**Editorial Style Guide Example**

*Professional Communications OER*

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For any queries not clarified in this style guide, please consult:

**Dictionary:** *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* or [oxforddictionaries.com](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com)

**Style guide:** *The Canadian Press Stylebook: A Guide for Writers and Editors*. See also *The Canadian Press Caps and Spelling* (for Canadian spelling choices; treatment of Canadian government, geographic, military, etc., terminology; list of plain-language words, and more).

# Acronyms

Common acronyms should be written in uppercase without periods (CBC, RCMP, NATO).

When referring to locations referred to with acronyms, (U.S., U.K.), use a period after each letter.

# Addresses

Follow Canada Post mailing guidelines for addresses:

John Smith  
123 Main Street,  
Anytown AB A1A 1A1

Use two-letter abbreviations for provinces (i.e., AB, BC, QC).

# Academic

Degree abbreviations do not use periods (PhD, MSc)

Capitalize the official names of educational institutions (e.g., The University of British Columbia) and lowercase subsequent references such as “the university”).

Capitalize the official proper names of academic departments (Department of Economics, but “the economics department”).

# Capitalization

Use Title Case for titles, headlines, and subheads.

Title Case capitalizes the first word in a sentence, as well as all nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and subordinating conjunctions (like, because).

The “Title Case” style does not capitalize the following words:

* articles (i.e., the, an, a)
* conjunctions (and, but, or, for, nor)
* prepositions over four characters, unless these words begin the sentence

Also use capitals at the start of words in the following scenarios;

* Names of events and historic periods (World War II, The Jurassic Period)
* Proper names, trade names, government departments and agencies, association names, company names, and club names
* Languages, nations, races
* Religions

Dates and Times

* Format dates using MM/DD/YYYY
* In running text, use Day - Month - Date, Year (e.g., Tuesday, January 1, 2015)
* If only referring to a month and year, you do not need to include a comma (March 2009)
* If abbreviating months in running text, follow with a period (Jan.)
* If referring to a span of years, use an en dash (YYYY–YY)
* Do not list decades or centuries in the possessive form (i.e., 1920s, not 1920’s)
* Use the 12-hour clock, and follow with AM or PM
* Use *midnight* and *noon* rather than digits
* If a period of time spans several hours, use the word ‘to’ to indicate time (6PM to 9PM)
* Do not include zeros in the minutes place if time is on the hour (8PM not 8:00PM)

Hyperlinks

* Avoid the phrase “Click here” for hyperlinks. The link text should refer to the title or content of the page you are linking to (e.g., You can register online or in-person).
* Only link to the page when it is first mentioned in your content, not every time it appears.
* Have links open in a new tab.

Inclusive Language

* Rewrite sentences whenever possible to eliminate gender-specific pronouns.

Lists  
Use a colon to introduce a list only when the text following the colon does not flow naturally from it. In other words, use a colon only when the text before the colon is a complete sentence. If the items in the list *complete* the text that introduces the list (turning it into a complete sentence), omit the colon and use end punctuation for each bullet item. See examples below:

1. The students in the Tuesday afternoon seminar have three assignments:
   * Read a chapter in a novel from the 18th century.
   * Write an essay comparing it with a chapter in a novel from the 20th century.
   * Complete both projects by 5 p.m.
2. The students in the Tuesday afternoon seminar must
   * read a chapter in a novel from the 18th century,
   * write an essay comparing it with a chapter in a novel from the 20th century,
   * and complete both projects by 5 p.m.

Bulleted items are capped if they do not grammatically complete the introductory sentence, such as in example 1; bulleted items begin with lowercase letter if they grammatically complete the introductory text. Terminal punctuation for bulleted items is optional for phrases, and required for complete sentences. Simple lists (of one or two words per bullet) do not need punctuation.

Names and Titles

Use the professional title “Dr.” only for licensed health care professionals. Follow with a period.

If a position title appears after the person’s name in running text, use a comma to separate the two and capitalize the title (i.e., Steve Jones, Dean of Medicine…).

Numbers

* In running text, spell the first nine numbers as words. Use digits for numbers 10 and above.
* If using numbers both above and below 10 in the same sentence, use digits.
* For numbers at the beginning of a sentence, always spell the number.

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## Telephone Numbers

* Put area codes in parentheses, then a hyphen between the two sets of numbers in a telephone number: (555) 123-4567
* Identify whether the number shown is a phone number, fax, or toll-free number i.e. *Phone: (780) 555-5555.* Capitalize this label.

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## Measurement

* Spell out units of measurement

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## Money

* Express money in digits, using the correct symbol. Do not add a space between the symbol and the digit ($100).
* Do not include zeros after the decimal in dollar figures unless at least one figure includes cents.

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## Percentage

* Use numerals for percentages. E.g., 5 percent, 12 percent, 20 percent.
* Use the word “percent” instead of the symbol.

Punctuation

## Accents

Include accents when using French words, or words from other languages that use these markings.

## Ampersand

Use “and” rather than ampersand (&), except if it is part of an APA source citation (e.g., Miller & Smith, 2015).

## Apostrophe

If a plural noun ends with an *s*, use an apostrophe to indicate possessiveness. For example, “The students’ complaint” (more than one student complained). If the plural noun does not end with an *s*, use an apostrophe plus an *s*. For example, “The children’s lunch.” To indicate possession with a last name that ends in *s*, use an apostrophe and an *s* (e.g., Mr. Jones’s garage sale, not Mr. Jones’ garage sale. *But*, The Joneses’ garage sale if referring to a multimember family).

## Brackets

If the final punctuation applies to the whole sentence, place the punctuation after the bracket (like this).

If the phrase found inside the brackets is a complete sentence, then the punctuation would be located inside the brackets. (This is an example of such a sentence.)

## Comma

Use the Oxford (serial) comma, which is the comma before *and* (e.g., John, Paul, George, and Ringo).

## Hyphen

* Hyphenate compound modifiers that precede a noun (four-year-old child).
* Hyphenate written compound numerals between 21 and 99 (twenty-one).
* Hyphenate joint titles (Vice-President).
* Do not hyphenate words with the prefix *by* (e.g., bylaw).

## Periods

* Headlines, subheadlines, and page titles should not have periods.
* Periods go inside the closing quote mark (*He said, “I’m late for a very important date.”)*

## Quotation Marks

* To highlight a word or phrase, use double quotation marks in running text
* Use double quotation marks to enclose direct quotations. Use single quotation marks within double quotation marks if quoting within a quote.
* Periods and commas are placed inside quotation marks; colons and semicolons are placed outside.
* When a sentence ends with a single and double quotation marks, separate them with a space

## Special Characters

* Use exclamation marks (!) sparingly.
* Ellipses […] indicate an omission from a text or quotation. Surround with square brackets and place a space before and after the ellipse

# Spacing

* After the end punctuation of a sentence, use one space before starting your next sentence.
* After a title, skip one line before beginning the body text
* After a paragraph, skip one line before beginning the next paragraph
* After a document section, skip two lines before beginning the next section

Spelling

Use Canadian spelling. Consult the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* for clarifications.

Style and Tone

* Use the second person singular/plural (You)
* Use the active voice as much as possible

Word List

* message (not capitalized)
* email (no dash)
* web page (not capitalized, not *webpage*; use *website* wherever possible unless referring to a specific page of a website)
* The communication channels are verbal, non-verbal, written, and digital (NOT oral, NOT nonverbal written as one word)
* professional communication NOT workplace communication. OK to refer to the “workplace” as a physical location, though.