

LBJ Student Publishing Guide

Chapter 1. Rules of Usage

This section of the LBJ Student Publishing Guide provides rules and examples related to capitalization, punctuation, numbers, and other elements of language and style. It is intended to provide a basis for consistent usage throughout PRP reports to be published in the LBJ School's series. For the user's convenience, the topics are arranged alphabetically.

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Acronyms

Many government agencies, unions, and other organizations are referred to by the initials of their full names with periods omitted. Spell out the name in full the first time it appears in the text, with the acronym in parentheses immediately after. Thereafter, the acronym may be used alone.

Example:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was directed to establish maximum levels for contaminants in water. A project was conducted last year to study water-related issues for the EPA.

When the acronym refers to a title in a foreign language, if possible give the title in that language (including accents) and its English translation or an explanatory phrase in English.

Examples:

Sistema Aduanero de Automatización Integral (SAAI—Integrated Customs Automation System) has improved...

Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México (FNM), the Mexican national railway, runs between...

The National Railway of Mexico (FNM—Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México) runs...

Whether to use “the” before an acronym that is used as a noun depends on whether the acronym is read as a series of letters or as a neologism (coined word).

Examples:

The IRS established...

NATO established...

Whether to use “a” or “an” when an acronym is used as an adjective depends on the sound of the first letter if the acronym is read as a series of letters.

Examples:

A TEA report...

An NAACP report... (but a NATO report)

Note that an acronym is capitalized even when the words it represents are lowercased:

gross national product (GNP)

If a report or paper contains a large number of acronyms, make a list of these, each followed by the full name of the entity, so that an alphabetical list of acronyms can be provided for the readers' convenience.

Capitalization

Use capitals sparingly and only when they indicate a proper noun.

Government Divisions

Capitalize full names of legislative, deliberative, administrative, and judicial bodies, departments, bureaus, and offices. Incomplete designations derived from proper nouns are generally lowercased, unless capitalization is needed for clarity. The names of some federal bodies, such as the House and the Senate, are capitalized to distinguish them from state bodies.

U.S. House of Representatives; the House

U.S. Senate; the Senate

U.S. Supreme Court; the Supreme Court; the Court

U.S. Congress; the 97th Congress; Congress; congressional

Department of State; State Department; the department

Bureau of the Census; Census Bureau; the bureau; the census of 1980

Texas Legislature; 67th Legislature; the state legislature; the legislature; 1995 legislative session

Texas House; the house

Texas Senate; the senate

Texas Supreme Court; the supreme court

Austin City Council; the city council; the council

Precinct 4; Ward 2

11th Congressional District; the district

Texas Sunset Advisory Commission; sunset review

Texas Commission on the Arts; the commission

Texas Department of Transportation; the department

Example:

The U.S. Department of State, like other executive departments, has a wide range of responsibilities unknown to the general public. The department is...

Headline Style

In regular title capitalization, such as used for chapter titles, text subheaders, and titles of tables or figures, all words are capitalized except articles, coordinating conjunctions, and prepositions, unless they are the first or last word of the title.

Examples:

An Analysis of Texas and Mexico Views on NAFTA

Official Relationships across the Border

Average User Fee Revenue per Capita in Texas Cities (in Constant 1996 Dollars)

Laws and Acts

The full formal or accepted titles of laws, acts, treaties, and similar documents are capitalized. Incomplete names are usually lowercased.

Declaration of Independence

Constitution of the United States; the United States (*or* U.S.) Constitution; the Constitution

the Fifth Amendment (5th Amendment); the amendment

Bill of Rights

Texas Constitution; the state constitution; the constitution

Federal Housing Act of 1961; the act of 1961; the act

Social Security Act; social security

North American Free Trade Agreement; NAFTA; the agreement

Numbered Designations

Chapter, table, region, etc.

Words used with a number or letter to denote progression or parts of a whole are capitalized, even when named within a sentence.

Class I Region IV Title 2 Section 3 Table 4
Subchapter 3

Time Periods

The numerical designation of a period of time is lowercased unless it is part of a proper name.

twentieth century (20th century); *but*: Twentieth Century Fund

the twenties

the seventeen hundreds (1700s)

Political/Geographical Divisions

As Part of a Name

Words designating political or geographical divisions of the world are capitalized when part of a name.

Travis County; the county

New York City

Roman Empire

Second Precinct; the precinct

Northwest Territory

Eleventh Congressional District

Popular Place Names

Popular names of places are usually capitalized.

the Bay Area

the Gulf Coast

the Sunbelt

The Word City

Capitalize *city* only when used in the full official name of a political unit. Do not capitalize *city* when it is used to refer to the geographical location.

Examples:

All funds for paving streets have been deleted from the 1999 budget of the City of Austin.

A recent ordinance passed by the city prohibits...

The city of Austin is surrounded by many beautiful lakes and streams.

The Word State

Capitalize *state* only when used in the full official name of the political unit. Do not capitalize it when used to refer to the geographical unit.

Examples:

The fiscal crisis facing the State of Texas [Texas state government] forces the state to examine alternative delivery approaches for public services.

The state of Texas has many diverse geographical areas: the Panhandle, the Gulf Coast, the Piney Woods, the Hill Country, and Big Bend.

Names of Rivers, Lakes, etc.

A generic geographical term—such as lake, river, valley—is capitalized when used as part of a name, whether or not it is an official part of the name:

Examples:

Nile Delta

Great Barrier Reef

Walden Pond

When a generic term is used in the plural following more than one name, it is uppercased.

Examples:

between the Mississippi and Hudson Rivers

the Ozark and Catskill Mountains

Public Buildings and Monuments

Names of buildings, monuments, etc., are capitalized.

Examples:

the White House

the Oval Office

the Capitol (also, the Texas State Capitol)

the Statue of Liberty

Titles and Offices

Civil, military, and professional titles are capitalized when they precede the name as part of the name. In text matter, titles are usually lowercased. Some titles in federal government are uppercased to distinguish them from state positions. The title “Speaker” is normally capitalized in all usages, with or without a proper name attached.

Examples:

the president of the United States, the president, the presidency, presidential;
President George Washington, President Washington; George Washington,
president of the United States; presidents Washington and Lincoln; American
president Bill Clinton (plurals and appositives are lowercased)

the Clinton administration; the administration

William H. Rehnquist, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court; Chief Justice
Rehnquist; the Chief Justice

Warren Christopher, secretary of state; Secretary of State Christopher; Secretary
Christopher; the secretary of state; the secretary

Kay Bailey Hutchison, U.S. senator from Texas; Senator Hutchison; the senator
from Texas; the senator

George W. Bush, governor of Texas; Governor Bush; the governor; the governor
of Texas

Bill Spelman, member of the Austin City Council; Councilmember Spelman

Larry Faulkner, president of The University of Texas at Austin; President
Faulkner; the president of the university

Distinguished Visiting Tom Slick Professor of World Peace (any endowed professorship); Professor Lee; the professor of public affairs; a visiting professor

John Smith, president of Smith Enterprises; the president of the company

House Speaker Gib Lewis; the Speaker

Italics

Foreign Words

Non-English words that are not in common usage (consult a dictionary) should usually be italicized. If the term is to appear frequently, such as *colonias* in a book that is primarily about *colonias*, then it is sufficient to italicize only the first appearance of the word and define it at that point for the benefit of the reader. Non-English proper names or geographical terms are not italicized.

Legal Cases

Legal cases are italicized when identified in full or in abbreviated form.

Examples:

Miranda v. Arizona

Duncan v. Texas Department of Criminal Justice

the *Miranda* case

Duncan

Reference to a Word as a Word

When a word is used to represent the word itself and not the idea or thing that the word usually represents, the word is italicized. A word should also be italicized when it is defined.

Examples:

Disinterested and *uninterested* are not synonymous.

Pococurante means indifferent or nonchalant.

Titles

Titles of books, journals, published reports, motion pictures, television programs, ships, aircraft, and certain taxonomic names are italicized.

Examples:

I am reading *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and *Profiles in Courage*.

That issue was analyzed on *60 Minutes*.

The article was published in the *Austin American-Statesman*.

The USS *Enterprise* was menaced by a giant *Chrysaora quinquecirrha*.

Jargon

Technical terms with precise meanings can save a great deal of space in writing. Jargon, on the other hand, tends to complicate meanings, especially when used euphemistically. Examples of euphemistic jargon are the use of “assessment instrument” instead of “test” and “paradigmatic construct” instead of “example.”

Words ending in “ize” such as *maximize*, *prioritize*, *finalize*, *operationalize*, and *utilize* (try *use*) are generally to be avoided.

Lists

General Rules

When including lists in the text of a report, remember these rules:

1. Numbered lists should be used sparingly; if overused they interrupt the flow of ideas and make for uninteresting reading.
2. Short lists of one- or two-word items should be run into the text rather than separated.
3. All items in a list should be parallel in structure; mixing sentences with phrases is awkward, as is mixing active sentences with passive sentences or prepositional phrases with adverbial clauses.
4. Listed items should not begin with capital letters unless they are complete sentences.
5. In general, use numbers, not bullets, for lists separated out of text. Usually, if the material is important enough to be listed separately, the items should be numbered.

Enumeration of Items

Items in a vertical list should be enumerated using numerals followed by periods. Items within a paragraph should be enumerated using numerals enclosed in parentheses and not followed by a period.

Examples:

The recommended steps are

1. close the door,
2. open the window, and
3. sit down.

The recommended steps are (1) close the door, (2) open the window, and (3) sit down.

Introductory Punctuation

A colon is commonly used after an introductory word, phrase, or sentence to introduce a list. The colon often replaces the words *that is* or *for example*. A colon should not be used after these words or after *such as*, *namely*, or *for instance* unless a complete sentence follows. A colon is used after an introductory statement that contains the words *as follows* or *the following*.

Examples:

The ecological impact assessment report included the three most critical areas: the Edwards Aquifer, Barton Creek, and Waller Creek.

A number of senators supported the policy, for instance, John Glenn and Sam Nunn.

For instance: I like ice cream; Mary makes ice cream; I like Mary.

The department had three options: (1) to reduce its staff, (2) to expand its private funding base, or (3) to operate in the red.

The department's options were as follows:

1. It could reduce its staff to compensate for budget cuts.
2. It could expand its private funding base to restore lost funds.
3. It could operate in the red for a year to test the system.

Do not use a colon to introduce a list that is a complement or object of an element in the introductory statement. A colon is not used if the introductory statement is completed grammatically by the items in the list.

Examples:

The steps in the process include

1. taking a sample,
2. testing the ore, and
3. writing the report.

The three core courses that should be taken in the fall semester are (1) Policy Development, (2) Political Economy I, and (3) Applied Quantitative Analysis I.

If the introductory statement is a complete sentence and is followed by other complete sentences, a period may be used.

Example:

Care was taken to eliminate the effects of temperature variation.

1. Identical amounts of the chemicals were placed in beakers.
2. Each beaker was heated to exactly 40°C.
3. The contents of each beaker were poured into a large dish.

Punctuation between Items

Note that the punctuation used to separate items within a list depends on the items' grammatical construction. When items in a series are long and complex or involve internal punctuation, they should be separated by semicolons for the sake of clarity.

Example:

In following this procedure, one should

1. use identical amounts of mercury, potassium, and sulfur;
2. stir carefully, making sure the mixture is uniformly bubbly; and
3. step back.

Numbers

When to Spell Out

For PRP reports, numbers zero through ten should be spelled out in the text; all numbers over ten should be written as figures. All numbers should be spelled out when they begin a sentence.

Examples:

Approximately ten people were in the auditorium.

Enrollment in the graduate program increased by 52 students.

Fifty-two people were in the auditorium.

In discussions in which clusters of spelled-out numbers would be cumbersome, use figures for all numbers.

Example:

The number of nonprofit organizations in each city was as follows: Leesville, 7; Dodson, 8; Bronco, 1; and Moss Hill, 12.

Numbers in the same category within the same context should all be figures.

Example:

In one block a 103-story office building rises between two old apartment houses only 3 and 4 stories high.

Percentages

Numbers used to express percentages should be written with numerals followed by the word *percent*. However, the percent sign (%) may be used in tables.

15 percent 49 percent 3 percent

Units of Measurement

Numbers used with units of measurement should be written as figures.

2 miles 3 pounds 14 inches

Decimals

Decimals less than one should have a zero before the decimal place.

0.25 0.17497

Sums of Money

Large sums of money may be designated as follows:

\$2 million \$500 thousand

Foreign currency amounts are expressed with an initial or initials preceding the amount:

US\$2.47 million (for U.S. currency); N\$2.47 (for new pesos—Mexico)

Profanity

There should seldom be a need to employ vulgarisms in School publications. When it is necessary to quote profane language, a 3-em dash with a space on either side (such as used in Bibliographies to represent repetition) should be substituted for the offensive word(s).

Punctuation

Apostrophes

In Plurals of Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Numbers

No apostrophe is used in the plural forms of acronyms, abbreviations without periods, and numbers.

PRPs, HSAs, Btus, the 1960s (*but* the sixties)

An apostrophe is used in the plural form of abbreviations with periods.

Ph.D.'s, M.A.'s

In Possessives

The possessive of singular proper nouns ending in *s* is formed by adding the apostrophe and *s*. The possessive of plural proper nouns ending in *s* is formed using only the apostrophe.

Jefferson Davis's home the bosses' cars the Joneses' house

The possessive of some singular words ending in a sibilant may be formed by adding only the apostrophe:

for appearance' sake righteousness' reward Texas' laws

Commas

In Series

A comma is placed after the next-to-the-last item in a series:

A, B, and C.

In Dates

No comma is necessary between a month and year.

April 1978 (*but* April 16, 1978)

Dashes

For ease of production, the School does not use en-dashes in its publications. Substitute a hyphen where en-dashes would normally be typeset. Em-dashes are employed normally and should be made using the appropriate WORD commands with no spaces before or after the dash. Do not string two hyphens together to form an em-dash.

Example:

Similar practices were found to occur in the three largest Texas cities—Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio—and are examined separately in Chapter 4.

Editorial Insertions in Quotes

Brackets, not parentheses, should enclose editorial corrections, explanations, or comments in quoted material.

“These [the free-silver Democrats] asserted that the ratio was wrong.”

Hyphens

An adjective form composed of a present participle preceded by its object is usually hyphenated when it precedes a noun but is left open when it follows a noun.

thought-provoking paper (but the paper was thought provoking)

problem-solving technique

An adjective form composed of an adverb ending in *-ly* plus a participle or adjective is not hyphenated.

highly developed economy overly complex explanation

The trend in compound words is away from the use of hyphens, especially in words with prefixes such as “non,” “anti,” “bi,” “un,” “super,” “pro,” “pre,” “post,” “sub,” “semi,” “supra,” and “under.”

nonmembers	preexisting (<i>but</i> pre-1960)
antirevolutionary	postoperative
superannuated	substandard
prowar (<i>but</i> pro-Arab)	understaffed

When in doubt about whether to hyphenate a compound word or term, refer to a recent edition of a standard dictionary, such as *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, tenth edition. Once a correct form has been determined, usages must remain consistent throughout the manuscript. It is not satisfactory, for example, to use “policymaking” or “semi-detached” in one chapter but refer to “policy-making” or “semidetached” in another.

Punctuation with Quotation Marks

In quoted matter, commas and periods are placed within the final quotation marks.

“It is so,” he said.

It is the “dogma,” or the appearance of it, that causes problems in that area of “no-man’s-land.”

Semicolons and colons are placed outside final quotation marks.

There are many “abuses”; most are undocumented, including the famous “mystery cases.”

Special Uses of Quotation Marks

Quotation marks may be used to set off words when spoken language is implied, when words are used in an ironic sense, when words are used as slang, or when words are used in an unusual context. However, *quotation marks should be used sparingly*. For instance, in a carefully written sentence, irony can be conveyed without the use of quotation marks. Words that are special terms used in a particular field should not be set off in quotes if they have been defined and are used throughout the report. Also, quotation marks should not be used with the expression *so-called*.

Examples:

Without his “help,” I probably would have finished on time.

The so-called beach-front property was actually located ten miles from the seashore.

Straight Quotes/Smart Quotes

All quotation marks (double and single) as well as apostrophes should be in “smart” (curly) style, not straight. This Guide uses the “smart” quotes style. WORD offers features to set or change the style of quotation marks.

Quotations

Fair Use

Frequent use of material from one source—both direct quotes and paraphrased information—is inadvisable, as it represents an overdependence on someone else’s wording and ideas and could constitute a violation of the fair use doctrine of the 1976 Copyright Act. The *Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th edition (available in the Public Affairs Library), has a full discussion of the fair use doctrine (chapter 4) and the use of quotations (chapter 10). Remember that fair use also applies to charts, tables, and graphs, not just text. If you have any doubts about whether permission is required to use any material, consult the Publications Office as soon as possible, since it may be necessary to have written permission on file before a manuscript is accepted for publication.

Format

Generally, quotations of ten typed lines or more are separated from the text and typed in “block” form (indented on *both* sides), with quotation marks omitted. Quotes of fewer than ten lines are run into the text using double quotations marks, unless they need to be separated out for emphasis. Frequent use of block quotes is discouraged, as it is distracting to the reader.

Spelling

Spelling should conform to standard American usage and be consistent. The Publications Office uses *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, tenth edition, as the authority for spelling and word divisions.

It is imperative that a spellchecker be applied to all manuscript drafts; this will catch many basic typographical errors. Original spellings and punctuation should be retained in quoted material, but minor nonsubstantive corrections to improve clarity or consistency are permissible. Special care must be taken to use correct and consistent spellings for foreign names or words, with particular attention to accent marks, since these may be unfamiliar to nonspecialists and errors may be difficult to detect.