



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY HOUSE STYLE GUIDE (v5, MARCH 2023)

Instructions

As of March 2023, OSU Press has updated to:

- *Chicago Manual of Style (CMS)*, 17th edition (for text style and citation style)
- *Modern Language Association (MLA) Handbook*, 9th edition (for citation style only)

Please continue to refer to Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (MW), [online edition](#), for guidance about spelling and hyphenation.

What we detail here in our House Style Guide are

- (1) rules that counter the sources above or
- (2) rules we want to highlight because they are common issues that come up in manuscripts or involve conventions we think are important.

Of course, we are always willing to diverge from all styles when an author’s own chosen style is **consistent, clear, and comprehensible** to readers.

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SECTION 1: DOCUMENTATION

A. Overview of Common Citation Styles

Given that we publish primarily in the humanities, the most fitting styles are the *CMS* Notes-Bibliography System and *MLA* style, but other styles are acceptable, such as the *CMS* Author-Date System and *APA* style. Please refer to those style manuals for more guidance.

- 1) **CMS Notes-Bib System:** Use shortened citation form in the notes—even on first mention—accompanied by a full bibliography with all sources listed (as opposed to a select bibliography and full citation form in the notes). See *CMS* 14.2, 14.19, and 14.23 for a general overview.

Shortened citation in note: 1. Gold, *Literary Theory*, 138.

Entry in Bibliography: Gold, Craig. *Literary Theory*. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2012.

- 2) **MLA:** Please note the following in particular:
 - For three or more authors, list the first author only followed by *et al.*
 - In the Works Cited, shorten *University* and *Press* to *U* and *P* when the publisher is a university press.

Examples:

In-text citations:

	(Chen)
<i>w/ page #s</i>	(Chen 23)
	(Chen 23, 27)
	(Bordo 89, 105; Chen 27)
<i>w/ titles</i>	(Chen, <i>Animacies</i>)
	(Chen, "Agitation" 54)

Discursive footnote:

For more on biopolitics and biopower, see Bordo; Chen, *Animacies* 32.

Entries in Works Cited:

Bordo, Susan. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. U of California P, 1993.

Chen, Mel Y. "Agitation." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 117, no. 3, 2018, pp. 551–66.

———. *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*. Duke UP, 2012.

3) **Hybrids/Variations:**

- A permissible variation in the *CMS* Notes-Bib System is an author's use of in-text, parenthetical citations for primary sources repeated throughout the work and then shortened citations in notes for secondary sources (plus, of course, a full bibliography). If this variation is used, an author must include a note that in-text citations for a certain work have been used throughout the book (e.g., "Hereafter, citations to *Jane Eyre* will occur parenthetically in text.") See *CMS* 13.67 for examples.
- Many classics titles use a hybrid of *CMS* Notes-Bib and Author-Date—including the year in citations but placing those citations in notes. This is fine; consistency and comprehension are paramount.

Note on Online Sources:

- DOIs are preferred if available.
- An access date should be listed only when a publication date or last updated date is not available.
- For URLs, include the protocol <https://> or <http://>. For DOIs, add the protocol <https://doi.org> if it is not already listed.

Whichever style is selected, in the end-of-book bibliography, authors **should NOT format entries using tabs**. Authors should use the hanging indent function or simply set all lines flush left, and we will format from there.

B. In-Text Citations and Quotations

- 1) **Ibid:** Use of *ibid.* is discouraged in favor of repeating the shortened citation. Author-only citations, used for subsequent citations of the same work and outlined in *CMS* 14.34, are also acceptable.
- 2) **Changes to capitalization:** A capital letter can be used to start a quote with no bracket needed to indicate a change from the original. Likewise, a capital letter in the original can be changed to lowercase to start a quote (see *CMS* 13.18–20 for more on this specific rule and then *CMS* 13.7 for more on other permissible changes to quotes). The same applies to changes in initial capitalization following an ellipsis.
- 3) **To indicate deletion of a letter in quote,** enclose brackets around one nonbreaking space, like so: *At best, such ideologies perpetuate a history of diminishing the linguistic, rhetorical, and cultural output of minority groups; at worst, they "serve[] to justify racist and nativist biases under the cover of American patriotism."*
- 4) **Ellipses:** Ellipses at the beginning and end of a quote are not needed, per *CMS* 13.52. However, note exceptions for poetry and verse (*CMS* 13.57). When ellipses are present,

ensure correct use of three dots vs. four. For the use of brackets in distinguishing added vs. original ellipses, see *CMS* 13.58.

- 5) **Block quotations:** The first paragraph of a block quotation is set flush left (not indented). Subsequent paragraphs will be indented.
- 6) **Translations:** While Chicago is preferred for treating translations in running text or block quotes, an author's preferred style is acceptable as long as it is clear, comprehensible, and consistent. We prefer that translations are styled in the least cumbersome manner possible.

C. Citation Managers

If citation management software was used (such as Zotero or EndNotes) the resulting embedded field codes must be removed. See *CMS* 14.5 for more information.

SECTION 2: STYLE, USAGE, AND PUNCTUATION

A. Italics

- 1) **We prefer italics for words as words** rather than quotation marks, but it is permissible for an author to use double quotation marks (not single) to set off specialized terms if done consistently across the book.
- 2) **Italics should not be used for foreign words** in common use (e.g., *ibid.*, *oeuvre*). A good test is whether the word is in *MW*; if so, no italics are needed.
- 3) **Commas and periods should be in italics when they follow an italicized word.** All other punctuation (semicolons, colons, quotation marks, brackets, etc.) should follow *CMS* 6.2, 6.4, and 6.6—that is, they should follow the style of the main/surrounding text. Note exceptions such as italicizing the exclamation point in “the Beatles’ *Help!*” because the punctuation is part of the song title.
- 4) **An initial “the” in periodical titles** should be lowercased and not italicized: the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, etc. This applies to works in MLA style as well, given how titles may appear in running text. Please note the exception for periodicals consisting of *the* plus only one other word; in these cases, capitalize and italicize *The* (e.g., *The Guardian*).

B. Spelling and Hyphenation

- 1) **Words with prefixes** such as *non*, *pro*, *pre*, *post*, *re*, *anti*, *inter*, *co*, and *in* will be spelled solid and not hyphenated, unless doing so results in a misleading or confusing word (e.g., *coauthor*, *but* *co-op*). Please consult *CMS* 7.89, section 4 (pp. 455–57).

- 2) **Compound words** will be hyphenated according to *CMS 7.89*, sections 1–3 (pp. 446–55), and *MW*. Compound adjectives containing an *-ly* adverb will not be hyphenated (e.g., *highly developed area*).
- 3) **British spellings** and punctuation will be changed to American (except in quotations).

C. Inclusive Language

Many sources now offer guidance on using inclusive language. See, for example, “Guidelines on Inclusive Language and Images in Scholarly Communication” by the Coalition for Diversity & Inclusion in Scholarly Communications,¹ which recommends:

- using “people-first” language: emphasize individuals over attributes (e.g., “person with diabetes” rather than “a diabetic”)
 - being cognizant of the way bias structures communication: ask what a given perspective assumes as a “default” and who might be excluded
 - including identity details only when they are pertinent: in particular, be wary of the tendency to note such details only when referring to identity categories perceived as outside the “default.” If identity details are germane to a discussion, aim to be as specific as possible (e.g., list an individual’s specific age rather than describing them as “elderly”)
- 1) Terms referring to sexual orientation or gender identity and expression are typically **lowercased**. An author’s preference for terminology will be respected.
 - 2) Likewise, we agree with Chicago that “a person’s stated preference for a specific pronoun should be respected.” Thus, we **allow use of *they, he, she, him, or her* for singular antecedents**. Do not use the more cumbersome *he/she, him/her, s/he*. When a gendered pronoun is to be used, it is best to go back and forth between the gendered pronouns.
 - 3) **Geopolitics**: When referring to residents of the United States, use the more specific “US American” rather than “American.” In the context of economics, as alternatives to “first world,” “third world,” and “developing country,” consider using the nation’s specific income designation by the World Bank.
 - 4) **Race, Ethnicity, and Indigeneity**
 - a. We prefer to capitalize ***Black*** when referring to race/ethnicity. In contrast, ***white***, not generally regarded as an ethnic designation, should be lowercase unless an author has offered a rationale for capitalizing. ***Brown*** is also not typically

¹ See also [Conscious Style Guide](#) and [Radical Copyeditor](#) for more guidance on inclusive language practices.

considered an ethnic designation, but consider parallel treatment in scenarios such as “Black and Brown people.” Ultimately, an author’s well-grounded preference for lowercasing or capitalizing such terms will be respected. Usage should be consistently applied either across a monograph or within chapters of an edited collection.

- b. **Latino/as** is fine as a plural version of *Latino/a*. Note also that both **Latinx** and **Latine** are acceptable terms (author’s preference should guide usage), with *Latinxs* and *Latines* being the proper plural forms.
 - c. We prefer to capitalize **Indigenous** and **Native** when these adjectives refer to groups of people.²
- 5) **Racial, sexual, or gendered slurs**—or slurs of any nature: It is our preference not to reproduce slurs in their full form. Where they are important to include, we ask they be elided. Depending on context, the use of internal asterisks paired with a final letter may clarify what the original term is. For example:

“n—” or “n—s”
“f***t,” “f*g”
“J—” or “J*p”

One’s positionality as author and the context of the use are both relevant factors, but please consider that the elision of hate speech, rather than compromising learning, often expands readers’ and students’ ability to engage with texts.³

D. Capitalization

- 1) Lowercase **internet** and do not hyphenate **email**.
- 2) **References in the text to chapters, tables, and figures** should not be capitalized (e.g., as shown in figure 3.1; see chapter 2).
- 3) **Captions** for figures, illustrations, etc. should follow *CMS* 3.21 and 3.22 for syntax, punctuation, and capitalization. Regarding capitalization, use sentence style except for formal titles of works (which use headline style).
- 4) Contrary to *CMS* 8.161, **all words in a hyphenated compound in a title should be capitalized** (e.g., *Anti-Identitarian French Feminist Fictions*).

² More regionally specific resources are available on the Conscious Style Guide website in the “First Nations / Indigenous / Native Peoples” section on the [Ethnicity, Race + Nationality](#) page.

³ For more on this topic, please see Koritha Mitchell, “Teaching & the N-word: Questions to Consider,” [korithamitchell.com](#), March 23, 2018; Koritha Mitchell, “The N-Word in the Classroom: Just Say No,” C19 Podcast, season 2, episode 6; Ruth A. Starkman, “Dropping the N-Word in College Classrooms,” *Inside Higher Ed*, July 24, 2020; and Terah J. Stewart, “To Whom It May Concern: An Open Letter on the N-Word and Academic Publishing,” [terahjay.medium.com](#), July 16, 2021.

E. Footnotes/Endnotes

- 1) **Footnotes are our default notes system for scholarly material (for accessibility reasons)**, so your notes will be changed to this system unless you provide a compelling reason for using endnotes.
- 2) Notes should **not be attached to chapter opening material** (chapter number, chapter title, or author name) **or captions**.

F. Abbreviations

- 1) **Abbreviations are okay in parentheses** (*e.g., i.e., etc., fig., chap.*) and in the notes but not in running text.
- 2) Note the following preferences regarding abbreviations and acronyms:
 - **US** (all capitals, no periods—whether adjective or noun form). Please note that both *US* and *United States* are acceptable in noun form and that a given work can employ both interchangeably. The preferred possessive form is *United States'* (*CMS* 7.20).
 - **BCE, CE, AD** (all capitals, no periods)
 - **COVID-19** (*not* covid-19 or Covid-19)
 - **a.m., p.m.** (lowercase, with periods)

G. Punctuation

- 1) **No comma is necessary after a short introductory phrase** (typically two words or less): “In 1971 I moved to Chicago.” **Commas should appear after introductory dependent clauses of any length**: “After Jill left, she drove home.”
- 2) **We use the serial comma** in a series of three or more: “apples, oranges, and pears” (*not* “apples, oranges and pears”).
- 3) **Commas should not appear between compound predicates** except in rare cases where a comma prevents confusion (see *CMS* 6.23): “He grabbed his keys and wallet but forgot where he was going” *but* “She remembered the student who answered the question, and smiled.”
- 4) **We prefer the use of double quotation marks** rather than single quotation marks most often found employed as British style.

- 5) **Possessives of words that end in s** should be formed by adding 's in all cases (*Xerxes's armies, Euripides's plays, Descartes's three dreams, Burroughs's lost notebook*).
- 6) **Epigraphs** do not require quotation marks.
- 7) **Slash marks (/)** require no space when separating single words (*and/or*) but do require a space on each side when separating lines of poetry in running text. Although *CMS* encourages the use of a space when the slash separates phrases with more than one word, exceptions can be made for the sake of parallel structure, as in this example: "That is also why Deborah Kamen and Sarah Levin-Richardson go to such trouble to disaggregate the binary oppositions of active/passive, insertive/receptive, dominant type/submissive type, superordinate/subordinate, masculine/feminine, and man/woman."

H. Other Common Style and Usage Issues

- 1) **When a numbered or alphabetized list occurs in running text**, ensure the number is enclosed in parentheses and not just followed by one: "Two related questions need to be addressed, and those concern (1) the changing ontological status of previously impossible events and (2) differing cultural concepts of what is possible or realistic."
- 2) **We prefer that authors not refer to themselves in the third person.** Limited use of first-person pronouns is acceptable (*I, we, us*, etc.). Likewise, second-person pronouns can be used sparingly and when appropriate.
- 3) **Split infinitives are perfectly acceptable**, and even desirable in some sentences. It's also okay to end a sentence with a preposition.
- 4) **Contractions are permissible** when they fit the style of the writing.
- 5) **We use *that* for restrictive clauses and *which* for nonrestrictive clauses** set off (sometimes) by commas. However, we do allow *which* in restrictive clauses in some cases—for example, when the clause is widely separated from its noun, when the noun is itself preceded by *that*, or when there are too many *thats* in the sentence.

I. Special Note about Classics and Medieval Titles

- 1) **Note that many classics and medieval titles contain lemma/lemmata**, a quotation from a text (a word or phrase) that the commentator then explains. The best way to indicate the lemma is with underlining, given that italics will already be present in the manuscript to indicate words as words, emphasis, etc. However, feel free to use whatever style the author has deemed appropriate, as long as you think it makes clear the lemma and is consistent across the ms.

- 2) **We prefer “the *Canterbury Tales*”** and not “*The Canterbury Tales.*”
- 3) Refer to *CMS* 14.242–14.252 for more on acceptable conventions for Greek and Latin references.

J. Numbers

- 1) **In most cases, whole numbers zero through one hundred and whole numbers one through one hundred followed by *hundred, thousand, or hundred thousand* will be spelled out** (e.g., four pears, sixty-three years, nine hundred words, *but* 107 articles, 42,655 votes). See *CMS* 9.2 and 9.4. In social science works where there are a lot of numbers and percentages, numbers under 10 can be spelled out and % is permissible in the text. Whatever the rule being followed, numbers referring to the same category of things should be treated alike in the same immediate context.
- 2) Always **use numerals for percentages** (82 percent) except at the beginning of a sentence.
- 3) **Month/day/year (January 12, 1986) is the preferred style for dates**, and inconsistent usage should be changed to this form. But, if an author has consistently used day/month/year format (12 January 1986), that is acceptable.
- 4) **While *CMS* style is preferred for inclusive numbers**, we do **not** apply this rule for display matter such as titles and subtitles: *Advertising to Women: 1900–1999*. In MLA works, follow *CMS* style for inclusive numbers given how inclusive ranges may appear in running text.
- 5) **Commas will be used in numbers of four or more digits** (e.g., 1,200), except for addresses, page numbers, and years.
- 6) **We use roman numerals only for the preliminary pages** of a book (not for vol. nos.). Inclusive roman numerals are given in full.

SOME ADDITIONAL NOTES

- *not only* . . . [no ,] *but also*
- *cf.* for “compare” only, not “see”
- *but* or *and* can start a sentence, in moderation
- *none* does not have to take a singular verb (e.g., “none of the books were interesting” is fine)
- use *first, second, etc.*, not *firstly, secondly* . . .

- a book *comprises* its chapters, not vice versa
- *whose* can be used for inanimate things
- in comparisons such as *cars like Hondas*, it is not necessary to replace *like* with *such as* (unless the meaning is unclear)
- only one set of em dashes per sentence