

AMA Manual of Style

You are looking at 1-1 of 1 items for: **med-9780195176339-div2-280**

False Singulars

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A few plural nouns are used so often in the singular that they are often paired with a singular verb. The agenda has been set for our next meeting. Frequently treated erroneously in this way are the plurals bacteria, criteria, phenomena, and memoranda. The distinction between singular and plural, however, should be retained; when the singular is intended, use bacterium, criterion, phenomenon, and memorandum. Also, many now consider acceptable the use of data as a singular. In this usage, data is thought of as a collective noun and, when considered as a unit rather than as the individual items of data