



# WVU Press House Style Guide

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West Virginia University Press uses the following sources to resolve questions of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and style:

- *The Chicago Manual of Style* (17th ed., hereafter CMOS)
- *Merriam-Webster's Online* (unabridged.merriam-webster.com and merriam-webster.com)
- *Garner's Modern English Usage* (4th ed., hereafter *Garner's*)

The Press follows the recommendations in these three sources in nearly all cases. This guide provides exceptions to these sources as well as an overview of some common style points (with references to the appropriate sources noted in parentheses).

Of course, we acknowledge the validity of other style manuals and will follow the author's choice of style as long as it is consistent, clear, and comprehensible to the reader.

## 1 Documentation

The Press prefers the **notes and bibliography system** of citation outlined in chapter 14 of CMOS. Other systems of citation, however—including CMOS's author-date system (see chapter 15), MLA, or APA—are acceptable alternatives. If a manuscript uses a non-CMOS citation system consistently, there is generally no need to convert to the notes and bibliography system. Regardless of the system used, ensure consistency and completeness.

### 1.1 Notes and Bibliography System

In the notes and bibliography system, only shortened citations are provided in the notes and complete bibliographic data is given in the bibliography (see CMOS 14.19 and 14.23):

*Shortened note:* 1. Morris, *Vicious Circle*, 118.

*Bibliography entry:* Morris, Georgia. *Vicious Circle: The Dangers of Recidivism*. Denver: Pickering, 2001.

Avoid the use of *ibid*; instead, use shortened citations (see CMOS 14.34). Where the same work is repeatedly cited in a paragraph, parenthetical citations may be used in place of note references (see CMOS 13.66 and 14.34).

### 1.2 Notes-Only System

For edited collections especially, it may be appropriate to use a notes-only system of citation. In lieu of a bibliography, the complete reference is given in the notes on first use and shortened citations are used thereafter (CMOS 14.19).

<sup>1</sup>Georgia Morris, *Vicious Circle: The Dangers of Recidivism* (Denver: Pickering, 2001), 118.

<sup>2</sup>Morris, *Vicious Circle*, 23–26.

Give the complete citation on first use in *each chapter*. Readers should not be expected to look to prior chapters for full citation information.

Avoid the use of *ibid*; instead, use shortened citations (see CMOS 14.34).

### 1.3 Placement of Note Numbers

Regardless of the citation system used, the following considerations apply to the placement of note numbers:

- 1) Note numbers should never be placed within or next to chapter titles, subtitles, author name, epigraphs, or other display text. Instead, an unnumbered note should appear immediately before the first note of the relevant chapter (CMOS 14.52).
- 2) More than one note reference should never appear in the same place (e.g., <sup>7,8</sup>); instead, combine the citations or comments into a single note (CMOS 14.28).

### 1.4 URLs

Regardless of the citation system used, use shortened forms of URLs wherever possible (CMOS 14.10). When available, use the permalink or the digital object identifier (DOI). Do not, however, use third-party services (e.g., Bitly, TinyURL) to create short URLs.

For example, searching JSTOR for a keyword yields a long, unreadable URL for an article:

[https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1wf4ds0.17?Search=yes&resultItemClick=true&searchText=books&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3Ffc%3Doff%26amp%3Bwc%3Don%26amp%3Bgrou p%3Dnone%26amp%3BQuery%3Dbooks%26amp%3Bacc%3Don&refreqid=search%3A8e87eab58f41d764f03b1a4af8a9193e&seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1wf4ds0.17?Search=yes&resultItemClick=true&searchText=books&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3Ffc%3Doff%26amp%3Bwc%3Don%26amp%3Bgrou p%3Dnone%26amp%3BQuery%3Dbooks%26amp%3Bacc%3Don&refreqid=search%3A8e87eab58f41d764f03b1a4af8a9193e&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents).

The unnecessary computer code, which starts with the question mark, can be deleted to yield the shortened URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1wf4ds0.17>.

## 2 Style, Usage, and Punctuation

### 2.1 Spelling

- 1) Use the first spelling given in *Merriam-Webster's*.
- 2) Use American spellings instead of British or Canadian spellings (except in quotations).
- 3) Do not hyphenate compound words formed with prefixes such as *anti*, *co*, *multi*, *non*, *post*, *pre*, *semi*, *sub*, *un*, and the like unless the lack of hyphen results in a misleading or confusing word (e.g., re-creation v. recreation). See CMOS 7.89.

- 4) Do not hyphenate compounds formed with adverbs ending in *-ly* (e.g., reasonably tall; CMOS 7.86).
- 5) Hyphenate compounds formed with adverbs that do not end in *-ly* before the noun but not after the noun (e.g., well-known scholar, but the scholar is well known; CMOS 7.85).

## 2.2 Italics

- 1) Letters used as letters and words used as words should be italicized, not surrounded by quotation marks (e.g., the letter *s*, the word *book* contains four letters; CMOS 7.63–64).
- 2) Special terms may be italicized on first use but should be roman for all subsequent uses (CMOS 7.56). Double quotation marks, though not preferred, may be used if done consistently. Never use single quotation marks.
- 3) Italicize words and phrases in languages other than English only if they do not appear in *Merriam-Webster's* (e.g., coup d'état but *libro*; CMOS 7.53).
- 4) Contrary to CMOS 8.192, treat sources that blur the distinction between a blog and a website (e.g., publishing websites) analogously to blog posts, newspapers, and magazines (e.g., *Vox*, *BuzzFeed*, *Bustle*).

## 2.3 Capitalization

- 1) Names of academic departments should be lowercase, contrary to CMOS 8.28 and 8.85 (e.g., she is an associate professor in the department of history at West Virginia University).
- 2) Use lowercase for academic titles, except named chairs (e.g., professor of history; chair of the English department; Jackson and Nichols Professor of English; CMOS 8.28)
- 3) Use all lowercase for references to parts, chapters, tables, figures, and the like (e.g., as shown in table 3; see chapter 5; CMOS 8.180).
- 4) Directional words for regions should be lowercase unless listed differently in CMOS or *Merriam-Webster's* (e.g., central Appalachia, northern Appalachia, but Southern California; CMOS 8.47).
- 5) All headings, titles, etc. should use headline-style capitalization (CMOS 8.159).
- 6) Capitalize *Black* and *Indigenous* along with other racial, ethnic, national, and cultural terms that are standardly capitalized (e.g., Asian, Hispanic). *White* and *Brown*, when used to describe race, may also be capitalized at the author's discretion.

## 2.4 Punctuation

- 1) Use the serial, or Oxford, comma between elements in a list (e.g., The book contains tables, photographs, and maps; CMOS 6.19).

- 2) Use commas with introductory phrases of four or more words and with shorter phrases as needed for clarity. It is also acceptable to use commas with introductory phrases regardless of length as long as this is done consistently (CMOS 6.33).
- 3) In any series, use the lightest punctuation that clearly separates items—commas between simple items (even if the series is introduced by a colon) and semicolons between items that contain internal punctuation (CMOS 6.19 and 6.60):
  - a. Grandma always carried three things in her bag: her wallet, her glasses, and a book.
  - b. The boy told his teacher that he did not have his homework, which was an unusually long assignment, because he had been sick all night with a stomach bug that, he claimed, had been going around; because he had to help his father build a tool shed, despite the fact that he had the stomach bug; and because he had to babysit his little brother.
- 4) Form the possessive of singular nouns ending in *s* by adding *'s* regardless of pronunciation (e.g., Hayes's book, Jesus's disciples, Descartes's *Meditations*; CMOS 7.16–7.19).
- 5) Contrary to CMOS 7.61 and 7.62, use quotation marks around all signs, notices, slogans, mottoes, and the like regardless of length (e.g., The crowd cheered, waving signs that read “Got Electricity?: Thank a Coal Miner”; She stood under the “Exit” sign). Such phrases in languages other than English may be italicized instead per CMOS 7.62.
- 6) Avoid use of scare quotes, quotation marks with *so-called*, and quotation marks with common figures of speech (CMOS 7.57, 7.59, and 7.60).
- 7) Do not use quotation marks for epigraphs (CMOS 13.36).

## 2.5 Usage

- 1) Use *that* for restrictive clauses and *which* for nonrestrictive clauses (see CMOS 5.250 and 6.27; *Garner's*).
- 2) *They*, *their*, and *them* may be used as singular pronouns instead of *he/she*, *his/her*, and similar constructions when the singular antecedent cannot be avoided by rewriting (e.g., “Every person attending the meeting must bring their own coffee”).
- 3) Omit social titles and honorifics (e.g., Ms., Mr., Dr., Prof., Rev., Hon.). Likewise, do not append abbreviations for degrees or other credentials to names, even in author or contributor bios; instead incorporate any important information into the text (e.g., *not* Stephen Hawking, PhD, *but* Stephen Hawking received a PhD...).
- 4) For transliterated text, follow a single system consistently (e.g., for Chinese transliterations, follow Pinyin or Wade-Giles exclusively, not a mixture of both; CMOS 11.71–11.108).

- 5) Use *United States* instead of *America*, unless referring to the pre-Constitution period prior to the United States. Avoid the possessive *United States'* (but if you must use it, that is the preferred form *not* United States's).
- 6) Whenever possible, avoid references to specific pages in your own manuscript (e.g., For my discussion of Schwarz, see p. 15–16). Instead, refer to the chapter or section title (e.g., For my discussion of Schwarz, see chapter 3; CMOS 2.35).
- 7) Avoid references to dissertations and dissertation advisors, even in acknowledgments.

## 2.6 Numbers

- 1) Spell out whole numbers one through one hundred and round numbers (CMOS 9.2 and 9.4). However, in a numbers-heavy or technical manuscript, you may spell out numbers under 10 (CMOS 9.3). Whichever rule is followed, numbers used to refer to the same category of things should be treated consistently in the same context (e.g., The group consisted of 3 ducks and 106 geese; CMOS 9.7).
- 2) Use numerals and the word *percent* for percentages (47 percent; CMOS 9.18).
- 3) Avoid beginning sentences with numbers when possible. When a number must begin a sentence, spell it out (CMOS 9.5).
- 4) Do not use superscripts for ordinal numbers (e.g., 126th, not 126<sup>th</sup>; CMOS 9.6).
- 5) The month-day-year style (August 18, 1920) for dates is preferred, though the day-month-year style (18 August 1920) is acceptable if used consistently. No commas should be used with the day-month-year style (CMOS 6.38). Regardless of the style used, days should always be expressed in cardinal, rather than ordinal, numbers (e.g., June 12, 1967, *not* June 12th, 1967; CMOS 9.31).

## 2.7 Abbreviations

- 1) Abbreviations such as *e.g.*, *i.e.*, *etc.*, *fig.*, *chap.*, *vol.*, and the like are acceptable in parentheses and notes but not in running text (CMOS 10.42). Common Latin abbreviations should not be italicized (CMOS 7.55). Always use a comma after *e.g.* and *i.e.* (CMOS 6.51).
- 2) The Press prefers the abbreviation *US* (all caps, no periods, no space), but *U.S.* is acceptable if used consistently (CMOS 10.4, 10.32).
- 3) In a text with numerous abbreviations, a list of abbreviations should be prepared (CMOS 1.44).
- 4) Spell out state names in running text when the state alone is used (e.g., The author is from Minnesota; the president lives in the District of Columbia), but—contrary to CMOS 10.27—the two-letter postal abbreviation may be used when the city is provided (e.g., The director moved to Los Angeles, CA; the scientist traveled to Washington, DC, for the

congressional hearing). States listed with cities, whether spelled out or abbreviated, should be set off by commas (CMOS 10.29).

- 5) The Press prefers *a.m.* and *p.m.* instead of *am/pm* or *AM/PM*.
- 6) Use periods with spaces for initials in names (e.g., Octavia E. Butler; N. K. Jemisin); however, the periods and spaces may be dropped when the entire name is abbreviated (e.g., LBJ [Lyndon B. Johnson]; CMOS 10.12).

## 2.8 Quotations

- 1) In most cases, set quotations of 100 words or more as extracts. Quotations shorter than 100 words should be run into the text. See CMOS 13.10 for a few exceptions to this general rule.
- 2) Do not use ellipses at the beginning of quotations, even if the quotation picks up in the middle of a sentence. Instead, change the initial letter of the quotation from upper to lower case (or vice versa) to suit the text that precedes it; no ellipses or bracketed letters are required (CMOS 13.18).
- 3) Do not use ellipses at the end of a quotation unless the quotation itself ends with a deliberately incomplete sentence or is truncated verse (CMOS 13.52, 13.55, 13.57).

## 3 Illustrations and Tables

- 1) Numbered figures and tables should be referenced in the text (e.g., as shown in figure 1; CMOS 3.9), and tables and figures should be numbered separately (CMOS 3.50).
- 2) Never refer to illustrations and tables by their placement (e.g., the table on the opposite page), as the final location of the illustration or table may vary from the author's suggested placement and across formats (e.g., print v. e-book).
- 3) Captions should be formatted according to CMOS 3.21–37. For example:
  - a. Fig. 13. Sears, Roebuck & Co. store, Grand Avenue, Lloyd Boulevard, and East Glisan Street, Portland, constructed 1928–1929. (Photo by Ackroyd Photography, 28 February 1949. The Huntington Library, San Marino, California, LCB drawer 1, box 1. Reproduced by permission of Thomas Robinson.)
- 4) For books with more than ten figures or tables, and in contributed volumes, illustrations should be numbered by chapter: I.1 (fig. 1 of the intro), 1.1 (fig. 1 of chap. 1), and so on (CMOS 3.11).

If you have any questions about the Press's style, please contact the managing editor.