

Exercise #3: Science-specific word choice

Circle the most correct word option

A	B
Patient data are shown in Table 1.	Patient data is shown in Table 1.
A single bacteria is visible by electron microscopy.	A single bacterium is visible by electron microscopy.
To test if H3 K4 me3 was associated with transcription...	To test whether H3 K4 me3 was associated with transcription...
The most widely accepted theory is currently X.	The most widely accepted hypothesis is currently X.
Heat shock has a dramatic affect on gene expression.	Heat shock has a dramatic effect on gene expression.
With the advent of high throughput sequencing, many new fungi have been discovered.	With the advent of high throughput sequencing, many new funguses have been discovered.
When galactose was used fewer colonies grew.	When galactose was used less colonies grew.
Our results prove that chromatin modifications direct gene expression changes at the HOX locus.	Our results support the hypothesis that chromatin modifications direct gene expression changes at the HOX locus.
We believe that HLH binding domains are more ancient than zinc finger domains	Our findings support the model that HLH binding domains are more ancient than zinc finger

Answer	Reason
Patient data are shown in Table 1.	The word “data” is plural*.
A single bacterium is visible by electron microscopy.	”bacterium” is the singular form of “bacteria”
To test whether H3 K4 me3 was associated with transcription...	Both are correct. “whether” is sometimes preferred over “if” to stress agnostic attitude to the outcome.
The most widely accepted hypothesis is currently X.	“theory” means principles tested ad nauseum that still remain true... “Theory of relativity”, “Germ theory of disease”
Heat shock has a dramatic effect on gene expression.	“effect” is a noun. ”affect” is a verb. “to have a strong effect” “it affects my mood”
With the advent of high throughput sequencing, many new fungi/funguses have been discovered.	Both are right. In many Latin root words, the plural of “-us” is “-i”
When galactose was used fewer colonies grew.	”fewer” refers to a countable number. “less” refers to continuous or abstract amounts
Our results support the hypothesis that chromatin modifications direct gene expression changes at the HOX locus.	We don’t ”prove” things using the scientific method. We “disprove” the null hypothesis. We exclude possibilities.
Our data supports the model that HLH binding domains are more ancient than zinc finger domains.	Generally, try to avoid feelings and beliefs in most manuscript writing. Also, think hard about when to use the term “to believe”. Make sure you aren’t overselling what could be better described as “thinking” or