



Writing Guide

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1. Punctuation

Apostrophe (')

Examples

Use the apostrophe with nouns to show ownership (for people), belonging to (for groups), and affiliation or relationship (for things). This grammatical structure is called "possessive."

If the noun does NOT end in *s*, add an apostrophe and an *s*.

What to do with words that end in *s*

If a plural noun ends in *s*, add an apostrophe after the *s*.

If a singular noun ends in *s*, add an apostrophe and an *s*.

If a proper name ends in *s*, add an apostrophe and an *s*.

Note: If a new syllable is formed in the pronunciation of the possessive, and adding the extra syllable makes the word hard to pronounce, adding only the apostrophe is acceptable.

Use the apostrophe to mark the place in a contraction where letters are omitted.

Note: In business writing, contractions are acceptable and preferred when there's no possibility of confusion. The rule is to say less and avoid stuffiness.

Do NOT use the apostrophe to make personal pronouns possessive (its, hers).

The employee's office was locked.
Jim plays on the CSUSM men's tennis team.
It is the company's car.

All employees' offices were locked.
All US companies' employees quit.

Who stole the boss's car?

Sue Jones's backyard is overgrown.
Dennis's car was stolen.

Los Angeles' freeways are usually congested.
New Orleans' recovery from Katrina has been slow.

It is = it's
Has not = hasn't
Cannot = can't

This stock lost its value.
The key is hers.

Quotation marks (" ")

Use quotation marks to enclose the exact words of a speaker or a writer.

Exception: Long quotations (five lines or more) are indented at the right and left margins, quotation marks are NOT used, and the quote is single spaced.

Note: When quoting something that has a spelling or grammatical error, insert *sic* in italics and enclose the text in brackets []. *Sic* means, "This is the way the original material was."

Use single quotation marks to enclose a quote inside a quote.

Words that are used humorously, ironically, or with some reservation may be enclosed in quotation marks.

"This sale should bring in more customers over the weekend," said the manager.

"Could you please be more specific," Tiffany asked, "and give me an example of a low-calorie dessert."

Note: Each part of the quote is enclosed with quotation marks.

Professor Grant said, "It's always nice to hear a student say, 'We need more homework.'"

The exam was "really" easy.

Quotation marks (“ ”) continued

Periods and commas ALWAYS go inside quotation marks and a comma precedes the quote.	Donald said, “You’re fired.”
Semicolons and colons ALWAYS go outside quotation marks UNLESS the punctuation is part of the quoted text.	“You’re fired,” said Donald.
	Yesterday, Ashley said, “We will definitely finish by 5 p.m.”; however, everyone ended up working until midnight.
	Please bring me the following items from your “urgent file”: The Veracruz project and the Guadalajara data.

Comma (,)

Use the comma to connect independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction.	Fuel-efficient cars are selling like hotcakes, but gas-guzzlers are not moving.
An independent clause is independent because it can be written as a complete sentence.	Note: The word <i>but</i> is the coordinating conjunction that separates what could be written as two sentences:
Coordinating conjunctions are words used to connect related parts of a sentence (<i>for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so</i>).	Fuel-efficient cars are selling like hotcakes. Gas-guzzlers are not moving.
Use the comma to separate items in a series.	<i>Consumer Reports</i> showed that silver, white, blue, and black cars were the top four colors favored by American consumers.
Note: The series must have at least three items. Insert a comma after the second to last item in the series. In other words, the series needs one comma fewer than the number of items in the series.	
Note: If the series has two items, separate the items with <i>and</i> or <i>or</i> .	
Use the comma to separate two or more adjectives in a series IF they modify the same noun and IF no <i>and</i> connects them. In this case, the comma replaces <i>and</i> .	Joe has been a reliable, competent employee for five years.
An adjective explains or describes a noun or pronoun.	I guarantee that this is a good, clean car.
A noun is a word that represents a person, place, thing, event, abstract idea, or state/condition.	Hard-working students get good jobs.
	Love is all we need.
Use commas to set off a nonrestrictive clause.	Nonrestrictive clause: The survey, which was five pages long, was sent to Starbucks three days ago.
A nonrestrictive clause adds extra information about the subject. Introduce the nonrestrictive clause with the word <i>which</i> and put commas around the clause. If the subject refers to a person, use “who” to introduce the clause.	Note: ... <i>which was five pages long</i> provides extra information about the survey. If the extra information is left out the sentence is still clear

Comma (,) continued

Do NOT use commas to set off a restrictive clause. A restrictive clause specifically identifies the subject. Without the restrictive clause the reader can't identify the exact subject of the sentence. Introduce a restrictive clause with the word <i>that</i> and no comma.	Restrictive clause: The survey that was five pages long was sent to Starbucks yesterday. Note: <i>That was five pages long</i> specifically identifies which survey it was—the one that was five pages long and not the one that was three pages long. Without the restrictive clause the reader can't tell which survey was sent to Starbucks.
Use the comma to “set off” parenthetical expressions. A parenthetical expression is one or more words that interrupt the sentence; it's a comment that appears to be “stuck in.” Parenthetical expressions also include: transitionals such as <i>however, for example, therefore, consequently, and in fact</i>; introductory interjections such as <i>oh</i> and <i>right</i>; and responsive expressions <i>yes, not, surely, indeed, well, and and so on.</i>	Falsifying survey data, it has been shown, will lead to a bad reputation. The survey is, however, seriously flawed. Oh, just do whatever you want. The results, indeed, are correct.
Use commas to set off an appositive. An appositive is a word or phrase set beside a noun or pronoun to describe or explain it.	CSUSM, the friendliest campus in the US, is also the youngest campus in California. Note: In this case, <i>the friendliest campus in the US</i> is the appositive that explains CSUSM (the noun).
Use a comma to separate units in a date or address (except street number and name) and use a comma AFTER the date or address.	The house at 211 Pine Road, San Marcos, is vacant. September 5, 2010, was the only time Jerry called in sick in 20 years.
Note: When using just the month and year a comma is not needed after month or year.	In August 2010 the average high temperature was 98 degrees F.
Use a comma after a dependent clause when an independent clause follows. A dependent clause is dependent (or subordinate) because it is not a complete sentence; it does not express a complete thought. An independent clause is independent because it can be written as a complete sentence.	Although it's more expensive, this computer has many more features. Since it was a holiday, public libraries were closed. Note: <i>Since it was a holiday</i> is a dependent clause; it “depends” on the independent clause <i>public libraries were closed</i> to become a complete sentence.

Comma (continued)

Use a comma after an introductory verbal.	
A verbal looks like a verb but acts as another part of speech. Verbals include gerunds, participles, and infinitives.	
A gerund is a verb form ending in <i>ing</i> and used as a noun. A gerund is used to explain an activity, a process, or a behavior.	After selling his car, Jim purchased a scooter. Note: <i>Sell</i> is a verb, and <i>selling his car</i> is used as a noun phrase describing an activity.
A participle is a verb form that functions as an adjective.	Feeling quite shaken, Geraldine failed her exam. Note: <i>Shake</i> is a verb. In this case <i>shaken</i> functions as an adjective and describes Geraldine's feelings.
An infinitive is a verb form introduced by <i>to</i> . An infinitive (<i>to</i> + verb form) may be used as a noun phrase, adjective, or adverb.	Since he only had one more exam to write, Jim took a nap. Note: <i>To write</i> is an infinitive. In this case, <i>to write</i> refers to <i>exam</i> and acts as an adjective.

Colon (:)

Use the colon to introduce a list.	Workers in this company belong to three groups: clerical, IT, and customer support.
Do NOT use the colon when the general idea of the sentence continues.	Not this. Cities with growing crime rates are: San Diego, New York, and Oahu. This. Cities with growing crime rates are San Diego, New York, and Oahu.

Semicolon (;)

Use the semicolon to connect independent clauses NOT connected by a conjunction to show that the clauses are very closely related.	The new contract provides wage increases; the original contract emphasized shorter hours.
An independent clause is independent because it can be written as a complete sentence.	Note: Both parts of the sentence (both independent clauses) could be written as individual, complete sentences. Instead, the two closely related sentences are written as one sentence and a semicolon is used in place of a word such as <i>and</i> (conjunction).
Conjunctions are words such as <i>and</i> , <i>but</i> , and <i>or</i> that connect words, phrases, and sentences.	
Use the semicolon when the second independent clause is introduced with a transitional.	Survey results show that we need to revise the policy; however, the president did not approve the proposed revision.
Transitionals are words and phrases such as <i>however</i> , <i>therefore</i> , <i>thus</i> , <i>as a result</i> , <i>consequently</i> , <i>on the other hand</i> , <i>etc.</i> , and show some logical connections between sentences or parts of sentences.	Hip customers like the new model; therefore, the store decided to sell both models.

Semicolon (;) continued

Use the semicolon to connect independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction. A clause is a group of words that includes a subject, a verb, and sometimes modifiers. An independent clause is independent because it can be written as a complete sentence. Coordinating conjunctions are words used to connect related parts of a sentence (<i>for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so</i>). For example, two nouns, two clauses, two verb forms, etc.	The market price was \$6; but we paid \$10 per share.
Use the semicolon to separate items in a list when the items have commas in them.	Goods received on Invoice 27 are as follows: three dozen denim shirts, size 14-33; four pairs men's gloves, brown, size large; and five dozen assorted socks.

Hyphen (-)

Use a hyphen to combine words into one compound word.	
nouns brother-in-law, city-state, American-born numbers spelled out and at the beginning of a sentence twenty-one through ninety-nine adjectives long-term contract, twenty-dollar bill prefixes co-organizer, ex-president, self-sufficient	

Em dash (—)

Use the em dash to set off a word or phrase for emphasis or to show interrupted thought.	Only one person—the dean—can make that decision. If you want to change the world—vote!
Use the em dash for parenthetical expressions that are long or contain internal punctuation. Note: An em dash is two hyphens. To create an em dash in Word, type the first word, insert two hyphens, type the next word or punctuation, and insert a space. Inserting the space will turn the hyphens into an em dash.	This new software—most managers who work at the BestBuy in San Marcos believe—will sell out by Friday.

En dash (–)

The en dash is used to indicate a range of numbers, dates, or times. The en dash is longer than a hyphen but shorter than the em dash.	The conference will be held Monday – Thursday.
Note: To create an en dash in Word, type the first word or numeral, insert a space, type a hyphen, insert a space, type the next word or numeral (word, space, hyphen, space, word).	Please read pages 1 – 50 for tomorrow.

2. Capitalization

What to capitalize in titles and section headings of written works	Examples
The first word	<i>Services Marketing: Integrating Customer Focus Across the Firm</i>
The last word	
All words with four or more letters	
Short verbs like <i>Is</i> , <i>Be</i> , and <i>Are</i>	“A Campus to Be Proud Of” “Wait Lines Are Longer in Summer”
The first word following a dash or colon	<i>Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity</i>
Also capitalize words with fewer than four letters except: articles (<i>the</i> , <i>a</i> , <i>an</i>) unless they are the first or last word;	“Implications of the Results” “The Implications”
short conjunctions (<i>and</i> , <i>as</i> , <i>but</i> , <i>if</i> , <i>or</i> , <i>nor</i>) unless they are the first or last word; and	“Challenges and Risks” “But What if There Are Risks?”
short prepositions (<i>at</i> , <i>by</i> , <i>for</i> , <i>in</i> , <i>of</i> , <i>off</i> , <i>on</i> , <i>out</i> , <i>to</i> , <i>up</i>) unless they are the first or last word.	<i>Fishing by Night</i> <i>By the Water's Edge</i>
Exceptions	
Capitalize short words like <i>in</i> , <i>out</i> , <i>off</i> , and <i>up</i> when they serve as adverbs.	“CSUSM’s Men’s Basketball Team Chalks Up Another Victory”
An adverb can modify a verb, an adjective, another adverb, a phrase, or a clause.	
Capitalize short prepositions like <i>in</i> and <i>up</i> when used with other prepositions of four or more letters.	“What’s Happening In and Around San Marcos”
A preposition links nouns, pronouns and phrases to other words in a sentence. The word or phrase that the preposition introduces is called the object of the preposition.	

What to capitalize and not capitalize

Capitalize	Do not capitalize
Proper names Richard Smith	Common names the president the vice president
Geographic places Midwest, East Coast, Northern California	General directions Go north, then turn east on Highway 78.
Titles preceding names when the title and name are NOT separated by a comma and are considered part of the name President Haynes Vice President of Human Resources Sally Smith was hired in 2008.	Titles separated from the name by a comma Ellen J. Neufeldt, president of CSUSM, spoke during the graduation ceremony. Note: In this case, the title functions as an appositive that adds extra information about Ellen J. Neufeldt. The vice president of human resources, Sally Smith, was hired in 2008.
Nouns followed by a number or letter to indicate sequence We meet in Room 418 Get more No. 10 envelopes See Figure 2 Chapter 3 Invoice 27	The nouns <i>line</i>, <i>note</i>, <i>page</i>, <i>paragraph</i>, <i>size</i>, <i>step</i>, and <i>verse</i> followed by a number line 22 page 105 paragraph 10
Department names The Department of Human Resources	General references to a department or area of expertise Jim works in human resources.
Official degree names and course titles Bachelor of Business Administration Principles of Accounting	Majors, minors, and general references to degrees or courses bachelor's degree accounting class
Nationalities, races, and ethnicities African American, Caucasian, German, Japanese, Ukrainian	The races <i>white</i> and <i>black</i> when referring to people
Names of months and semesters November; Fall 2012 semester	Names of seasons fall, winter, spring, summer
First word of complimentary close Sincerely yours,	Subsequent words of complimentary close Sincerely yours,

3. Point of View

Point of view in writing refers to the source of the writer's opinions and conclusions. Maintaining objectivity (showing absence of bias) keeps the writer's words believable. Therefore, an "impersonal" style is usually preferred in business writing. The style is determined by choosing a "point of view." Compare:

Personal style: Having reviewed the data, I recommend raising prices by 12%.
Impersonal style: A study of the data supports raising prices by 12%.

There are three points of view in writing—first, second, and third person.

First person

Use pronouns such as <i>I</i> , <i>we</i> , <i>my</i> and <i>our</i> .	<i>I</i> found that customers prefer chocolate ice cream.
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Second person

Use pronouns such as <i>you</i> and <i>your</i> .	In order to get the discount, <i>you</i> must purchase the software by June 27.
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Third person

Use nouns as well as pronouns such as <i>he</i> , <i>she</i> , <i>it</i> , and <i>they</i> .	All <i>project managers</i> had deadlines, so <i>they</i> cancelled the meeting.
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4. Voice

Active voice (subject + verb)

Verbs typically show action. In active voice, a sentence in which a verb does show action is structured such that the “doer” of the action is stated as the subject.

The **subject** is a word, phrase, or clause that names the person, place, or thing about which something is said.

Note: Active voice is used when the “doer” is known or is important to identify. In business writing the active voice is preferred because sentences are usually grammatically shorter and contain more information (the “doer” of the action).

Exceptions: When verbs don’t show action, they show a “link” or a condition/state. Verbs that show a link (linking verbs) are all forms of *be*, *seem*, *appear*, and *become*. Verbs that show a condition/state include *feel*, *look*, *sound*, *taste*, and *smell*. Even though there is no “doer,” the sentence can still be written in active voice.

Examples

The marketing director reported the results in our September newsletter.

Note: *Marketing director* is the subject and the “doer” of the action expressed by the verb *reported*.

The hungry student smelled the pizza being served in the lobby.

Note: *Smelled* shows action and *hungry student* is the “doer” and the subject.

The pizza smelled great and looked good.

Note: In this case the verbs *smelled* and *looked* don’t show action; they describe states or conditions of the pizza.

Passive voice (subject + be + verb)

A sentence is in the passive voice when the verb follows a form of *be*.

The **forms of *be*** are *am*, *is*, *are*, *was*, and *were*.

Note: In passive voice, the “doer” of the action expressed by the verb is either not stated in the sentence or, if the “doer” is stated, it is not the subject of the sentence. Instead, the “doer” is introduced by the preposition *by*, usually at the end of the sentence. In addition, the subject of the sentence is acted upon.

Note: Passive voice is used when the “doer” is not known, is not important, or when the writer doesn’t want to identify the “doer” (e.g., who did it).

Note: Passive voice is preferred when:

- 1) the writer does not want to name or accuse;
- 2) the writer wants to create an impersonal tone; or
- 3) the information is sensitive or the news is bad.

The results were reported.

Note: The verb construction *were reported* is made up of two parts—*were* and *reported*. In addition, the results (the subject) were acted upon; they were reported in September’s newsletter. Who reported the results—the “doer” of the action—is not stated in the sentence.

The results were reported by the marketing director.

Note: In this case, the marketing director is the “doer”; however, the sentence is structured such that *marketing director* is not the subject. This structure uses the preposition *by* plus the “doer.”

1) In the past year, the equipment has been sabotaged 10 times.

2) Petroleum is refined in Texas.

3) Several drivers were killed during the high-speed chase.

5. Numbers

Numbers are represented by words or numerals (digits).

When to use words	Examples
Zero and whole numbers 1 through 9	zero, one, two, and nine
Ordinal numbers less than 10	first, second, and ninth
Any number at the beginning of a sentence	Forty-two people attended the meeting.
Exception: A sentence can begin with a proper noun that starts with a numeral.	24 Hour Fitness offers personal training.
Note: To avoid long numbers at the beginning of a sentence, rewrite the sentence.	Not: One thousand three hundred and fifty-one people attended the meeting. This: The meeting was attended by 1,351 people.
Common fractions that stand alone or begin a sentence	one-half, two-thirds
A fraction is a common fraction when the numerator and denominator are integers.	
When to use numerals (digits)	
Numbers 10 and above	11, 23, and 101
Ordinal numbers 10 and above	11 th , 23 rd , and 101 st
Complicated fractions are usually expressed with numerals.	15/32, 24/50
Decimals	0.38, 5.25 0.38 pounds, $p=.05$
Note: Put a zero before the decimal when the value is less than one unless the value can never be greater than one, such as when expressing probability.	
When a number used in a sentence refers to a numeral (digit).	Survey responses ranged from 1 (<i>poor</i>) to 5 (<i>great</i>). Divide by 6. Pick a number 1 to 9.
Fractions with whole numbers	7 $\frac{1}{2}$, 22 $\frac{1}{2}$
Note: Leave a space between the whole number and the fraction. If the fraction character is used ($\frac{1}{2}$), be consistent throughout the text.	
Percentages	7.5%, 22.5%, 7.5 percent, 22.5 percent
Note: Using the % sign is preferred in business writing.	
Identification numbers	Channel 7, Highway 9
Parts of books	page 3, chapter 5
Do NOT capitalize <i>page</i> and <i>chapter</i> .	

When to use numerals (continued)

Figures	Figure 2 Note: Capitalize <i>Figure</i> because the numeral indicates sequence.
Tables	Table 7 Note: Capitalize <i>Table</i> because the numeral indicates sequence.
Days and years	August 8, 2011 8 August 2011
Note: Do not use a comma between the month and year when the date is written in European style. If multiple numbers in a sentence refer to similar things, be consistent. Note: If one of the numbers is 10 or greater, use numerals for all items.	There were 9 juniors, 15 sophomores, and 27 seniors in the class. Note: <i>Juniors, sophomores, and seniors</i> refer to the same thing (class standing) so all three numbers are written as numerals. None of the nine juniors collected the required 20 surveys. Note: <i>Juniors</i> and <i>surveys</i> refer to different things so <i>nine</i> is spelled and 20 is written as a numeral.
Plurals and numbers in a series	
To make plurals out of numbers, add <i>s</i> only. Do NOT include an apostrophe.	three 5s, in the 1970s
Use words and numerals when there are two numbers one after another. Preferably, spell out the number with fewer letters.	six 5-point scales 100 six-question surveys

6. Word Choice

a/an	Examples
If the first letter of the word following <i>a/an</i> sounds like a consonant, use <i>a</i> .	a Master in Business Administration, a personal computer, a historical moment
Also use <i>a</i> when <i>u</i> sounds like <i>y</i> in <i>yes</i> or <i>o</i> sounds like <i>w</i> in <i>window</i> .	a union, a user, a one-sided game
If the first letter of the word following <i>a/an</i> sounds like a vowel, use <i>an</i> .	an issue, an apple
Also use <i>an</i> before a silent <i>h</i> .	an honest person, an honorary degree
The rules also apply to acronyms.	an MBA, an IBM executive, a PC, a BLT
affect/effect (both can be used as verbs and nouns)	
<i>Affect</i> as a VERB means to influence, impact, transform, or cause a change.	The advertisement was designed to affect what consumers do. Inflation affects the market.
<i>Affect</i> as a VERB means to pretend or to fake.	The nervous interviewee was affecting self confidence.
<i>Affect</i> as a NOUN refers to feeling responses including emotions and moods, or specific responses such as satisfaction.	Marketing research is often conducted to study affect (the stress is on the first syllable of affect).
<i>Effect</i> as a VERB means to bring about as a result.	The governor will effect a salary freeze.
<i>Effect</i> as a noun means a <i>result, consequence</i> or <i>something brought about</i> .	What was the effect of the advertisement? A side effect of poor grammar and spelling is poor customer relations.
amount/number	
<i>Amount</i> is used for mass nouns.	amount of water, evidence, and oxygen
A mass noun denotes something that cannot be counted.	Note: <i>Water, evidence, and oxygen</i> denote something that cannot be counted.
<i>Number</i> is used for count nouns.	number of surveys, respondents, and dollars
Count nouns denote something that can be counted.	Note: <i>Surveys, respondents, and dollars</i> denote something that can be counted.

data/datum

<i>Data</i>, a Latin word, is plural and plural nouns are used with plural verbs. <i>Datum</i> is the singular form of data and is used with singular verbs. Note: When <i>data</i> is used as a mass noun it is used with singular verbs. A mass noun denotes something that cannot be counted.	The data were recorded yesterday. The data were entered in an Excel file. The datum was recorded yesterday. The datum was entered in an Excel file. The data was gathered yesterday. Note: <i>The data was gathered yesterday</i> is considered acceptable if <i>data</i> is used as a mass noun.
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that/which

Use <i>which</i> with nonrestrictive clauses. A nonrestrictive clause adds extra information about the subject. When writing a nonrestrictive clause, introduce it with the word <i>which</i> and put commas around the clause. If the subject is or was a person, use <i>who</i> to introduce the clause. Use <i>that</i> with restrictive clauses. A restrictive clause specifically identifies the subject. Without the restrictive clause the reader can't identify the exact subject of the sentence. Introduce a restrictive clause with the word <i>that</i> and no comma.	The survey was sent to Starbucks three days ago. Nonrestrictive clause: The survey, which was five pages long, was sent to Starbucks three days ago. Note: <i>Which was five pages long</i> provides extra information about the survey. If the extra information is left out the sentence is still clear. Restrictive clause: The survey that was five pages long was sent to Starbucks yesterday. <i>That was five pages long</i> specifically identifies which survey it was, the one that was five pages long and not the one that was three pages long. Without the restrictive clause the reader can't tell which survey was sent to Starbucks.
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then/than

<i>Than</i> is used in comparisons. <i>Then</i> is most commonly used to refer to time. <i>Then</i> can be replaced by <i>next</i> or <i>immediately</i>. <i>Then</i> can be used after <i>but</i> to qualify a preceding statement. <i>Then</i> is used in <i>if...then</i> statements.	Four is larger than three. I will write the exam then. Exit on Twin Oaks Valley Road then turn left onto Craven. Everything was fine, but then the car broke down. If I have to take statistics, then I will.
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who/that

<i>Who</i> refers to people.	Dr. Jones is the instructor who teaches BUS 101.
<i>That</i> refers to groups and things.	Jay is on the team that won the state title.

who's/whose

<i>Who's</i> is a contraction of <i>who is</i> or <i>who has</i> .	Who's administering the survey?
<i>Whose</i> asks who is the owner?.	Whose paper is this?
If you can replace the word with <i>who is</i> or <i>who has</i> , use <i>who's</i> .	

who/whom

<i>Who</i> is a subjective pronoun.	Who is taking the exam?
A subjective pronoun refers to the person performing an activity or experiencing a state.	Who missed the exam yesterday?
<i>Whom</i> is an objective pronoun.	The exam is being administered to whom?
An objective pronoun refers to the person to/for/about whom the task or activity impacts.	The exam was missed by whom?
Rewrite the sentence and replace who/whom with another pronoun such as she/he (subject) or her/him (object).	Who is taking the exam? She/he is taking the exam. The exam is being administered to whom? The exam is being administered to her/him/us/them.

7. Lists

Parallelism (symmetry)	Examples
Express equal thoughts in the same (parallel) grammatical form. Parallel construction is used with a) nouns and noun phrases, b) verbs and verb phrases, and c) gerunds.	
a) Nouns and noun phrases	
If one of the parts of a sentence, series, or list is a noun or noun phrase, the other parts must also be nouns or noun phrases.	The questionnaire asks for this information: age, salary, and race. Note: <i>Age, salary, and race</i> are all nouns.
A noun phrase includes a noun and the modifiers that distinguish it.	The questionnaire asks for this information: years of experience, number of children, and marital status. Note: <i>Years of experience, number of children, and marital status</i> are noun phrases.
Note: Nouns and noun phrases are similar grammatical forms and can be used together.	The questionnaire asks for this information: age, years of experience, and race. Note: <i>Age and race</i> are nouns; <i>years of experiences</i> is a noun phrase.
b) Verbs and verb phrases	
If one of the parts of a sentence, series, or list is a verb or verb phrase, the other parts must also be verbs or verb phrases.	To do well in class students must listen, concentrate, and study. Note: <i>Listen, concentrate, and study</i> are all verbs.
A verb phrase includes a verb followed by a noun phrase, another verb, or a preposition.	
A preposition links nouns, pronouns, and phrases to other words in a sentence. The word or phrase that the preposition introduces is called the object of the preposition.	While in class CSUSM students often surf the Internet, text their friends, and eat their lunches. Note: <i>Surf the Internet, text their friends, and eat their lunches</i> are all verb phrases.
Note: Verbs and verb phrases are similar grammatical forms and can be used together. However, to be parallel, the verbs and verb phrases must all be in the same tense.	Students who took Business Writing 203 reviewed spelling, brushed up on punctuation, and learned to use parallel grammatical structure. Note: <i>Reviewed, brushed, and learned</i> are all in the past tense.

c) Gerunds

If one of the parts of a sentence, series, or list is a gerund, the other parts must also be gerunds.	Good habits for academic success include studying hard, focusing on the lesson, and attending class.
A gerund is a verb form ending in <i>ing</i> and used as a noun. A gerund is used to explain an act, a process, or a behavior.	Note: <i>Studying</i> hard, <i>focusing</i> on the lesson, and <i>attending</i> class are all gerunds.

8. Format

Font	Examples
Two main categories of fonts are serif and sans serif. A serif is a pointed feature located at the end of strokes that form letters. Serif fonts have the features, sans serif fonts do not (<i>sans</i> is French for <i>without</i>). Serif fonts can be further categorized as Oldstyle, Modern, and Slab Serif (Williams, 1998).	This sentence is written in Garamond, an Oldstyle serif font that works well for body text.
Readability deals with the degree to which an extended amount of text is easy to read. Oldstyle serif fonts are the most readable of all fonts and should, in general, be used for the body text in formal business writing.	This is written in Times New Roman, a commonly used Oldstyle serif font.
Sans serif fonts are commonly used for headings and subheadings. Using a bold strong sans serif font creates contrast between headings and the main text which helps the reader easily differentiate the two. Sans serif fonts are also high in legibility, which is the degree to which a small chunk of text is easily recognized. Serif fonts can also be used for headings but when they are, format the font to distinguish headings from the body text.	This sentence is written in Calibri, a sans serif font that should not be used for the main body text.
	This is written in Arial.
	This is written in Corbel.
Figure numbers and titles	
Give all figures a number and title.	Figure 1: Average Responses
Give all tables a number and title.	Table 1: Summary of Results
Line spacing	
Single spacing is normally used in business writing. However, line spacing that is too tight decreases readability. In Word, using the default line spacing of 1.15 also works well.	

Indenting paragraphs and long quotes

A paragraph indent tells the reader that there is a new paragraph.

Indent paragraphs OR put extra space between them.
Do not do both.

Do not indent the first paragraph under a heading or subheading. The reader does not need the signal that there is a new paragraph.

Quotations of five lines or more should be indented on both sides and the quotation should be single-space.

Headings and subheadings

Headings and subheading provide organization and give the reader clues as to the content of the document. Use them!

Don't use all caps. Doing so reduces readability and looks like shouting.

If your text is left justified, left justify the headings and subheadings.

Select and format font to create contrast between headings and the main body text.

Select and format font to clearly distinguish main headings from subheadings.

Page numbers

Do not place a page number on the title page.

All pages after the title page must be numbered.

Use Arabic numerals beginning with the first page of the main body of the document (e.g., "Introduction" section), and continuing through the remainder of the document.

1, 2, 3...

Lower case Roman numerals should be used for pages between the title page and the first page of the main body of the document (e.g., the "Table of Contents" and "Executive Summary" should be given lower case Roman numerals).

i, ii, iii...

Italics

Use italics for whole publications like book titles, titles of magazines, and final reports.	The textbook is titled <i>Elementary Statistics</i> .
Parts of publications—chapters in books, articles in magazines, sections of a report—are enclosed in quotation marks.	The third chapter of the book <i>Elementary Statistics</i> is titled “Concepts of Sampling.”
Italicize a word that refers to a word.	Survey responses range from <i>poor</i> to <i>excellent</i> .
Italicize a letter that refers to a letter.	His first name is spelled with a <i>W</i> .

9. Getting Started

The cover page

Include a title.

Identify the audience by name, title, and organization (e.g., prepared for or submitted to)

Identify the author(s) by name, title, and organization (e.g., prepared by or submitted by)

Include a submission date.

Do not give the cover page a page number.

Table of contents

The table of contents is a document outline with headings, exactly as they appear in the text, and page numbers. It lists ALL the parts of the report that come AFTER the Table of Contents, beginning with Executive Summary.

Executive summary

The executive summary succinctly explains whatever is important in the report and typically presents information in the same order as it appears in the main report (called indirect order). Use about 30 to 40% of the summary to explain report sections such as 1) purpose/objective, 2) motivation for the project, 3) methodology used, and 4) limitations of the project. Use about 60% to 70% of the summary to explain 1) key results, 2) conclusions, and 3) recommendations.

Introduction

The introduction of a report prepares the readers to receive the report. Consider all likely readers and use sound judgment to determine what they need to know. Appropriate information may include 1) when, how, and by whom the report or project was authorized, and who wrote the report or completed the project; 2) the purpose or aim of the report; 3) the motivation for the report or project; 4) the scope or boundaries of the problem; 5) background or how the problem developed; and 6) topics that are covered in the rest of the report.