

Style Guide



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A Note from the Editors

The Public Interest Center (PIC) compiled this style guide to give Ohio EPA employees a standard reference for use in preparing documents and correspondence.

PIC uses Associated Press (AP) style when writing and editing public documents. Many of you may be familiar with other grammar and style guides. There are several accepted usages depending on the reference book you use, but these entries reflect the Agency's preferred style.

Franklin Covey's Writing Advantage Training

Ohio EPA has provided Franklin Covey's Writing Advantage training to interested employees in an effort to improve written communication between employees and our customers. The training is focused on business and technical writing and provides tips for making your message accessible, easy to understand and relevant.

The information and rules taught in this course support the Agency's style guide entries. If there is a discrepancy between the Agency and Writing Advantage style guides, the Agency's style should be used.

How to Use the Style Guide

- Entries are listed alphabetically.
- Many entries simply give the correct spelling.
- Several entries include Right: or Wrong: examples in italics.
- Related topics are at the end of the entry in boldface.

Writing Tips

Below are a few guidelines to keep in mind when writing letters, memos, reports, fact sheets and other business documents.

- Keep sentences and paragraphs short, avoiding excessive punctuation.
- Avoid using acronyms, if possible. If you use an acronym, always write it out on first reference, followed by the acronym in parentheses.
- Use language that is easily understood. If appropriate, try to convey technical information in a manner that an eighth grade student could understand.
- Simplify terms.

Complex:

were in attendance
will be in attendance
be of benefit to
for the purpose of
was in receipt of
for the protection of
may constitute a threat to
prior to
if you are a handler of
due to the fact that

Simple:

attended
will attend
benefit
to
received
to protect
could threaten
before
if you handle
because

- Write in the active voice instead of passive. If the subject acts, the voice is active. If the subject is acted upon, the voice is passive. The red flag for the passive voice is some variation of an auxiliary verb (was, will be, have been, is being), plus a past participle (built, written, directed), plus "by" if the actor is mentioned. Here are some examples:

Active Voice:

- I wrote this book.
- The publisher gave me an advance.
- The landfill operator requested a public hearing.

Passive Voice:

- This book was written by me.
- I was given an advance by the publisher.
- A public hearing was requested by the landfill operator.

Sources

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A

a, an - Use *a* before consonant sounds: *a historic event, a one-year term* (sounds as if it begins with a w).

Use *an* before vowel sounds: *an energy crisis, an honorable man* (the h is silent), *an NBA record* (sounds as if it begins with e), *an 1890s celebration*.

accept, except - *Accept* means to receive. *Except* means to exclude. *I accept your offer. Everyone was there except Bill.*

acronyms - In general, use them sparingly unless your readership is familiar with them. If they must be used, always spell out on first reference, followed by the acronym in parentheses: *combined sewer overflow (CSO)*. No apostrophe is needed when making acronyms plural. Example: *PCBs*.

NOTE: U.S. EPA has a list of environmental acronyms online. Refer to the **Helpful References** in the appendix.

administration - Lowercase: *the administration, the governor's administration, the Obama administration*. When referring to the current state administration, use the Kasich administration (include Kasich's name). See **governor**.

adviser - Not advisor.

affect, effect - *Affect* means to influence: *The game will affect the standings. Effect, as a verb, means to cause: He will effect many changes in the company. Effect, as a noun, means result: The effect was overwhelming. It was a law of little effect.*

afterward - Not afterwards.

Agency - When referring to Ohio EPA on second reference, it is customary to capitalize Agency. Note: This is our style and breaks the general rule for avoiding capitalization whenever possible. See **capitalization** and **Ohio EPA**.

agenda - A list. It takes singular verbs and pronouns. *The agenda has been revised.* The plural is agendas.

aid, aide - *Aid* is assistance. *Aide* is a person who serves as an assistant.

almost, most - If you can substitute *almost* for *most* in a sentence, use *almost*.

already, all ready - *Already* is an adverb expressing time: *The shipment had already been made when the stop order arrived. All ready* is a two-word phrase meaning "completely prepared." *He was all ready to start work on the project when it was canceled.*

alternate, alternative - *Alternate* means one and then the other: *alternate stripes of blue and white. Alternative* means providing a choice between two or more things: *alternative routes*, or something remaining to be chosen: *Is there an alternative to going?*

a.m., p.m. - Lowercase, with periods.

amid - Not amidst.

ampersand (&) - Do not use as a replacement for "and". Use the ampersand only when it is a part of an official name of a company, product or other proper noun.

annual - An event cannot be described as annual until it has been held in at least two successive years. Do not use the term "first annual." Instead, note that sponsors plan to hold an event annually.

apostrophes - Examples:

- Plural nouns not ending in s: Add 's: *the alumni's contributions, women's rights.*
- Plural nouns ending in s: Add only an apostrophe: *the girls' toys, states' rights, the ships' wake.*
- Singular nouns not ending in s: Add 's: *the city's needs, the girl's toys.*
- Always use 's if the word does not end in the letter s: *Nally's policies, the company's waste, Marx's theories.*
- Singular common nouns ending in s: Add 's unless the next word begins with s: *the hostess's invitation, the hostess' seat.*
- Singular proper names ending in s: Use only an apostrophe: *Achilles' heel, Agnes' book, Socrates' life.*
- Apostrophes are used to show possession, not to make words plural.
- Use in place of omitted figures, but not to make figures plural. Right: *'60s and 1960s.* Wrong: *'60's or 1960's.*

Appalachia - In the broadest sense, Appalachia applies to the region along the Appalachian Mountains from Maine into northern Alabama. In a sense that often suggests economic depression and poverty, Appalachia refers to parts of eastern Tennessee, eastern Kentucky, southeastern Ohio and the western portion of West Virginia. When using this word, specify the extent of the area in question.

assure, ensure, insure - Use *assure* to make a person sure of something: *I assure you I will be there.* Use *ensure* to mean to guarantee something: *Steps were taken to ensure accuracy.* Use *insure* for references to insurance: *The policy insures his life.*

attorney, lawyer - A person with a law degree is a lawyer. A person who acts on behalf of another person is that person's attorney. Therefore, a lawyer can be John Smith's attorney or the attorney for John Smith or even an attorney in the Smith case, but attorney should not be used in such references as "a Columbus attorney" or "an Ohio attorney" or "a patent attorney" or simply "an attorney." When in doubt, use *lawyer*. Do not abbreviate, and capitalize only when referring to an officeholder's title, such as: *District Attorney Tom Robbins.*

B

bad, badly - *Bad* is an adjective, as in a bad accident. *Badly* is an adverb that describes how something is done, as in *the plant was badly maintained.* Wrong: *He felt badly when the decision was delayed.*

because, since - Use *because* to denote a specific cause-effect relationship: *He went because he was told to attend.* *Since* is acceptable in a casual sense when the first event in a sequence led logically to the second but was not its direct cause: *He went to the game, since he had been given the tickets.*

beside, besides - *Beside* means at the side of. *Besides* means in addition to.

biannual, biennial - *Biannual* means twice a year and is a synonym for the word "semiannual." *Biennial* means every two years.

bibliographies - Appear at the end of chapters, articles and books. Whatever the exact format, complete bibliographic entries include the name of the author, the title and the full publication history. Refer to the appendix for more information and examples.

billion - Use figures in all except casual uses. *The total cost was \$2 billion. The population reached 4 billion.*

bimonthly - Every other month. Semimonthly means twice a month.

biweekly - Every other week. Semiweekly means twice a week.

board of directors, board of trustees - Always lowercase. A member of the board is a director or trustee.

brownfields - One word.

bureau - Capitalize when part of the formal name of an organization or agency: *the Bureau of Motor Vehicles.* Lowercase when used alone.

business/organization/company - Businesses, organizations or companies are treated as one unit and should be referred to in the singular. Therefore, when referring to a business, organization or company, use the proper name on the first reference and 'it' on subsequent references. Right: *The Smith Company's fine included penalties for surface water violations at its Dayton plant.* Wrong: *The company moved their operations to Pennsylvania.* See **collective nouns**.

C

cannot - One word.

capital, capitol - *Capital* is the city where a seat of government is located, and it is also used in the financial sense to describe money or property. Do not capitalize. When referring to the specific building in Washington and state equivalents, use *capitol*, which should be capitalized. *The Ohio Capitol is in Columbus.*

capitalization - Avoid unnecessary capitals. Use as part of official name, but not in condensed version. Right: *The Division of Air Pollution Control is writing rules. The division issued a permit.* Wrong: *We released the Strategy today.*

CD-ROM - all uppercase.

chairman - Use *chairman* if the person is a man, *chairwoman* if the person is a woman and *presiding officer* or *committee head* if the position is theoretical. Do not use chairperson unless it is an organization's formal title for an office. Avoid using chair unless specifically requested by the person in that position.

chief - See titles.

citations - Bibliographic entries that enable writers to identify the sources of their information within the text. The methods of citation vary depending on the technical field and its traditions, the type of publication and the publisher. Refer to the appendix for more information and examples.

city - Capitalize as part of a proper name: *New York City*. Lowercase elsewhere: *the city government*, *the city Board of Education*; and all "city of" constructions. Use *City* on second reference when referring to a specific city government if the context does not require the city name: *We issued a permit to the city of Dayton. The City then began building the plant.*

cleanup, clean up, clean-up - One word as a noun: *The cleanup will take two months.* Two words as a verb: *The company must clean up the spill.* Hyphenated when used as an adjective: *The clean-up plan is a public record.*

collective nouns - Nouns that denote a unit take singular verbs and pronouns: *business, class, committee, company, crowd, family, group, herd, jury, orchestra, organization, team*. Some usage examples: *The staff is confused. The committee is meeting to set its agenda. The jury reached its verdict. The company violated its permit. A herd of cattle was sold.*

commas - Use commas to separate elements in a series, but do not place a comma before the conjunction in a simple series. Right: *The rule will be implemented on municipal, state and federal levels.* Wrong: *The rule will be implemented on municipal, state, and federal levels.* Always place a comma after a date. *The Declaration of Independence was signed July 4, 1776, in Philadelphia. Dec. 7, 1941, is a day that will live in infamy. After reviewing your Aug. 4, 2008, letter, I have decided to proceed.* Do not place a comma between the month and year when no date is given: *A notice was sent in December 2007.* See **dates**.

committee - Do not abbreviate. Capitalize when part of a formal name: *the Labor Management Committee*. Use lowercase on second reference: *The committee met last week.*

company/business/organization - See business/organization/company.

complement, compliment - *Complement* means completing or supplementing something. *Compliment* is an expression of praise.

continual, continuous - *Continual* means happening over and over, or frequently repeated: *Writing well takes continual practice.* *Continuous* means uninterrupted, steady, unbroken: *A continuous stream of water flowed from the pipe.*

county - When writing about one county, capitalize: *Wayne County*. When writing multiple counties, lowercase: *Stark, Wayne and Medina counties*. Without a specific county name, use lowercase: *the county budget*. When referring to a specific county on second reference, use *County* when the context does not require using the county name. See **city**.

courtesy titles - For federal, state or county elected officials, address correspondence to *The Honorable* (person's name). The salutation should read *Dear* (title) (name). Do not abbreviate senator or representative. Example:

*The Honorable Joe Smith
Ohio Senate
Columbus, OH 43266*

Dear Senator Smith:

For members of the U.S. House of Representatives, the salutation should read *Dear Congressman* or *Congresswoman* (name). Courtesy titles are not necessary for local officials.

D

dash - Use the dash to denote an abrupt change in thought in a sentence or an emphatic pause. The correct way to format a dash is to hit the hyphen key (the one next to the number 0 on the keyboard) twice. There should be a space on both sides of a dash. Be aware that some word processing programs will automatically "correct" your dash -- that's okay. *Smith offered a plan — it was unprecedented — to raise fees* (note "corrected" dash).

data - Plural form of datum, meaning a fact used to draw a conclusion or make a decision.

database - One word.

dates - No comma between month and year if no day is included. Right: *June 2008. June 1, 2008.* Wrong: *June, 2008.* Always use Arabic figures without st, nd, rd or th. When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. Spell out months when using alone, or with a year alone. Use commas to offset the date from the rest of the sentence: *On July 24, 2007, you sent a letter. Your July 24, 2007, letter was informative.*

degrees - Do not capitalize academic degrees when they are spelled out. *He had a master of science* ('s is omitted). Specifically, *his master's was in engineering* ('s is included when replacing degree). Abbreviate degrees when they follow a person's name.

demolish, destroy - Both mean to do away with something completely. Something cannot be partially demolished or destroyed. It is redundant to say totally demolished or totally destroyed.

director - Refer to as *Director Scott J. Nally*. Capitalize *director* only if it immediately precedes name.

division/office - When referring to a division, office, department or program (not section) such as the *Drinking Water Assistance Fund*, should the title be capitalized? If it is a vague reference, use lower case. If it is the official name of the fund or program, capitalize on the first reference and when using the full title. On the second reference, lowercase unless using the full title. For instance: *Ohio has a drinking water assistance fund that finances water improvement projects throughout the state. Ohio EPA's Drinking Water Assistance Fund, managed by the Division of Drinking and Ground Waters, financed the project. The division financed more than 100 projects in the last fiscal year.*

dollars - Use figures and the \$ sign in all except casual references (*Can I borrow a dollar?*) or amounts without a figure (*Dollars are flowing overseas*). For specified amounts, the word takes a singular verb: *He said \$50 is what they want.* For amounts of \$1 million or more, use the \$ and numerals up to two decimal places: *He is worth \$4.35 million.* For amounts less than \$1 million: *\$4, \$25, \$500, \$1,000, \$650,000.*

downgradient - One word.

E

effect, affect - *Effect*, as a verb, means to cause: *He will effect many changes in the company.* *Effect*, as a noun, means result: *The effect was overwhelming.* It was a law of little effect. *Affect* means to influence: *The game will affect the standings.*

e.g., i.e. - *e.g.* stands for the Latin *exempli gratia*, which means for example. To avoid confusion, simply write "*for example*". *i.e.* is an abbreviation for the Latin *id est*. Say "*that is*" to avoid misunderstanding. Insert a comma before and after: *Some problems, for example, pollution, energy shortages or housing, can be solved by technology.*

either - Use it to mean one or the other, not both. Right: *She said to use either door.* Wrong: *There were lions on either side of the door.*

email - Lowercase, no hyphen.

engine, motor - An *engine* develops its own power, usually through internal combustion or the pressure of air, steam or water: *automobile engine, steam engine.* A *motor* receives power from an outside source: *an electric or hydraulic motor.*

enquire, enquiry - The preferred words are *inquire, inquiry.*

ensure, assure, insure - *Ensure* to mean to guarantee something: *Steps were taken to ensure accuracy.* *Assure* to make a person sure of something: *I assure you I will be there.* Use *insure* for references to insurance: *The policy insures his life.*

entitled - A right to do or have something. Do not use it to mean titled. Right: *She was entitled to the promotion.* Wrong: *The publication was entitled "Ohio Integrated Report."*

exceedance - Can also be spelled *exceedence*, but *exceedance* is preferred.

except, accept - *Except* means to *exclude*. *Accept* means to *receive*. *Everyone was there except Bill. I accept your offer.*

F

farther, further - *Farther* refers to physical distance: *He walked farther into the woods.* *Further* refers to an extension of time or degree: *She will look further into the mystery.*

fax - The abbreviation for facsimile. The noun is not capitalized except when it appears on a form where other headings (Address, Phone, Fax, E-mail) are capitalized.

federal - Do not capitalize except when referring to an architectural style or part of a formal name: *the federal government, Federal Express, the Federal Housing Administration.*

fewer, less - In general, use *fewer* for individual items, *less* for bulk or quantity. *Fewer than 10 applicants applied* (individuals). *I had less than \$50 in my pocket* (an amount). But: *I had fewer than 50 \$1 bills in my pocket* (individual items).

flammable, inflammable - avoid using *inflammable* because it has contradictory meanings: “able to burn” and “not able to burn.”

flood plain - Two words.

flood stage - Two words.

floodwaters - One word.

footnotes - A common method of citing sources. Footnotes originally appeared at the bottom of a page, but now usually appear at the end of a chapter or article, making typing and layout easier. Refer to the appendix for more information and examples.

foreword - A page at the beginning of a publication. Not forward.

fractions - Spell out amounts less than one, using hyphens between the words: *one-third, three-fifths.*

fund-raiser - Hyphenate when referring to a person's position or to a social event. *He is a fund-raiser for the organization.*

fund-raising - Hyphenated as a noun and a modifier. *The fund-raising event.*

G

geographic terms and names - Lowercase north, south, east and west and variations when they indicate direction. Capitalize north, south, east, west and similar terms when they refer to regions or Ohio EPA districts: *Northwest Ohio, Southwest District.*

good, well - *Good* is an adjective that means something is as it should be or is better than average: *He is a good pitcher. I feel good.* When used as an adverb, *well* means in a satisfactory manner or skillfully: *She performed well at the recital.*

governor - Refer to as *Governor John R. Kasich.* Lowercase without a name: *the governor of Ohio.* Instead of the governor, always refer to Ohio's governor as *Gov. Kasich* (include name). See **titles**.

ground water - Two words.

H

health department - Capitalize only if referring to a specific health department.

highway patrol - Capitalize if used in the formal name of a police agency: *the Ohio Highway Patrol, the highway patrol.*

his/her - When using these personal pronouns, use *his/her, his* or *her*. You can also use *his or her* (combined). Do not use the plural *they*.

home page - Two words, not capitalized.

hopefully - Means in a hopeful manner. Avoid using in this context: *Hopefully, the fighting will end soon.* Instead, use *we hope* or *I hope*.

hyphen - Hyphens are joiners. Use them to avoid ambiguity or to form a single idea from two or more words. *He re-covered the leaky roof.* Compound modifiers: *100-year flood plain, a well-known man, the landfill was non-compliant.* For hyphenation showing a range: *He received a 10- to 20-year prison sentence.*

I

i.e., e.g. - See *e.g.*, *i.e.*

illegal - Use *illegal* only to mean a violation of the law, not a violation of a contract or rule.

in-depth - Hyphenated.

injuries - They are suffered, not sustained or received.

Internet - Capitalized. The abbreviation, Net is also capitalized. See **World Wide Web**.

intranet - Not capitalized.

it's, its - *It's* is a contraction for *it is* or *it has*: *It's up to you. It's been a long time.* *Its* is the possessive form of the neuter pronoun: *The company lost its assets.* *Its'* is never a proper spelling.

J

judgment - Not judgement.

K

kids, children - Do not use *kids* except in very informal references. When in doubt, use *children*.

L

landfill, landfilling - One word, when used as noun and a verb. *Instead of recycling, the company landfilled the materials.*

lawyer, attorney - A person with a law degree is a lawyer. A person who acts on behalf of another is an attorney. Therefore, a lawyer can be John Smith's attorney or the attorney for John Smith or even an attorney in the Smith case, but attorney should not be used in such references as "a Dayton attorney" or "a patent attorney" or simply "an attorney." When in doubt, use lawyer. Do not abbreviate. Capitalize only when referring to an officeholder's title, such as: *District Attorney Tom Robbins.*

leach field - Two words.

legislators - See **courtesy titles**.

less, fewer - In general, use *fewer* for individual items, *less* for bulk or quantity. *Fewer than 10 applicants applied* (individuals). *I had less than \$50 in my pocket* (an amount). But: *I had fewer than 50 \$1 bills in my pocket* (individual items).

liaison - Commonly misspelled.

listserv - One word, lowercase, no *e* on the end.

local emergency planning committee (LEPC) - Capitalize only if referring to a specific LEPC. See **health department**.

M

me, myself or I - Use *myself* only when you have used *I* earlier in a sentence: *I want to complete that project myself.* You can clear up confusion by eliminating the first reference. You would not say: *The IRS sent a refund check to myself.* You would say: *The IRS sent me a refund check.*

media - A plural noun. *The media were plentiful at the public meeting.*

miles per hour - The abbreviation *mph* (no periods) is acceptable in all references.

million - Use figures in all except casual uses. *The total cost was \$2 million. The population reached 4 million.*

more than, over - *More than* generally refers to quantity: *More than 50 people returned the survey.* *Over* generally refers to spatial relationships: *The dog jumped over the fence.*

most, almost - If you can substitute *almost* for *most* in a sentence, use *almost*.

motor, engine - A *motor* receives power from an outside source: *an electric or hydraulic motor.* An *engine* develops its own power, usually through internal combustion or the pressure of air, steam or water: *automobile engine, steam engine.*

N

nationwide - One word.

news release/news conference - Preferred to press release and press conference since “press” implies only print media.

noncompliance - one word, no hyphen.

non-discrimination statements - Ohio EPA has a responsibility to communicate that it is an equal opportunity employer on all publications. This statement should read: *Ohio EPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer.*

nonpoint - One word.

numerals - Spell out whole numbers below 10; use figures for 10 and above. Avoid starting a sentence with a number. If unavoidable, spell it out. Exceptions: Use figures if combined with million or billion. *The fine was \$1 million. The treatment plant can handle up to 7 million gallons per day.* Use figures in all *percent* instances. *1 percent. 2.5 percent* (use decimals, not fractions). *10 percent.* For amounts less than 1 percent, precede the decimal with a zero. *The chlorine measured 0.5 percent.* Repeat *percent* with each individual figure. *The process will remove 10 percent to 40 percent of the lead.*

O

occurrence - Commonly misspelled.

Ohio EPA - As an acronym, do not precede with the word “the.” Wrong: *the Ohio EPA.* When using the full name, it is acceptable to say the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency. Do not use OEPA. See **Agency**.

online - One word as an adjective or adverb referring to the Internet domain.

on-site - Hyphenate *on-site* when using it as a modifier to a noun. *They conducted an on-site visit.* Off-site also is hyphenated as a modifier.

organization/company/business - See **business/organization/company**.

P

parentheses - The temptation to use parentheses is a clue that a sentence is becoming contorted. Try to write it another way. Use commas or two dashes as alternatives whenever possible. Place a period outside a closing parenthesis if the material inside is not a sentence (*such as this fragment*). (*An independent parenthetical sentence such as this one takes a period before the closing parenthesis.*)

PCBs - No apostrophe needed when making acronyms plural.

percent - One word. Avoid using the % sign. Instead, spell out percentages in text: *Nearly 24 percent of the respondents were women.* Use figures in all instances. *1 percent. 2.5 percent* (use decimals, not fractions). *10 percent.* For amounts less than 1 percent, precede the decimal with a zero. *The chlorine measured 0.5 percent.* Repeat *percent* with each individual figure. *The process will remove 10 percent to 40 percent of the lead.*

permit-to-install, permit-to-operate, permit-to-install and operate - Never capitalize. Context determines whether it should be hyphenated: *Ohio EPA issued a permit-to-install on Oct. 1, 1994. The company obtained a permit to install the facility on Oct. 1, 1994.* Other ways to avoid the term: *installation permit, operating permit.*

pipeline - One word.

policy-maker, policy-making - Hyphenated.

press conference, press release - Use *news conference* and *news release* instead, to include broadcast media in addition to print (press) media.

principal, principle - *Principal* is a noun or adjective meaning someone or something first in rank, authority, importance or degree: *She is the school principal. Money is the principal problem.* *Principle* is a noun that means a fundamental truth, law or motivating force: *They fought for the principle of self-determination.*

punctuation within quotes - Commas and periods always go inside quotation marks. Place other punctuation marks inside where they apply only to the matter being quoted: *John asked, "Did they receive a permit?"* Place marks other than commas and periods outside the quotation marks when they apply to more than just the quoted part: *Did Rachel say, "I'm not interested in the position"? I can't believe he said, "You aren't going to the conference"!* The last two references are rarely used in business writing.

Q

quotation marks - Do not use quotation marks to emphasize a word. Use boldface, underlined or italic type.

R

ranges - The form: *\$12 million to \$14 million*. Not: *\$12 to \$14 million*.

regardless - Not *irregardless*.

representative - See **courtesy titles**.

runoff - One word as a noun. *DSW employees discovered that field runoff was the source of the stream's pollution*. Two words as a verb. *She tried to run off with the keys*.

S

semiannual - See **biannual**.

semimonthly - See **bimonthly**.

senator - See **courtesy titles**.

source water - Two words.

state - Lowercase in most "state of" constructions: *the state of Ohio, the states of Ohio and Indiana*. State should be capitalized when referring to an organization. Right: *She is employed by the State of Ohio. The State of Ohio provided testimony on the bill*. Wrong: *All dogs in the State of Ohio must be licensed*. Or, to eliminate redundancy, just use "Ohio." Example: *All dogs in Ohio must be licensed*.

statehouse - A place where legislators hold sessions. Capitalize all references to a specific statehouse, with or without the name of the state: *The Ohio Statehouse is in Columbus. The governor will visit the Statehouse today*.

statewide - One word.

stationary, stationery - To stand still is to be *stationary*. Writing paper is *stationery*.

storm water - Two words.

streamflow - One word.

subject-verb agreement - Although the subject and verb might not be adjacent, they must agree in number. Right: *Ohio, along with four other states, was upset by the proposal* (Ohio, the subject, was upset). Wrong: *Ohio, along with four other states, were upset by the proposal*.

surface water - Two words. See **ground water**.

T

telephone numbers - Use parentheses around area codes within text. Exception: on letterhead, business cards and other official business correspondence, a vertical line separates the area code from the phone number in accordance with Ohio's branding guidelines. This may not be changed.

that, which - *That* is the defining, or restrictive pronoun; *which* the non-defining or non-restrictive. *The lawn mower that is broken is in the garage* (tells which one). *The lawn mower, which is broken, is in the garage* (adds a fact about the only mower in question).

their, there, they're - *Their* is a possessive pronoun: *She went to their house*. *There* is an adverb indicating direction: *We went there for dinner*. *There* also is used as a pronoun for impersonal constructions in which the real subject follows the verb: *There is no food on the table*. *They're* is a contraction for they are.

then, than - *Then* is an adverb commonly used to express time and order: *He was young then. He took his hat and then left. First comes alpha and then beta*. *Than* is a conjunction used to introduce the second element in a comparison: *A is taller than B*.

times - Use figures except for noon and midnight, which add clarity. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes: *11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3:30 p.m.* Also, use *10 a.m.* instead of *10:00 a.m.*

titles - Capitalize only if the title appears directly before the person's name. Right: *Ohio EPA Director Scott J. Nally* or *Scott J. Nally, director of Ohio EPA.* The exception is President, referring to the *President of the United States*, which is always capitalized.

to, too - *To* has many uses; check a dictionary for a complete listing. Here are a few examples: *He went to the store. This is a key to the house. He gave a toast to her success. Too* means in addition, more than enough, or extremely: *I like football, too. I read too many magazines on the plane. This cake is too delicious!*

toward - Not towards.

U

under way - Two words, except when used in the nautical sense of the word.

upgradient - One word. See **downgradient**.

U.S. EPA - Two words. Note that U.S. is offset with periods.

V

village - Apply the same capitalization principles as specified in the **city** entry.

VIP, VIPs - Acceptable in all references for very important person(s).

volatile - Something that evaporates rapidly. It may or may not be explosive.

W

wastewater - One word.

waterline, water line: One word (*waterline*) for where the water of a creek/stream/lake touches land. *The oil collected along the waterline of the stream.* Two words (*water line*) for a pipe that conveys water. *The village will extend the water line.*

we, us - *We* is a subject pronoun for a group: *We are happy to be here. I can't believe we made it. Us* is used as an indirect object: *Give us the book. She told us about the verdict.*

wetlands - One word.

wellfield - One word.

wellhead - One word.

who, whom - Use *who* when someone is the subject of a sentence, clause or phrase: *The woman who rented the house is responsible. Who is there?* Use *whom* when someone is the object of a verb or preposition: *The woman to whom the room was rented is responsible. Whom do you wish to see?*

who's, whose - *Who's* is a contraction for "who is" or "who has," not a possessive: *Who's there? Who's taken this class?* *Whose* is the possessive: *I do not know whose coat it is.*

workday, workweek - One word.

World Wide Web - Capitalized. Second references are not capitalized. Common uses: website; webpage; webcast; webmaster. Note that *web manager* is two words. When referring to a Web site that begins with "www", do not include *http://*. *For more information, go to www.epa.ohio.gov. To begin the application process, go to <https://ebiz.epa.ohio.gov/login.jsp>. See **email**.*

Y

yearlong - One word.

years - Use figures, without commas: *1999*. Use an *s* without an apostrophe to indicate spans of decades or centuries: *the 1990s*. *Years* are the exception to the general rule in numerals that a figure is not used to start a sentence. *1999 marked the first full year of the Central Office at the Lazarus Government Center.*

your, you're - *Your* is a possessive adjective which functions as a pronoun: *your dog, your idea, your coat.* *You're* is a contraction of *you are*: *You're driving me crazy. You're the new president.*

Appendix

Helpful References

Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry Glossary of Terms - www.atsdr.cdc.gov/glossary.html

Chicago Manual of Style's Chicago-Style Citation Quick Guide - www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Chicago Manual of Style Online - www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html

dictionary.com - <http://dictionary.reference.com/>

Energy Information Administration Energy Glossary - www.eia.doe.gov/glossary/

Geology and Earth Science Terms and Definitions from geology.com - <http://geology.com/geology-dictionary.shtml>

Glossary of Legal Terms - www.id.uscourts.gov/glossary.htm

Groundwater Foundation Groundwater Glossary - www.groundwater.org/gi/gwglossary.html

McGraw-Hill Access Science Encyclopedia of Science & Technology Online - www.accessscience.com/

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service Glossary - www.weather.gov/glossary/

U.S. EPA

- Ag101 Glossary - www.epa.gov/agriculture/ag101/glossary.html
- Clean Energy Glossary - www.epa.gov/cleanenergy/energy-and-you/glossary.html
- Drinking Water Glossary - <http://water.epa.gov/drink/resources/glossary.cfm>
- Terms of Environment: Glossary, Abbreviations and Acronyms - www.epa.gov/OCEPATERMS/

U.S.G.S.

- Geologic Glossary - www2.nature.nps.gov/geology/usgsnps/misc/glossaryAtoC.html
 - Water Science Glossary of Terms - <http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/dictionary.html>
-

Bibliography Guidelines

Book

Author(s). Publication Year. *Full Title* (in italics). Volume Number. Edition. City of Publication. Publisher.

Example:

Parker, Roger C. 1993. *Looking Good in Print: A Guide to Basic Design for Desktop Publishing*. Third Edition. Chapel Hill: Ventana Press, Inc.

Journal or Magazine Article

Author(s). Publication Year. "Full Title of Article (in quotation marks)." *Name of Journal or Magazine* (in italics), volume, month or quarter of publication (in parenthesis), and pages.

Example:

Tanzer, Andrew. 2006. "Profiting in Biofuels." *Kiplinger's Personal Finance: Your Guide to Making Money Work* (November), 66-67.

Electronic Media

Author(s). Date. Title. Name of Publication (in italics). Means of Retrieving the Information.

Examples:

Kimball, Lee. 1996. *Web Guide for Dummies*. Key Word: dummies www.dummies.com.

Ohio Department of Natural Resources. 2009. *EarthCacheGPS: Using technology to explore the outdoors*. www.dnr.state.oh.us/tabid/22203/default.aspx.

Unpublished material

Author(s). " Title (in quotation marks)." As much as history as available.

Examples:

Rusk, Joan, and Elaine Yardley. 1980. "The Diseases of the Bighorn Sheep." Paper presented at annual meeting of the Bighorn Sheep Society, Los Angeles, 24-26 May.

Chick, Kelley. 2009. "Greenversations at a Glance: Blogging at EPA." PowerPoint presented as part of training for U.S. EPA Web writers and reviewers.

Public Documents

Country, State, County or Other Government Division. *Full Title* (in italics). Complete publication information.

Examples:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. *The Clean Water Act After 37 Years: Recommitting to the Protection of the Nation's Waters*. Testimony of Lisa P. Jackson, Administrator. Before the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure United States House of Representatives. October 15, 2009.

Ohio. *Ohio Law Governing Ground Water Ownership and Allocation*. Published in Members Only: An informational brief prepared for members of the Ohio General Assembly by the Legislative Service Commission staff. Authors: LSC Staff Attorneys Jill Rowland and Eric Vendel. Reviewed by Marcia A. Cooper, Division Chief.

Citation Guidelines

Citations allow you to identify the source of information within the text. Methods vary depending on the technical field and type of publication. Here are some guidelines from FranklinCovey that you may find helpful. For details, see the FranklinCovey Style Guide.

- Enclose the author's name and date of publication in parenthesis following the material quoted or the ideas referred to. For example, "One critic called the whole dispute a 'galaxy of confusion' (Jameson 1976)."
- Use a consistent format.
- Include a full alphabetized list of cited sources at the end of each article or chapter.

Footnote Guidelines

Footnotes are a common method of citing sources. Originally appearing at the bottom of a page, many footnotes now appear at the end of the chapter or article. Consider using the automatic footnote function of your computer software, if available. Here are some guidelines from FranklinCovey that you may find helpful. For details, see the FranklinCovey Style Guide.

- Use superscript (raised) Arabic numerals immediately following a quotation or paraphrase to indicate that the quotation or paraphrase has a footnote.
 - In the first footnote to a source, include the author or authors, the full title, complete publishing information and the pages being referred to.
 - In the second and subsequent references, make footnotes brief. Generally, include only the author's last name and the page number or the material referred to.
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