STYLE GUIDE ENGLISH

INTRODUCTION

The following style sheet has been created based on the following external style guides. It is recommended that you use this document as a quick reference sheet and refer to the appropriate existing style guides for more information.

American English: The Chicago Manual of Style (16th Edition)
British English: New Oxford Style Manual (Third Edition)

Unsure of the correct spelling? Refer to the following (online) dictionaries, in order of preference, depending on which style of English you are conforming to.
American English: Merriam-Webster's Dictionary; Dictionary.com
British English: Oxford Dictionaries; Collins English Dictionary

Please note: this document has been prepared in a way that American English issues are consistent with The Chicago Manual of Style recommendations, while British English issues are consistent with the New Oxford Style Manual recommendations.

PUNCTUATION

Apostrophes	*American English:* • An apostrophe and *s* are generally used with nouns ending *s*, *x*, or *z*, unless pronunciation would be hampered. • For possessive plural nouns, use an apostrophe without the *s*, unless the plural noun itself doesn't end in *s*. • With joint ownership, give the possessive form to the final name only, e.g., *Jack and Jill's adventure*.	*British English:* • Same as in American English; however, it is recommended to rearrange the sentence if possible. • Same as in American English. • Same as in American English.
Colons	*American English:* • Only capitalize the first word after a colon if it begins a complete sentence or is a proper noun. • Use a colon between the hour and minutes when indicating time, e.g., *5:22 a.m.*	*British English:* • Only capitalise the first word after a colon if it is a proper noun. • Use a colon between the hour and minutes when indicating 24-hour time eg *11:30am*.
Commas	*American English:* • Always use the Oxford (serial) comma, e.g., *I love rabbits, cats, and dogs*. • Use commas before conjunctions like *and*, *but,* and *for* when they connect independent clauses. • Use a comma to end a quote if followed by an attribution. In such cases, always place the comma before the closing quotation mark, e.g., *"Don't worry," said Phil*. • Use a comma on either side of *e.g.* and *i.e.*	*British English:* • Only use the Oxford comma if it helps to prevent ambiguity eg *I love peanut butter and jelly, ham and cheese, and tuna sandwiches.* • Same as in American English. • The placement of the comma in relation to the closing quotation mark is dependent on whether the comma is part of the quote eg *'Don't worry', said Phil*. • Never place a comma on either side of *eg* and *ie*.
Ellipses	*American English:*	*British English:*

	• Place a space on either side of an ellipsis, e.g., *If only … Never mind.*	• Only place a space after an ellipsis if used to indicate a pause for thought eg *If only… Never mind*
Em dashes These are the longest form of dashes.	*American English:* • Use em dashes like you would use parentheses—to add information • Never have a space separating an em dash from the surrounding words.	*British English:* • Not used in British English.
En dashes These are longer than hyphens but shorter than em dashes.	*American English:* • Use an en dash between compound words to convey a distinction in sense, such as when *and* or *to* is implied, *e.g., import–export business.* • Use an en dash between ranges, e.g., *read chapters 8–12*. • Never have a space separating an en dash from the surrounding words.	*British English:* • When using en dashes like you would use parentheses, have spaces surrounding the dash – like so. • Same as in American English. • Don't have a space around an en dash when used between ranges and between compound words to convey a distinction in sense eg *1950–1958; import–export business.*
Hyphens	*American English:* • Use hyphens to form compound terms*, e.g., merry-go-round*. • Don't use a hyphen between a prefix and the root word unless doing so results in a double consonant or double vowel; however, double *e* in words with the prefix *re*– are okay, e.g., *subcontractor; pre-eminent; reeducate.* • Use a hyphen between a prefix and the root word if the meaning could be misunderstood, *e.g., re-create*. • Always use a hyphen between the prefix self– and its root word.	*British English:* • Use hyphens to form compound terms, except in the case of compound nouns eg *merry-go-round; school bus*. • Don't use a hyphen between a prefix and the root word unless doing so results in a double consonant or double vowel eg *re-educate*. • Same as in American English. • Use a hyphen between a prefix and a proper noun, number, or date eg *pre-1950s*. • Use a hyphen between numbers when they are spelt out eg *twenty-seven*.
Parentheses Known as "round brackets" in British English	*American English:* • Introduce abbreviations and acronyms parenthetically at their first use, unless the shortened version is more common. • Use parentheses to indicate the possibility of a noun being either singular or plural, *e.g., author(s)*.	*British English:* • Same as in American English. • The placement of a comma or full stop in relation to the closing bracket is dependent on whether the complete sentence is in brackets eg *She excelled at maths. (I struggled with it.)*
Periods Known as "full stops" in British English	*American English:* • Use periods within abbreviations, unless indicating news and media services, e.g., *U.S.A.; CNN*. • Abbreviations such as *Mrs.*, *Mr.*, *a.m.*, and *p.m.* are followed by a period. • Never use periods within acronyms, e.g., *NATO*. • Always place the period before the closing quotation mark, regardless of whether the period is part of the	*British English:* • Never use full stops within abbreviations eg *USA; UK*. • Abbreviations such as *Mrs*, *Mr*, *am* and *pm* are not followed by a full stop. • Same as in American English. • The placement of the full stop in relation to the closing quotation mark is dependent on whether the full stop is part of the quote eg *as I always say, 'never say never'.*

	quote, e.g., *as I always say, "never say never."*	
Semicolons	*American English:* • Use semicolons in complicated lists (where a comma is already used in one or more list items), e.g., *I traveled to Waco, Texas; Miami, Florida; and Denver, Colorado.*	*British English:* • Same as in American English.
Quotation marks	*American English:* • Use double quotation marks as the primary form, e.g., *"Never say never."* • At the end of quotes, commas and periods are always placed before the closing quotation marks, regardless of whether they are part of the quoted material, e.g., *as I always say, "never say never."* • If additional quotation marks are needed within already quoted material (called *nesting*), alternate between double and single quotation marks as needed. In such cases, ensure there is a space between the different quotation marks, e.g., *"Jenny said 'yes' when I asked her on a date."*	*British English:* • Use single quotation marks as the primary form eg *'Never say never.'* • At the end of quotes, commas and full stops are placed according to whether they are part of the quotation eg *as I always say, 'never say never'.* • If additional quotation marks are needed within already quoted material (called *nesting*), alternate between single and double quotation marks as needed. In such cases, ensure there is a space between the different quotation marks eg *'Jenny said "yes" when I asked her on a date.'*

NUMBERS

General	*American English:* • Use a comma in numerals of four or more digits, except in the case of page numbers, e.g., *there are 1,842 pages; turn to page 1842.* • Use an en dash between ranges, e.g., *read chapters 8–12.* • For general amounts, spell out all unless they're years, dates, or are truly awkward to spell out. • Spell out decades of life, e.g., *thirties*. • Spell out words in fractions if decimal notation isn't required, unless the use of numerals makes the information easier to grasp.	*British English:* • Same as in American English. • Same as in American English. • Spell out numbers up to and including *ten*. Use figures for numbers above *ten*. • Spell out ordinal numbers up to and including *tenth*. Use figures and the appropriate suffixes for ordinal numbers above *tenth*. In such cases, never use superscript eg *18th*.
Times	*American English:* • Always spell out times of day that are even, half, and quarter hours, e.g., *seven thirty; seven fifteen.* • Always spell out the hour of the day when preceding *o'clock,* e.g., *seven o'clock*. • Use a colon between the hour and minutes when indicating time, e.g., *5:22 a.m.*	*British English:* • Never spell out times of day, except for *noon* and *midnight,* which should be used instead of *12*. • Never use spaces between the number and the *am/pm* eg *5am*. • When using the 12-hour clock, place a full stop between the hour and minutes. Also avoid the additional *.00* for times on the hour eg *4.30pm.*

		• When using the 24-hour clock, place a colon between the hour and minutes, and omit the *am*/*pm* eg *16:30.*
Dates	*American English:* • Always place the month before the date, e.g., *April 13.*	*British English:* • Always place the date before the month eg *13 April.* • Never use the suffix *-th* with dates, and never precede the number with *the* (see above).
Percentages	*American English:* • Spell out the numeric percentage and the word *percent*, e.g., *seven percent.*	*British English:* • Use figures and the percentage symbol (*%*) eg *7%.*

SPELLING

American English:	*British English:*
• –or (e.g., *color*) • –ize (e.g., *realize*) • –ed (e.g., *learned*) • –l (e.g., *labeled*) • –er (eg *center*) • –nse (e.g., *defense*) • Typically delete the first vowel in instances of –oe and –ae (e.g., *estrogen, pediatrics*).	• –our (eg *colour*) • –ise (eg *realise*) • –t (eg *learnt*) • –ll (eg *labelled*) • –re (e.g., *centre*) • –nce (eg *defence*) • Okay to use –oe and –ae (eg *oestrogen, paediatrics*)

OTHER

Abbreviations	*American English:* • Introduce abbreviations parenthetically at their first use, unless the shortened version is more common, e.g., *the Federal Aviation Administration (F.A.A.)* • Use periods within abbreviations, unless indicating news and media services, e.g., *U.S.A.; CNN.* • Abbreviations such as *Mrs.*, *Mr.*, *a.m.*, and *p.m.* are followed by a period. • Use a comma on either side of *e.g.* and *i.e.*	*British English:* • Same as in American English. • Never use full stops within abbreviations eg *USA*. • Abbreviations such as *Mrs*, *Mr*, *am* and *pm* are not followed by a full stop. • Never place a comma on either side of *eg* and *ie.*
Acronyms	*American English:* • Introduce acronyms parenthetically at their first use, unless the shortened version is more common. • Never use periods within acronyms, e.g., *NATO.* • Acronyms are typically uppercase if comprised of fewer than five letters, e.g., *NATO; Oxfam.*	*British English:* • Same as in American English. • Same as in American English. • Acronyms are written in uppercase.
Capitalization	*American English:* • Only capitalize the first word after a colon if it begins a complete sentence or is a proper noun, e.g., *we need two things: food and water;*	*British English:* • Only capitalise the first word after a colon if it is a proper noun.

	I don't know what to do: Should I stay or should I go?	
<u>Headings</u>	<u>*American English:*</u> <u>*[PLEASE NOTE, on the MLTS Proofreading Test we will not consider uncapitalized headings to be an error.]*</u> • In almost all cases, capitalize all words in a heading, except for prepositions (see below). • In almost all cases, capitalize all prepositions with more than four letters. Also capitalize prepositions if they are the first or last word of a heading, e.g., *Breaking News: Guards Swarm on Local Town, Locate Smith.*	<u>*British English:*</u> • Only capitalise the first word and any proper nouns eg *Breaking news: Guards swarm on local town, locate Smith.*

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