

# Style Guide

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# Preface

For those unfamiliar with style guides, a style guide acts as a set of writing guidelines for a particular organization. That way, all published documents within an organization look and feel the same to those who use them—the organization’s style. In our case, the advice in this guide will help you write and design documents similarly so that all our documents retain [REDACTED] branding.

Please note that the advice in this style guide is for internal use only, except for the “Job Postings” section. For advice on writing documents that will be publicly published, please consult your supervisor or relevant project lead for the work you are creating.

## What the Style Guide is Based On

This style guide is based on the seventeenth edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* (CMS). It is available both as a book and online. You can email Makay W. to request permission to borrow a hardcopy. This style guide does not correct typos and misuses of grammar. It is meant to be used as a guideline for writing in the style of our organization. If there are any remaining questions that this guide does not answer, they can be found in CMS.

## How to Use the Guide

The style guide is organized into groups based on their relevance to each other. Use the table of contents and the index to find specific information. Alternatively, skim through the headings to find the topic you are interested in.

## What Is (and Is Not) Included in This Guide

This guide contains information about jargon, document formatting, grammar, punctuation, presentations, job postings, and forms. There are no instructions on how to correct “bad” writing such as typos. The purpose of this document is to help professionals write documents that conform to [REDACTED] overall style.

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# Jargon

This section defines brand terms, especially those that need clarifying. Information about how to communicate career-specific terms to those outside of your specialty are also included. If you would like to add a term, request access to edit or email Makay W. with the terms you would like to add. Please include the term definition and explanation in the email.

## Terms Defined

Terms are listed in alphabetical order.

[Redacted content]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[Redacted]

**Communicating Terms**

Remember that other departments outside of your specialization may not be familiar with the terms that your specialization uses. When communicating with other departments about information that is specific to your career, define these terms when the term is necessary for communication. Otherwise, rephrase the term so that it is explanatory without using the term itself.

Example 1: Defining a Term for Another Department

From Human Resources:

Hi everyone,

Next week’s recert (xx/xx) will cover sensory grounding techniques—interventions that help students in a high state of sensory stress return to a neutral state. This recert will be held online only at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. Don’t forget to submit your attendance form for credit.

See you then,

Human Resources

Example 2: Communicating Without Using a Specialized Term

In this example, a diagnosis of vitamin deficiency anemia is being explained without medical terminology. You would not want to simply say that “Student Name has vitamin deficiency anemia” without defining what vitamin deficiency anemia is and explaining the relevant implications.

[Redacted]



# Document Formatting

This section covers the preferred settings for all documents except for forms. Please refer to the “Forms” section on page 17 for formatting guidelines for forms.

## Fonts

Arial and Calibri are the preferred fonts for body text and headings. Most of our documents are held and used digitally. These fonts, aside from being the most widely used, are also screen-friendly.

For documents that will be used as a hardcopy, however, please change the body text font to Garamond or Cambria. These are easier to read for hardcopy documents. Do keep titles, headings, and subheadings for hardcopy documents in Calibri or Arial. Calibri and Arial are more recognizable at a glance and suit headings better.

In Summary:

Font Use	Font Choices	
Headings and Subheadings (Digital and Hardcopy)	Arial <b>Arial</b> <i>Arial</i>	Calibri <b>Calibri</b> <i>Calibri</i>
Digital Body Text	Arial <b>Arial</b> <i>Arial</i>	Calibri <b>Calibri</b> <i>Calibri</i>
Hardcopy Body Text	Garamond <b>Garamond</b> <i>Garamond</i>	Cambria <b>Cambria</b> <i>Cambria</i>

Figure 1. Table Showing Font Use and Font Choices

## Font Size

Generally, as heading levels decrease, make the next lowest heading level two points smaller than the previous level. However, a four point difference between the title size and the first heading level size is preferred. For longer documents that will need several levels of headings and subheadings, please see “Titles, Headings, and Subheadings” on page 6 for formatting guidelines.

Guidelines:

- Document Titles: 18 or 24 point font.
- Headings: 14 or 16 point font.
- Subheadings: All subheadings are the same point size as the body text or 12 to 14 point font.
- Body Text: 10 to 12 point font. 12 point font is preferred, but longer documents may have smaller text.
- Captions and Footnotes: 10 or 11 point font.

## Font Consistency

For consistency, use only one font for the whole document or use one font for the body text and another for the headings and subheadings. Make sure that all headings share the same formatting and that the body text is in the same font and size throughout.

## Typography

This section covers how to use boldface, italics, all caps, and underlining.

### Boldface, Italics, All Caps, and Underlining

Using underlining for emphasis is not preferred. Underlining cuts through letters such as “p” and “q” and is more difficult to read. Boldface is the preferred way to emphasize information. Avoid using bold and italics together. The combined effect is not any more emphasized than it would be with either bold or italics by itself. It is also more difficult to read.

Also, avoid overusing any of these alterations in the body text. Too much use of bolding and italics will decrease the impact on the document.

Examples:

***Avoid using bold, italics, and underlining together.***

***Also, avoid using bold and italics together.***

### Options for Emphasizing Text

1. Bold information and/or make the font size bigger by two points. Again, use this for emphasis sparingly. Otherwise, the impact of the formatting will be decreased.
2. Set apart important information with a first level formatted heading such as “**Important.**”
3. For single sentences that need to be emphasized, distinguish the sentence by giving it its own line of text with one space above and below.

For Example:

This is the previous paragraph. This is the previous paragraph. This is the previous paragraph. This is the previous paragraph. This is the previous paragraph. This is the previous paragraph.

This line of text is the important sentence that needs to be distinguished.

This is the next paragraph. This is the next paragraph. This is the next paragraph. This is the next paragraph. This is the next paragraph. This is the next paragraph.

## Titles, Headings, and Subheadings

Headings and first and second level headings should be distinguishable from each other by two points each. However, titles and first level headings should have a four point font difference. One space separates the last sentence of the previous section from the next heading.

Guidelines:

- Titles are bolded, centered, and set in either 18 or 24 point font.
- First level headings are bolded, left aligned, and set in either 14 or 16 point font.
- Second level headings are bolded, left aligned, and set in the same font size as the body text.
- Third level headings are italicized, left aligned, and set in the same font size as the body text.
- Fourth level headings and beyond are indented one half inch, italicized, set in the same font size as the body text, and distinguished by a Roman numeral for each continuing heading level. All accompanying text is left aligned with the roman numeral and there is no space between the text and the heading.

For Example:

**Title** - 18 point font

**Heading Level 1** - 14 point font

**Heading Level 2** - 12 point font

*Heading Level 3* - 12 point font

*i. Heading Level 4+*: 12 point font

Text for heading levels 4+. Text for heading levels 4+. Text for heading levels 4+. Text for heading levels 4+. Text for heading levels 4+. Text for heading levels 4+.

## Bulleted and Numbered Lists

Use bulleted lists for non-sequential information and numbered lists for sequential or hierarchical information. For both bullets and lists, only include a period at the end of a bullet or list entry if the information is a complete sentence. Otherwise, default to entries that have no ending punctuation.

Example: For Both Bulleted and Numbered Lists

No Punctuation:

- Thing One
- Thing Two
- Thing Three

Punctuation:

- This is a complete sentence.
- This is a complete sentence.
- This is a complete sentence.

### Capitalization in Lists

The first letter of every word in any list can either be capitalized or only the first letter of the first word in an entry can be capitalized. Either way, choose only one option for consistency.

Example:

All Capitalized:

- Thing One
- Thing Two
- Thing Three

Traditional Capitalization:

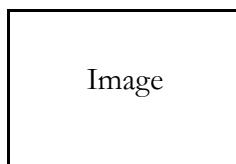
- Thing one
- Thing two
- Thing three

### Images and Captions

Images are centered with one space above and below the image with its caption (if necessary). Captions are in ten point font, italicized, and centered to the image with no space between the image and its caption.

Example:

Previous paragraph.



*Caption*

Next Paragraph.

### Indentations and Line and Paragraph Spacing

Documents are single spaced and left aligned with one space between paragraphs. One space also separates sections from one another. There is no space between a heading and its first paragraph.

Paragraphs are left aligned without any indentation. There is no indentation after a heading or subheading and the following paragraph. Fourth level headings and beyond are indented by a half inch. Refer to “Titles, Headings, and Subheadings” on page 6 for heading formatting guidelines.

Example:

Last paragraph of the above section.

**Therapy** (heading level one, bolded, and set in 14 point font)

First paragraph of this section in 12 point font.

Second paragraph of this section.

Any other paragraphs in this section follow the same formatting as the second paragraph.

**Next Section Heading** (formatted the same as previous first level heading)

## Margins

Documents are set to one inch margins on all sides as the preferred setting.

## Document Dimensions

Both hardcopy and digital documents are printed and seen on the standard 8.5 x 11 inch setting.

## Alignment

Document titles, pictures, and picture captions are centered. All other information is left aligned.

## Citations

APA citations are preferred for all departments as most departments use APA citation as the standard form in their careers. References are listed in alphabetical order. The title is centered, bolded, and set in the same font size as the body text. The references are set in the same font and font size as the main body text. One space separates the first reference from the title as well as reference from reference. The citation page should be formatted as shown below:

### References

The first reference is listed like so and, if it takes more than one line, any following lines are indented a half inch with a hanging indent.

Additional references follow the same format as above. Additional references follow the same format as above.

### APA Citation Format

For more information on APA citations not included in the examples below, please visit: [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/general\\_format.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html). The formatting below comes from scribbr.com.

#### *Books*

Author's last name, Initials. (Year). *Book title in italics* (Editor or translator initials, Last name, Ed. or Trans.) (X edition abbreviated as ed.). Publisher.

#### *Articles*

Author's last name, Initials. (Year). Title of article. *Journal name in italics*, Volume (Issue), page number or page-page. <https://doi.org/DOI>

#### *Websites*

Author's last name, Initials. (Year, month day of publication). *Title of work in italics*. Website name. <https://URL>

## Grammar

For proper grammar, a complete sentence generally follows the standard subject, verb, object (noun being acted on) sentence structure. Paragraphs and whole documents should be structured so that consecutive sentences in a paragraph build on the paragraph's main idea and consecutive paragraphs build on the document's main idea. Checking to make sure that each sentence or paragraph supports the previous and following sentence or paragraph will help you identify irrelevant or out-of-order information.

### Sentence Style

The average sentence length is 10-15 words. Generally, keep sentences brief by being conscious of how descriptive phrases and words are used. Avoid using too many long sentences in a row and split longer sentences into two short sentences. A mix of longer and shorter sentences are preferred as the variety is easier to read.

Examples: Making Sentences More Brief

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

### Paragraph Style

Paragraphs of 3-5 sentences are preferred. Paragraphs are single spaced and left aligned with no indentation in paragraphs. See "Indentations and Line and Paragraph Spacing" on page 8.

### Active and Passive Voice

Active sentences are preferred as active sentences give more information about "who," reduce wordiness, and help clarity by avoiding ambiguity. Active voice sentences are those that tell who is performing an action while passive sentences omit the performer. Passive sentences can be easily restructured into the active voice with a little rewording and clarification on who is doing an action.

Examples: Passive Sentences into Active Sentences

Passive Sentence: "Damage has been spotted on several tables and chairs in the cafeteria as of late."

This sentence is passive because it does not tell who damaged the tables and chairs.

Active Sentence: "Lately, the residents have damaged tables and chairs in the cafeteria."

Passive Sentence: "Since a new law has been passed, the next training will be on policies."

This sentence is passive because it does not tell who passed the law.

Active Sentence: "The state passed a new law so our next training will cover our updated policies."

# Punctuation

This guide does not cover punctuation for errors such as typos. Rather, this punctuation section covers punctuation guidelines for writing in [REDACTED] style. For information on typo-related errors, consult the seventeenth edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Email Makay W. for a hardcopy.

## Hyphens

Where a word is acceptable in either the hyphenated or non-hyphenated form, the non-hyphenated form is preferred. As a general rule, compound adjectives (like blue-gray sky) that come before the noun they describe are hyphenated.

Examples: Compound Adjectives

- Brand-specific terms
- Company-wide retreat
- In-the-moment decision

## Apostrophes

Example: [REDACTED]

## Colons

A complete sentence should follow a colon when introducing a list in a sentence, a bulleted list, or a numbered list. Colons do not need a complete sentence when used as a label to introduce lists.

Example: Complete Sentences and Colons

“The following list shows qualifications for admission into the program: qualification, qualification, qualification, and qualification.”

Do not: “Qualifications are the following: qualification, qualification, and qualification.”  
This is an incomplete sentence because “following” is an adjective that is missing the noun it describes.

Example: Complete Sentences and Bulleted and Numbered Lists

“The following list shows qualifications for admission into the program:

- Qualification
- Qualification
- Qualification

“The following list shows qualifications for admission into the program:

1. Qualification
2. Qualification
3. Qualification

Example: Colons as Labels or Headings





# Presentation Guidelines

This section covers the style guidelines for formatting presentations.

## Alignment

Text on presentation slides should be left aligned. There should be a strong visual line from top to bottom of the text. This makes it easier to read.

<sup>1</sup>Example:

Redacted  
*Figure 2. Example of Good Presentation Alignment*

## Design Concepts

Make sure there is good contrast between design colors and text. For example, use a dark font on a light background or a light font on a dark background.

Example of Dark Text on a White Background:

- Commenced on January 20, 1942
- Attendees used coded language
- Discussed forced sterilization
- Examined “humane” methods for mass genocide

*Figure 3. Example of Dark Text on a White Background*

## Headings

Headings should be in sentence case in sans serif font. Use a different color for the headers. Subheadings should be in a separate color. Both are underlined below.

Example:

Redacted  
*Figure 4. Example of Proper Heading Use*

---

<sup>1</sup> Presentation by [REDACTED]

## Notes

Notes that give more information on a topic are encouraged for shared presentations. For easier reading, put notes in a bulleted list.

Example:

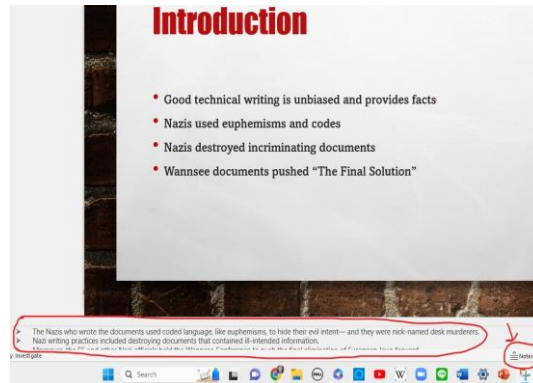


Figure 5. Example of Notes on the Bottom of a Slide

## Punctuation for Slides

Use colons before a list. If ending a sentence in a list with a period (or not), do so consistently throughout all the slides. Be uniform with all punctuation.

## Spacing

Double space between headings and the body of text. Use multiple spacing between body text (see an example above under “Headings”).

## The Number of Words Per Line

Each sentence should be five words or less.

<sup>2</sup>Example:

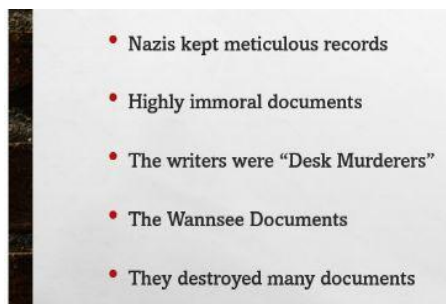



Figure 6. Example of the Correct Number of Words Per Line

## The Number of Lines Per Slide

Each slide should have at most five sentences. It is better to have more slides with less text on each slide than text-heavy slides (see picture under “The Number of Words Per Line”).

<sup>2</sup> Diana S. Lujan, “Wolves in Sheep’s Clothing.”

## Forms

This section gives advice on how to write forms in  style as well as how to format forms.

### Advice on Plain Language

Legal forms should limit jargon regarding instructions that require a person to sign the document after reading it.

Example: Too Much Jargon

“By signing below, you indicate agreement with the requirements of state law 5.126 as indicated.”

Example: Plain Language

“By signing below, you agree to our company's expectations and to uphold the laws covered above.”

### Appearance

Forms should have a white background with black text. Dark backgrounds with white text are hard to read. If there is more than one page, page numbers should be included. The font size and font should be consistent throughout the form.

Example:

Redacted

*Figure 7. Example of a Form with Good Appearance (Black Font on a White Background)*

Do not put a dark background behind the text:

Redacted

*Figure 8. Circled Examples of Dark Background Behind Text.*

### Dates

Ensure there is a line to write the current date to the right of the signature line and give plenty of writing room.

Example:

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Ease of Use

Make the text a larger or different font: The text should be clear and easy to read in a font with adequate space between the letters.

Example:

Large and easy to read vs. tiny and impossible to read.

## Kerning

Kerning is the careful attention to the amount of space between letters (CMS 983).

Examples:

**Bad:**



**Good:**



Figure 9. Examples of good and bad kerning.

## Section Headings

Bold headings and subheadings. Do not underline any text and avoid all caps. Make the font for the headings larger than the subheadings and body text.

Examples:

Do:

- **Heading**
- **Subheading**

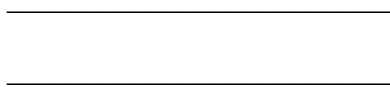
Don't:

- Underline
- **ALL CAPITALS**

## Signature Space

The signature and date line at the bottom of each form should be wide enough to accommodate every type of autograph.

Example of Good Line Width:



Example of Good Line Length: \_\_\_\_\_

## Spacing and Line Width

The width between each writing line should be spaced so that the document is uniform in appearance. There should be plenty of room for people to write. Extra line space should be available on each form.

Example of a Form with Enough Space and Line Width:

Redacted

Figure 10. Example of a Form With Enough Space and Line Width

## Tables

Titles are capitalized and bolded. Each column should have a header.

Example:

Redacted

*Figure 11. Example of a Table with the Title in the Correct Format*

## Job Postings

This section is about job postings as they should appear online. Every job posting should follow the guidelines below.

### Fonts

Arial or Calibri are the preferred fonts for both body text and headings if the job posting site allows for font choice. Job postings are advertised digitally and these fonts are screen-friendly for readers.

### Font Size

Job posting titles should have 18 or 24 point font.

### Font Consistency

For consistency, use one for the body text and another for the headings and subheadings. Ensure that all headings have the same formatting and that the body text is in the same font and size throughout.

### Postings

Every posting should be single-spaced and left aligned with one space between paragraphs. One space also separates sections from one another. There is no space between a heading and its first paragraph. Paragraphs are left aligned without any indentation. There is no indentation after a heading or subheading and the following section.

Example:

### Position Summary

Prepares and cooks meals and snacks for students and staff at a 70+ bed 24/7 residential treatment center for adolescents. Job duties may include cooking, food preparation, serving, menu planning, and dishwashing. Experience is preferred but not required.

## Next Section Heading

### Margins

Documents are set to one-inch margins on all sides as the preferred setting if the job posting site allows.

### Alignment

Document titles, pictures, and picture captions are centered. All other information is left aligned.

### Bulleted and Numbered Lists

Bulleted and numbered lists are appropriate for job postings. However, use bullets for non-sequential information and numbered lists for sequential or hierarchical information. For both bullets and lists, only include a period at the end of a bullet or list entry if the information is a complete sentence. Otherwise, default to entries that have no ending punctuation.

Example: For Both Bulleted and Numbered Lists

No Punctuation:

- Thing One
- Thing Two
- Thing Three

Punctuation:

- This is a complete sentence.
- This is a complete sentence.
- This is a complete sentence.

### *Capitalization in Lists*

Choose only one of the capitalization options below for consistency.

Example:

All Capitalized:

- Thing One
- Thing Two
- Thing Three

Traditional Capitalization:

- Thing one is blue
- Thing two is red
- Thing three is green

### Job Description Title

The job description title should have only the first letters of each word capitalized in either Arial or Calibri and bolded. In addition, there should be a colon before the word that describes which area of the company needs to hire employees.

Example:

**Job Description: Kitchen**

### Job Description Headings

Job description headings should not be in all caps. Only the first letter of each word should be capitalized.

Example:

**Position Summary**

### Qualifications

Under qualifications, list each type in a bullet point format. Be consistent with punctuation.

Example:

- High school diploma or equivalent is required.
- Food handlers permit required (may be obtained after hire).
- Must possess a current certificate for cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid. We will provide in-house CPR training if the candidate needs to certify.

### Job Types and Benefits

The description of different types of jobs and benefits should be listed in bullet points. This goes for all job descriptions.

Example:

#### **Benefits:**

- 401(k)
- Dental insurance
- Health insurance
- Paid sick time
- Paid time off
- Referral program

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Line Width

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