

A&S Style

What is Style? Why Use a Style Guide?

Style, as applied to written communications for the Faculty of Arts & Science, is the use of guidelines and rules that encourage consistency and comprehension and a common language.

The Faculty of Arts & Science Style Guide is by no means an exhaustive list of language rules and guidelines. It draws heavily on other respected, standard resources. If the information you are seeking can't be found in A&S Style, the resource of first resort is the Canadian Press Stylebook, 17th Edition, and its accompanying guide, the Canadian Press Caps and Spelling, 20th Edition. If those sources fail you, the next place to turn is the Canadian Oxford Dictionary.

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1. Abbreviations & Acronyms

Abbreviations:

In general, names of universities, faculties and organizations should be spelled out on first reference, with the abbreviation in parentheses if the organization will be mentioned again in the document. For example: University of Toronto (U of T) is Canada's leading research university.

- **University of Toronto:**
 - The accepted abbreviation for University of Toronto is U of T with spaces between the elements; UofT is incorrect.
 - For University of Toronto Mississauga, use U of T Mississauga or UTM.
 - For University of Toronto Scarborough, use U of T Scarborough or UTSC.
 - References to the St. George campus, the Mississauga campus or the Scarborough campus are correct. It is incorrect to refer to them as downtown, east and west campuses.

- **Faculty of Arts & Science:**
 - A&S is the accepted abbreviation, not FAS. Note: There are spaces in between the characters.
- **Other universities:**
 - Names of other universities should be written out on first reference (e.g., McGill University), but may be referred to more casually on subsequent references (e.g., McGill).

Acronyms:

An acronym is a word that is formed from the first letter of the words it comprises (e.g., ROM for Royal Ontario Museum) or from the major words in the title.

The name of an organization should be spelled out on first reference, with the acronym placed in parentheses afterward, if the organization will be referred to again. For example: Cell & Systems Biology (CSB), Ecology & Evolutionary Biology (EEB).

Minimize the use of acronyms; they can cause confusion or slow the reader down. For example: if you are writing about the Women & Gender Studies Institute, you should consider using referring to it as “the institute” on second reference rather than WGSi.

Acronyms should generally be written in capital letters without periods or spaces, e.g. Canadian Institute for Theoretical Astrophysics (CITA).

- **Street Names:**
 - For general locations, spell out the place: University Avenue, College Street, along King Street East.
 - Abbreviate street names in numbered addresses. For example: 100 St. George St.
 - Spell out first through ninth as street names. For example: She lives at 123 First Ave.
- **Buildings:**
 - Capitalize the names of campus buildings. For example: McLennan Physical Laboratories or Sidney Smith Hall.
 - Colloquial names for campus buildings (e.g., Con Hall or Sid Smith for Convocation Hall and Sidney Smith Hall) should not be used.
 - Lower case when referring to a general building rather than its formal name. For example: the architecture building.

2. Capitalization

In keeping with Canadian Press style, follow this basic rule: capitalize all proper names, trade names, government departments and agencies of government, names of associations, companies, clubs, religions, languages, nations, races, places and addresses. Otherwise, lowercase is favoured where a reasonable option exists.

- **University:**
 - Capitalize University when referring to the University of Toronto. For example: The University has three campuses.
 - The word “university” is lowercase if referring to any other university. For example: Ryerson University is developing additional land in the downtown core. The university is

building new residences for students there.

- **Faculties, Departments, Colleges, Centres and Institutes:**

- Always use an ampersand when referring the Faculty of Arts & Science.
- Capitalize the full proper names of all faculties and departments. For example: the Faculty of Arts & Science; the Department of Anthropology. Do not capitalize the “the” except at the start of a sentence.
- When referring to the Faculty of Arts & Science, use the uppercase: the Faculty. In referring to the academic staff, use the lowercase: faculty. For example: The Faculty has its main administrative offices in Sidney Smith Hall. The faculty believe strongly in academic freedom.
- Lowercase generic references to faculties or departments. For example: the dental faculty or the psychology department.
- Capitalize the proper names of colleges, centres and institutes but not the generic term. For example: Victoria College, the college; the Asian Institute, the institute; the Centre for Ethics, the centre.
- Ampersands are acceptable (and save space!) for departments with “and” in their name i.e., Near & Middle East Studies; Astronomy & Astrophysics.

- **Titles:**

- Capitalize formal titles directly preceding a name. For example: President Meric Gertler, Professor Ken Burch.
- Titles and job descriptions should be lowercase otherwise. For example: Meric Gertler, president of U of T, or Nicholas Terpstra, chair of the Department of History.
- Capitalize the full names of chairs, fellowships and awards but do not capitalize the word chair, fellowship or award on its own. For example: Ted Mossman Chair in Mathematics, Jim Arthur.

- **Courses:**

- The titles of courses should be capitalized. For example: Introduction to Sociology. You do not need to put them in quotation marks.
- When referring to a course by number, capitalize the identifying letters. For example: Monuments of Art History is FAH101H1.
- Academic subjects or disciplines: Lowercase the names of all subjects, unless they include proper nouns. For example: history, Asian history.

- **Publications/movies/television shows:**

- Capitalize the names of publications, such as the Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science. Do not capitalize “the” in the title of the publication. For example: the New York Times, the Globe & Mail.
- Do not capitalize “magazine,” unless it is part of the publication’s title. For example: Harper’s Magazine, Time magazine, U of T Magazine.
- Titles of books are italicized, while titles of magazines and newspapers are not.
- Italicize the names of movies and television shows.
- Quotations: Capitalize the first word of a quotation when it is a complete sentence.

3. Common Mistakes

- **Its** and **it's**. Its is a possessive: Its colour was an ugly shade of green. It's is a contraction of it is: It's too late to register for that economics course that I wanted to take.
- **Affect** and **effect**. Affect is to influence or have an effect on a result. Effect is to bring about or accomplish.
- **Can/could** and **may/would**. Can refers to the ability or power to do something, while may expresses doubt or permission to do something.
- **Complement, compliment**. Complement is to complete; compliment is to praise.
- **Composed of, comprise**. Composed is made up of; comprise means contains all the parts.
- **Defuse** and **diffuse**. Defuse is to render harmless, while diffuse means scattered.
- **Desert** and **dessert**. Desert means barren land or to abandon; dessert is a sweet or a confection.
- **Discreet** and **discrete**. Discreet means circumspect in speech; discrete means separate or individually distinct.
- **Ensure, insure, assure**. Ensure is to make sure; insure is to provide insurance; assure is to remove worry or uncertainty.
- **Flaunt** and **flout**. Flaunt means to show off, while flout means to mock or scoff at.
- **Historic** and **historical**. Historic means famous in history, while historical means about history.
- **Lay** and **lie**. Lay means to put something down; lie means to recline.
- **Fewer/less**. Use fewer with plural nouns, such as fewer men. Use less with singular nouns, such as less sugar.
- **Principal** and **principle**. Principal means chief or most important; principle is a basic rule or truth.
- **Who** and **whom**. Who represents he-she-they, while whom represents him-her-them.
- **Which** and **that**. "Which" introduces a parenthetical or non-essential clause, while "that" introduces an essential clause that cannot be omitted from a sentence. For example: The reception, which was held at Hart House, was very enjoyable. The course that she teaches is interesting.
 - For a more comprehensive list, see the Canadian Press Stylebook.

4. Degrees & Diplomas

- **Terminology:**
 - A graduation ceremony is called convocation. Students who are preparing to graduate are graduands. Once they cross the stage and receive their diplomas, they are graduates.
 - Graduates are also known as alumni (plural for group of males or mixed male and female group). A male graduate is an alumnus; a female graduate is an alumna. Alumnae is the correct term for a group of female graduates.
 - Informal references to university degrees are lowercased. For example: bachelor's degree, master's degree, doctoral degree or doctorate.
 - When writing about alumni, include the acronym of the graduate's degree, year of graduation on first mention of the person's name. For example: Jeff Ernest (BA 2008).
 - When writing about alumni with a graduate degree, indicate degree type, year of graduate and subject area. For example: Diana Ferris (PhD 2010 English)
- **Abbreviations:**
 - Whenever possible, avoid degree abbreviations and use a phrase instead. For example: Jane Smith, who has a doctorate in geography.
 - Abbreviations for common academic degrees generally don't include periods. (Abbreviations are uppercase; degrees themselves are lowercase):
 - BA, bachelor of arts

- Hons. BA, honours bachelor of arts
- BCom, bachelor of commerce
- BASc, bachelor of applied science and engineering
- BSc, bachelor of science
- Hons. BSc, honours bachelor of science
- DDS, doctor of dental surgery
- JD, juris doctor (law)
- MA, master of arts
- MBA, master of business administration
- MD, medical doctor
- MSc, master of science
- MSW, master of social work
- PhD, doctor of philosophy

5. Dates & Times

- **Dates:**
 - Do not abbreviate days of the week or the months of the year, except in tables, where they are used without a period. For example: Mon for Monday, Feb for February.
 - When referring to a month and year, but not to a specific day, no comma is necessary. For example: July 1867.
 - The academic year is 2014-15, not 2014-2015.
- **Time:**
 - Time is written in numerals: 8 am or 7 pm. Use 8 am rather than 8:00 am. Also, use noon and midnight, not 12 noon and 12 midnight. No period in am or pm.
 - A colon is used to separate hours and minutes: 8:17 am.
 - For significant events, give both the day of the week and the date. For example: Convocation begins on Thursday, June 3, 2019.

6. French & Latin

- **French:** The Canadian Press Stylebook uses Le Petit Robert and Le Petit Larousse as its French dictionaries.
 - Use the English form for the names of organizations whenever possible. For example: Quebec provincial police, rather than Sûreté du Québec.
 - If the name of an organization can't be easily translated, use the French name with an explanation of the organization's purpose. If an organization or work is well known, there is no need for a translation. For example: Notre Dame, La Bohème.
 - For French books, movies and songs, etc., use the English title if it is widely known. For example: Remembrance of Things Past, not A la recherché du temps perdu.
 - If there has been no official translation, provide a translation in parentheses that conveys the meaning of the French title. For example: Les Belles-soeurs (The Sisters-in-Law).
 - Use accents on French proper names, including place names. Accents are not needed for Quebec and Montreal, because they have common English versions, unless they are part of a proper name. For example: Jean Chrétien, Fête nationale.
 - For most French names, capitalize the first word and the second — if the first is an article — and all proper nouns. For example: the newspaper, Le Journal de Montréal; the government agency, Office de la langue française.

- In Quebec and many other French-speaking areas of the world, multiple word place names are hyphenated: Notre-Dame-du-Lac, Quebec. No hyphens are used, however, in the names of natural features, such as the lake, Lac des Sables, or mountains.
 - Check all family and place names that include some variation on saint. Place names in Quebec use abbreviations (without periods) for Saint (St) and Sainte (Ste), but elsewhere in Canada, style varies. For example: St-Pierre-Baptiste, Quebec; Ste-Julienne, Quebec; Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.
 - For Quebec family names, either the full word or the abbreviation is accepted. For example: Pierre St-Juste or Pierre Saint-Juste.
 - References to the saints themselves should follow English practice, using the abbreviation and a single gender. For example: St. Hubert, St. Marguerite.
- **Latin:** Latin words appear regularly in an academic context, making it useful to know the singular and plural forms of common words, as well as the masculine or feminine forms, as appropriate. Many of the plural forms have been Anglicized for ease of use. Unless otherwise noted, the singular forms appear first, followed by the plural:
 - Alumnus (male, singular); alumna (female, singular); alumni (male or mixed group, plural); alumnae (female group, plural)
 - Appendix, appendices
 - Bacterium, bacteria
 - Criterion, criteria
 - Erratum, errata
 - Honorarium, honorariums
 - Hypothesis, hypotheses
 - Index, indices
 - Matrix, matrixes
 - Memorandum, memorandums
 - Minutia, minutiae
 - Prospectus, prospectuses
 - Referendum, referendums
 - Syllabus, syllabuses
 - Symposium, symposiums
 - Thesis, theses

7. **Inclusive Language**

Equity and diversity are guiding principles at U of T and writing should reflect this inclusive approach. Be aware of sensitivities when referring to age, colour, creed, nationality, personal appearance, religion, sex and disabilities. Treat everyone equally and without stereotyping.

- Do not use descriptions of a person's race, colour, sexual orientation, disability or national origin unless it is pertinent to the story. The same applies to descriptions of appearances and clothing.
- Capitalize the proper names of nationalities, peoples, races and tribes. For example: Caucasian, Haida, Inuit, Jew. The terms black and white are acceptable, but are not the names of races and are lowercase. African-American and African-Canadian are acceptable.
- Aboriginal Peoples is uppercase. The term includes all Indian, Inuit and Métis Peoples. First Nations — widely used by status and non-status Indians — is uppercase. Other variations, such as aboriginals, native peoples and indigenous people, are lowercase. Follow the [preference of First Nations bands](#) in the spelling of their names.
- Avoid using “he” to refer to a person of either sex, or “man” to refer to both men and women. If possible, rewrite sentences to eliminate gender-specific pronouns. For example: You — not he —

can get help with resume writing at the career centre. Plural nouns, such as they or them, are handy as substitutes.

- Use words such as police officer or firefighter, rather than policeman or fireman.
- In some cases, the old female variant that adds -ess is no longer employed. Use actor or poet for people of either gender, rather than actress or poetess for women.
- Don't define people by their disorders (e.g., the blind). If the disability is pertinent to the story, be clear and sensitive in describing it. Emphasize the person, not the disability — use language that puts people first.
- Gay and lesbian are the appropriate terms to refer to people attracted to those of the same sex. Use sexual orientation — not sexual preference — since it is not a choice.

8. Numbers

In your text, spell out numbers from zero to nine; use digits for all other numbers. For example: two minutes, the fourth hole, a six-pack, 10 students, the 11th month.

- **There are exceptions where numerals are always used:**
 - Currency: \$6
 - Addresses: 3 Heath St.
 - Dates and years: December 7, the 1990s, 1st of May
 - Percentages that include decimals: 2.5 per cent
 - Ages, standing alone after a name: Susan Jones, 19
 - Temperatures, when Celsius or Fahrenheit is specified: 3 C, -6 F
 - Times: 3 pm, nine at night
 - Phone numbers: 416-978-6100
- **Spell out the number if:**
 - You use a number to start a sentence — but try to avoid it. For example: Twenty years ago, we immigrated to Canada.
 - It is a figure of speech: Ten Commandments, ten-gallon hat.
 - It is used informally: There were hundreds of people at the film's opening.
 - A fraction of less than one stands alone: one-half, five-eighths.
- **Roman numerals** are used in proper names and to indicate sequence: King Henry VIII; Pope John XXIII; John D. Rockefeller IV; The Godfather, Part II.

9. Punctuation

Punctuation brings order and clarity to your text, but beware of using too much punctuation, or it confuses the reader.

- **Apostrophes: Apostrophes are used to mark possession.**
 - To form the possessive of a single noun that doesn't end in s, add an apostrophe and an s. For example: friend's textbook, sister's laptop.
 - Single nouns ending with an s or an s sound need an apostrophe and an s to become plural. For example: witness's statement.
 - Plural nouns ending in s need just an apostrophe to form the possessive. For example: professors' offices.
 - Names of two syllables or more ending with an es or ez sound usually need just an apostrophe to form the plural. For example: Moses' brother; Socrates' play.
 - For company and organizational names, follow their preferences.

- **Parentheses: Use parentheses sparingly.**
 - Use parentheses to enclose equivalents and translations. For example: The temperature was 25 C (80 F) today. The Knesset (Israeli Parliament) should vote on that bill tomorrow.
 - If the punctuation mark applies to the entire sentence, put it after the closing bracket. For example: He was finding it easier to get along with his belle-mère (mother-in-law).
 - If the punctuation mark applies only to the words inside the parentheses, put it inside the closing bracket. For example: Professor Smith came to the University of Toronto after completing a post-doctoral fellowship at Harvard University. (She earned her PhD at the University of British Columbia.)
 - Use brackets to enclose a nickname within a proper name. For example: Sam (Lightning) Lindstrom wins every race he runs.

- **Commas:**
 - Commas should appear between items listed in a series, but not before the final or, nor or and. For example: Sally Wong is studying English, psychology, biology and ethics this year.
 - A comma is required before clauses introduced by but, and, for, or, nor and yet if the subject of the sentence changes. For example: She comes from New Brunswick, and she is a brilliant student.
 - Use a comma to set off a person's age, degrees, awards and affiliations. For example: Jane Jones, PhD, will be the speaker at convocation. Ron Deibert, the director of the Munk School of Global Affairs' Citizen Lab, spoke to the Toronto Star.
 - Use commas to separate geographical elements. For example: She transferred from the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta, to the University of Toronto in Toronto, Ontario.

- **Hyphens:**
 - Use hyphen for compound adjectives. For example: old-car enthusiast.
 - Hyphens are used regularly in compound words. Hyphenate most compounds of three or four words. For example: happy-go-lucky, mother-in-law.
 - Use a hyphen to avoid doubling a vowel, tripling a consonant or duplicating a prefix. For example: co-operate, doll-like, sub-subcommittee.
 - Use hyphens with the written numbers 21 to 99 and with fractions standing alone. For example: seventy-six, three-quarters.
 - Use hyphens with successive compound adjectives. For example: 18th- and 19th-century poetry.
 - Use a hyphen to connect dates, except when from or to are used. For example: 2010-2011, September to June, between 1914 and 1917.

- **Quotation Mark:**
 - Always use double quotations marks, except for in headlines and for quotes within a quote.
 - Quotes within a quote use single quotation marks. For example: "We are moving into a world in which chemical analysis will be everywhere — the 'lab' will be wherever you are," said Wheeler.
 - Quotation marks are placed outside commas and periods and inside semicolons and colons.
 - Question marks and exclamation points are placed inside quotation marks if they are part of the quote and outside if they are not.
 - Items placed inside quotation marks include article titles, direct quotes, parts of books, and short poems.

- Use quotation marks around unfamiliar terms on first reference or around words used ironically. For example: Professor Aaron Wheeler will be holding a workshop focusing on “DropBot.” The “friendly” discussion resulted in two black eyes and one broken nose.
- Do not use quotation marks around single letters. For example: She got an A on her exam.
- **Spacing:**
 - Use **one space**, not two, between the punctuation at the end of one sentence and the beginning of a second sentence.
 - Write dashes with **spaces before and after**. For example: Em dashes – so called because they are as wide as the letter m — are used for emphasis or interruption in a sentence.

10. Spelling

We have provided some general spelling rules, but when in doubt, turn first to the Canadian Press Caps and Spelling or the Canadian Oxford Dictionary.

Back in the 1990s, the Canadian Press heeded complaints from the Canadian public and reverted back to a more British style of spelling by using -our, rather than the American -or in words of more than one syllable where the u is silent. For example: Honour, neighbour and favourite, rather than honor, neighbor and favorite.

- **However, when not used as nouns, some words don’t use the -our:**
 - labour but laborious
 - behaviour
 - neighbour
 - colour
 - odour but odorous
 - demeanour
 - rigour but rigorous
 - endeavour
 - rumour
 - favour, favourite, favourable
 - saviour
 - flavour
 - valour but valorous
 - harbour
 - vapour but vaporous
 - honour, honourable, honoured but honorary
 - vigour but vigorous
 - humour but humorous
 - tremor (no u)
- American pattern of using -ize/yz, rather than ise/yse. For example: criticize, not criticise.
- Canadians adopt the **British -ce endings** for nouns, rather than -se. For example: defence and pretence, rather than defense and pretense.
- **Like the British, Canadians double the l when adding a suffix to a word:**
 - compel, compelled, compelling
 - counsel, counsellor, counselling
 - enrol, enrolled, enrolment
 - fulfil, fulfilled, fulfilment, fulfilling

- install, instalment, installation, installing
 - marvel, marvelled, marvelous
 - signal, signalled, signalling
 - total, totalled
 - travel, traveller, travelling
 - tranquil, tranquillize
- The **diphthong** (ae or oe) is out of fashion for common words; an e is the accepted replacement. For example: encyclopedia and fetus, rather than encyclopaedia and foetus.
 - **Exception:** Archaeology, not archeology.
 - When a **proper name** differs from the Canadian Press Stylebook, use the style favoured by the subject with respect to geographical places and book and movie titles. For example: Lincoln Center, not Centre; Bar Harbor, Maine, not Bar Harbour.
 - Rather than using an **umlaut** (ö) in German names, substitute oe.
 - Use the suffixes -off or -eff in **Russian names**, rather than -ov or -ev.
- **Common University Terms:**
 - Advisor, not adviser
 - Catalogue, not catalog
 - Counsellor, not counselor
 - Enrolment, not enrollment
 - Full-time (a.); full time (n.)
 - Fundraising, not fund-raising
 - Part-time (a.); part time (n.)
 - Program, not programme
 - Vice-president and vice-provost, not vice president and vice provost
 - **Other spelling quirks:**
 - Per cent, not percent
 - Grey (colour), not gray
 - Centre, centred, centring, not centered, etc.
 - Theatre, not theater

11. Titles

Use titles on first reference but seldom after that. For example: President Meric Gertler of the University of Toronto will give the keynote speech. Gertler will discuss the value of good teaching at the university level.

- **Courtesy titles:** In general, do not use the courtesy titles Mr., Mrs., Ms. or Miss.
- **Doctors and doctorates:**
 - In general, use Dr. for licensed health-care professionals.
 - Do not use Dr. for people with doctorates outside the health-care field. If pertinent, mention that they have an earned or honorary degree and name the discipline. For example: Brown, who has a doctorate in sociology, spoke to CTV News.
- **Capitalize formal and professional titles only when** they immediately precede a person's name. In all other instances, they are lowercase. For example: Vice-president Deep Saini; Deep Saini, the principal and vice-president; Councillor Mike Layton; Mike Layton, the city councillor.
 - For faculty, provide a proper academic title whenever possible. For example: assistant professor, associate professor, professor, lecturer. If a faculty member has other titles, such as a research chair or a position at a research institute, they can be included, too.
 - Spell out Professor, rather than using Prof.

12. U of T Quirks & Miscellany

- Capitalize University when referring to the University of Toronto.
- The abbreviation for the University of Toronto is U of T, not UofT.
- The abbreviation for the Faculty of Arts & Science is A&S, not A & S or FAS.
- Use advisor, not adviser.
- Italicize the names of books, plays, symphonies and operas. Magazine names are not italicized. For example: *To Kill a Mockingbird*; Maclean's.
- When writing titles, use Professor, not Prof.