Suppose you were writing to someone in another department:

> I understand you are doing a confidential study of the Bronson matter. May I please get an advance copy of your report [At this point you hesitate. Should this sentence end with a period or a question mark?]

This is the kind of problem that continually comes up. How do you find a fast answer to such questions? In this manual there are several ways to proceed.

Use the Printed Index. A sure way to find the answer you want is to check the detailed index at the back of the manual. This index has more than doubled in size—from 19 pages in the ninth edition to 43 pages in the tenth. In the new index (which contains over 5000 entries), any one of the following entries will lead you to the right punctuation for the problem sentence above:

Periods, **101–109**	Question marks, **110–118**	Requests, **103**, **113**, **124a**,
. . .	. . .	. . .
at end of requests, **103**	at end of requests, **103, 113**	

In each entry a **boldface number** refers to the proper rule, **¶103.** If you look up ¶103, you will find that a question mark is the right punctuation for the sentence in question.

In almost all the index entries, references are made to specific rule numbers so that you can find what you are looking for fast. In a few cases, where a page reference will provide a more precise location (for example, when a rule runs on for several pages), a page number is given in lightface type. Suppose you were confronted with this problem:

> If you compare the performance records of Catano, Harris, and Williams, you won't find much difference *(between/among)* them.

The index will show the following entries:

> *among* (see *between,* 317) **OR** *between–among,* 317

The entry on page 317 indicates that *between* is correct in this situation.

Use the Electronic Index. This is an even better way to find the answer you're looking for. As you might expect, the electronic index contains all of the items in the printed index. However, it also contains a good deal more. It provides entries for many of the terms and phrases that have been used to illustrate specific rules in the manual—items far too numerous to fit in a printed index. Suppose you were unsure whether or not to capitalize *the* when it precedes *Wall Street Journal*. The electronic index will direct you to ¶324, where you will learn that *the* is capitalized in this particular case.

The electronic index is located on the Gregg Web site, <http://www.gregg.com>. For rapid access, install this index on your computer. In that way, if you encounter a problem as you are working at the computer, the index can quickly direct you to the place in the manual where you will find the answer you're looking for.

Use a Fast-Skim Approach. Many users of reference manuals have little patience with detailed indexes. They would rather open the book and skim through the pages until they find what they are looking for. If you prefer this approach, you will find several features of this manual especially helpful.

- The brief topical index on the inside front cover indicates the key paragraphs for each major topic.
- At the start of each section except the appendixes, you will find a detailed list of all the topics covered in that section. This list will help you quickly focus on the rule or rules that pertain to your problem. Suppose the following problem came up:

  The only point still at issue is whether or not new *Federal* [or is it *federal?*] legislation is required.

The index on the inside front cover indicates that ¶¶301–366 deal with the topic of capitalization. A fast skim of the outline preceding ¶301 (on page 92) will turn up the entry *Names of Government Bodies (¶¶325–330)*. If you turn to that set of rules, you will find in ¶328 that *federal* is the proper form.

- Extensive cross-references have also been provided throughout the manual so that you can quickly locate related rules that could prove helpful. Some cross-references take this form: *See ¶324;* others may read *See also ¶324.* The form *See ¶324* indicates that ¶324 contains significant information that adds to or qualifies the rule you are currently reading; the word *See* suggests that you really ought to pursue the cross-reference before making a decision. The form *See also ¶324* carries a good deal less urgency. It indicates that you will find some additional examples in ¶324 and perhaps a restatement of the rule you are currently reading but nothing altogether new. In effect, *See also* suggests that you don't have to pursue the cross-reference if you don't want to—but it couldn't hurt.

Play the Numbers.   There is still a third way to find the answer to a specific problem—and this is an approach that will grow in appeal as you become familiar with the organization and the content of the manual. From a fast inspection of the rule numbers, you will observe that they all carry a section number as a prefix. Thus Section 3 (on capitalization) has a "300" series of rules—from 301 to 366; Section 4 (on number style) has a "400" series—from 401 to 470; and so on. Once you become familiar with the section numbers and the section titles, you can find your way around fairly quickly, without reference to either index, by using the section number tabs on the outer edges of all pages. For example, you are about to write the following sentence:

  43 percent of the questionnaires have now been returned. [Or should it be "*Forty-three* percent of the questionnaires . . . "?]

If you know that matters of number style are treated in Section 4, you can quickly turn to the pages tabbed for Section 4, where a fast skim of the outline of topics at the start of the section will lead you to the answer in ¶421. *Forty-three percent* is the right answer in this instance.

A familiarity with the section numbers and section titles can also save you time when you are using the index. If your index entry lists several different paragraph numbers, you can often anticipate what the paragraphs will deal with. For example, if you want to know whether to write *5 lb* or *5 lbs* on a purchase order, you might encounter the following entry in the index:

  Weights, **429–431, 535–538, 620**

If you know that Section 6 deals with plurals, you will try ¶620 first.

Look Up Specific Words or Phrases.   Many of the problems that arise deal with specific words or phrases. It is impossible for the manual to anticipate every troublesome word

or phrase that you may encounter. However, if the manual deals with a particular item that concerns you, you are now more likely than ever to locate the place where it is discussed, thanks to the greatly expanded electronic index. Consider the following sentence and decide whether *therefore* should be set off with commas or not.

It is(,) *therefore*(,) essential that operations be curtailed.

A check of the printed or the electronic index will show the following entry:

therefore, **122**, **124b**, **138–142**, **178**, **290f**, 328, 343

A reading of the rules in ¶141 will indicate that no commas should be used in this sentence.

Suppose you are not sure whether to use *allusion* or *illusion* in a particular sentence. There is no entry for these words in the printed index, but the electronic index will direct you to page 200, where you will find the two words defined and distinguished.

If you cannot find an entry for a particular word or phrase in either the printed or the electronic index, then skim the list of topics at the beginning of the appropriate section in the manual to locate the sequence of paragraphs most likely to be of help. For example, if you are unsure whether a particular term should be capitalized, check the outline at the start of Section 3 to see which particular set of rules is likely to shed light on your problem. You can also scan the rules and examples in Section 3 until you find something that closely resembles the situation you are grappling with. If you still can't find the answer you need, take advantage of the "Ask the Author" service that is available on the Gregg Web site.