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## Articles Do Not Unfold Over Time

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**Abstract:** "Articles Do Not Unfold Over Time" discusses the all-too-common error of using the future tense to describe an article's contents. "October *JOE*" highlights a just few of the notable articles in the October issue, including two from fellow professional communicators.

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### Articles Do Not Unfold Over Time

I'm taking this space to discuss an all-to-common error.

One of the most common errors I find in *JOE* articles is the use of future tense to describe the contents of an article, as in "this article will discuss." But articles do not unfold over time. What the article discusses is already "there" and already discussed. You should be talking about your article, not the readers' reading experience, which *does*, of course, unfold over time.

So *this* article discusses a common usage error *and* some of the more notable articles in the October issue. You may not have read about the notable articles yet, but the article discusses them.

Articles do not unfold over time, and neither do reports or white papers or Extension publications. So use the present tense.

### October *JOE*

As a professional communicator myself, I'm especially pleased to call your attention to contributions from two of my colleagues.

The first Commentary, "[Plagiarism Within Extension: Origin and Current Effects](#)," explains why plagiarism in Extension publications is a problem, despite what some in Extension might think, and offers some resources to help Extension staff avoid the problem, which does harm to "the relevance, legitimacy, and continued existence " of Extension. The first Tools of the Trade article, "[Publications Highlight Science Communication Research for Busy Professionals](#)," describes a series of publications from Oregon State "designed to identify, distill, and highlight useful social science research to help professionals communicate more effectively."

These two articles are "must reads."

Master Gardeners get attention in the last Feature article, "[The Effects of Florida Master Gardener Characteristics and Motivations on Program Participation](#)," and the first Research in Brief, "[Reasons for Volunteering as a Mississippi Master Gardener](#)." The latter is followed by articles on Master Naturalist and Master Forest Owner programs.

There are also a number of interesting articles on nutrition topics among the 33 varied articles that make up the October issue. Together, the articles in the October issue demonstrate the breadth and depth of what we

do in Extension. We should all be proud.

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