comic routine about phonetic punctuation! Don't invite derision: it's counterproductive. Grammar books and copyeditors insist on illogical punctuation. Surprisingly, standards differ between here and Europe. American editors require that other punctuation marks come inside quotes. They'd remove the second and third periods in the displayed text. OK, I don't mind. But an insensitive one would also remove the first period and put the

first quotation mark inside the single quotes. That changes the meaning: it suggests that the student was questioning whether something was really logical. The third sentence seems to me to demonstrate that the standard American rule makes it impossible to render some nuances. When that happens, rephrase—it won't help to argue with the editor! Should I write, "Should I say 'Amen!'" No: rephrasing that last sentence would make it at once unobjectionable and more forceful: I should merely say "Amen!"

- i. Almost everyone says *different than* frequently and wrongly. Moreover, the correct *different from* often sounds awkward. When that happens in your writing, rephrase to avoid the problem. Often, more words are necessary.
- j. Direct objects of verbs and objects of prepositions must be in the *objective* (sometimes called *accusative*) case:

I led *him* to *her*.

- k. Similarly, for indirect objects of verbs and subjects of infinitives:

I gave *him* a present for *her* to admire.

- l. Clauses with gerunds can often be parsed more than one way. Sometimes a gerund must have a subject, and that must be in the *genitive* case:

I appreciated *his* quickly displaying it.

- m. I'm no expert in such things and can't be definitive. I want to point out that there are such rules, and when in doubt or when criticized for their misuse, you should be able to find them somewhere.
 - n. These distinctions are confusing in part because English has lost many of its inflections. The genitive *her* and objective *her* are identical, for example. It's probably easiest to learn them in Latin, where all the inflections are different. English, French, German, Italian, Latin, and Spanish all work in comparable ways, so that consciousness of these matters pays off when you need to read the other languages.
 - o. Multiply hyphenated words such as Gillman's *non-PhD-granting* institution are unfortunate. For one thing, they're apt to be mangled by hyphenation software, becoming *non-PhD-grant-ing*. In such situations, use more words and rephrase: institutions *that do not grant the PhD*!
 - p. It is well known that many hyphenations in English are unnecessary, particularly *well-known* unless you have to distinguish a *well-known* liar, an obscure but well *known* liar, and a sickly known liar.
 - q. In mathematical discourse we write about *well-ordered sets* because the original term was *wohlgeordnete Mengen*. In logic we write about *well-formed* formulas. (*Wohlformulierte Formeln* is intelligible German, but I don't recall ever seeing it.)
3. I discussed briefly a book review I wrote recently for *Mathesis*, a Mexican journal (really international) for the history and philosophy of mathematics. It has been accepted as is, and will be published very soon. The review indicates that the book

is a good one. But I stressed the last pages of the review, which indicate that the book had extremely poor editing. You'll see that its errors are so serious as to invite derision, and detract from the book's overall effectiveness. There's a link to the review on the course's home webpage.

4. One comment in that review deserves repetition with special emphasis:
 - a. *Use your spelling checker!*
 - b. *Don't* trust it, though!
 - c. It will object to the unusual words and names that occur in mathematics, and to a zillion symbolic expressions. But it makes you think about your spelling.
 - d. It will *not* object to your use of an incorrect but properly spelled word in place of the correct one.
 - e. You can add new, correctly spelled, words to you spelling checker's dictionary, so that it will not repeatedly object to them. Careful: if you add an incorrectly spelled word,...
 - f. I don't use a spelling checker routinely. But one of the very last steps before my submitting a document for publication is spell-checking. First, I empty the part of spelling checker's dictionary that I had entered in the past, to insure that I don't perpetuate any blunders of that sort. The checker usually finds one blunder every five pages or so. I have never used a grammar checker, so have no advice on that technique.