

Doubled "That"

When the word *that* introduces a clause, the subject of the clause may not follow immediately; in such a case, the writer is often tempted to repeat the word *that* later in the sentence. Consider the following:

We ask **that** if the software you ordered is included on a CD-ROM, **that** a copy of the CD be sent to us for comparison with our file.

Note the doubling of *that*. The author begins a *that* clause, then interrupts it with an *if* clause (if the software . . .), delaying the grammatical subject of the *that* clause, a *copy*. The separation is awkward but grammatically acceptable. The problem lies in the second *that*, which is unnecessary and should be eliminated.

Revised: We ask that if the software you ordered is included on a CD-ROM, a copy of the CD be sent to us for comparison with our file.

The awkward separation of *that* and a *copy* that led the writer to commit this error is easily remedied by beginning the sentence with the *if* clause:

Revised and improved: If the software you ordered is included on a CD-ROM, we ask that a copy of the CD be sent to us for comparison with our file.