

# Word for Word

## "As Well As" or "And"?

*As well as* and *and* both connect words or phrases in sentences, but they are not interchangeable. Whereas *and* indicates that the words or phrases connected are roughly equivalent, *as well as* indicates that the elements following are distinct from those preceding it. Traditionally, this distinction has been that the words or phrases following *as well as* have less emphasis or importance, but it is now generally acceptable to use *as well as* to indicate only that some kind of distinction is present. In most instances, setting the *as well as* phrase off with commas will help clarify meaning.



### Examples:

Correct: A molecular biologist, a surgical oncologist, a biostatistician, and an undergraduate research intern comprise the research team.

Correct: A molecular biologist, a surgical oncologist, and a biostatistician, as well as an undergraduate research intern, comprise the research team.

Although both of these sentences are correct, they have slightly different meanings. The first assigns equal importance to all research team members. The second makes some distinction between the experts and the research intern. This could suggest that the intern has a smaller role than the experts do, or it could indicate that something about the intern's role is different from, though not necessarily less important than, the experts' roles. If the nature of the distinction is not clear from the context of the sentence, additional text is needed to clarify.

One implication of this is that *as well as* cannot simply replace *and* in a grouping of connected words or phrases.

**Example:**

Incorrect: A molecular biologist, a surgical oncologist, a biostatistician, as well as an undergraduate research assistant comprise the research team.

One way to see if *as well as* is being used correctly is to replace it with *in addition to*. If the sentence still makes sense, *as well as* is an acceptable choice.

**Examples:**

Incorrect: The experiments used lung cancer cell lines A549, PC14, LC319, in addition to breast cancer cell line MDA-MB-231.

Correct: The experiments used lung cancer cell lines A549, PC14, and LC319, in addition to breast cancer cell line MDA-MB-231.

Finally, using *as well as* with a singular subject does not make the subject plural; therefore, the subject's verb must remain singular.

**Examples:**

Incorrect: The principal investigator, as well as her co-investigators, have extensive experience using the assay.

Correct: The principal investigator, as well as her co-investigators, has extensive experience using the assay.

**Bibliography**

*Chicago Manual of Style. 17th edition.* 5.142: Misleading connectives--"as well as," "along with," "together with," and the like. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press; 2017: 270.

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--Joe Munch

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