

General Guidelines/Tips:

1. Think like a marketer
 - “Sell”, don’t just inform (avoid unnecessary fluff, however)
 - Get the reader excited about the program/section
 - Focus on the benefits to the reader
 - Make the WIFM (What’s in it for me?) obvious. Answer the “So What?”
2. Write for your audience
 - Avoid academic jargon.
 - Translate complicated concepts into terms the reader will understand. Break it down to a level that will help the reader relate.
 - Frequently refer back to the “Personas” document to remind yourself who we are trying to reach and how to reach them.
3. Keep it informal
 - Use active voice and write in first person (you, our).
 - Don’t write something you wouldn’t say in an everyday conversation. The language you use should be simple and straightforward, not showy, “I’m smarter than you” words
 - BUT, respect the reader’s intelligence and take them seriously. Be careful not to oversimplify and “talk down” to your readers.
4. Less is more
 - Reader should be able to scan copy: Use bolded text, headers, bulleted lists, and links when possible
 - Keep your paragraphs and sentences short. Try to use one, at the most two, paragraphs per content field.
 - Get to the point! Don’t bury the important, interesting stuff with unnecessary detail.
6. Know what info to include/not to include
 - Work from a template or similar site samples: You should be able to clearly identify the type of information you need for each paragraph and “plug” it into a fairly consistent format and style.
 - Don’t include something unless it’s RELEVANT to the audience. Ask yourself if this would intrigue/excite the audience.
7. What are others (i.e. universities, education web sites, professional organizations/associations) saying about your subject area (if applicable)
 - Do a quick online search and see what else is out there about this type of degree.



Note: The University of Idaho follows the AP Style Book as our editorial standards. If you will be generating a lot of Web copy, it is recommended you invest in a copy. You can get it at the Bookstore or Amazon. They also have an interactive site at: <http://www.apstylebook.com/>

Editorial Style Tips

- Follow AP Style
- When referring to degrees, spell out full name; Bachelor of Science in Architecture (B.S. Arch). Use abbreviation in following references on that page.
- Lowercase “bachelor of science”, “bachelor degree”, or “bachelor’s” when used alone and separate from formal name of degree
- Capitalize formal department name: Department of Architecture and Interior Design
- Don’t capitalize program name: architecture program, NOT Architecture Program.
- Spell out University of Idaho (don’t use UI, U of I)
- Lowercase university and college: “The university programs...” or “Students in the college.”
- Use standard circle bullet points (not dashes, arrows, etc.)
- Spell out all other acronyms (universities use a lot of acronyms, don’t expect the reader to know what you’re talking about)

Capitalization

General Rule: Eliminate excess capitalization. When in doubt, don't capitalize.

Degrees

- He has a bachelor of arts degree in English.
- She has a master's degree in psychology.
- He holds a doctorate in chemistry.

Student Classifications

- That course should be taken in the freshman year.
- She is a junior majoring in mathematics.

Titles

- Our speaker today is noted author John Smith... celebrated chemist John Doe... famed linguist Mary Jones.
- John Doe is president of Avistacorp. Avistacorp President John Doe is speaking today. The president is speaking today.
- Mary Jones was hired as director of Community Affairs. Director of Community Affairs Mary Jones celebrates 10 years at Spokane Transit Authority.

Numbers

General rule: Use figures for numbers 10 or higher; spell out single digit numbers (there are exceptions).

Time

- It is 6 p.m. (Note: a.m. and p.m. are lower case, with periods; there is a space after the numeral)
- Correct: It is 6 p.m. Wrong: It is 6:00 p.m. (Do not use a colon followed by two zeroes!)
- The event will be held 4-7:40 p.m. The event will be held 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. (Note: no spaces before or after the hyphen.)

Phone Numbers

- Call (509) 359-6200 for information. For information, call 359-6200, ext. 27. Call (509) 359-6200 or toll free (800) 359-6200.

Numbers

- I have 1,234 jelly beans. We have 9,000 pennies.

Grade Point Averages

- She has a 4.0 GPA. (Note: Only extend beyond one decimal place when absolutely necessary, as in 3.956 GPA.)

Money

- I have \$5. She has \$1,000. He has \$1 million. She has \$1,492,456. He has \$1.9 million. They have \$16.95. George only has 6 cents.

Percentages

- Only 10 percent voted in the election. (Reserve the % symbol for scientific or statistical copy.)

Age

- I have a 12-year-old child. She is 16 years old. (Note: Ages are always numerals.)

TV/Radio

- The program is on Channel 6.
- My favorite radio station is 89.5 FM.

Hyphens

Compound Modifiers

- I am a full-time employee. I work full time.
- This is an on-campus offering. The class is offered on campus.
- He competes in the 100-meter dash.
- This is a fund-raising event. I work in fund raising. We are holding a fund-raiser next week.

Prefixes/Suffixes

General rule: Do not use a hyphen.

- That is an ultramodern idea. The temperatures are subzero. This is a nonprofit organization.
- The message was sent Universitywide.

But use a hyphen here:

- That is un-American. That occurred pre-1914.
- Did you re-cover your couch? (Note: Without the hyphen, the question creates a homonym error and asks if the couch has been found again.)
- She re-entered the room. I re-evaluated the evidence. (Rule: A prefix ending with the same vowel that begins the word to which it is being attached is followed by a hyphen.)

Commas

Series

- We offer biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics. (Rule: In a series, do not use the final comma before the word "and" or "or.")

Dates

- That occurred in April 1982. That happened on April 6, 1982. On April 6, 1982, my daughter was born.

General

- John Smith Jr. chairs the committee. John Smith II chairs the committee.
- John Smith and his wife, Sally, are coming to dinner.

Possession

General rule: Singular nouns (whether or not they end in "s") become possessive by adding 's. If a proper noun ends in s, add only the apostrophe.

- Ross' Landing, witch's brew, Gabriel's trumpet, hostess's party, a class's gift

Abbreviations

General Rule: Use AP style for abbreviating state names in sentences; use postal abbreviation for state names in addresses.

- Eastern Washington University is in Cheney, Wash.
- I come from Miami, Fla.
- Send the form to John Smith, 1234 Main St., Cheney, WA 99004

Gender-Specific Language

- Use chair or chairperson (instead of chairman)
- average person or ordinary people (instead of common man)
- mail carrier (instead of mailman)

- humanity, human beings, people (instead of mankind)
- police officer (instead of policeman)

People's Titles

- Dr. John Smith, chair of the Chemistry Department, is attending today. (Thereafter: use Dr. Smith or Smith; in certain informal writings, it can be appropriate to use the person's first name in second reference.)
- Professors John Smith and Jane Doe will be here.
- John Smith, Ph.D. (Note: It is redundant to state Dr. John Smith, Ph.D.)

Titles of Books, Films, etc.

For simplicity, we choose to italicize book, film, newspaper, magazine and most other titles:

- I loved the movie *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.
- I just read Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*.
- I have a subscription to *The New York Times*.
- She reads *Time* magazine.
- There is a Broadway revival of *Oklahoma!*
- My mother's favorite song is *Some Enchanted Evening*.
- I always listen to *A Prairie Home Companion* on the radio. Sometimes I watch *Frasier* on television.

To aid understanding, put quotation marks around a component within a larger title and for the title of papers and speeches:

- My article, "How to Write Well," appeared in the latest issue of *U.S. News & World Report*.
- She will speak on "How to Write Well" at Tuesday's seminar.
- Her paper, "How to Write Well," will appear in several journals this spring.

Acronyms

General Rule: On first reference for documents intended for external use, spell out the full name; on second reference, the acronym can be used.

- The decision will be made by the Information Technology Policy Committee. The ITPC will issue a statement later this week.

Rule: If the acronym does not appear until several sentences after the full name is used, put it in parentheses after the full name.

- The decision will be made by the Information Technology Policy Committee (ITPC).

Rule: Only very well-known acronyms should be used on first reference in internal communications; otherwise use the rule for external documents.

- The number of FTEs is increasing at the University.

WebSpeak

General Rule: In a printed publication, omit the http:// in a Web address. If you wish to have the URL appear as a link in an e-mail or Web document, include the entire URL including http://

- My e-mail address is jdoe@mail.ewu.edu. (A simple declarative sentence, no link possible.)
- Link to Whitworth's Web site at <http://www.whitworth.edu>.
- For more information, please visit our Web site at www.whitworth.edu
- online (one word)
- Internet (always capitalized)

- Web site
- Go to the Web for more information

House Rules

- advisor (not adviser)
- ID (capitals, no periods)
- Time, day and/or date, location (Sequence of events are always in this order. Example: The event will be held at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2002, in Showalter Auditorium.)
- the city of Cheney; the state of Washington (city and state are not capitalized)
- telethon, phone-a-thon
- ensure (means to guarantee); insure (has to do with insurance)
- titled (not entitled). Example: The book is titled *A Farewell to Arms*.