

# Academic Writing

*What do you want your writing to say about you?*

Transportation and Logistics  
Student Orientation

Tom Jirik  
Communication Coordinator

**“It’s as interesting and as difficult to say a thing well as to paint it. There is the art of lines and colours, but the art of words exists too, and will never be less important.”**

**-- Vincent van Gogh**  
*Post-Impressionist Dutch painter*

**“The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug.”**

**-- Mark Twain**  
*American author  
and humorist*

**“Writing – the art of applying the seat  
of the pants to the seat of the chair.”**

**--Mary Heaton Vorse**

*American journalist,  
labor activist, and novelist*

# What's the Point?

- Communicating clearly
- Communicating effectively
- Communicating professionally

# Why good writing is important

- Reflects on you as a professional
- Reflects on your research
- Helps you to advance your ideas
- Is critical to collaboration

# Know Your Audience

# Put tools in your toolbox

- **Style guides**
- **Dictionaries**
- **Thesaurus**
- **Books on writing**
- **Another set of eyes**
- **Learn your weaknesses**
- **Tips and tricks**

# Style

More than being a snappy  
dresser

# Style guide/style manual

- A set of standards for the writing and design of documents, either for general use or for a specific publication, organization or field.
- **The implementation of a style guide provides uniformity in style and formatting of a document.**

# Examples of Style Guides

- The ACS Style Guide
- AMA Manual of Style
- The Associated Press Stylebook
- **The Chicago Manual of Style**
- **Turabian**
- The Elements of Style
- The Elements of Typographic Style
- ISO 690
- MHRA Style Guide
- MLA Style Manual
- MLA Handbook
- The New York Times Manual
- The Oxford Guide to Style/New Harts' Rules
- **The Publication Manual of the APA**
- The ASA Style Guide

# Online style guides

- Purdue University Online Writing Lab – under “Research and Citation”
  - <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>
- NDSU Center for Writers under “Citing Sources”
  - <https://www.ndsu.edu/cfwriters/>

# Online Guides

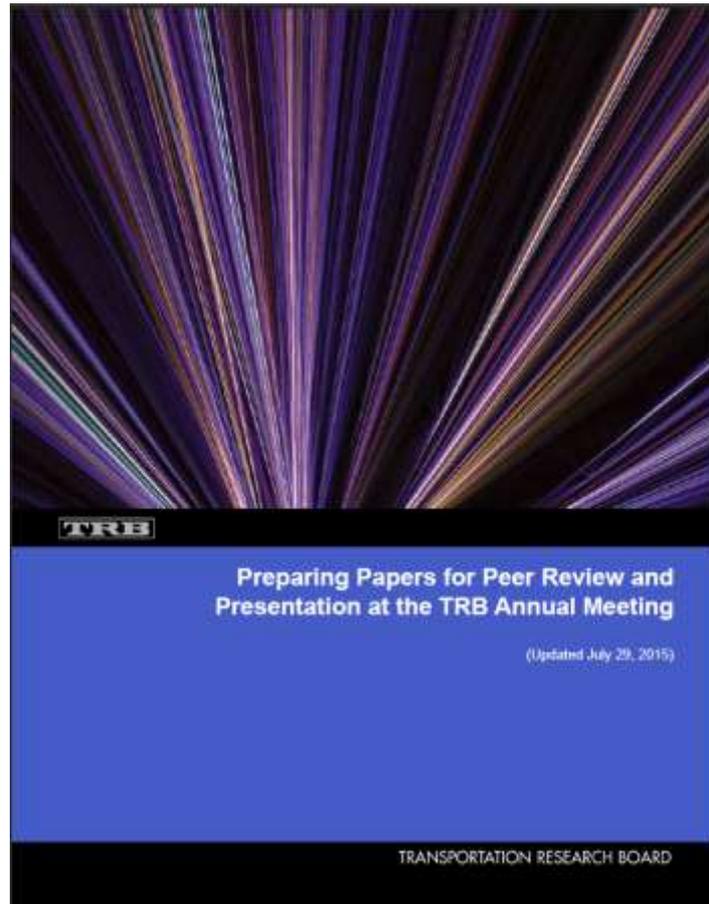
- University writing programs
- Professional organizations
- Publishing companies/organizations

## Be careful

Is it complete?

Is it up to date?

Does it apply to you?



## Most journals have a style guide or guidelines for authors

- Look for them online
- Request them

<http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/AM/InfoForAuthors.pdf>

## TRB receives more than 5,300 papers per year

- only 20% Published in Transportation Research Record
- only 60% are presented at the TRB annual meeting.

TRB's Paper Author Resource Page:

<http://www.trb.org/AnnualMeeting/AMPaperAuthorResource.aspx>

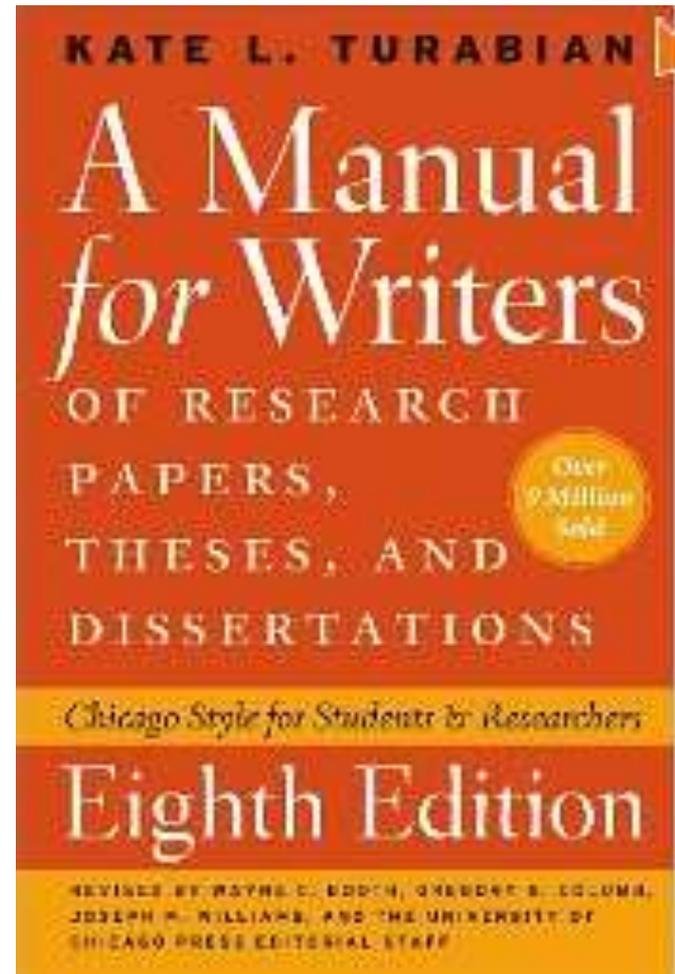
# Top 10 Ways to Get Your Paper Rejected

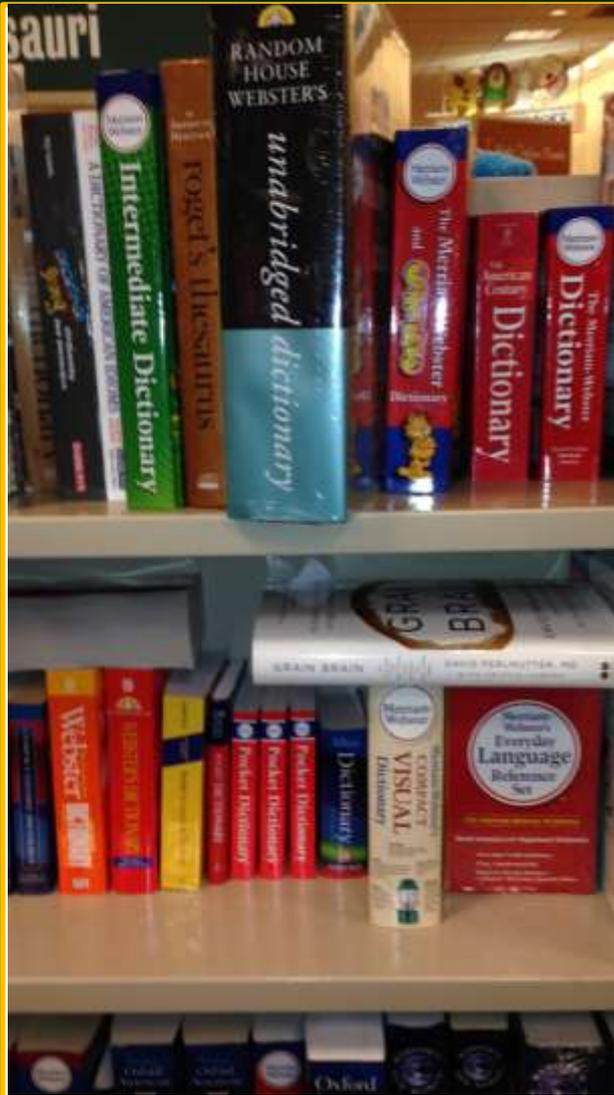
1. Ignore the word limit.
2. Ignore the formatting rules.
3. Include spelling and grammar mistakes.
4. Do not provide relevant references.
5. Submit nearly identical papers to several committees or even one committee.
6. Do not revise your paper—think of it as a work of art.
7. Insert random tables and graphics.
8. Never explain the main findings—your readers should be able to figure that out.
9. Do not respond to reviewer comments.
10. Miss deadlines.

Condensed in “Writing a Paper for the Transportation Research Record”

<http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/am/2015/WritingForTheTRRecord.pdf> adapted from Horacio Plotkin. *How to Get Your Paper Rejected*. *BMJ*, 329, p. 1469 (Dec. 18, 2004). [www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/329/7480/1469](http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/329/7480/1469).

***Another example of an abbreviated style guide***





# Dictionary & Thesaurus

- Hard copies are a standby
- Several good on-line sources are available
- Some available as apps

## Examples:

[www.merriam-webster.com/](http://www.merriam-webster.com/)

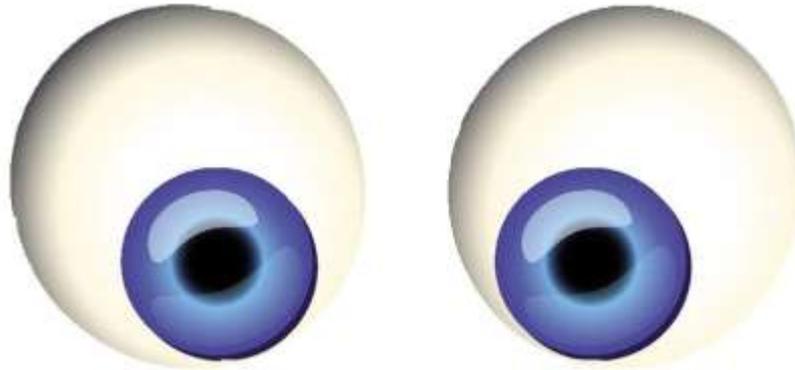
[www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/)



# Books on writing

- Many available
- Find one that fits you and your writing
- Watch for great examples of writing

# Another set of eyes



Find someone else to read your copy

- Critical eye
- Willing to be honest
- Unfamiliar with what you've written



# Learn your weaknesses

- Learn what to watch out for in your text
- Be cautious in your writing
- Pay extra attention to these items in your editing

# Plagiarism and documentation

***Give credit where credit is due***

*The following slides on plagiarism are adapted with permission from the NDSU Center for Writers.*

<https://www.ndsu.edu/cfwriters/>

# Plagiarism is:

- Dishonest
- Serious breach of professional ethics
- Cheating

*Plagiarism can damage your professional reputation beyond repair*

# NDSU Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct

**“Academic misconduct (intentional or otherwise) includes but is not limited to . . .**

**Plagiarizing, i.e., submitting work that is, in part or in whole, not entirely one’s own, without attributing such portions to their correct sources.”\***

*NDSU Policy Manual, Section 335, <http://www.ndsu.nodak.edu/policy/335.htm>*

## North Dakota State University Policy Manual Section 326: Academic Misconduct

3.1 Academic or scientific misconduct shall mean fabrication, falsification, **plagiarism**, misrepresentation of sources, breach of confidentiality, or other practices. . .

3.8 Plagiarism shall mean taking over ideas, methods, or written words of another without acknowledgment of and with the intention that they be credited as the work of the deceiver. Different academic disciplines may have their own separate definition which may add additional elements that need to be taken into consideration in an allegation of plagiarism.

# Penalties

## **North Dakota State University Policy Manual**

### **Section 326: Academic Misconduct**

10.2 Sanctions resulting from academic misconduct may include, but are not limited to, termination of employment or student status, termination of current research activity, special prior review of future research activities, written reprimand, probation for a specific period of time, and/or suspension of rights and responsibilities.

10.3 In cases of students, recommendations for sanction or disciplinary actions will be forwarded to the Vice President for Student Affairs or the Graduate Dean to determine appropriate administration of any sanctions.

### **Section 335 Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct**

12. Rescission of degrees. A degree previously awarded may be rescinded if it is determined that the graduate's actions taken to obtain the degree involved academic misconduct.

# Two Types of Plagiarism

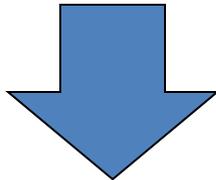
1. *Intentional*—Deliberately turning in an entire paper or portions of a paper (i.e., patchwriting) that you have not written with the intent to deceive the instructor:
  - Hiring someone to write a paper;
  - Buying a paper off the Internet;
  - Copying and pasting an entire source or portions of one source to submit as original work;
  - Copying and pasting portions of many sources to submit as original work (also called *patchwriting*).

# Two Types of Plagiarism

2. Unintentional—Accidentally or unknowingly failing to meet standards of academic integrity:
- Forgetting to acknowledge the author/source with in-text citations;
  - Forgetting to include quotation marks when copying exact words;
  - Failing to paraphrase or summarize completely;
  - Failing to contribute to the paper (patchwriting).

# Patchwriting

- Similar to patchwork quilting = joining blocks of fabric together to make a blanket.



- Joining blocks of text together in a composition without any contribution from the writer of the paper = almost all of the document is cut-and-pasted from sources.

# Patchwriting

Variations but still unacceptable:

- slightly altering the words and sentences to make them look like original writing;
- including in-text citations but failing to work with the material by paraphrasing the ideas and by contributing an original organizational structure with an introduction, clear thesis and claims, transitions, and explanations.

# Warning

**All types of plagiarism  
are serious—  
intentional and unintentional.**

~~~~~

**Learn to avoid plagiarism to maintain  
your academic integrity.**

# Alternative Metaphor

Instead of a quilt,  
envision an academic paper  
as a *chocolate chip cookie*.



# Alternative Metaphor

- The “cookie” contains the writer’s own ideas— introduction, thesis, subpoints, explanations, discussion, transitions.
- The “chocolate chips” are small pieces of source material within the cookie—clearly identifiable quotations, summaries, and paraphrases

# Avoiding Plagiarism

- Begin your writing process early to allow ample time for revision.

# Avoiding Plagiarism

- Take careful notes from sources
  - author/date/title/page/URL
  - identify exact quotations with quotation marks immediately
  - summarize and paraphrase carefully

# Avoiding Plagiarism

- Avoid patchwriting
  - structure the paper with your own introduction, thesis, claims, explanations, and transitions
  - use sources to support or illustrate your points
  - paraphrase and summarize most of the source material and use quotations sparingly

# Avoiding Plagiarism

- Use direct quotations sparingly  
(if allowed in your field)
- Follow a style guide (Chicago, APA, etc.) to identify the author and source:

Smith (1981, p. 255) defines  
*schizophrenia as “a mental disease . . .”*

# Avoiding Plagiarism

- Identify sources at the beginning of the information, in the middle, or at the end  
Smith (2005) found that . . .

Studies have shown, according to Smith (2005), that . . .

Studies have shown that . . . (Smith 2005).

# Paraphrasing & Summarizing

- Use transitional words and phrases
- State your own point
- Integrate the source by identifying the author and presenting the data in your own words:

However, subsequent studies contradicted the first findings. For example, Smith and Jones (2000) determined that mice were more susceptible than humans to the new strain. Their study examined...

# Paraphrasing & Summarizing

- Do not simply substitute a few synonyms in the same sentence
- Language fluency is required (extensive vocabulary, knowledge of word connotations, etc.)
- Consult a native speaker when unsure (e.g., Center for Writers)

# Responsible Paraphrase

Totally restructure the sentence and emphasizes the important details:

In their investigation of apple blotch, Kohmoto et al. (1976, p. 141) found that seven equally deadly host-specific toxins (HSTs) of varying activity levels were created by *Aleternatrai mali*.\*

\*Source: McMillan, Victoria E. 2006. Writing papers in the biological sciences. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Bedford/St. Martins, Boston, p. 29.

# **A word about documentation**

## ***Footnotes, endnotes, bibliographies and reference lists***

### ***Demanded by:***

- Ethics
- Copyright laws
- Courtesy to readers

### ***Helpful to:***

- You
- Future readers

# Resources for documentation

- “References” tab in Microsoft Word
- Other software for generating

# Writing email

## Things to think about

- Is this the correct media for the message?
- Is it going to the right people?
- Do you know the receiver(s)?
- Is privacy an issue?

# Writing email

## Content

- Subject line – short, descriptive, specific
- Change the subject line to reflect content
- Use a courtesy title or greeting
- Keep message brief and to the point
- State up-front what action you want reader to take
- Avoid jargon and “institution speak.” Use language appropriate to your audience.

# Writing email

## Content

- Use hard returns to create visual breaks
- Avoid all caps
- Avoid emoticons
- Do not use abbreviations unless in common use (FYI, and RTFL)
- Check spelling and grammar (PROOFREAD)

# Writing email

## Etiquette

- Use a standard and short email signature
- When replying, your reply should be at the top of message
- Edit your replies
- Don't grab an old email to send a new message
- Use Bcc when emailing a group of people who do not personally know each other

# Writing email

- Use Cc to keep people informed on information. Cc means for your information and no action needed
- Send only messages of relevance. Use “Reply to all” and “Cc” only if all the parties need to know
- Check to make sure attachments are attached
- If it’s urgent, call – don’t mark your message
- Avoid using the return receipt feature



# Tips, Tricks and Things to Watch out for

# Punctuation

“If you find a sentence particularly hard to punctuate, consider rewriting it; the problem may be one of style rather than punctuation. A well-written sentence almost punctuates itself.”

**--Jan Venolia,**  
*Author of Write Right!*

# Punctuation makes a difference!

Let's eat, Grandma!

VS.

Let's eat Grandma!

# Apostrophe

## Has three uses

- To form possessives of nouns
- To show the omission of letters
- To indicate certain plurals of lowercase letters

# Apostrophe

Not only is an apostrophe sometimes omitted where it is needed, but even more often it is used where it doesn't belong.

**Who's book is this?**

**Whose book is this?**

Remember: The apostrophe takes the place of "is" when you say who's. . .

# Apostrophe

With plural words that end in s, add only an apostrophe.

**Employees' union**      **students' grades**

With plural words that do not end in s, add 's.

**Children's story**      **women's issues**

# Apostrophe

Never use an apostrophe with possessive pronouns.

**Yours** not your's

**Its** not it's – it is

**Theirs** not their's

# Apostrophe

Apostrophes are not used with simple plurals:

Wrong: “In the 1990’s TMA’s became increasingly common.”

**Correct: “In the 1990s, TMAs became increasingly common.”**

Use an apostrophe to form certain plurals in abbreviations that combine upper and lower case and have internal periods: **M.D.’s** and **Ph.D.’s**

# Apostrophe

Use apostrophes to form plurals of letters that appear in lowercase. **Three ps** vs. **three p's**. Place 's after the letter.

No need for apostrophes indicating a plural on capitalized letters, numbers, and symbols (though some editors, teachers, and professors still prefer them).

# Colon

Use a colon to introduce a list, summary, or a long quotation.

Capitalize the first letter following the colon only if it begins a complete statement or quotation.

**The company has a new policy: Every employee will earn two weeks of paid vacation.**

# Colon

Do not place a colon immediately after a verb.

**Wrong: The prerequisites for the course are: two years of history, Sociology 101, and fluency in Spanish.**

Right: The prerequisites for the course are two years of history, Sociology 101, and fluency in Spanish.

# Comma

“Commas are like shots of tequila. One or two might be fine, but 42 is bad.”

-- *the Internet*

# Comma

When two complete statements are joined by **and, but, or, nor, for, yet, or so** you should use a comma.

**The results of the study are not definitive, so additional work is needed.**

**The samples are all very similar, yet differences remain.**

**You are a valued member of the association, and your input on the committee is important.**

# Comma

Use commas to separate three or more items in a series.

**The research looked at age, gender, and ethnicity.**

# Comma

Although journalists tend to omit the final comma to save space, most guides for technical writing recommend retaining the final comma to avoid confusion. Note the problem with these sentences:

**The 15-member marching band, a drum major carrying the flag and 20 gymnasts were in the parade.**

**I dedicated the book to my mother, Michelle Obama, and God.**

# Comma

The elements in a series separated by commas may be short, independent clauses:

**“The only way to keep your health is to eat what you don’t want, drink what you don’t like, and do what you’d rather not.”**

**-- Mark Twain**

# Comma

Use a comma between adjectives if you can add the word **and** between them and the sentence still makes sense.

-- a young, energetic student (young and energetic)

--white tennis shoes (You would not say, white and tennis shoes.)

# Comma

Commas are needed after an introductory phrase (many of which begin with a preposition).

**In the case of two competing theories, chose one that you seek to prove or to disprove through your research.**

**Through our analysis, we. . .**

**In conclusion, the team found. . .**

# Comma

Put a comma after introductory words:

**However,**

**Thus,**

**Therefore,**

**Consequently,**

This is also the case when a semi-colon precedes the introductory word:

**A shortage of materials has currently halted the construction; however, we plan to resume as soon as possible once our shipment arrives.**

# Semicolon

Semicolons are useful between independent clauses that contain commas.

**The coach, a man of few words, led his team by example; however, the words he used were chosen carefully.**

If you rephrase the sentence or create two separate sentences and avoid the semicolons, your document may be easier to read.

# Semicolon

Use semicolons to separate long or complicated items in a series:

**The lottery winners included an elderly gentleman who had never before bought a lottery ticket; a high school student hoping to use the winnings for college; and a reporter who bought her ticket while writing a story about corruption in the lottery system.**

# Semicolon

Use a semicolon to separate many items in a series:

**The following items must be tracked monthly: gallons of fuel; vehicle mileage; driver hours; passenger one-way trips; passenger fares; contract income; supply costs; personnel wages; and maintenance costs.**

# Hyphen or Dash

Use a single hyphen or dash between inclusive numbers or dates.

**199-2000**

**pp. 111-136**

Use a single hyphen or dash between a compound of two or more words within a hyphenated word.

**Minneapolis-St. Paul area**

**well-balanced**

**post-World War I**

**quasi-judicial**

# Hyphen or Dash

Use two hyphens or dashes for emphasis, to indicate an abrupt change, or with explanatory words or phrases.

**“People want to know why I . . .write such gross stuff. I like to tell them I have the heart of a small boy—and I keep it in a jar on my desk.”**

**-- Stephen King**  
*American author*

# Dashes

**“The overuse of dashes is the sign of a lazy writer.”**

**-- Michael Gartner**

***Newspaper editor &***

***Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial writer***

# Hyphen

One of the most common spelling questions for writers and editors concerns compound terms – whether to use two words, hyphenate, or omit a space and write a single word.

**on line**   **on-line**   **online**

When in doubt check the dictionary. In general, if the term is not listed, hyphenate it.

# Hyphen

*The Chicago Manual of Style* gives some latitude in using hyphens.

- Readability should be the final guide.
- If the writing is clearer and easier to read without the hyphens, leave them off.

# Hyphen

Use a hyphen with certain prefixes:

**self-    ex-    vice-    well-**

Use a hyphen to avoid doubling a letter:

**Semi-independent    shell-like    part-time**

Use a hyphen if the root word begins with a capital letter:

**pre-Columbian    sub-Saharan    non-English**

# Hyphen

Use a hyphen to form certain compound words:

**Right-of-way**   **editor-in-chief**   **president-elect**

Use a hyphen to promote clarity:

**co-worker**   **re-read**   **caffeine-free**  
**re-creation (vs. recreation)**  
**un-ionized (vs. unionized)**

# Hyphen

Use a hyphen to clarify suspended compounds:

**Full- and part-time workers**

**First-, second-, and third-quarter earnings**

# Hyphen

Use a hyphen to combine numerical unit adjectives:

**12-inch ruler**    **100-year lifespan**  
**250-page book**

Use hyphens within age terms:

**Three-year-old**    **55-year-old**

# Hyphen

Use a hyphen in titles that describe a dual function:

**Secretary-treasurer**

**Chairman-CEO**

Do not use a hyphen in a job title that describes a single function:

**Attorney General**

**Chief Executive Officer**

# Hyphen

For the sake of consistency, when the word **from** is used, you should use the word **to** instead of a hyphen.

**Sarah attended NDSU *from* 2001 *to* 2005.**

# Hyphen

When the word **between** is used, you should use the word **and** instead of a hyphen.

**She published her articles *between* 2001 *and* 2005.**

# Hyphen

Do not use a hyphen when you have an adverb ending in **-ly** combined with an adjective:

**Wrong:**      **widely-held belief**  
                 **highly-regarded individual**

**Correct:**    **widely held belief**  
                 **highly regarded individual**

# Ellipsis Points

Ellipsis points are three equally spaced periods that indicate omission of words in quoted material. When used in the middle of a sentence, use three periods.

**“The collision between two purposes. . . shows by the uniformity of its solution.”**

# Ellipsis Points

Between sentences, retain the period or other punctuation mark that ends the sentence before the omission. Use four equally spaced periods followed by a capital letter.

**“The spirit of our American radicalism is destructive and aimless. . . .On the other side, the conservative party. . . is timid and merely defensive of property.”**

# Ellipsis Points

Note: You have a duty not to misrepresent the original work through the use of ellipsis. **Accuracy of intent** is critical.

# Quotation Marks

Periods and commas are always placed inside the closing quotation marks.

Colons, semicolons, question marks and exclamation points all follow closing quotation marks unless a question mark or exclamation point belongs to the quoted material.

**Which of Shakespeare's characters said, "All the world's a stage. . . ."?**

# Capitalization

Capitalize prepositions in titles if they consist of four or more letters:

**Since**      **Through**      **Under**  
**Around**      **During**      **Toward**  
**Above**      **Between**      **Until**  
**Against**

# Capitalization

Do not capitalize words such as **government, federal, state, administration** unless they are part of the title of a specific entity.

**U.S. Government vs. federal government**  
**federal budget vs. Federal Highway**  
**Administration**

# Capitalization

Do not capitalize seasons (**fall, winter, spring, summer**) except when used to denote an issue of a journal (**Summer 2005**).

# Capitalization

Do not capitalize terms when they suggest direction (**western provinces, eastern Australia, central states**) unless they refer to a compass point or specific location (**Middle East, North Pole, the Left Bank**).

# Capitalization

Capitalize **African American, Caucasian, Hispanic, Native American, Asian** but do not capitalize generic terms such as black(s) or white(s).

Capitalize personal titles only if they precede the name and are not separated by a comma:

**President Barack Obama**     **Professor Johnson**  
**the treasurer, Bill Olson**     **board chair, Al Jones**

# Words often Confused

Accept/Except

Adverse/Averse

Advice/Advise

Affect/Effect

Allude/Elude/Refer

Alternate/Alternative

Apt/Liable/Likely/Prone

Because/Since

Biannual/Biennial

Complement/Compliment

Comprise/Composed of

# Words Often Confused

Due to/Because of

Fewer/Less

Further/Farther

Imply/Infer

In/Into/In to

Insure/Ensure/Assure

Lay/Lie

Like/As

**When  
in doubt,  
look it up!**

# Words Often Confused

Loose/Lose

Predominant/Predominate

Principal/Principle

Proved/Proven

Rare/Scarce

That/Which

To/Too

# Helpful Hints

Bi- vs. Semi-

**bi- means “two”**

**Semi- means “half”**

If you want to avoid confusion when referring to a period of time, abandon the use of the prefixes **bi- and semi-**, and instead say **every two weeks, every two months, twice a year** or whatever interval you are describing.

# Hints

Between vs. Among

**Use between for two items; among for three or more.**

Never use **irregardless** – Use regardless

It's vs. Its

**It's = It is**

**Its = belongs to**

# More Hints!

Data

While acceptance of the word **data** as a singular has become common, in scientific and formal writing, the plural form is still preferred.

**data are...**      **not data is...**

# Still More Hints

People vs. Persons

Use **people** for larger groups; **persons** for an exact or small number.

Never use **and etc.** Use etc.

**et cetera** means “and other unspecified things of the same class.”

# Make Sure Your Meaning is Clear

Rewrite to eliminate misplaced modifiers:

**People with deficient metabolizing systems or children may be unjustly burdened by genetically engineered food.**

**It's a 30-minute documentary on the Bay Area's housing and growth crisis produced by the Association of Bay Area Governments.**

# Using Numbers in Text

Numbers **less than 10** should be spelled out.

Numbers **10 or greater** should be written as numerals.

This rule applies for rankings also: **first, second and third but 12<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup>.**

## Using Numbers in Text

Avoid starting a sentence with a numeral.  
Rewrite the sentence to start with a word.

Percentages are always given in numerals.  
(No space appears between the numeral and the symbol (15%).

# Parallel Construction

Be consistent when you create lists, outlines, or headings. If a list begins with a verb, every item in the list should begin with a verb:

1. **Provide operating funds. . .**
2. **Work with all state agencies. . .**
3. **Coordinate efforts. . .**

# Consistency in Headings

Check your document for consistency in:

- spacing before and after headings
- underlining
- indenting
- the use of bold type
- numbering systems
- capitalization

# Repetition

Avoid repeating the same word or variations of the word too close together. Use a thesaurus to help you find alternative words and rewrite your sentences.

# Rephrasing

**Clumsy:** All programs except one are mainstay programs for this state. That one program is Section 5309. This program has provided additional support but is not necessarily a funded program every year.

**Improved:** The 5310 and 5311 programs are mainstays in funding for this state. The exception is Section 5309, which has provided additional support but is not necessarily funded every year.

## Things to Watch for. . .

Don't use plural pronouns *they* or *their* to refer to a singular noun.

**“Each person interviewed believed that they should have taken more time to develop their particular center.”**

Instead, the sentence should read:

**“Each person interviewed believed that more time was needed to develop that particular center.”**

# More Hints

The phrase *in order to* is usually unnecessary.

**“In order to study the commute mode choice process, a survey was designed and administered to a random sample of 1,000 Sacramento residents.”**

Instead, the sentence should read,

**“To study the commute mode choice process, a survey was designed...”**

# More Hints

Don't use **over** when **more than** is appropriate.

**“Over 800 respondents completed the survey.”**

Over designates a place. A better way to phrase the sentence is:

**“More than 800 respondents completed the survey.”**

# More Hints

i.e. means “**that is**”

e.g. means “**for example**”

Always put a comma after them.

(i.e.,....) or (e.g.,....)

Note that **e.g.** and **i.e.** are not italicized.

# Still More Hints

**et al.** means “and others”

It is always written with a period after the second element only. It is used in bibliographies, but as a rule should not be used for the words “and others” within the text (except in citing references). The abbreviation is applied only to persons, not to things.

# Limiting Prepositional Phrases

Prepositions can easily be overdone.

Words ending in **-ance, -ence, -ity, -ment, -sion, or -tion** are often “buried verbs” and require additional prepositional phrases to complete the idea.

**Our efforts toward maximization of profits failed.**

vs. Our efforts to maximize profits failed.

# Jargon and Acronyms

Know your audience

Overuse can lead to:

- 👉 Misunderstandings
- 👉 Lack of comprehension
- 👉 Reader exasperation

A UGPTI seminar included the following acronyms:

**TEUs / RFID / GPS / EAS / RTLS / GDP  
FDA / SMARTSe / HAZMAT / RADAR / LA US  
/ GPRS / CDMA / UHF / HF / LF / MHz NFC  
/ ISO / Wi-Fi / EPC / TDMA**

- **WTF**
- **Wisconsin Trucking Federation**
- **LOL**
- **League of On-line Librarians**

# Proofreading

“Proofread carefully to see if you any words out.”

**It is YOUR job to proofread your documents.**

# Can You Read This?

According to research at Harvard University, it doesn't matter what order the letters in a word are, the only important thing is that the first and last letter be in the right place.

This is because the human mind does not read every letter by itself, but the word as a whole.

# References

Write Right: A Desktop Digest of Punctuation, Grammar and Style (4<sup>th</sup> Edition) by Jan Venolia.

The Chicago Manual of Style (16<sup>th</sup> Edition)  
– University of Chicago Press.

Professional Email Guidelines. University of Minnesota Communicators Forum.  
<http://umcf.umn.edu/resources/emailguide.php>

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