

EDITORIAL

STYLE
GUIDE



Consider this **Editorial Style Guide a compass** that will keep our writing moving in the same direction. With this as a starting point, we can streamline our writing, review, and collaboration while offering our readers a clear and consistent experience.

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Welcome

All publications produced by The Rippel Foundation should be seen as part of a “suite” or “family,” so **it’s important that our published products (both print and online) be standardized and consistent.** Editorially and visually consistent publications will convey the high level of professionalism that reflects the quality of our work.

Everyone involved in Rippel’s work has a background of successful and effective writing. Nothing in this guide is intended to imply that the style you’re familiar with is wrong and this is the only right approach. This guide is simply meant to unify our output. There are many valid style guides out there, and we selected a widely-used one, *The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS)*, as our starting point for [various reasons](#).

In short: this guide is meant to promote collaboration, which, as we all know, requires compromises [including on the part of the Communications (Comms) Team] to benefit the whole organization and our collective output.

Why is this guide important to you?

You’ll be more productive if you don’t have to spend time and effort thinking about how to format your citations, whether to use a serial comma (use it!), etc. You’ll likely also find it easier to think about writing for your audience if you’re not busy making grammar decisions, or trying to write to address any differing style preferences of different team members.

You don’t have to be perfect! The Comms Team will help you fix whatever you might miss. The goal here is for all of us to have to do less so we can best focus on the reader and the content. This guide also provides a starting point for discussion between the writer and those supporting them.

Sources for Information on Styles and Formatting

The Rippel Foundation's Guide to Editorial Style should be your first point of reference for style questions. However, it's not intended to be comprehensive. In the event that your question isn't answered here, please consult *The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS)*. Each office has a hard copy of the latest edition. You can also access it online through LastPass. Use any of the three accounts we have for CMOS online by opening your LastPass Vault and scrolling down to the "Shared Information—Technology Broadly Shared" section. Contact Rippel IT with any questions about online access.

In the event of conflicting information between guides, always follow *The Rippel Foundation's Guide to Editorial Style*. If you have a question not answered below or in CMOS, please contact the Comms Team. This editorial style guide provides direction and guidelines for editorial needs; for visual needs, please visit the [Visual Style Guide](#), where you can find brand guides and templates for Rippel and its initiatives. That's also the place to look to learn more about copyright any time you want to use someone else's content.

Publishing/Disseminating on Platforms Outside of Rippel

Journals, partner websites, external blogs, grant proposals, etc.

Always look up the target platform's style guidelines (or verify they have none), and conform to those. Continue to adhere to this guide and CMOS for anything not addressed in the target platform's guidelines.

For instance, psychology journals may require APA style. As another example, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) grant proposals are submitted on RWJF's website through an unformatted text box, so make sure the text is readable in the box instead of relying on what looks good in your Word document.

George Orwell's Six Rules

from *Politics and the English Language*
(paraphrased by *The Economist*)

1. Avoid clichés
2. Never use a long word where a short one will do
3. If it's possible to cut out a word, always cut it out
4. Never use the passive where you can use the active
5. Never use a foreign phrase or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent
6. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous

We selected *The Chicago Manual of Style* for various reasons:

- One of the most widely used and respected style guides in the United States
- Commonly used in academic and business publications, representing the best fit for Rippel’s mission and work (as opposed to similar guides). Used for:
 - Many academic journals
 - Many trade publications
 - Anthropology and history
 - Dissertations, research papers, and theses
- Web-friendly
- Prioritizes clarity
- Reduces unnecessary and redundant elements



Why We Sometimes Differ From *The Chicago Manual of Style*

To increase clarity and readability for our specific audiences, Rippel has elected to break from CMOS style in some cases. In most cases, we do this for one of three reasons: (1) to use style choices that are more familiar to those working on health and well-being; (2) to be more relatable and conversational; (3) to make it easier to explain ideas on the cutting edge.

For ease of use, we alphabetized the style topics covered in this guide. Some of the styles are consistent with CMOS and have references to the guide in the listings.

The Rippel Foundation

This is the name of this organization and is our primary shared brand. ReThink Health is the flagship initiative of The Rippel Foundation. When referring to the foundation, use “The Rippel Foundation” on first reference and then “Rippel” or “the foundation” (no capitals) on subsequent references (no acronym). You may also use The Rippel Foundation as the organization’s legal name (without the “Fannie E.” in the original legal name) because we have registered it as a legal alias.

Note that “The” is part of the foundation’s name and should always be capitalized, even when embedded in text. If “The” isn’t working in your sentence, there’s usually a way to rearrange the sentence. For example:

I drank from the The Rippel Foundation mug.

Could become:

I drank from the mug The Rippel Foundation gave me.

I drank from The Rippel Foundation’s mug.

Consider introducing The Rippel Foundation earlier so you can just use “Rippel” going forward.

I visited The Rippel Foundation’s offices. When I returned, I drank from the Rippel mug they gave me.

Rippel’s Nested Brands

ReThink Health

An initiative (or program) of The Rippel Foundation. Always capitalize the T in ReThink and don’t omit Health (i.e., don’t use ReThink on its own). Don’t use the initialism “RTH” (unless it’s purely internal, like an email with a coworker or a task in Asana), as it dilutes the brand and ReThink Health is already short enough.

ReThink Health Projects

Use the full name of a project of The Rippel Foundation’s ReThink Health initiative. The first time the project is mentioned, use the full project name and mention both Rippel and ReThink Health. For example, ReThink Health’s Portfolio Design for Healthier Regions project, an initiative of The Rippel Foundation. In subsequent references you can shorten the project name (e.g., Portfolio Design) or “the project.” Do not create or use acronyms. Do not use VISTAS.

FORESIGHT

A past initiative (or program) of The Rippel Foundation. Always capitalize all letters (this adds clarity for the reader by differentiating this name from surrounding text, which is useful in this particular case because it’s a relatively common word that will appear very close to the project name).

Common Misspellings

a lot (never *alot*)

all right (never *alright*)

a.m. and *p.m.* (lowercase with periods)

appendixes (not *appendices*)

curricula (not *curriculum*s)

HHS (not *DHHS*, for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)

indexes (not *indices*)

percent (not *%*)

symposiums (not *symposia*)

toward (no *s*)

up-to-date (adj.)

URL (capitalized)

U.S. (adj., spell out *United States* when used as a noun)

Compounds

- Compound words are hyphenated if they are adjectives, but not hyphenated as nouns (just use a space).
- Do not hyphenate compound words that start with an *-ly* adverb.

Compounds not hyphenated as nouns, but hyphenated as adjectives

Decision maker/decision-maker

Decision making/decision-making

In house/in-house

Long term/long-term

Problem solving/problem-solving

Short term/short-term

System wide/system-wide

Compounds: Exceptions

- *health care* (all cases, including n., adj., and modifier. Never write as one word and never hyphenate unless it's part of the proper name of an organization or similar)
- *policy maker* (always a space)
- *well-being* (always hyphenated)
- *self-publish* (and other compounds starting with "self"—both noun and adjective forms hyphenated, except where *self* is followed by a suffix or preceded by *un*)

Compounds: no hyphen or space

childcare

changemaker

crosscutting

database

email

grantmaker

lawmaker

multisector

nongovernmental

nonprofit

startup

storytelling

website

workforce

Writing Resources

Use these resources to further develop your writing skills.

[Common Sense and Better Writing Guide](#)

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Style Guide. Third Edition. 2009. Pp. 87-95

[Best Practices for Web Writing](#)

University of Maryland Baltimore. 2018-2019.

[4 Ways to Never, Ever Use Jargon Again](#)

Gwen Moran. Fast Company. March 26, 2014.

[8 Dos and Don'ts for Nonprofit Blogging](#)

Ginger Hill. Contentuity360. October 7, 2015.

Abbreviations

Don't use periods with most abbreviations. Some examples: VP not V.P., CEO not C.E.O. The periods are not necessary for the reader to understand the acronym; omitting them saves space and avoids any confusion/cluttering of punctuation. There are a few exceptions, such as names of months, which should be spelled out in full, and lowercase abbreviations like a.m. and p.m. (in this example, mainly to avoid confusion with the word "am"). Another exception is with non-degree prefixes and suffixes in peoples' names, such as Jr.

See [CMOS 10](#)

Acronyms

Always spell out the full name on first reference (even if you think the reader is likely to already be familiar with the acronym) and place the acronym in parentheses after it. Use only well-established acronyms (e.g., HHS, CMS, HRSA, ACA). Otherwise, try shortening the name if you must refer to it repeatedly. For example, instead of creating an acronym for the ReThink Health Dynamics Model, refer to it simply as "the model" once you have stated its full name.

See [CMOS 10.002](#)

Active vs. Passive Voice

Always use the active voice if at all possible.

In the active voice, the subject, or main actor, always "does" the action. Chronologically, the subject will come before the verb in a sentence. In the passive voice, the subject is acted upon by the verb. Use the active voice, rather than passive voice, in your writing because it allows you to make your points more clearly, be more engaging, and potentially use fewer words. If it doesn't seem to work with your sentence, then rewrite the sentence.

NO *Our survey was designed to measure three key variables.*

YES *Our survey measures three key variables.*

It's generally good practice to review every document you write for use of active vs. passive voice. This process helps you recognize when you're being ambiguous, so you can help the reader by being clear about who is the agent of action. If you find yourself using passive voice a lot in a document, ask yourself how well you know the material.

As illustrated in the above examples, passive voice is extremely common in science writing, and in some circles implicitly accepted—so don't feel bad if you have used it in the past. Active voice serves the Rippel reader better (in both clarity and engagement), so use active voice regardless of what you may see from others outside our organization.

See [CMOS 5.118](#)

a.k.a.

In general, don't use a.k.a.; use "also called" instead.

Ampersands

Don't use an ampersand as a substitute for the word "and" unless it is absolutely essential as a way to save space; for example, in the title of a PowerPoint slide.

Do use an ampersand if it is an official part of a company or organization name or other formal entity or title (e.g., House & Garden, Procter & Gamble).

and/or

Don't use "and/or." There's always a way to get your point across with more clarity, you'll sound less stodgy, and in many cases it's used when the writer really means "or."

NO *Bring your fork and/or spoon on the camping trip.*

YES *Bring your choice of fork, spoon, or both on the camping trip.*

Don't use "/" to connect two words in general (see Slashes section below)

Assure vs. ensure vs. insure

These words have the same underlying meaning but are used differently. Assure means to promise, remove someone's doubts, or say something with confidence. Ensure means to make certain or guarantee. Insure should mainly be used for references to insurance. "I assure you that the food is fresh." "To ensure that this task is completed, I will follow up tomorrow."

Capitalization (hyphenated words)

In a title or header, capitalize the second word in a hyphenated compound word.



The Rippel Foundation's ReThink Health Guide to Health and Well-Being



The Rippel Foundation's ReThink Health Guide to Health and Well-being

See [CMOS 8](#)

Capitalization (titles/headers)

The following rules apply to capitalizing titles and headers in general, but there are exceptions not mentioned here (see *The Chicago Manual of Style* for more).

Capitalize:

First and last words and all nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and subordinate conjunctions (words that transition between clauses while making it clear one clause is less important than the other, such as "after," "if," and "where").

Lowercase:

Articles "the," "a," and "an", common coordinating conjunctions and, but, for, or, and nor, prepositions (words expressing a noun or pronoun's relation to another element in the sentence) like "on"

When in doubt, consider the word's function and importance in the title.

See [CMOS 8.088](#)

Citations

Rippel uses the [author-date](#) system because it is most common in the sciences and social sciences (as opposed to the [notes and bibliography](#) system preferred by many working in the humanities—including literature, history, and the arts). In the author-date system, sources are briefly cited in the text, usually in parentheses, by author's last name and year of publication. Each in-text citation matches up with an entry in a reference list, where full bibliographic information is provided. The following examples illustrate the author-date system. Each example of a reference list entry is accompanied by an example of a corresponding in-text citation. For more details and many more examples, see [CMOS 15](#).

BOOK

Reference list entries

(in alphabetical order)

Grazer, Brian and Charles Fishman. 2015. *A Curious Mind: The Secret to a Bigger Life*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
Smith, Zadie. 2016. *Swing Time*. New York: Penguin Press.

In-text citations

(Grazer and Fishman 2015, 12)
(Smith 2016, 315–16)

CHAPTER OR OTHER PART OF AN EDITED BOOK

In the reference list, include the page range for the chapter or part. In the text, cite specific pages.

Reference list entry

Thoreau, Henry David. 2016. "Walking." In *The Making of the American Essay*, edited by John D'Agata, 167–95. Minneapolis: Graywolf Press.

In-text citation

(Thoreau 2016, 177–78)

In some cases, you may want to cite the collection as a whole instead.

Reference list entry

D'Agata, John, ed. 2016. *The Making of the American Essay*. Minneapolis: Graywolf Press.

In-text citation

(D'Agata 2016, 177–78)

JOURNAL ARTICLE

In the reference list, include the page range for the whole article. In the text, cite specific page numbers. For articles consulted online, include a URL or the name of the database in the reference list entry. Many journal articles list a DOI (Digital Object Identifier). A DOI forms a permanent URL that begins <https://doi.org/>. This URL is preferable to the URL that appears in your browser's address bar.

Reference list entries

(in alphabetical order)

Keng, Shao-Hsun, Chun-Hung Lin, and Peter F. Orazem. 2017. "Expanding College Access in Taiwan, 1978–2014: Effects on Graduate Quality and Income Inequality." *Journal of Human Capital* 11, no. 1 (Spring): 1–34. <https://doi.org/10.1086/690235>.

LaSalle, Peter. 2017. "Conundrum: A Story about Reading." *New England Review* 38 (1): 95–109. Project MUSE.

Satterfield, Susan. 2016. "Livy and the Pax Deum." *Classical Philology* 111, no. 2 (April): 165–76.

In-text citations

(Keng, Lin, and Orazem 2017, 9–10)

(LaSalle 2017, 95)

(Satterfield 2016, 170)

Journal articles often list many authors, especially in the sciences. If there are four or more authors, list up to 10 in the reference list; in the text, list only the first, followed by et al. ("and others"). For more than 10 authors (not shown here), list the first seven in the reference list, followed by et al.

GUIDE When to Cite

Ethics, copyright laws, and courtesy to readers require authors to identify the sources of direct quotations or paraphrases and of any facts or opinions not generally known or easily checked. Conventions for citing sources vary according to scholarly discipline, the preferences of publishers and authors, and the needs of a particular work. (CMOS, 14.1)



Tip: Cite While You Write

Build your citations as you go along and keep hyperlinks and page numbers you intend to reference (one easy way to do this is using comments in your document), so you don't have to backtrack. This isn't just a huge time-saver for yourself, but it will make anyone assisting you, such as a program associate, very happy with you (and more inclined to do you a solid in the future) when they don't have to retrace your steps to cite exactly what you intended.

Commas

Rippel uses the Oxford (serial) comma. See "Lists" below.

Never use a comma before a verb unless it is setting off a phrase within the sentence:

-  *ReThink Health, the flagship initiative of The Rippel Foundation, discovers and shares what it takes to thrive together through shared stewardship.*
-  *ReThink Health, is the flagship initiative of The Rippel Foundation.*

Never use a comma before an open parenthesis. If a comma is needed, it should come after the close parenthesis.

Contractions

You may use contractions (e.g., don't or you're) when you deem them to be appropriate because you intend to come off as more conversational or approachable. The only time to explicitly avoid contractions is when you're submitting a work to another organization (such as a journal or a grantmaker) and they explicitly forbid contractions in submissions.

Copyrights (Protecting Rippel)

Copyright protects the rights that creators have over their original works of authorship fixed in a tangible medium of expression, which means it must exist in some physical form. Works that are protected by copyright include literary and artistic works such as books, music, paintings, films, computer programs, websites, articles, photographs, charts, etc. Whereas trademarks protect brands, copyrights protect content.

Copyright does not protect mere ideas or facts; but it may protect the form in which those ideas or facts are creatively and tangibly expressed.

Copyright rights arise automatically upon the creation of the original work. That means virtually all content produced today is protected by copyright law. Copyright grants the “author” (i.e., the creator) the exclusive legal right to print, publish, perform, record, copy, sell, or adapt the original work. It also allows the copyright owner to authorize how or when others may use the protected work. Therefore, from both a legal and an ethical standpoint, you need the permission of the copyright holder before you use another’s material. For information about citing external works see page 10.

While the use of the copyright symbol—“©”—is not required by law (as stated above, copyright rights attach automatically), it is important to use it so that others know who to contact for permission to use the protected work. A copyright notice is simple and easy to use. It includes:

- The copyright symbol;
- The year the work was first published or a range of years if it’s ongoing, such as a blog (“published” means when a work is made available to the public); and
- The copyright owner (note, the original author may be the current copyright owner or it may be a person or business to whom the author transferred the copyright rights).

Typically a “rights” statement is also included (such as “All rights reserved.” or “Some rights reserved.”).

We have two copyright notices for Rippel-created work (i.e., created by staff and contractors or consultants). One of them should be selected and used for all written materials published, regardless of whether they are branded with The Rippel Foundation logo or a logo for a Rippel initiative:

1. When you are open to photocopying and sharing, use the following. This version of the copyright allows for distribution so long as the user does not use it to make money and does not change it in any way. This is designed so people interested in using our work to galvanize action can do so without making money from or modifying our work. But it will provoke a conversation if their intended use is for anything more than that.

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2. When you are not open to photocopying and sharing, use this version. This version is especially helpful when a product is not ready for distribution and is really just intended for personal use only.

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3. For documents with limited space use:

Copyright ©2022 The Rippel Foundation. All rights reserved.

Copyrights (Images)

Rippel has policies concerning the use of images you create as well as those created by others. You must ensure that any images used in your written works follow these policies. [See Visual Style Guide](#)

Dashes

Use the right dash at the right time. Know the differences between hyphens (-), en dashes (-), and em dashes (—).

While it's common for people not to know there are different dashes, let alone how to use them, it can have a surprisingly large effect on the readability of your writing. Make a mental note of the three types of dashes and how to use them, and get used to using the em dash in particular, as it's likely to be the one you will use the most often.

Hyphen (-)

The primary purpose of the hyphen is actually to create compound words (as in *shortest-length*) or to break a word across lines (as is often seen in newspaper or magazine articles). It's not intended for use in date or number ranges, nor to add a long pause for emphasis in a sentence.

One common use of the hyphen is to create compound adjectives out of two or more words.

YES *He had no long-term plans.*

YES *We read the 15-year-old report.*

However, do not hyphenate those same words when used together as nouns!

YES *He had no plans in the long term.*

YES *The report was 15 years old.*

YES *One quarter of the country voted.*

Note: Do not hyphenate an adverb ending in *-ly* to the word that follows it.

YES *They gave generally irrelevant arguments.*

When a reference to a large amount of money modifies a noun, the number and the order of magnitude are not hyphenated. However, when the value "\$10 million" is part of a phrasal adjective, it must be linked with the other two elements (a and year) must be linked.

YES *\$10 million contract*

YES *He signed a \$10 million-a-year contract.*

En Dash (–)

Use an en dash to indicate ranges (of numbers, dates, etc.). For more information, see [CMOS 6.83–6.86](#).

To create an en dash in Microsoft Word, do any one of the following:

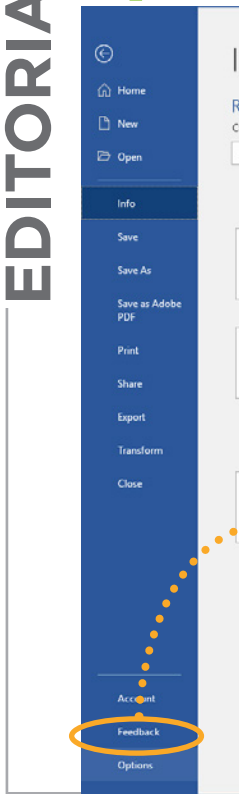
- Press Ctrl+Minus (only works on the numeric keypad) in Windows, or Option+Hyphen on Mac
- If you're using Windows and don't have a numeric keypad, you can set up a hotkey by following the directions in the box on page 14
- Choose Symbol from the Insert menu, and then select En Dash from the Special Characters tab

Em Dash (—)

Use an em dash to set off an amplifying or explanatory element in a sentence. Though other punctuation marks (such as commas, parentheses, semicolons, and colons) can serve the same purpose, use the em dash if you want to emphasize the pause or interruption. For more information, see [CMOS 6.87–6.94](#). To create an em dash in Microsoft Word, do any one of the following:

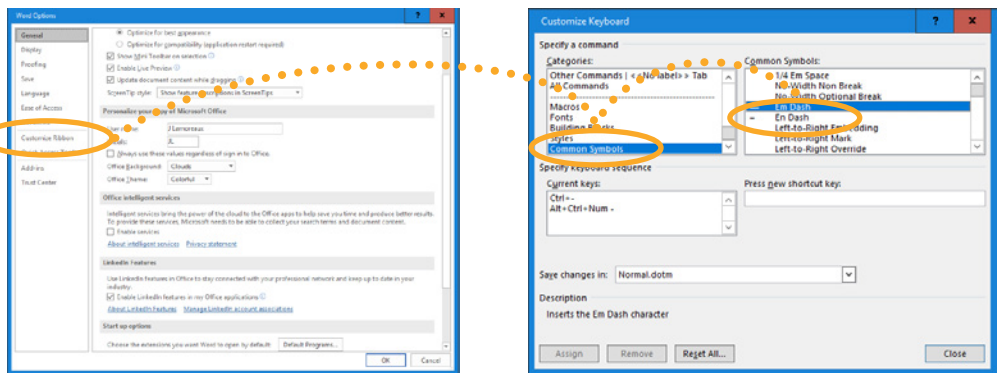
- Press Alt+Ctrl+Minus (only works on the numeric keypad) in Windows, or Shift+Option+Hyphen on Mac

EDITORIAL Tip



Creating New Hotkeys

If you're using Windows and don't have a numeric keypad, you can set up another key combination to type an en or em dash (Comms recommends Ctrl+Hyphen for the em dash). In Word, go to the File tab, select Options at the bottom left, then go to Customize Ribbon. Click the Customize button at the bottom of that window. Scroll to the bottom of the Categories box in the next window and select Common Symbols. Select Em Dash in the box to the right, then input a new keystroke into the Press New Shortcut Key box (starting with Ctrl). Contact the Comms Team or IT if you need assistance.



- If you're using Windows and don't have a numeric keypad, you can set up a hotkey by following the directions in the box above.
- Choose Symbol from the Insert menu, and then select Em Dash from the Special Characters tab

Don't leave spaces on either side of the dash(es). For example, this is how—the spacing around dashes—should look. This is not how — the spacing around dashes — should look. Also, don't use double hyphens (--) in place of a proper dash symbol (some computers have been set to autocorrect double hyphens into an em dash).

See [CMOS 6.75-6.94](#)

Dates and Seasons

When listing month and year or season and year, don't include a comma between them. Write them as: May 2015 or fall 2015 (not May, 2015 or fall, 2015). Only use commas in a date when including the day, such as: May 15, 2015. When the date is included

mid-sentence, there should be a comma after the year as well, before the sentence continues. Seasons are never capitalized unless they are part of a name, such as the Fall 2015 Course Catalog or the Mid-Winter Break Ball.

See [CMOS 8.088](#)

Degrees (academic)

When writing about yourself or others for Rippel, avoid including academic degrees—your writing will come off as more approachable. If you include them when not absolutely necessary, you run the risk of seeming stuffy or self-important. Yes, there will be times when it is appropriate, but those should be few and far between. If you include degrees, you should have a very good reason, and consider whether their inclusion will serve the reader (as the writer, are you including a degrees for the reader or for yourself?), and err on the side of leaving them out. If you include degrees for one person, you must include them for everyone referenced or quoted.

When including a person's academic degrees with their name, don't use periods. It should be *Julie Smith, MD, PhD* (not *M.D., Ph.D.*). See [CMOS 10.21](#) for details.

Within prose, don't capitalize academic degrees. While this guidance may seem counterintuitive, degrees are capitalized only when used as part of the name unless used in institutional settings.

She is board certified in internal medicine and received her medical degree with honors from Howard University College of Medicine, after earning a master of science in business administration from Boston University.

Note that degrees should only be possessive if immediately followed by the word "degree." Both of the below examples are correct:

Master's degree

Master of science

e.g., i.e., and etc.

"e.g." and "i.e." are not interchangeable.

"e.g." means "for example."

"i.e." means "in other words" or "also known as."

Use "e.g." when you're providing an example(s) of something. Use "i.e." when you're trying to clarify something by using another name for it. Always follow them with a comma (with no preceding space).

YES *e.g., example*

YES *i.e., example*

Omit "i.e." if putting the synonym in parentheses or after a comma.

Always precede "etc." with a comma.

YES *Example, etc.*

Never use "etc." with "e.g." because it's redundant.

NO *e.g., apples, oranges, grapes, etc.*

YES *e.g., apples, oranges, grapes*

YES *Apples, oranges, grapes, etc.*

Favor "e.g." unless you want to emphasize that the list goes on. That is the main distinguishing feature of "etc."—while "e.g." doesn't mean the list doesn't go on, "etc." calls attention to the fact there are many more examples, if desired. See [CMOS 5.250](#)

Ellipses

The main purpose of ellipses is to denote portions missing from a quotation. If you use them, please review the guidelines in [CMOS 13.50-13.58](#). There are special guidelines for quotations containing periods and other punctuation.

Emphasis

As a general rule, use italics for *emphasis*.

READERS WILL INTERPRET ALL CAPS AS YELLING.

Underlining for emphasis is an outdated relic from the age of typewriters and could cause confusion with hyperlinks.

Bold is often used for headers, especially on the web, so, for clarity's sake, avoid using it for emphasis. You can make a rare exception and bold lines you want to stand out, but think carefully about whether this will improve clarity for the reader and whether it makes sense in the medium (for instance, it's more acceptable in an email than in a journal article).

Fewer vs. Less

Use "fewer" to refer to numbers or individual items that can be counted.

YES *She has fewer quarters after going to the arcade.*

Use "less" to refer to matters of degree, value, or amount.

YES *They are serving less yogurt at this conference than last year.*

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Rippel has decided to use the terminology used by [GLAAD](#) as depicted in the list on the following page.

Respecting Identity and Orientation

<i>Instead of...</i>	<i>Use...</i> <small>example</small>
<i>homosexual</i>	gay or lesbian person
<i>bi</i>	bisexual person (no hyphen)
<i>homosexual relationship</i>	relationship
<i>sexual preference</i>	sexual orientation
<i>sex change</i>	transition
<i>transsexual</i>	transgender person
<i>transvestite</i>	cross-dresser
<i>gay or transgender lifestyle</i>	LGBTQ people and their lives
<i>admitted homosexual</i>	out gay man, out lesbian
<i>special rights</i>	equal rights, protection
<i>opposite sex</i>	different sex

If you'd like to explore further, GLAAD provides information on its website to help people understand how to communicate about sexual orientation and gender identity.

Readers will be able to discern people's sexes and orientations through their names or pronouns. Categorizations in the chart may be useful when talking about large groups, but when referring to an individual or small group, only state gender identity or sexual orientation (or both) if it's directly relevant to the content, and in that case either use their preference or the appropriate subcategory. If you don't know, ask, but consider that if the person's gender identity or sexual orientation

is directly relevant to the content you probably would have known it by now.

Also consider what is relevant when communicating about relationships. If you wouldn't refer to a straight relationship as a "straight" relationship, there is no reason to state that one is gay via your writing. Don't make assumptions about marital or family relationships (for example, use *spouse* or *partner* instead of *husband* and *wife*; use *parent* instead of *mother* and *father*).

Government Agencies

On first reference, spell out the full name, including identifying whether it's a U.S. or state agency. If you will name the agency again, place the established acronym in parentheses following the full name, then use the acronym for subsequent references. For example, the US Department of Health and Human Services' established acronym is HHS and not DHHS. If you're unsure, visit the organization's website to identify its established acronym; don't make one up. Also note that many government agencies, such as CDC, omit the article ("the") in front of their acronyms. If you're not sure, check their website.

See [CMOS 8.063](#)

Health Care

Always include a space between the words "health" and "care"—never write it as one word (unless naming an organization or publication title that contains "healthcare" as one word). Dictionaries and style guides generally agree with writing it as two words (a few say either one is fine, but none seem to come down on the side of "healthcare"). At Rippel, we have an interest in separating the idea of "health" from the limits of its "care" component, so it makes sense for us to represent that in our writing.

Including the space also matches what is done by other organizations with which we are closely aligned. For instance, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation uses this spelling, as does *Health Affairs* and FORESIGHT partner

Nemours Children’s Health System. Even the Institute for Healthcare Improvement includes the space every time—except when writing its own name!

Health Ecosystem

See the section titled [System for Health](#).

Hyphens

See the section titled [Dashes](#).

Italics or Quotations?

When quoted in text or listed as a reference, titles of books, journals, magazines, newspapers, videos, blogs (not the post), movies, reports, and other freestanding works are italicized; titles of articles, blog posts, chapters, and other shorter works are enclosed in quotation marks. For example:

- We read *To Kill a Mockingbird* for the event.
- Rippel’s *Pathway for Transforming Health Through Regional Stewardship* shows how stewards can mature in their practice.
- ReThink Health, a Rippel initiative, released the *Negotiating a Well-Being Portfolio Toolkit*.
- That *Health Affairs* article, “Cost-Effectiveness Of The Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Excise Tax In Mexico,” was fascinating.
- Their article, “What the Experts Want Us to Know About Public Health,” appeared in *The New York Times Magazine*.

Note that *the* and *magazine* are both capitalized and set off because the name of the publication is *The New York Times Magazine*.

See [CMOS 14.068](#)

Less

See the section titled [Fewer vs. Less](#)

Links

To ensure our links are accessible for people who are color blind, underline them and ensure they are in the Rippel teal color.

[Underline hyperlinks](#)

Lists (bulleted, numbered, or lettered)

Bulleted lists are an effective way to make dense text easier to read. When creating bullets, be sure to use parallel construction for each item in the bulleted list. For example, if the first word of the first bullet is a lower-case article (a, an, the), then the first word of all bullets should be a lowercase article. Or, if the first bullet starts with a capitalized verb, then each bulleted item should begin with a capitalized verb. Here is an example:

- *Create a bulleted list*
- *Use the same style for each bullet*
- *Help readers understand your points easily*

By default, do not use punctuation at the end of items on a bulleted list. Generally, precede bulleted lists with a grammatically complete sentence ending in a colon, and capitalize each item.

Look at this example list:

- *Item 1*
- *Item 2*

If the list isn’t part of a sentence, no punctuation is needed (as in the example above), unless each bulleted item is an individual sentence, in which case each should be punctuated appropriately. Follow the guidance on punctuating all types of bulleted lists in [CMOS 6.127–6.132](#).

The exceptions are

- *when the list is part of a longer sentence, or*
- *every item on the list is itself one or more complete sentences.*

Such lists, often better incorporated within the text, should be set vertically only if the context demands that they be highlighted.

More often than not, cases where you’re making a bulleted list that is formatted like a sentence, you can better serve the reader by using a normal paragraph structure and/or removing the list and providing a link to its details for those who want to learn more.

Lists (Oxford or serial commas)

Always use the serial comma (also known as the Oxford comma) when listing three or more things in a sentence.

This means placing a comma before “and” in a list.

YES *We will discuss stewardship, sustainable financing, and strategy.*

NO *This book is dedicated to my parents, Tom Hanks and God.*

As illustrated in the latter example, the serial comma helps remove ambiguity (with minimal downside).

The Oxford Comma

In her style guide, *Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*, Lynne Truss writes: “There are people who embrace the Oxford comma, and people who don’t, and I’ll just say this: never get between these people when drink has been taken.”

American style guides overwhelmingly favor the serial comma (see [CMOS 6.19](#) for more details). The major exception is the Associated Press, which omits it primarily for space reasons (it’s the style used for newspapers, after all). The serial comma is mandated by every major academic style guide, the U.S. government style guide, and Strunk & White’s seminal *Elements of Style*. In addition to representing the majority, this list better represents Rippel’s work (in comparison to the journalistic AP guide). Not everyone uses it yet, but many organizations and publications are moving toward the serial comma, including many of Rippel’s major partners.

May vs. Might

There are two distinctions between “may” and “might”:

1. “Might” (really, “might have”) is the past tense of “may.”

EDITORIAL Tip

When to use lists (and which kind?)

Bulleted lists should be used to display a series of discreet segments of information. Try to identify points in your writing where a list would improve clarity, because it’s a handy way to break up blocks of text visually. On the other hand, consider whether the bulleted list is adding anything for your reader.

Use the type of list that is most appropriate for your content!

- Bulleted: ordering isn’t important and it’s not a list of mutually exclusive options
- 1. Numbered: ordering matters (e.g., a list of steps to complete a task)
- A. Lettered: it’s a list of mutually exclusive choices (like a multiple-choice test)

The first mouse might have gotten away already, but we may be able to catch the second one soon.

2. You may use “might” in the present tense to express what is hypothetical or unlikely, while you should use “may” for what is possible, factual, or likely. In short, “may” implies greater probability than “might.”

See [CMOS 5.147](#)

Numbers in Text

Spell out numbers under 10 (three pencils); use numerals for 10 and higher (100 erasers). There are two exceptions:

- 1) Spell out numbers when they start a sentence

YES *Eleven is the 11th loneliest number.*

Consider rewording sentence to move a multi-digit number away from the start

YES *Twelve days have passed becomes It’s been 12 days*

- 2) Percentages. See Percentages section below for more information

Avoid using roman numerals (I, IV, etc.).

See [CMOS Ch 9](#)

Ordinal Numbers

Use superscript when possible for ordinal numbers over nine (*100th*), mainly because Microsoft Word defaults to it and it's not worth your time or effort to disrupt your writing to go back and change it. Regular text is also acceptable (*100th*) if superscript is difficult to create in the desired medium (and above all, be consistent within your document!). Spell out ordinal numbers below 10 (*first, ninth*) unless in a table, figure, or other context where using numerals would increase clarity and readability.

Paragraph Spacing and Indenting

Insert one blank line (two strokes on the enter or return key) between paragraphs. This is preferred because most of our content will be digital. The blank line method is easier to follow on a screen, while the indent is a holdover from the limitations of mechanical printing presses and newspapers.

You can make an exception and indent the first line instead of using an empty line in instances where space is at an extreme premium, such as a strictly page-limited grant proposal or a printed piece that will increase in cost with each additional page. However, if your document will be shared publicly, consider rewriting the content to save space before resorting to indenting.

Always use one or the other, never use both the blank line and the indent at the same time.

Parentheses

Use parentheses to set off material from surrounding text. Like dashes, but unlike commas, parentheses can set off text that has no grammatical relationship to the rest of the sentence. Use parentheses when the text is meant as an aside or explanation. Conversely, use an em dash when you want to emphasize the text you're setting off. (This use is consistent with *CMOS*, but not stated there.)

YES *He suspected the noble gases (helium, neon, etc.) could produce a similar effect.*

YES *You should try Mark's cupcakes (especially if you haven't before) because they are delicious.*

Percentages

Spell out the word "percent" instead of using the % symbol. Also use numerals, not spelled-out numbers, with percentages, even when numbers are less than 10 (e.g., 5 percent). As with other guidelines about numbers, you should always avoid starting a sentence with a numeral, so if the percentage is at the start of a sentence, either rewrite the sentence or use an approximate number instead.

YES *Almost 30 percent of people do not like business cards.*

NO *29.7% of people do not like business cards.*

Periods (spacing)

Use just one space after a period, not two, before the next sentence starts.

The convention of using two spaces is a relic from the days of typewriters and mechanical printing presses. In the digital age, publishing platforms (both web and print) have more control over how text appears, and design around making sentence breaks clear with only one space. Since clarity is the same, we go with just one space because it takes up less space.

Periods

If you end a sentence with one of the rare abbreviations that end in a period (the most common examples are "Jr." and "etc."), don't add another period to the end of the sentence. The period ending the abbreviation pulls double duty and ends the sentence as well.

See [CMOS 6.012](#)

Being Inclusive

Instead of... Use... example

- She's learning disabled.*
She has a learning disability.
- He's emotionally disturbed/mentally ill.*
He has a mental health condition.
- He's in special ed.*
He receives special ed services.
- She's developmentally delayed.*
She has a developmental delay.
- She is non-verbal.*
**She communicates non-verbally/
with her eyes/device/etc.**
- They are brain damaged.*
They have brain injuries.
- He has a birth defect.*
He has a congenital disability.
- She has problems/special needs.*
She needs... (fill in specific need).
She uses... (fill in specific support).
- The handicapped or disabled*
People with disabilities
- Normal or healthy kids*
Kids without disabilities

Person-First Language

Rippel writers make language choices that are inclusive and sensitive to groups and individuals.

Frame the people affected rather than the condition. For example, instead of writing the term “autistic,” write “a person with autism.”

Do not frame people as if they have a deficit compared to a norm. For example, say a person who uses a wheelchair rather than a person confined to a wheelchair.

When referring to older adults, be aware that this demographic prefers elders, older adults, mature adults, and seniors, rather than the aged, the elderly, or senior citizens.

Do not frame roles in association with gender. Use spokesperson and chair rather than spokeswoman, chairman.

More examples of person-first language are in the box at left. If you do not see an example here, you can research what you need online or ask the Comms Team.

Plural Possessive

The possessive of most singular nouns is formed by adding an apostrophe and an s.

The possessive of plural nouns (except for a few irregular plurals, like children, that do not end in s) is formed by adding an apostrophe only.” My dog’s fleas; the boys’ books; the children’s school.

The question is what to do with proper names that are already possessive, like Kinko’s or Sotheby’s. Readers wonder whether to add a second apostrophe and s in phrases like “Kinko’s’s current publicity campaign.”

The answer is no. It is best to find a way to rephrase: “the current Kinko’s publicity campaign.”

See [CMOS 7.16](#)

Pronouns

Do not use the phrase “he or she” or its permutations. If you find yourself wanting to use it, use “they” (and its variations) instead.

Over the past few years, it’s become pretty standard to use “they” when referring to a single person, especially in place of the phrase “he or she.” Using “they” makes the sentence easier to read without generally sacrificing clarity—and, importantly for us, it sounds more conversational and less stuffy.

YES *Someone stole my muffin, but they won't get far.*

NO *In his or her card, the anonymous donor included a muffin shop gift card.*

Use gendered pronouns as well; in fact, there will be some instances where it’s necessary for clarity. Here’s an example:

President Obama focused his attention on the speaker.

That sentence would be confusing if you replaced “his” with “their” because it would likely be misinterpreted to mean he was focusing another group’s attention on the speaker rather than his own.

So use pronouns based on clarity for the reader; for most people, that will probably mean using gendered pronouns most of the time but also using “they” for a singular person pretty regularly. If you run into a situation where using “they” would be confusing but gender is uncertain, try omitting the pronoun altogether, or repeat the noun.

Listen to what he or she has to say
becomes

Listen to what the participant has to say.

However, if you have to repeat a noun more than twice in a sentence or repeat it too soon, you should probably rewrite the sentence. Use a plural noun to allow for a plural pronoun. Another alternative is to use an article such as “the” or “a;” the neutral, singular “one” instead of a pronoun; or try the relative pronoun “who.”

A contestant must conduct himself or herself with dignity at all times

becomes

Contestants must conduct themselves with dignity at all times.

He or she may find it rewarding

becomes

One may find it rewarding.

Proper Nouns (capitalization in the context of Rippel products)

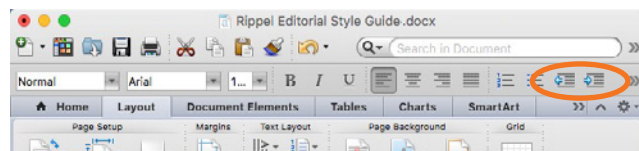
Capitalize proper nouns (Erin, Starbucks).

At Rippel, we use innovation language and often create new proper names for concepts or materials relevant to our work. When we refer to a “Story of Self,” for example, we are not referring to just any old story of self, but rather to a specific one that reflects the properties we recommend it include. Therefore, it’s a proper noun you should capitalize.

Similarly, capitalize “Pathway” when writing about not just any old pathway, but the specific one we have laid out for transforming health and well-being through regional stewardship. When in doubt, think about whether capitalization will provide more or less clarity and proceed with the direction that makes your meaning clearer, check [CMOS 5.6](#), or ask the Comms Team.

Quotes (long/blocked)

“Block” quotations of four or more lines. A blocked quotation is single-spaced and uses no quotation marks, but you should leave an extra line space immediately before and after. Indent the entire quotation .5 inches. The easiest way to do this in Microsoft Word is to select the entire quote, then click “increase indent” on the ribbon.



Give the source of a block quotation either in the preceding sentence in the main text or in parentheses at the end of the quotation and in the same type size. Put the opening parenthesis after the final punctuation mark of the quoted material. Don’t put a period before or after the closing parenthesis.

Here is an example that brings it all together:

If you describe a landscape, or a cityscape, or a seascape, always be sure to put a human figure somewhere in the scene. Why? Because readers are human beings, mostly interested in human beings. People are humanists. Most of them are humanists, that is. (Kurt Vonnegut)

See [CMOS 13.031](#)

Quotes (ending punctuation)

Commas and periods always go inside closing quotation marks. For example:

- *My mother always said, “Don’t talk to strangers.”*
- *“It’s a very windy day,” he said to no one in particular.*
- However, semicolons, colons, and em dashes go outside the quotation marks.
- *As Nike urges, “just do it”—even if you’re tired.*

We picked this style because it’s the standard in the United States, so it will read more naturally to our typical audience. In addition, as *The Chicago Manual of Style* notes, all methods for handling this punctuation have exceptions, so none is innately better than another aside from familiarity to the reader. [CMOS 6.114](#) provides a handy list of sections within the manual that go into more detail about quotations in relation to other punctuation.

Race and Ethnicity

Following the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s lead, Rippel has decided to use the [terminology used by the US government](#) (National Institutes of Health and Office of Management and Budget) and originated by the Institute of Medicine. This terminology has been widely adopted to standardize data collection and analysis about ethnic and racial inequities. These categorizations may be useful when talking about large groups, but when referring to an individual or small group, only state race or ethnicity (or both) if it’s directly relevant to the content, and in that case, either use subject’s preference or the appropriate subcategory (e.g., for someone from Pakistan or Pakistan heritage, use “Pakistani” rather than “Asian”). If you don’t know, ask, but consider that if the person’s racial or ethnic identity is directly relevant to the content you probably would have known it by now.

OMB Race and Hispanic Ethnicity Categories

HISPANIC OR LATINO		NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER		ASIAN	
Spaniard	Cuban	Polynesian	Kosraean	Asian Indian	Laotian
Andalusian	Costa Rican	Native Hawaiian	Pohnpeian	Bangladeshi	Malaysian
Asturian	Guatemalan	Samoan	Saipanese	Bhutanese	Okinawan
Catalonian	Honduran	Tahitian	Kiribati	Burmese	Pakistani
Castillian	Nicaraguan	Tongan	Chuukese	Cambodian	Sri Lankan
South American*	Panamanian	Tokelauan	Yapese	Chinese	Thai
Belearic Islander	Salvadoran	Micronesian	Melanesian	Madagascar***	Vietnamese
Gallego	Central American Indian	Guamanian	Fijian	Taiwanese	Iwo Jiman
Valencian	Canal Zone	Chamorro	Papau	Filipino	Maldivian
Spanish Basque	Argentinean	Mariana Islander	New Guinean	Hmong	Nepalese
Mexican	Bolivian	Marshallese	Solomon Islander	Indonesian	Singaporean
Mexican American	Colombian	Palauan	New Hebrides	Korean	Japanese
Mexicano	Ecuadorian	Carolinian			
Chicano	Paraguayan				
La Raza	Peruvian				
Mexican	Uruguayan				
Criollo	Venezuelan				
Latin American	South American Indian				
Puerto Rican					
AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE		BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN		WHITE	
Over 800 defined tribal groupings		Black	Bahamian	European	Egyptian
		African American	Barbadian	Armenian	Iranian
		African	Dominican**	English	Iraqi
		Botswanan	Dominican Islander	French	Lebanese
		Ethiopian	Haitian	German	Palestinian
		Liberian	Jamaican	Irish	Afghanistani****
		Namibian	Tobagoan	Italian	Israeli
		Nigerian	Trinidadian	Polish	Arab
		Zairean	West Indian	Scottish	Middle Eastern or North African
				Syrian	
				Assyrian	

*Not all South Americans are Hispanic as there are five non-Spanish speaking territories (Brazil, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, and Belize). **Many Dominicans consider themselves Hispanic, not Black. ***Madagascar has more than one major racial and ethnic group (Black Africans and Asian Indians). ****The U.S. Census groups Afghanistani with its geographically based Asian category.

Considerations when writing about race and ethnicity.

It is important to acknowledge the inherent sensitivities that may arise when writing and communicating about race and ethnicity as identities or categories of human beings. As noted above, various institutions define race and ethnicity for different purposes, whether it be for the US Census or for addressing discrimination through our judicial system. For example, the US Supreme Court unanimously held that “race” is not limited to census designations on the “race question” but extends to all ethnicities.¹ For our purposes at Rippel, we believe it is necessary to be cognizant of the nuances in how racial and ethnic standards vary and adjust our writing accordingly given the intent of our work.

In that spirit, Rippel is following the lead of Trabian Shorters in embracing “asset framing.” This means we avoid the terms “minority,” “nonwhite,” and other similar terms when writing about race or ethnicity. Using this language devalues the group by defining members based on deficiencies rather than strengths, and by a comparison to some “default” group instead of members’ own characteristics. Use a specific term from the list below instead, or “people of color” and “Indigenous people” to be more general.

There are five main racial categories as defined by the OMB:

- **White:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.
- **Black or African American:** A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa. Using African American to describe Americans of African descent is common, but black is often more accurate because it does not exclude other black people, such as Jamaicans or Haitians.

- **American Indian or Alaska Native:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment. Native American is no longer used interchangeably with American Indian because it has come to also encompass Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders as well. If there is reason to use Indigenous, Aboriginal, First Nation, Inuit, (e.g., when a subject self identifies with one of these races or you are referencing data produced by another organization) always capitalize these terms as a sign of respect the same way that English, French, and Spanish are capitalized.
- **Asian:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

There is one separate ethnic category:

- **Hispanic or Latino**

The chart on page 22 lists all of the subcategories the US Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has set as the standard. The US Census Bureau uses these, as do most modern surveys and science writing.

Capitalization of Race and Ethnicity

CMOS does not call for a standard practice, and says Rippel should determine its own preferences. Rippel follows the lead of The Diversity Style Guide and the American Psychological Association (APA).

Racial and ethnic groups are designated by proper nouns and are capitalized. Therefore, use “Black” and “White” instead of “black”

¹ St. Francis Coll. v. Al-Khazraji 481 U.S. 604 (1987), Shaare Tefila Congregation v. Cobb, 481 U.S. 615 (1987).

and “white” (do not use colors to refer to other human groups; doing so is considered pejorative). Likewise, capitalize terms such as “Native American,” “Hispanic,” and so on. Capitalize “Indigenous” and “Aboriginal” whenever they are used. Capitalize “Indigenous People” or “Aboriginal People” when referring to a specific group (e.g., the Indigenous Peoples of Canada), but use lowercase for “people” when describing persons who are Indigenous or Aboriginal (e.g., “the authors were all Indigenous people but belonged to different nations”).

Rippel

See section titled [The Rippel Foundation](#).

Roman Numerals

Avoid using roman numerals (I, IV, etc.). Use Arabic numerals (1, 4, etc.) instead because it will make your work seem more accessible.

Semicolons

Use semicolons with discretion; don’t just throw them around willy-nilly.

When items in a series themselves contain internal punctuation, separating the items with semicolons can aid clarity. If ambiguity seems unlikely, use commas instead. In other words, default to commas unless using them instead of semicolons would make your writing difficult to follow—and even then, try rewriting the sentence first before resorting to semicolons.

YES *Individual 1’s legal defense was provided by the law firms Smith, Brown, & Jones; Verenich & Sons; and Ivanov, Popov, & Petrov.*

This could also be reworked into a bulleted list.

You can also use semicolons to connect two independent sentences that would otherwise be separated by a period or a conjunction if the two sentences are closely interdependent or you want to emphasize contrast between them. This use should be relatively rare; think carefully about whether the reader would be better served by separating the content into two sentences instead.

Sexual Orientation

See [Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation](#)

Slashes

Avoid using slashes to connect two or more words. It comes across to many readers as stodgy and overly formal, and there is always a clearer way to get your point across, often more accurately.

NO *Revise/proofread your work before submitting it.*

YES *Revise then proofread your work before submitting it.*

States

Use the postal abbreviations for states (NJ, MA, etc.). Always capitalize them and don’t include periods.

See [CMOS 5.118](#).

Always list state names alphabetically and spell out state names whenever practical. If listing several states in a sentence, for example, make it look like this: Alaska, Georgia, and Ohio. But in some instances, state abbreviations are more practical, such as when you have a long list (three or more) of both cities and states. In those cases, you can abbreviate the state names without periods, such as: Juneau, AK; Atlanta, GA; Cleveland, OH; and St. Paul, MN.

See [CMOS 10.027](#)

System for Health

(not system of health) “Health ecosystem” is best, but when you need to write out this phrase, use “for.” Both phrases have similar meanings, but “system for health” emphasizes how the system should serve our health and well-being, not the other way around. In very technical documents, or when helpful for clarity, you could use “the system that produces health and well-being” instead.

That vs. Which

Use “that” to introduce a clause that is necessary for the reader to understand what you’re talking about. Use “which” to introduce a clause that contains only additional information that isn’t critical to allowing your reader to understand what you’re writing. Always put a comma before “which,” but never put a comma before “that.” For Example:

- *Out of those cups, I need the one that is full of water.*
- *I drove the car, which was red.*

See [CMOS 6.027](#)

That vs. Who

Use “who” instead of “that” when talking about people.

- YES** *She’s the woman who did my taxes.*
- NO** *She’s the woman that did my taxes.*

While “that” is still technically correct, using “who” when appropriate increases clarity and helps reduce the potential for confusion.

Titles (and degrees and affiliations)

When a professional or honorary title appears before a person’s name, capitalize it and write it as part of the person’s name (with no commas). When a title follows a person’s name, use commas to set it apart, and don’t capitalize it. For example: The Rippel Foundation President and CEO Laura Landy is correct when Laura’s title appears before her name, but

becomes Laura Landy, president and CEO of The Rippel Foundation, when her title comes after her name. (Always capitalize accepted acronyms in titles, like CEO or CFO)

When using a description of a person’s role in conjunction with their name, as opposed to a formal title, the description of the role should be lower case: e.g., financial advisor John Smith, actor Mary Jones.

Titles of Referenced Works

(italics vs. quotation marks)

Whether to use italics or quotation marks to set off the title of a work being cited is determined by the type of work. Italicize titles of books and periodicals; put quotation marks around titles of articles, chapters, and other shorter works.

- YES** *Refer to the article titled, “A Comparison of MLA and APA Style.”*
- YES** Refer to the book titled, *Moby Dick*.

See italics vs. quotes of this guide for a more detailed explanation. Also see [CMOS 8.156](#)

U.S. or United States

In running text, spell out “United States” as a noun. Use the abbreviation (“U.S.”) when it serves as an adjective.

U.S. dollars.

U.S. involvement in China.

China’s involvement in the United States.

See [CMOS 10.032](#)



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