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## Overview

The purpose of the *City of San José Style Guide* is to define and establish standards for grammar, spelling, and usage in communications, publications and documents prepared by the City of San José in order to achieve a consistent and high level of quality. It is intended for use by all City staff involved in the preparation of documents, including writers, support staff, and managers.

Whether the City's documents and publications are distributed to the public or for employees, it is the goal of the City to obtain a professional level of clarity and effectiveness that reflects the overall high quality expected from and by the City of San José and its staff. This guide is a tool to help achieve this goal.

As a first effort, this Style Guide is likely to have gaps in the material it includes, or it will identify areas where there are differences of opinion. It is important, therefore, that the users contribute their questions, comments and suggestions to improve the next edition of the *City of San José Style Guide*. Please use the enclosed feedback form found at the back of this document to send suggestions to the Public Outreach Coordinator, c/o the City Manager's Office.

## Documents and Publications

The principles for writing clear and effective documents and publications are not complex or magic. Different experts may describe them differently, but they come down to the same basic ideas. Here is a brief summary of the elements of writing so that we can communicate well with each other and with the public.

### 1. Plan and Organize

This may be the most important step to good writing. Before you begin writing, make sure you know your purpose and your audience. Define your focus and scope, prepare an outline, and identify your resources of time and funds to complete the project. Without good planning, the writing of the material usually will require more time to complete and revise, and likely will be less effective.

### 2. Be Brief

Longer is not necessarily better. With good organization, clear writing and good information working together, documents and publications have a far better chance of communicating and achieving their purpose. We still remember Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, which was less than 300 words. Very few now remember Edward Everett's two-hour oration that was the headline event on the same occasion.

### 3. Use Plain Language and Avoid Jargon

Use English that would be suitable for explaining the issue to your next door neighbor, or your Aunt Mary in Nebraska. Don't talk down to your audience, but remember they don't have the familiarity with the subject that you do. Jargon, acronyms and polysyllabic words often confuse and obscure the point. Simple is not simplistic. Take ownership for the ideas and information presented in the document by using the active voice. City documents must serve the public both today and tomorrow, as well as serving policymakers, staff, news media and experts in the field. The use of plain, jargon-free language will be more likely to meet the needs of these diverse audiences successfully.

### 4. Look It Up

In other words, do your research carefully, check your data and references, and don't make assumptions. The value of the City's documents is based on their accuracy and completeness. Factual errors, including misspelled names, wrong telephone numbers and incorrect dates and figures, diminish the level of confidence the reader has in the document and the City's efforts in general.

### **5. Rewrite**

This is the fundamental rule for good writing. Read your drafts carefully, aloud if possible, and don't hesitate to revise them. Professional writers rewrite their material mercilessly. To assure that you have adequate time to review and revise your writing, make sure your preparation schedule deliberately includes it. It always takes more time to correct mistakes, repair clumsy writing, and recover from their effects after the fact than it does to catch them early and fix them.

### **6. Proofread**

Read your material carefully, each time, no exceptions. Have someone else proofread it, too — a fresh pair of eyes usually works much better than the writer's, for catching any mistakes. It's too late and too costly to fix mistakes after the document or publication has already been printed and distributed.

### **7. Responsibility**

Whether or not your name will appear on the material you write, take responsibility as if it will be there. Don't hide behind the passive voice; take pride in the authorship of good quality material.

## Style Guide

### a, an

Use the article **a** before consonant sounds: *a historic event*, *a one-year term* (sounds as if it begins with a “w”), *a united stand* (sounds like you).

Use the article **an** before vowel sounds: *an energy crisis*, *an honorable man* (the “h” is silent), *an NBA record*, *an 1890s celebration*.

### accept, except

**Accept** means to receive. **Except** means to exclude.

### addresses

Use the abbreviations **Ave.**, **Blvd.**, and **St.** only with a numbered address: *1600 Pennsylvania Ave.* Spell them out and capitalize when part of a formal street name without a number: *Pennsylvania Avenue*.

Lowercase and spell out when used alone or with more than one street name: *Pennsylvania and Massachusetts avenues*. All similar words (**alley**, **drive**, **road**, **terrace**, etc.) always are spelled out. Capitalize them when part of a formal name without a number.

Always use figures for an address number: *9 Morningside Circle*. Spell out and capitalize **First** through **Ninth** when used as street names; use figures with two letters for **10th** and above: *7 Fifih Ave.*, *100 21st St.*

### adopt, approve, enact, pass

Amendments, ordinances, resolutions and rules are **adopted** or **approved**. Bills are **passed**. Laws are **enacted**.

### affect, effect

**Affect**, as a verb, means to influence: *The game will affect the standings*. **Affect**, as a noun, is best avoided. It occasionally is used in psychology to describe an emotion, but there is no need for it in everyday language.

**Effect**, as a verb, means to cause: *He will effect many changes in the company*. **Effect**, as a noun, means result: *The effect was overwhelming*.

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#### Important Note:

This portion of the Style Guide is intended to help improve consistency in written publications and reports.

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**aid, aide**

**Aid** is assistance.

**Aide** is a person who serves as an assistant.

**a.m., p.m.**

Lowercase, with periods. Avoid the redundant: *10 a.m. this morning*.

Note: when ending a sentence with **a.m.** or **p.m.**, the period following the “m” also signifies the end of the sentence. It is perfectly acceptable to end a sentence in this manner.

**among, between**

**Between** introduces two items, and **among** introduces more than two: *The funds were divided among the three brothers.*

However, **between** is the correct word when expressing the relationships of three or more items considered one pair at a time: *Negotiations about the debate format are under way between the network and the three campaign committees.*

**anybody, any body, anyone, any one**

One word for an indefinite reference: *Anyone can do that*. Two words when the emphasis is on singling out one element of a group: *Any one of them may speak up*.

**assure**

Make sure or certain; make confident.

**biannual, biennial**

**Biannual** means twice a year and is a synonym for the word semiannual. **Biennial** means every two years. **Semiannual** may be more clear than **biannual** in some contexts.

**bimonthly**

Every two months. **Semimonthly** means twice a month: *My bimonthly magazine subscription gives me six issues a year.*

**biweekly**

Every two weeks: *We get paid biweekly, 26 times a year.*

**capital**

The city where a seat of government is located. Do not capitalize.

**capitol**

The statehouse, the building where the legislature and state or federal government is housed.

**capitalization**

In general, avoid unnecessary capitals. Use a capital letter only if you can justify it by one of the principles following:

**Proper Nouns:**

Capitalize nouns that constitute the unique identification for a specific person, place or thing: *Mary, San José, El Niño.*

**Proper Names:**

Capitalize common nouns such as party, river, street and west when they are an integral part of a full name: *Democratic Party, Mississippi River, Fleet Street, West Virginia.*

Lowercase these common nouns when they stand alone in subsequent references: the party, the river. Lowercase the common noun elements of names in all plural uses: *the Democratic and Republican parties.*

**Titles:**

Capitalize formal titles when used immediately before or after a name, or when referring to a specific person.

Capitalize when part of a formal name: *San José City Manager Del Borgsdorf, Del Borgsdorf, City Manager.* Always capitalize San José.

Use lowercase at all times for terms that are job descriptions rather than formal titles. The exception is titles included in headings and signatory lines of memos, staff reports, etc.

Examples: Capitalize specific documents, areas, projects when accompanied by the city name: *The General Plan. The City of San José General Plan. A city's general plan.*

**channel**

Capitalize when used with a figure; lowercase elsewhere: *He turned on Channel 11. KNTV is a San José-based television channel.*

**city**

Capitalize **city** as part of a proper name: *Kansas City, New York City, City of San José.* Lowercase elsewhere: *a California city, the city government.*

Capitalize when referring to the City of San José: *The City has 6,800 employees.* Always capitalize San José.

Capitalize specific references to the City of San José as an institution in a document, lowercase for reference to the community or to other cities: *The City has been nationally recognized for its diversity program. The city is located in Silicon Valley.*

**City of**

Capitalize city when part of the name: *City of San José*, and when referring to the City organization on second reference: *the City*.

**city charter**

Lowercase for generic document, capitalize only for reference to a specific city's charter: *the San José City Charter*.

**city council**

Capitalize when part of a proper name, or specifically referring to the city council of the City of San José: *The San José City Council*, *the City Council of Cupertino*. Capitalize on second reference when referring to the San José City Council: *The Council voted unanimously*.

Retain capitalization if the reference is to a specific council but the context does not require the city name. Lowercase in other uses: *the council*, *a city council*. Use city council in a generic sense for plural references: *the San José, Santa Clara, and Milpitas city councils*.

**city hall**

Capitalize with the name of a city, or without the name of a city if the reference is specific: *San José City Hall*, *City Hall*. Lowercase plural uses: *the Boston and New York City halls*. Lowercase generic uses: *You can't fight city hall*.

**citywide**

One word. Use lowercase when referring to the larger San José community: *A citywide trend in unemployment rates has emerged*. Use uppercase when referring to the City of San José: *The City Council approved a new Citywide policy*.

**citizen, resident**

A **citizen** is a person who has acquired the full civil rights of a nation or community. To avoid confusion, use **resident**, not **citizen**, in reference to people who live in cities and states.

**civil cases, criminal cases**

A **civil case** is one in which an individual, business or agency of government seeks damages or relief from another individual, business or agency of government.

**Civil actions** generally involve a charge that a contract has been breached or that someone has been wronged or injured. A **criminal case** is one that the state or the federal government brings against an individual charged with committing a crime.

**clean up (v.) cleanup (n. and adj.)**

*She helped clean up the spill. The volunteers conducted a cleanup of the creek.*

**collective nouns**

Nouns that denote a unit take singular verbs and pronouns: *staff, class, committee, crowd, family, group, herd, jury, orchestra, team.*

Some usage examples: *City staff is researching the issue. The committee is meeting to set its agenda. The jury reached its verdict. A herd of cattle was sold.*

**Plural:**

Some words that are plural in form become collective nouns and take singular verbs when the group or quantity is regarded as a unit.

Right: *A thousand bushels is a good yield. (A unit.)*

Right: *A thousand bushels were created. (Individual items.)*

Right: *The data have been carefully collected. (Individual items.)*

**commissioner, commission member**

Do not abbreviate. Capitalize when used before a person's name but lowercase after.

**committee**

Do not abbreviate. Capitalize when part of a formal name: *the House Appropriations Committee*. Do not capitalize committee in shortened versions of long committee names: *the Special Senate Select Committee to Investigate Improper Labor-Management Practices, for example, became the rackets committee.*

**company, companies**

Use *Co.* or *Cos.* when a business uses either word at the end of its proper name: *Ford Motor Co., American Broadcasting Cos.* But: *Aluminum Company of America.*

If company or companies appear alone in second reference, spell the word out.

The forms for possessives: *Ford Motor Co.'s profits, American Broadcasting Cos.' profits.*

**Theatrical:**

Spell out company in names of theatrical organizations: *the Martha Graham Dance Company.*

**company and organizational names**

Consult the company if in doubt about a formal name. Do not, however, use a comma before **Inc.** or **Ltd.**

Do not use all capital letter names unless the letters are individually pronounced or if the company specifically includes uppercase letters in its name: *CRX, SJSU, USN*. Others should be uppercase and lowercase.

**compliment, complement**

**Complement** is a noun and a verb denoting completeness or the process of supplementing something: *The ship has a complement of 200 sailors. The tie complements his suit.*

**Compliment** is a noun or verb that denotes praise or the expression of courtesy: *The city manager complimented the maintenance employees. Beverages were compliments of Joe's Diner.*

**congress**

Capitalize **U.S. Congress** and **Congress** when referring to the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. Although **Congress** sometimes is used as a substitute for the House, it properly is reserved for reference to both the Senate and House.

Capitalize **Congress** also if referring to a foreign body that uses the term, or its equivalent in a foreign language, as part of its formal name: *the Argentine Congress, the Congress.*

**congressional districts**

Use figures and capitalize district when joined with a figure: *the 1st Congressional District*. Lowercase district whenever it stands alone.

**congressman, congresswoman, Member of Congress**

Use only in reference to members of the U.S. House of Representatives.  
(see more explanation under "legislative titles.")

**connote, denote**

**Connote** means to suggest or imply something beyond the explicit meaning:  
*To many people, the name Disney connotes fun.*

**Denote** means to be explicit about the meaning: *The word demolish denotes destruction.*

**consensus**

Not concensus!

**constitution**

Capitalize references to the U.S. Constitution, with or without the U.S. modifier:

*The president said he supports the Constitution.*

When referring to constitutions of other nations or of states, capitalize only with the name of a nation or a state: *the French Constitution, the Massachusetts Constitution, the nation's constitution, the state constitution, the constitution.*

Lowercase in other uses: *the organization's constitution.* Lowercase constitutional in all uses.

**convention**

Capitalize as part of the name for a specific national or state political **convention**:

*the Democratic National Convention, the Republican State Convention.*

Lowercase in other uses: *the national convention, the state convention, the convention, the annual convention of the American Medical Association.*

**councilmember**

Use one word, may be used for men and women. Upper case when used as title:

*Councilmember Mary Jones; Mary Jones, San José City Councilmember. Mary Jones, member of the San José City Council.*

Lowercase when used collectively: *San José city councilmembers are elected every four years.*

**counsel, counseled, counseling, counselor, counselor at law**

To **counsel** is to advise. A **counselor** is one who advises. A **counselor at law** (no hyphens for consistency with attorney at law) is a lawyer.

**county**

Capitalize when an integral part of a proper name: *Santa Clara County, Alameda County.*

Capitalize the full names of county governmental units: *the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, the Alameda County Department of Social Services.*

Retain capitalization for the name of a county body if the proper noun is not needed in the context; lowercase the word county if it is used to distinguish an agency from state or federal counterparts: *the Board of Supervisors, the county Board of Supervisors, the Department of Social Services, the county Department of Social Services.* Lowercase the board, the department, etc. whenever they stand alone.

**county con't...**

Capitalize county if it is an integral part of a specific body's name even without the proper noun: *the County Board, the County Legislature*. Lowercase the commission, the legislature, etc. when not preceded by the word county.

Capitalize as part of a formal title before a name: *County Executive John Smith*. Lowercase when it is not part of the formal title: *county Health Commissioner Mary Jones*.

**countywide**

See "citywide" for guidelines.

**courthouse**

Capitalize with the name of a jurisdiction: *the Cook County Courthouse, the U.S. Courthouse*. Lowercase in other uses: *the county courthouse, the courthouse, the federal courthouse*.

**day to day, day-to-day**

Hyphenate when used as a compound modifier: *They have extended the contract on a day-to-day basis. He is living day to day.*

**department**

Capitalize when part of a proper name: *The Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood, the Police Department*.

Retain capitalization on second reference to the same department: *The Department responded quickly.*

The same rules apply to departments, offices and divisions of the City of San José: *The Redevelopment Agency, the Agency; the Attorney's Office, the Office; the Planning Division, the Division.*

**directions and regions**

In general, lowercase north, south, northeast, northern, etc., when they indicate compass **direction**. Capitalize these words when they indicate **regions** or as part of proper names: *San José is located in the South Bay. The North was victorious. She has a Southern accent. He is a Westerner. The Bay Area has excellent weather.*

**director**

Capitalize when used as a formal title before a name: *State Director of Finance Fred Jones, Director Jane Smith*. Do not capitalize in job descriptions, generic usage, or informal designations: *the directors on the committee*. Uppercase as formal title after name: *Ralph A. Qualls Jr., Director of Public Works*. Uppercase on second reference when referring to a specific person: *the Director*.

**downtown, Downtown**

Usually lowercase. Use uppercase for specific title of document or event:

*Downtown Specific Plan.*

**effect, affect**

**Effect**, as a verb, means to cause: *He will effect many changes in the company.* **Effect**, as a noun, means result: *The effect was overwhelming.*

**Affect**, as a verb, means to influence: *The game will affect the standings.* **Affect**, as a noun, is best avoided. It occasionally is used in psychology to describe an emotion, but there is no need for it in everyday language.

**ensure, insure**

Use **ensure** to mean guarantee: *Steps were taken to ensure accuracy.*

Use **insure** for references to insurance: *The policy insures his life.*

**entitle**

Use it to mean a right to do or have something. Do not use it to mean titled.

Right: *She was entitled to the promotion.*

Right: *The book was titled, "Gone With The Wind."*

**essential clauses, non-essential clauses**

Both types of clauses provide additional information about a word or phrase in a sentence. (These terms are used instead of restrictive and non-restrictive.)

The difference between them is that the **essential clause** cannot be eliminated without changing the meaning of the sentence — it so restricts the meaning of the word or phrase that its absence would lead to a substantially different interpretation of what the author meant.

**Punctuation:**

An **essential clause** must not be set off from the rest of a sentence by commas.

The **non-essential clause**, however, can be eliminated without altering the basic meaning of the sentence — it does not restrict the meaning so significantly that its absence would radically alter the author's thought.

The presence or absence of commas provides the reader with critical information about the writer's intended meaning. Note examples:

- *Reporters who do not read the stylebook should not criticize their editors.*  
(The writer is saying that only one class of reporters, those who do not read the stylebook, should not criticize their editors. If the *who ... stylebook* phrase were deleted, the meaning of the sentence would be changed substantially.)

**essential clauses, non-essential clauses con't...**

- *Reporters, who do not read the stylebook, should not criticize their editors.*  
(The writer is saying that all reporters do not read the stylebook and should not criticize their editors. If the *who...stylebook* phrase were deleted, this meaning would not be changed.)

**Use of who, that, which:**

When an essential or non-essential clause refers to a human being or animal with a name, it should be introduced by **who** or **whom**. Do not use commas if the clause is essential to the meaning; use them if it is not.

**That** is the preferred pronoun to introduce clauses that refer to an inanimate object or an animal without a name. **Which** is the only acceptable pronoun to introduce a non-essential clause that refers to an inanimate object or an animal without a name.

The pronoun **which** occasionally may be substituted for **that** in the introduction of an essential clause that refers to an inanimate object or an animal without a name. In general, this use of **which** should appear only when **that** is used as a conjunction in the same sentence: *He said Monday that the part of the army which suffered severe casualties needs reinforcement.*

**every day (adv.) everyday (adj.)**

*She goes to work every day. He wears everyday shoes.*

**every one, everyone**

Two words when it means each individual item: *Every one of the clues was worthless.*

One word when used as a pronoun meaning all persons: *Everyone wants his or her life to be happy.* (Note that **everyone** takes singular verbs and pronouns.)

**farther, further**

**Farther** refers to physical distance: *He walked farther into the woods.*

**Further** refers to an extension of time or degree: *She will look further into the mystery.*

**federal**

Use a capital letter for the architectural style and for corporate or governmental bodies that use the word as part of their formal names: *Federal Express, the Federal Trade Commission.*

Lowercase when used as an adjective to distinguish something from state, county, city, town or private entities: *federal assistance, federal court, the federal government, a federal judge.*

Also: *federal District Court* (but U.S. District Court is preferred) and *federal Judge John Sirica* (but U.S. District Judge John Sirica is preferred.)

**fewer, less**

In general, use **fewer** for individual items, **less** for bulk or quantity.

Wrong: *The trend is toward more machines and less people.*  
(People in this sense refers to individuals.)

Wrong: *She was fewer than 60 years old.* (Years in this sense refers to a period of time, not individual years.)

Right: *Fewer than 10 applicants called.*

Right: *I had less than \$50 in my pocket.* (An amount.) But: *I had fewer than 50 \$1 bills in my pocket.* (individual items.)

**fiscal year**

Spell out for first reference: *It is set for fiscal year 2000-01.* Use of initials acceptable for second reference: *FY 2000-01.* Always include full numerals for year:

Wrong: *fiscal year 00-01.*

**full time, full-time**

Hyphenate when used as a compound modifier: *He was a part-time employee. He works full time.*

**general plan, general fund**

Capitalize only when accompanied by city name or referring to specific title or item: *The San José General Plan was recently updated. The City's General Fund is threatened by the Legislature.* Lowercase for generic use: *The general funds of cities support basic services. The state requires every city to have a general plan.*

**governmental bodies**

Follow these guidelines:

**Full Name:**

Capitalize the full proper names of governmental agencies, departments, and offices:

*The U.S. Department of State, the Georgia Department of Human Resources, the Boston City Council, the Chicago Fire Department.*

**governor**

Capitalize and abbreviate as **Gov.** or **Govs.** when used as a formal title before one or more names in regular text. Capitalize and spell out when used as a formal title before one or more names in direct quotations. Lowercase and spell out in all other uses.

**hazmat**

Hazardous materials. Use as one term, no space.

Capitalize when referring specifically to *City of San José Hazmat Unit.*

**imply, infer**

Writers or speakers **imply** in the words they use.  
A listener or reader **infers** something from the words.

**Internet**

Refers to the World Wide Web.

**Intranet**

Refers to an organization's internal website.

**its, it's**

When using in the possessive, do not use an apostrophe. If you are using an apostrophe with a pronoun, always double-check to be sure that the meaning calls for a contraction: *you're, it's, there's*.

**junior, senior**

Abbreviate as **Jr.** and **Sr.** only with full names of persons or animals.  
Do not precede by a comma: *Sammy Davis Jr.*

The notation **II** or **2nd** may be used if it is the individual's preference. Note, however, that **II** and **2nd** are not necessarily the equivalent of junior — they often are used by a grandson or nephew. If necessary to distinguish between father and son in second reference, use the elder Smith or the younger Smith.

**legislative titles*****First Reference Form:***

Use **Rep.**, **Reps.**, **Sen.** and **Sens.** as formal titles before one or more names in regular text. Spell out and capitalize these titles before one or more names in a direct quotation. Spell out and lowercase representative and senator in other uses.

Spell out other legislative titles in all uses. Capitalize formal titles such as *assemblyman*, *assemblywoman*, *city councilmember*, *delegate*, etc., when they are used before a name. Add **U.S.** or state before a title only if necessary to avoid confusion: *U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein spoke with state Sen. John Vasconcellos.*

***Congressman, Congresswoman:***

**Rep.** and **U.S. Rep.** are the preferred first-reference forms when a formal title is used before the name of a U.S. House member. The words **congressman** or **congresswoman**, in lowercase, may be used in subsequent references that do not use an individual's name, just as **senator** is used in references to members of the Senate.

**Congressman** and **congresswoman** should appear as capitalized formal titles before a name only in direct quotation.

**legislative titles con't...**

*NOTE: A reminder to staff that all correspondence to local, state and federal officials should be coordinated with Intergovernmental Relations in the City Manager's Office.*

**Organizational Title:**

Capitalize titles for formal, organizational offices within a legislative body when they are used before a name: *Speaker Tom Jones, Majority Leader Mary Smith, Minority Leader Peter Doe, Democratic Whip Susan Wong, Chairman Isadora Duncan of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, President Pro Tem John Wayne.*

**legislature**

Capitalize when preceded by the name of a state: *the California Legislature.*

Retain capitalization when the state name is dropped but the reference is specifically to that state's legislature: *Both houses of the Legislature adjourned today.* Capitalize legislature in subsequent specific references and in such constructions as: *the 100th Legislature, the state Legislature.*

Although the word **legislature** is not part of the formal, proper name for the lawmaking bodies in many states, it commonly is used that way and should be treated as such in any story that does not use the formal name.

If a given context or local practice calls for the use of a formal name such as Missouri General Assembly, retain the capital letters if the name of the state can be dropped, but lowercase the word assembly if it stands alone. Lowercase **legislature** if a story uses it in a subsequent reference to a body identified as a general assembly.

**manager**

Capitalize when used as a formal title before a name: *Manager Dusty Baker, Fleet Manager Susan B. Anthony.* Do not capitalize in job descriptions or generic usage: *program manager Bob Jones.*

**nationalities and races**

Capitalize the proper names of nationalities, peoples, races, tribes, etc.: *Arab, Arabic, African, African-American, American, Caucasian, Cherokee, Chinese* (both singular and plural), *Eskimo* (plural *Eskimos*), *French Canadian, Gypsy* (*Gypsies*), *Japanese* (singular and plural), *Jewish, Latin, Nordic, Oriental, Sioux, Swede, etc.*

**non-point source**

Use hyphen for **non-point**.

## numerals

A numeral is a figure, letter, word or group of words expressing a number.

Roman numerals use the letters, **I, V, X, L, C, D** and **M**. Use Roman numerals for wars and to show personal sequence for animals and people: *World War II, Native Dancer II, King George VI, Pope John XXIII*.

Arabic numerals use the figures **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9** and **0**. Use Arabic forms unless Roman numerals are specifically required.

The figures **1, 2, 10, 101**, etc., and the corresponding words — **one, two, ten, one hundred one**, etc. — are called cardinal numbers. The term ordinal number applies to **1st, 2nd, 10th, 101st, first, second, tenth, one hundred first**, etc.

Follow these guidelines in using numerals: Spell out **one** through **nine** in sentences, use figures for **10** and above.

### **Large Numbers:**

When large numbers must be spelled out, use a hyphen to connect a word ending in “y” to another word; do not use commas between other separate words that are part of one number:

*twenty; thirty; twenty-one; thirty-one; one hundred forty-three; one thousand one hundred fifty-five; one million two hundred seventy-six thousand five hundred eighty-seven.*

### **Sentence Start:**

Spell out a numeral at the beginning of a sentence. If necessary, recast the sentence.

There is one exception — a numeral that identifies a calendar year.

Wrong: *993 freshmen entered the college last year.*

Right: *Last year 933 freshmen entered the college.*

Right: *1976 was a very good year.*

### **Casual Uses:**

Spell out casual expressions: *A thousand times no! Thanks a million. He walked a quarter of a mile.*

### **Proper Names:**

Use words or numerals according to an organization’s practice: *20th Century Fox, Twentieth Century Fund, Big Ten.*

### **Figures or Words?**

*For ordinals:*

Spell out **first** through **ninth** when they indicate sequences in time or location: *first base, the First Amendment, he was first in line*. Starting with **10th** use figures.

Use **1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th**, etc., when the sequence has been assigned in forming names.

The principal examples are geographic, military and political designations such as *1st Ward, 7th Fleet and 1st Sgt.*

**numerals con't...*****Some Punctuation and Usage Examples:***

- *Act 1, Scene 2*
- *a 5-year-old girl*
- *DC-10 but 747B*
- *a 5-4 court decision*
- *2nd District Court*
- *the 1980s, the '80s*
- *The House voted 230-205.*  
(Fewer than 1,000 votes — use hyphen.)
- *Jimmy Carter defeated Gerald Ford 40,827,292 to 39,146,157.* (More than 1,000 votes.)
- *Carter defeated Ford 10 votes to 2 votes in Little Junction.*  
(To avoid confusion with ratio.)
- *5 cents, \$1.05, \$650,000, \$2.45 million*
- *No. 3 choice, but Public School 3*
- *0.6 percent, 1 percent, 6.5 percent*
- *a pay increase of 12 percent to 15 percent.*
- *from \$12 million to \$14 million*
- *a ratio of 2-to-1, a 2-1 ratio*
- *a 4-3 score*
- *(408) 555-1212*
- *minus 10, zero, 60 degrees*

***Other Uses:***

For uses not covered by these listings, spell out whole numbers below 10, use figures for 10 and above.

Typical examples: *They had three sons and two daughters. The team had a fleet of 10 station wagons and two buses.*

***In A Series:***

Apply the appropriate guidelines: *They had 10 dogs, six cats and 97 hamsters. They had four four-room houses, 10 three-room houses and 12 10-room houses.*

**olympics**

Capitalize all references to the international athletic contests held every four years: *the Olympics, the Winter Olympics, the Olympic Games, the Games, an Olympic-sized pool.*  
Lowercase other uses: *a beer-drinking olympics.*

**one-**

Hyphenate when used in writing fractions: *one-half, one-third*. Use phrases such as *a half* or *a third* if precision is not intended.

**oral, verbal, written**

Use **oral** to refer to spoken words: *He gave an oral promise*.

Use **written** to refer to words committed to paper: *We had a written agreement*.

Use **verbal** to compare words with some other form of communication: *His tears revealed the sentiments that his poor verbal skills could not express*.

**over**

It generally refers to spatial relationships: *The plane flew over the city*.

Avoid using with numerals: *I paid more than \$200 for this suit*.

**part time, part-time, full time, full-time**

Hyphenate when used as a compound modifier: *He was a part-time employee. He works full time*.

**percent**

Spell out as one word: *percent* (versus using “ % ” except for tables and charts).

**percentages**

Use figures: *1 percent, 2.5 percent* (use decimals, not fractions), *10 percent*.

Spell out the word *percentage* instead of “%” in sentence form.

For amounts less than **1 percent**, precede the decimal with a zero: *The cost of living rose 0.6 percent*. Repeat percent with each individual figure: *He said 10 percent to 30 percent of the electorate may not vote*.

**planning**

Avoid the redundant: *future planning*.

**police department**

In communities where this is the formal name, capitalize **police department** with or without the name of the community: *the San José Police Department, the Police Department*.

**policymaker, policymaking**

Use as one term, except as a compound modifier, a policy-making process.

### prefixes

Generally, do not hyphenate when using a prefix with a word starting with a consonant. Three rules are constant, although they yield some exceptions to first-listed spellings in Webster's New World Dictionary:

- Except for cooperate and coordinate, use a hyphen if the prefix ends in a vowel and the word that follows begins with the same vowel.
- Use a hyphen if the word that follows is capitalized.
- Use a hyphen to join doubled prefixes: *sub-subparagraph*.

### principal, principle

**Principal** is a noun and adjective meaning someone or something first in rank, authority, importance or degree: *She is the school principal. He was the principal player in the trade. Money is the principal problem.*

**Principle** is a noun that means a fundamental truth, law, doctrine, or motivating force: *They fought for the principles of self-determination.*

### public hearing, public meeting, public workshop, public forum

**Public hearing** refers to formal session to take public testimony as part of a policy-making process. **Public meeting** refers to meeting that is open to the public, but not necessarily a public hearing. **Public workshop** or **public forum** refer to less formal, though possibly structured, meetings to solicit public discussion and input.

### San José

Use an accent over the "e" in the name *San José*. According to local language experts, common Spanish usage dictates applying the accent mark only when it appears in lower case. Use of the accent mark should be avoided with all-caps or small-caps treatments. For instance, *City of San José* includes the accent mark, but *CITY OF SAN JOSE* does not. Since the City sun logo uses small caps, the accent mark is not used in the logo.

The only exception is when it is part of the proper name of another organization or business, such as *San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce* which has chosen not to use the accent mark.

The accent mark is not used in the City's web address ([www.ci.san-jose.ca.us](http://www.ci.san-jose.ca.us)).

To create an accented é, hold down the alt key and type "0233", on the numeric key pad.

When referring to the City of San José within a document, the preferred form of subsequent references to the organization is "the City," rather than "San Jose," in order to clarify that you are discussing the City government, vs. the community at large.

**San Jose's**

Avoid use of the possessive when possible. Use possessive only when the first reference is explicitly clear that it means either the City of San José as an institution, or the community of San José.

Example: Citing “*San José's character*” or “*San José's priorities*” is ambiguous whether it is the City or the community under discussion without a clear first reference.

**school**

Capitalize when part of a proper name: *Pioneer High School*, *John Muir Middle School*, *Willow Glen Elementary School*.

**seasons**

Lowercase spring, summer, fall, winter and derivatives such as springtime unless part of a formal name: *Summer Olympics*, *Winter Ball*.

**second reference**

As used here, the term applies to all subsequent references to an organization or individual in the document.

The listing of an acceptable term for **second reference** does not mean that it always must be used after the first reference. Often a generic word such as the Department or the Agency is more appropriate and less jarring to the readers. At other times the full name may need to be repeated for clarity.

**semiannual**

Synonym for **biannual** meaning twice a year.

**should, would**

Use **should** to express an obligation: *We should help the needy.*

Use **would** to express a customary action: *In the summer we would spend hours by the seashore.*

Use **would** also in constructing a conditional past tense, but be careful:

Wrong: *If Soderholm would not have had an injured foot, Thompson would not have been in the lineup.*

**South Bay**

Capitalize when used as a specific place name or as a shortened form of South San Francisco Bay: *“I live in the South Bay, the environmentally sensitive waters of the South Bay.”*

**state**

Lowercase in all state of constructions: *the state of Maine, the states of Maine and Vermont.*

Four states — Kentucky, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Virginia — are legally commonwealths rather than states. The distinction is necessary only in formal uses: *The commonwealth of Kentucky filed a suit.* For simple geographic reference: *Tobacco is grown in the state of Kentucky.*

Do not capitalize state when used simply as an adjective to specify a level of jurisdiction: *state Rep. William Smith, the state Transportation Department, state funds.* Also apply the same principle to phrases such as *the city of Chicago, the town of Enfield,* etc.

**state names**

Follow these guidelines:

***Standing Alone:***

Spell out the names of the 50 U.S. states when they stand alone in textual material. Any state name may be condensed, however, to fit typographical requirements for tabular material.

***Eight Not Abbreviated:***

The names of eight states are never abbreviated in text: *Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.* Memory Aid: Spell out the names of the two states that are not part of the contiguous United States and of the continental states that are five letters or fewer.

***Punctuation:***

Place one comma between the city and the state name, and another comma after the state name, unless ending a sentence or indicating a dateline: *He was traveling from Nashville, Tenn., to Austin, Texas, en route to his home in Albuquerque, N.M. She said Cook County, Ill., was Mayor Daley's stronghold.*

***Miscellaneous:***

Use *New York state* when necessary to distinguish the state from *New York City.*

Use *state of Washington* or *Washington state* when necessary to distinguish the state from the *District of Columbia.* (*Washington State* is the name of a university in the state of Washington.)

**that (conjunction)**

Use the conjunction **that** to introduce a dependent clause if the sentence sounds or looks awkward without it. There are no hard-and-fast rules, but in general:

- **That** usually may be omitted when a dependent clause immediately follows a form of the verb to say: *The president said he had signed the bill.*
- **That** should be used when a time element intervenes between the verb and the dependent clause: *The president said Monday that he had signed the bill.*
- **That** usually is necessary after some verbs. They include: *advocate, assert, contend, declare, estimate, make clear, point out, propose and state.*
- **That** is required before subordinate clauses beginning with conjunctions such as *after, although, because, before, in addition to, until and while*: *Haldeman said that after he learned of Nixon's intention to resign, he sought pardons for all connected with Watergate.*

When in doubt, include **that**. Omission can hurt. Inclusion never does.

**that, which, who, whom (pronouns)**

Use **who** and **whom** in referring to people and to animals with a name:

*John Jones is the man who helped me.*

Use **that** and **which** in referring to inanimate objects and to animals without a name.

**their, there, they're**

**Their** is a possessive pronoun: *They went to their house.* **There** is an adverb indicating direction: *We went there for dinner.*

**There** also is used with the force of a pronoun for impersonal constructions in which the real subject follows the verb: *There is no food on the table.* **They're** is a contraction for **they are**.

**titles**

In general, confine capitalization to formal titles used directly before an individual's name, and on second reference when referring to a specific person within the City organization. The basic guidelines:

**Lowercase:**

Lowercase and spell out titles when they are not used with an individual's name:

*The president issued a statement. The pope gave his blessing.*

Lowercase and spell out titles in constructions that set them off from a name by commas:

*The vice president, Theodore Roosevelt, declined to run again. John Paul II, the current pope, does not plan to retire.*

**titles con't...****Formal Titles:**

Capitalize formal titles when they are used immediately before one or more names: *Pope John Paul, President Washington, Vice Presidents John Jones and William Smith.*

A formal title generally is one that denotes a scope of authority, professional activity or academic accomplishment so specific that the designation becomes almost as much an integral part of an individual's identity as a proper name itself: *President Clinton, Mayor Willie Brown, Dr. Marcus Welby, Pvt. Gomer Pyle.*

Other titles serve primarily as occupational descriptions: *astronaut John Glenn, movie star John Wayne, peanut farmer Jimmy Carter.*

**Titles Within the City of San José Organization:**

Capitalize formal titles when they are used immediately before or after a name, and on second reference to a specific person: *City Manager Del D. Borgsdorf, Del D. Borgsdorf, City Manager, the City Manager said; Planning Director Jim Derryberry, It met with the Director's approval.*

A final determination on whether a title is formal or occupational depends on the practice of the governmental or private organization that confers it. If there is doubt about the status of a title and the practice of the organization cannot be determined, use a construction that sets the name or the title off with commas.

**Abbreviated Titles:**

The following formal titles are capitalized and abbreviated as shown when used before a name outside quotations: *Dr., Gov., Lt. Gov., Rep., Sen.* and certain military ranks listed in the military titles entry. Spell out all except *Dr.* when they are used in quotations. All other formal titles are spelled out in all uses.

**Titles of Nobility:**

Capitalize a full title when it serves as the alternative name for an individual.

**Past and Future Titles:**

A formal title that an individual formerly held, is about to hold or holds temporarily is capitalized if used before the person's name. But do not capitalize the qualifying word: *former President Ford, deposed King Constantine, Attorney General-designate Mary Jones, acting Mayor John Doe.*

**Long Titles:**

Separate a long title from a name by a construction that requires a comma: *Charles Robinson, undersecretary for economic affairs, spoke.* Or: *The undersecretary for economic affairs, Charles Robinson, spoke.*

**titles con't...*****Unique Titles:***

If a title applies only to one person in an organization, insert the word *the* in a construction that uses commas: *John Jones, the deputy vice-president, spoke.*

**trademark**

A **trademark** is a brand, symbol, word, etc., used by a manufacturer or dealer and protected by law to prevent a competitor from using it: *AstroTurf, for a type of artificial grass*, for example.

In general, use a generic equivalent unless the trademark name is essential to the story. When a trademark is used, capitalize it.

**verbs**

The abbreviation **v.** is used in this guide to identify the spelling of the verb forms of words frequently misspelled.

***Split Forms:***

In general, avoid awkward constructions that split infinitive forms of a verb (**to leave**, **to help**, etc.) or compound forms (had left, are found out, etc.)

Awkward: *She was ordered to immediately leave on an assignment.*

Preferred: *She was ordered to leave immediately on an assignment.*

Awkward: *There stood the wagon that we had early last autumn left by the barn.*

Preferred: *There stood the wagon that we had left by the barn early last autumn.*

Occasionally, however, a split is not awkward and is necessary to convey the meaning: *He wanted to really help his mother. Those who lie are often found out. How has your health been? The budget was tentatively approved.*

**wastewater, sewage**

Use **wastewater** as one word, and in preference to sewage.

**webpage**

One word, refers to a page on the World Wide Web; i.e., the Internet

**website**

One word, refers to a site, usually a collection of webpages on the World Wide Web.

**WPCP**

Water Pollution Control Plant.