UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

THE PENNSYLVANIA CHILD WELFARE RESOURCE CENTER

BASIC WRITING SKILLS RESOURCE MANUAL

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Basic Writing Skills Resource Guide

Abbreviations

An abbreviation is a shortened version of a word or words. Abbreviations (and symbols) can help conserve space in writing. Conventions applicable to abbreviation usage are:

- Write abbreviations for morning and afternoon as a.m. or p.m. Use noon instead of 12 p.m. and midnight instead of 12 a.m. to avoid confusion.
- Avoid unnecessary ciphers: use 1 p.m. not 1:00 p.m., use $1 not $1.00.
- Avoid abbreviating the names of states unless used in specific addresses.
- Capitalize abbreviations if the word they stand for should be capitalized – **i.e. organization name, APHSA (American Public Human Services Association)**. Also see the section on **acronyms**.
- APA Style permits the use of abbreviations that appear as word entries (i.e., that are not labeled *abbr*) in *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (2005). Such abbreviations do not need explanation in text, **i.e. IQ, AIDS, HIV**.
- Avoid abbreviation of common words throughout curriculum as much as possible – **i.e. pt. for part or app. for appropriate**
- Do not use symbol substitute for words in content, i.e., **do not use "—" for "through"** or **"&" for "and."**
- Symbols may be appropriate when part of an official journal or book title (**i.e. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine***) or when referring to/listing handouts (**i.e. At this time, please give participants Handout #1**).

Acronyms

An acronym is an abbreviation formed by combining the first letter or letters of several words. Conventions applicable to acronym usage are:

- Define or expand an acronym the first time it is introduced in a document or in a portion of a document that will be used as a standalone section. After the acronym is defined, the writer may use the acronym in the remainder of the document.
    - Use your judgment regarding how often to define or expand an acronym in your writing. Consider your target audience and their familiarity with the topic.

Familiar terms, such as GPS and CPS in child welfare, may only be defined or expanded once, depending on the intended audience.

- Acronyms should be defined/expanded on all handouts since they may be used as a standalone document.
- Acronyms should never be used in audio scripts for online learning. Acronyms (organization names) should always be expanded.
- See the CWRC Acronym List for help collapsing or expanding acronyms in your writing.

Example:

First use in document: county children and youth agency (CCYA)
Subsequent uses in same document: CCYA

- Use normal capitalization for the definition. Capitalize the individual words only if the term is a proper noun.
- Do not use periods in acronyms.
- Acronyms still require articles (i.e., "a," "an," or "the").
  - **INCORRECT:** NASW chapter is located in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania.
  - **CORRECT:** An NASW chapter is located in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania.
  - Remember that most acronyms are nouns and nouns require articles before them. If you're confused about whether to use "a" or "an" in front of an acronym that begins with a consonant, remember to speak the acronym out loud. If the first letter of the acronym makes a vowel sound (regardless of whether or not the first letter is actually a vowel), you should use "an."

- To make an acronym plural, add a lowercase s.

Examples:

a county children and youth agency	a CCYA
county children and youth agencies	CCYAs

Active versus Passive Voice

As a general rule, write in the active voice, which maintains the logic of who did what to whom. To ensure the sentence is structured correctly, find the subject and verb of the sentence and determine if the subject is doing, has done, or will do the action stated by the verb. Another instance of active voice is an imperative sentence.

Use	Instead of
The case worker interviewed the child's mother.	The child's mother was interviewed by the case worker.

Passive voice is acceptable when it is clear the system performs the action, when you are writing about something happening without the user controlling the action, when it is not important who or what does it, or to avoid blaming the user for an error.

Examples: *One hundred votes are required to pass the child safety bill.*

Baby Amelia was delivered at 3:30 a.m. yesterday.

The Apostrophe (reprinted from Purdue Online Writing Lab https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/621/01/)[1]

The apostrophe has three uses:

1. To form possessives of nouns
2. To show the omission of letters
3. To indicate certain plurals of lowercase letters

1

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Forming Possessives of Nouns

To see if you need to make a possessive, turn the phrase around and make it an "of the..." phrase. For example:

the boy's hat = the hat of the boy
three days' journey = journey of three days

If the noun after "of" is a building, an object, or a piece of furniture, then **no** apostrophe is needed!

room of the hotel = hotel room
door of the car = car door
leg of the table = table leg

Once you've determined whether you need to make a possessive, follow these rules to create one.

- **add 's to the singular form of the word (even if it ends in -s):**

  the owner's car
  James's hat (James' hat is also acceptable. For plural, proper nouns that are possessive, use an apostrophe after the 's': "The Eggleses' presentation was good." The Eggleses are a husband and wife consultant team.)

- **add 's to the plural forms that do not end in -s:**

  the children's game
  the geese's honking

- **add ' to the end of plural nouns that end in -s:**

  two cats' toys
  three friends' letters
  the countries' laws

- **add 's to the end of compound words:**

  my brother-in-law's money

- **add 's to the last noun to show joint possession of an object:**

  Todd and Anne's apartment

Showing omission of letters

Apostrophes are used in contractions. A contraction is a word (or set of numbers) in which one or more letters (or numbers) have been omitted. The apostrophe shows this omission. Contractions are common in speaking and in informal writing. To use an apostrophe to create a contraction, place an apostrophe where the omitted letter(s) would go. Here are some examples:

don't = do not
I'm = I am
he'll = he will
who's = who is
shouldn't = should not
didn't = did not
could've= could have (NOT "could of"!)
'60 = 1960

Forming plurals of lowercase letters

Apostrophes are used to form plurals of letters that appear in lowercase; here the rule appears to be more typographical than grammatical, e.g. "three ps" versus "three p's." To form the plural of a lowercase letter, place 's after the letter. There is no need for apostrophes indicating a plural on capitalized letters, numbers, and symbols (though keep in mind that some editors, teachers, and professors still prefer them). Here are some examples:

p's and q's = minding your p's and q's is a phrase believed to be taken from the early days of the printing press when letters were set in presses backwards so they would appear on the printed page correctly. Although the origins of this phrase are disputed, the expression was used commonly to mean, "Be careful, don't make a mistake." Today, the term also indicates maintaining politeness, possibly from "mind your pleases and thank-yous."

Nita's mother constantly stressed minding one's p's and q's.

three Macintosh G4s = three of the Macintosh model G4

There are three G4s currently used in the writing classroom.

many &s = many ampersands

That printed page has too many &s on it.

the 1960s = the years in decade from 1960 to 1969

The 1960s were a time of great social unrest.

The '60s were a time of great social unrest.

Don't use apostrophes for personal pronouns, the relative pronoun *who*, or for noun plurals.

Apostrophes should not be used with possessive pronouns because possessive pronouns already show possession—they don't need an apostrophe. His, her, its, my, yours, ours are all possessive pronouns. However, indefinite pronouns, such as one, anyone, other, no one, and anybody, can be made possessive. Here are some examples:

INCORRECT: his' book
CORRECT: his book
CORRECT: **one's** book
CORRECT: anybody's book

INCORRECT: Who's dog is this?
CORRECT: Whose dog is this?

INCORRECT: The group made it's decision.
CORRECT: The group made its decision.

(Note: *Its* and *it's* are not the same thing. *It's* is a contraction for "it is" and *its* is a possessive pronoun meaning "belonging to it." It's raining out = it is raining out. A simple way to remember this rule is the fact that you don't use an apostrophe for the possessive his or hers, so don't do it with its!)

INCORRECT: a friend of yours'
CORRECT: a friend of yours

INCORRECT: She waited for three hours' to get her ticket.
CORRECT: She waited for three hours to get her ticket.

Bullets

- Use numbers when order matters or listing steps in a process
- Use bullets if it is a list where order is not important
- Do not use a bullet (number or symbol) when there is only one item; there must be at least two items to make a bullet list.

Capitalization

The following capitalization conventions have been selected and should be applied consistently by all developers.

- Capitalize the names of business units such as Organizational Effectiveness, Human Resources, and Statewide Quality Improvement.

- Capitalize a process name if it stands alone: for example, Quality Service Review. Do not capitalize the word "process" if it appears after the process name and is not part of the acronym (**i.e. Quality Service Review process**. Capitalize the word "process" if it *is* part of the acronym (**i.e. Safety Assessment Management Process [SAMP]**).

- Use initial caps in hyphenated words in titles/headings: for example, **Section 1: Well-Being** or **Section 5: Out-Of-Home Safety**.

- General terms will be written in lower case letters, unless part of a title – i.e., practice model, supervisor, performance standards, performance values, core values, etc.

- Capitalize the first word that follows a colon.

- Only "federal" and "state" when it is part of a proper noun, that is, the official name of a particular or unique person, place, or thing. Only capitalize "federal" and "state" when you use it in the name of a federal agency, an act, or some other proper noun i.e. Federal Bureau of Investigations, Federal Insurance Contributions Act. Resource: http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/quickreference/dash/dashfederal.cfm

- Disorders, syndromes, etc. are not capitalized unless they are named after a person, such as Asperger syndrome (note that *syndrome* is not capitalized). A disorder, such as autism spectrum disorder, would *not* be capitalized since it is not named after a person. If you aren't sure, consult a dictionary.

- Begin the following types of words with lowercase letters:

  - Unofficial job titles in text: for example: case worker, supervisor

  - Do not capitalize descriptive terms (such as step, page, section, or lesson) except when the term is used with a number or letter as a title or name.

Examples:	Refer to Section IV in the curriculum.
	Ask participants to look at Step 6.

Colons

- Colons follow independent clauses and are used to call attention to information that comes after.
  - Colons come after independent clauses and before the word, phrase, sentence, quotation, or list it is introducing.
    - Example: Jose has only one thing on his mind: jobs.
    - Example: Jose has only one thing on his mind: getting a job.
    - Example: Jose only has one thing on this mind: he wants to get a job at the store on the corner.
    - Example: Jose has several things on his mind: the safety of his son, getting a job, and paying his bills on time.
  - Never use a colon after a verb that directly introduces a list.
    - Incorrect: The things on Jose's mind are: Luis, jobs, and bills.
    - Correct: The things on Jose's mind are Luis, jobs, and bills.

Commas

- Used to separate parts of a sentence
- Tell readers to pause between words or groups of words, and they help clarify the meanings of sentences
  - Commas are used to separate three or more words, phrases, or clauses in a series.
  - Commas are used after an introductory dependent clause (a group of words before the subject of a sentence that does not form a complete sentence).
    - Example: *If you want to speak to the family, you will have to call them first*.
  - Commas are used to set off introductory words, introductory adverbial, participial, or infinitive phrases, and longer introductory prepositional phrases.
    - Example: *Incidentally, I did speak with the family late last night*.
    - Example: *Hoping for a better answer, Hector tuned into Mrs. Smith so that he could ask the right questions*.
  - Commas are used between independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*).
    - Example: *Sylvia had to finish her paper work, so she stayed late at the office*.
  - Commas set off nonessential phrases or clauses.
    - Example: The man, I think, had a funny laugh.
  - Commas set off an appositive (a word or phrase that renames a noun).
    - Example: Sammy, Sophie's brother, will testify at court tomorrow.

Commonly Confused and Abused Words (adapted from Write Right [1995], Business Letter Writing [1994], and Writer's Inc. [1992])

Ability, Capacity	***Ability*** is the power of applying knowledge; ***capacity*** is the power of receiving and retaining it.
Accept, Except	The verb ***accept*** means to receive; the verb ***except*** means to leave out or take out. The preposition ***except*** means other than.
Acrost, Acrossed	Neither is correct. Use ***across***.
Affect, Effect	To sort out the confusion about these two words, remember that the most common use of ***affect*** is as a verb and of ***effect*** is a noun. A less common meaning of ***affec****t* as a verb is to pretend, to simulate or imitate in order to make a desired impression. The noun ***effect*** means result or consequence. The verb ***effect*** means to bring about.
Allude, Refer	To ***allude*** to something is to mention it indirectly. To ***refer*** is to indicate directly.
Allusion, Illusion	***Allusion*** is an indirect reference to something; ***illusion*** is a false picture or idea.
Alot	***Alot*** is not one word; a lot (two words) is a vague descriptive phrase which should not be used in formal writing.
Alright	Not yet accepted. Use the correct spelling of ***all right.***

Among, Between	***Among*** is used when speaking of more than two persons or things. ***Between*** is used when speaking of only two.
Ante, Anti	***Ante*** means before or in front of. ***Anti*** means against.
Annual, Biannual, Semiannual, Biennial, Perennial	An ***annual*** event happens once every year. A ***biannual*** event happens twice a year (***semiannual*** means the same as ***biannual***). A ***biennial*** event happens every two years. A ***perennial*** event is active throughout the year and continues to happen every year.
Anxious, Eager	Use ***anxious*** where there is a sense of anxiety. ***Eager*** where there is pleasant expectation.
Anyways	This is the incorrect form of ***anyway***.
Apt, Likely, Liable	***Apt*** implies a natural tendency. ***Liable*** suggests the possibility of risk, while ***likely*** conveys simple probability.
Ascent, Assent	***Ascent*** is rising; ***assent*** is agreement.
Bad, Badly	To help you decide whether to use the adjective ***bad*** or the adverb ***badly***, substitute a synonym in a sentence that calls for one or the other. Substitute ***unhappy*** and ***unhappily***, Which fits?
Be sure and	Use ***be sure to*** instead.
Between, Among	Use ***between*** when individual relationships are emphasized and the number is unspecified. Use ***among*** with unspecified numbers if individual relationships are not emphasized.

Bi, Semi	To minimize the confusion surrounding these two prefixes, use ***bi*** in the sense of every two weeks (***biweekly***) or every two months (***bimonthly***); use ***semi*** to mean twice each week (***semiweekly***), twice each month (***semimonthly***), and so on.
Bring, Take	***Bring*** means the action is directed toward the speaker; ***take*** means the action is directed away from the speaker.
Can, May	The rule that distinguishes between ***can*** (the ability or power to do something) and ***may*** (permission to do it) is weakening. Formal usage still required the distinction, despite the prevalence of ***can*** for ***may*** in speech.
Capital, Capitol	***Capital*** refers to wealth, the city that is the seat of government, or an uppercase letter. ***Capitol*** is the building in which state or federal officials congregate.
Complement, Compliment	***Complement*** is both a verb and a noun, meaning to complete a whole or satisfy a need. ***Compliment*** also functions as both verb and noun, meaning praise.
Comprise	One of our most abused words, ***comprise*** means to include or be made up of; it is frequently confused with ***compose*** or incorrectly used as a synonym for ***constitute***. The whole ***comprises*** the parts: the parts ***constitute*** the whole. Wrong: High tech companies ***comprise*** only six percent of GNP. Right: High tech companies ***constitute*** only six percent of GNP.
Contact	Not acceptable as a verb. . . use ***phone*** or ***visit***, etc.

Continual, Continuous	Dictionaries now list these words as synonymous, but maintaining the distinction between them helps preserve the richness of our vocabulary. ***Continual*** means over and over again; ***continuous*** means uninterrupted or unbroken.
Convince, Persuade	Synonyms; however use ***persuade*** to precede an infinitive.
Council, Counsel	***Counci****l*, always a noun, refers to an assemblage of persons or a committee. ***Counsel*** has both verb and noun forms, meaning to advise, the advice itself, or an attorney.
Different from, Different than	***Different from*** is preferred when it is followed by a single noun, pronoun, or short phrase. ***Different than*** is acceptable when it is followed by a clause or avoids wordiness.
Dilemma	Reserve the use of ***dilemma*** for situations involving a choice between roughly equal alternatives.
Disburse, Disperse	***Disburse*** is to pay out. ***Disperse*** means to scatter.
Discreet, Discrete	***Discreet*** is used to describe behavior that is prudent or respectful of propriety. ***Discrete*** frequently has a scientific connotation and means separate, distinct, or individual.
Disinterested, Uninterested	Cautious writers still observe the distinction between these two words. ***Disinterested*** means objective or impartial, not influenced by personal advantage. ***Uninterested*** means indifferent or lacking interest in an outcome.

Enthused	***Enthused*** may never become acceptable in formal writing. Careful writers use ***enthusiastic****.*
Farther, Further	Traditional American usage calls for ***farther*** when actual physical distance is involved and when physical distance is only figurative (The dispute is taking us ***farther*** apart.) ***Further*** is used in the sense of "more" or "additional" and is increasingly used in the figurative sense of distance (We are moving ***further*** from the truth).
Flammable, Inflammable	Both mean capable of burning. Because of the danger that ***inflammable*** will be mistaken for "not flammable," use ***flammable*** to mean combustible and ***nonflammable*** for it antonym.
For Free	Use ***free*** or ***for nothing*** instead.
Get, Got	Although ***get*** and ***got*** can claim a long history of use in the English language, careful writers will avoid their casual overtones by substituting words such as ***have*** or ***receive*** whenever possible.
Good, Well	***Good*** is an adjective; ***well*** is nearly always an adverb. Exception: When used to indicate state of health, ***well*** is an adjective.
Hanged, Hung	Men are ***hanged***; things are ***hung***.
Home, Hone	The verb ***hone***, meaning to sharpen, is sometimes incorrectly substituted for ***home*** in the expression ***home in***, meaning to be guided to a target.

I, Me, Myself	***I*** is the subjective case and thus should be used when it is the subject of a sentence (the ***who*** or ***what*** that the rest of the sentence is about. ***Me*** is the objective case and should be used when it is the object of the action or thought conveyed by the verb or when it is the object of a preposition. ***Myself*** is correctly used for emphasis (***I, myself,*** will see to it) or as a reflexive (***I*** hurt ***myself*** falling off the roof). Do not use ***myself*** as a substitute for ***I*** or ***me***.
Imply, Infer	***Imply*** means to suggest or express indirectly; ***infer*** means to draw a conclusion from facts.
Insure, Ensure, Assure	***Insure*** means to cover with insurance; ***Ensure*** means to make sure or certain; ***Assure*** means to inform confidently, with a view to removing doubt; to cause to feel sure; convince
Inter, Intra	***Inter***- means between; ***intra***- means among
Irregardless	A redundancy. Use ***regardless***.
It's, Its	***It's*** is the contraction of ***it is*** or ***it has***. ***Its*** is a possessive pronoun.
Kind of, Sort of	These expressions are clumsy in formal writing. However when either one is used, no article (***a, an,*** or ***the***) should follow.
Lay, Lie	***Lay*** is an intransitive verb (i.e. it does not take an object); it means to recline. The past tense of ***lie*** is ***lay***.

Lend, Loan	***Lend*** means to give or allow use of something temporarily on the condition that it or its equivalent will be returned; ***Loan*** means a sum of money lent at interest.
Liable, Likely	***Liable*** means responsible according to the law or exposed to an adverse action; ***likely*** means in all probability.
Literally	***Literally*** has strayed into being used for emphasis in ways that are anything but literal. Your credibility is jeopardized if you write, ***We were literally climbing the walls.***
Loose, Lose	**Loose** (v) means to set free, while **lose** (v) means to suffer a loss, to mislay
Meantime, Meanwhile	***Meantime*** is a noun that refers to an interval between events. ***Meanwhile*** is an adverb meaning ***during*** the intervening time.
Nauseated, Nauseous	A person who feels sick is no more ***nauseous*** than a person who has been poisoned is ***poisonous***. Something that makes you feel sick is ***nauseous*** (nauseous fumes); what you feel is **nauseated**.
Of, Have	***Of*** should not be used in place of ***have***. "I ***should have*** (not ***should of***) known that."
Off of	Drop the ***of*** "How many times do I have to tell you to stay ***off*** (not ***off of***) my blue suede shoes?"
Orientate	The correct word is ***orient***.
Real, very, really	Do not use ***real*** in place of the adverbs ***very*** or ***really***. Examples: Pimples are ***very*** (not real) embarrassing. This cake is ***really*** stale – I mean, it's just about

	fossilized.
Principle, Principal	***Principal*** functions as both noun and adjective. The noun refers to the head of a school or firm, or to capital that earns interest; the adjective means chief or main. ***Principle*** is a noun-meaning rule or standard.
Set, Sit	***Sit*** means to put the body in a seated position. ***Set*** means to place.
Shall, Will	Just let your ear be your guide.
Site, Cite	***Cite*** means to quote or to refer to. ***Site*** means location or position.
Stationary, Stationery	***Stationary*** means fixed in position, not moving. ***Stationery*** is writing paper and envelopes.
Tenant, Tenet	**Tenant** is one who occupies a dwelling, while a **tenet** is an opinion or belief held.
Than, Then	***Than*** is used in a comparison; ***then*** tells when.
That, Who, Whose	Using ***who*** to refer to persons makes them seem more human. Use ***that*** to refer to things.
Their, There, They're	***Their*** is the possessive personal pronoun. ***There*** is an adverb used to point out location. ***They're*** is the contraction for ***they are***.
To, Too	***To*** is the preposition, which can mean in the direction of. ***To*** also is used to form an infinitive. ***Too*** is an adverb indicating degree.
Verbal, Oral	***Verbal*** is anything in words; anything spoken is ***oral***.

Was, Were	***Was*** means the first and third person singular past tense of be; ***Were*** means the second person singular past tense of be;
Weather, Whether	***Weather*** refers to the condition of the atmosphere. ***Whether*** refers to a possibility.
Who, Whom	The best guide for deciding whether to use ***who*** or ***whom*** is to substitute a personal pronoun. If *he*, *she*, or *they* would fit, use ***who*** (nominative case); if *him*, *her*, or *them* would fit, use ***whom*** (objective case).
Who's Whose	***Who's*** is the contraction for ***who is***. ***Whose*** is the possessive pronoun.
Would of	Incorrect usage. Write ***would have***.
Your, You're	***Your*** is a possessive pronoun. ***You're*** is the contraction for ***you are***

Commonly Misspelled Words (compiled from Oxford Dictionaries: http://oxforddictionaries.com/words/common-misspellings)

Correct spelling	Spelling advice	Common misspelling
accommodate, accommodation	two **c**s, two **m**s	accomodate, accomodation
achieve	**i** before **e**	acheive
across	one **c**	accross
aggressive, aggression	two **g**s	agressive, agression
apparently	**-ent** not **-ant**	apparantly

appearance	ends with **-ance**	appearence
argument	no **e** after the **u**	arguement
assassination	two double **s**'s	assasination
basically	ends with **-ally**	basicly
beginning	double **n** before the **-ing**	begining
believe	**i** before **e**	beleive, belive
bizarre	one **z**, double **-r**	bizzare
business	begins with **busi-**	buisness
calendar	**-ar** not **-er**	calender
Caribbean	one **r**, two **b**s	Carribean
cemetery	ends with **-ery**	cemetary
chauffeur	ends with **-eur**	chauffer
colleague	**-ea-** in the middle	collegue
coming	one **m**	comming
committee	double **m**, double **t**, double **e**	commitee
completely	ends with **-ely**	completly
conscious	**-sc-** in the middle	concious
curiosity	**-os-** in the middle	curiousity
definitely	**-ite-** not **–ate-**	definately
dilemma	**-mm-** not **-mn-**	dilemna
disappear	one **s**, two **p**s	dissapear
disappoint	one **s**, two **p**s	dissapoint
ecstasy	ends with **–sy**	ecstacy
embarrass	two **r**s, two **s**'s	embarass
environment	**n** before the **m**	enviroment
existence	ends with **-ence**	existance
Fahrenheit	begins with **Fahr-**	Farenheit
familiar	ends with **-iar**	familar
finally	two **l**s	finaly
fluorescent	begins with **fluor-**	florescent
foreign	**e** before **i**	foriegn
foreseeable	begins with **fore-**	forseeable
forty	begins with **for-**	fourty
forward	begins with **for-**	foward
friend	**i** before **e**	freind
further	begins with **fur-**	futher

gist	begins with **g-**	jist
glamorous	**-mor-** in the middle	glamourous
government	**n** before the **m**	goverment
guard	begins with **gua-**	gaurd
happened	ends with **-ened**	happend
harass, harassment	one **r**, two **s**'s	harrass, harrassment
honorary	**-nor-** in the middle	honourary
humorous	**-mor-** in the middle	humourous
idiosyncrasy	ends with **-asy**	idiosyncracy
immediately	ends with **-ely**	immediatly
incidentally	ends with **-ally**	incidently
independent	ends with **-ent**	independant
interrupt	two **r**s	interupt
irresistible	ends with **-ible**	irresistable
knowledge	remember the **d**	knowlege
liaise, liaison	remember the second **i**: **liais-**	liase, liason
lollipop	**i** in the middle	lollypop
millennium, millennia	double **l**, double **n**	millenium, millenia
Neanderthal	ends with **-thal**	Neandertal
necessary	one **c**, two **s**'s	neccessary
noticeable	remember the middle **e**	noticable
occasion	two **c**s, one **s**	ocassion, occassion
occurred, occurring	two **c**s, two **r**s	occured, occuring
occurrence	two **c**s, two **r**s, **-ence** not **-ance**	occurance, occurence
pavilion	one **l**	pavillion
persistent	ends with **-ent**	persistant
pharaoh	ends with **-aoh**	pharoah
piece	**i** before **e**	peice
politician	ends with **-cian**	politican
Portuguese	ends with **–guese**	Portugese
possession	two **s**'s in the middle and two at the end	posession
preferred, preferring	two **r**s	prefered, prefering
propaganda	begins with **propa-**	propoganda
publicly	ends with **–cly**	publically
really	two **l**s	realy

receive	**e** before **i**	recieve
referred, referring	two **r**s	refered, refering
religious	ends with **-gious**	religous
remember	**-mem-** in the middle	rember, remeber
resistance	ends with **-ance**	resistence
sense	ends with **-se**	sence
separate	**-par-** in the middle	seperate
siege	**i** before **e**	seige
successful	two **c**s, two **s**'s	succesful
supersede	ends with **-sede**	supercede
surprise	begins with **sur-**	suprise
tattoo	two **t**s, two **o**s	tatoo
tendency	ends with **-ency**	tendancy
therefore	ends with **-fore**	therefor
threshold	one **h** in the middle	threshhold
tomorrow	one **m**, two **r**s	tommorow, tommorrow
tongue	begins with **ton-**, ends with **-gue**	tounge
truly	no **e**	truely
unforeseen	remember the **e** after the **r**	unforseen
unfortunately	ends with **-ely**	unfortunatly
until	one **l** at the end	untill
weird	**e** before **i**	wierd
wherever	one **e** in the middle	whereever
which	begins with **wh-**	wich

Emphasis Techniques

Words and phrases are bolded, italicized, or enclosed in quotation marks for emphasis or to indicate they have a special significance in a particular context. For example, foreign words and phrases that have not been fully adopted into the English language are generally italicized. Do not capitalize words for emphasis.

Important reminders when using conventions such as bolding, italics, and quotation marks are the following:

- Be consistent in applying the formatting to convey a specific meaning each time the word or phrase is used.

- Italics has been traditionally used for emphasis, however because of computers, bold is commonly used as well. Neither is favored over the other, but be consistent with use.

- Use emphasis techniques sparingly so they are effective in helping readers identify the points being made. Overuse of these techniques can make them cumbersome to the readers or may result in the techniques losing their effectiveness.

End of Sentence Punctuation

- End of sentence punctuation is used to let the reader know when a thought is finished.
  - A statement (or declarative sentence) is followed by a period.
    - Example: Mechanicsburg is the home of the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center.
  - A direct question (or interrogative sentence) is followed by a question mark.
    - Example: When did Cynthia come home last night?
  - Do not use a question mark after a declarative sentence that contains an indirect question.
    - Example: Martin wants to know when Cynthia came home last night.
  - An exclamatory sentence is followed by an exclamation point.
    - Example: I had a horrible day!
  - Use exclamation marks sparingly because they can unnecessarily exaggerate sentences.
    - Example: Sally was the most patient caseworker I have ever met! (*most* emphasizes *patient caseworker*; therefore, an exclamation point is not needed).

Hyphens

Hyphens are often used to create a compound, a word or word group that consists of two or more parts combined to express a specific concept. Compound words can form nouns, verbs, or adjectives. As adjectives, they are also called unit modifiers. A number of variations exist, a few of which are defined in the following examples.

- Hyphenate two or more words that act together to modify another word. This rule applies only when the compound modifier occurs before the word it modifies.

Examples:	well-documented success	The success was well documented.
	not-too-distant future	

- When a verb and an adverb are combined to form a compound, do not use a hyphen if they form or are used as a verb. If they form a noun or adjective, use a hyphen or close the two to form one word.

Examples:

Verb	**Noun or Adjective**
"Please log on to CAPS…"	**Noun**: "Make sure you have your logon information." **Adjective**: "Please follow the log-on procedure…"

- In a series of unit modifiers that all have a common base element (noun), do not repeat the base throughout the series. Use the term only at the end of the series, and place a hyphen after each of the first elements.

Examples: Long- and short-term memory

2-, 3-, and 10-min trials

- Use a hyphen when the second element is capitalized, is a number, or when the hyphen is needed to avoid confusion. Always use a hyphen, however, for the prefixes self- and quasi.

	Use a Hyphen when second element is capitalized, a number or prefix is self-	**Hyphen needed to avoid confusion**
Examples:	non-American pre-1990 self-governed	re-create vs. recreate co-op vs. coop

- Do not hyphenate the following prefixes and combining forms unless they are combined with a capitalized word or there is a possibility of two meanings or

mispronunciation:

after	extra	infra	off	trans
ante	fore	macro	out	tri
anti	hyper	meso	over	pro
bi	hypo	micro	semi	pseudo
by	inter	mis	post	re
co	intra	mono	pre	ultra
contra	intro	multi	step	un
de	iso	neo	sub	under
demi	in	non	super	

- A hyphen may optionally be used when the prefix ends and the root word begins with the same vowel. When the repeated vowel is “i”, a hyphen is almost always used.

  Examples: anti-inflammatory
  co-occur
  reelection

- Do not use a hyphen with the following suffixes and combining forms:

able	fold	full	gram	hood
less	like	ship	ward	wise

- If the first word is an adverb ending in -ly, do not use a hyphen.

  Examples: highly trained users
  newly built facility

- Hyphenate between numbers and words that form a unit modifier.

  Examples: 10-gallon hat
  3-hour delay

- Hyphenate between the elements of spelled-out compound numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine.

- Hyphenate spelled-out fractions except when one or the other already contains a hyphen.

Examples: one-half

two one-thousandths

- Do not hyphenate a modifier consisting of a number followed by a possessive noun, such as 2 month's layoff.

Improper Contractions

- Never use *could of, should of, would of*. What you mean it *could have, should have, would have*; correct contractions are *could've, would've, should've*.
- Try not to use contractions at all in formal writing.

Negatives

- You should only have one negative word per sentence.
  - Example: *I can't do that*.
- Negatives: *not, don't, can't, won't, shouldn't, couldn't, wouldn't, didn't, neither/nor, no, nothing*.

Number Rules

- Spell out numbers under 10.
- Use figures (14, 233) to express numbers 10 and above.
- Use figures to express numbers under 10 that are grouped for comparison with figures 10 and above: *The results showed that 2 out of 20 recipients disagreed with the proposal*.
- Use figures and the percentage sign to represent percentages: *A significant majority, 62%, said they would support the fundraising campaign*.
  - EXCEPTION: Use the word "percentage" when a number is not given: *Researchers determined the percentage of rats…*
- Dates, ages, and money are represented by figures:
  - 2 weeks ago

- She was a 2-year old.
- The workers were paid $5 each.

- Common fractions are written out: *One-fifth of the respondents…*
- Regardless of the rules above, numbers that begin sentences must be written out; however beginning sentences with numbers should be avoided.

Paragraph Construction

- The basic rule of thumb when writing paragraphs is to keep one idea to one paragraph. If you begin to transition into a new idea, it belongs in a new paragraph. There are some simple ways to tell if you are on the same topic or a new one:
  - Write one idea and several bits of supporting evidence within one single paragraph.
  - Include several points in a single paragraph as long as they are related to the overall topic of the paragraph.
  - Avoid lengthy paragraphs by elaborating on single points that get too long and placing them in their own paragraphs.
- To be as effective as possible, a paragraph should contain each of the following: *unity*, *coherence*, *a topic sentence*, and *adequate development*.
  - Coherence makes the paragraph easily understandable to the reader. Create coherence in your paragraphs by creating logical bridges and verbal bridges.
    - Logical bridges: the same idea of a topic is carried over from sentence to sentence and successive sentences can be constructed in parallel form.
    - Verbal bridges: keywords can be repeated in several sentences, synonymous words can be repeated in several sentences, pronouns can refer to nouns in previous sentences, and transition words can be used to link ideas from different sentences.
  - A topic sentence is a sentence that indicates in a general way what idea or thesis the paragraph is going to deal with. An easy way to make sure your reader understands the topic of the paragraph is to put your topic sentence near the beginning of the paragraph.

- Adequate development
    - The topic (which is introduced by the topic sentence) should be discussed fully and adequately. Writers should beware of paragraphs that only have two or three sentences. It's a pretty good bet that the paragraph is not fully developed if it is short.
    - Ensure paragraphs are well developed by employing the following strategies:
        - Use examples and illustrations
        - Cite data (facts, statistics, evidence, details, and others)
        - Examine testimony
        - Use anecdote or story
        - Define terms in the paragraph
        - Compare and contrast
        - Evaluate causes and reasons
        - Examine effects and consequences
        - Analyze the topic
        - Describe the topic
        - Offer a chronology of an event

❖ Start a new paragraph when:

- Beginning a new idea or point
- Contrasting information or ideas
- Readers need a pause
- Ending your introduction or starting your conclusion

Parallel Thought

❖ Express parallel thought in grammatically parallel terms

- Use a gerund with a gerund, an infinitive with an infinitive, etc. For example:
    - *To speak with a family in person would be better than writing them an e-mail* would be better said as, *Speaking with a family in person would be better than writing them an e-mail*.
- Use parallel construction in lists, headings, and outlines. If you use active voice, continue with active voice. If you start with a strong verb, make all phrases start with a strong verb. If you use a preposition in a phrase, use it in all.
- Use parallel construction to improve the flow of ideas or add impact. This helps the reader see the similarity in content or function. Notice how Lincoln used parallel construction:
    - "…government of the people, by the people, and for the people."
- Use parallel construction to avoid sexist language in handling names and titles in writing.
    - **Incorrect:** Mr. Smith, Mr. Harkness, and Rose are providing services.
    - **Correct:** Mickey, Jack, and Rose are…, or Mr. Smith, Mr. Harkness, and Ms. Tyler are…)

Parentheses

- Elements inside parentheses are related to the sentence but are non-essential.
    - Parentheses set off additions or expressions that are not necessary to the sentence. They tend to de-emphasize what they set off.
        - Example: *We drove through three towns (Dillsburg, Mechanicsburg, Carlisle) on our way to a family visitation.*
    - Parentheses enclose figures within a sentence.
        - Example: *Grades will be based on (1) participation, (2) in-class writing, and (3) exams.*
    - When the group inside the parentheses forms a complete sentence but is inserted inside a larger sentence, no period is needed. However, if a question mark or exclamation point is needed, it may be used.
        - Example: *The snow (she saw it as she passed the window) was now falling heavily.*
    - When parentheses are used to enclose an independent sentence, the end punctuation belongs inside the parentheses.

- Example: Mandy told me she saw Amy's car that night. (I saw Amy's car before Mandy.) She said Amy came home around 2 a.m.

Plurals and Possessives

- An "s" is put at the end of a word for two reasons: to make it plural or to show possession.
- When you add an "s" to make a plural, don't use an apostrophe:
  - Plurals: *books, students*
  - Possessives: *the book's pages, the student's desk*
  - Possessives for plural nouns: *the books' pages, all of the students' desks*
- When you add an "s" to make a plural, don't use an apostrophe.
- Possessive pronouns don't use apostrophes: *yours, hers, its, ours, theirs*.
- Rules for Forming Plural Nouns: To form the plural of nouns, follow the rules below.
  - **Add s to most nouns.**

    girl/girls bicycle/bicycles printer/printers

  - **Add es to nouns ending is s, x, z, ch, or sh.**

    class/classes ax/axes buzz/buzzes church/churches wish/wishes

  - **For nouns ending in y preceded by a consonant, change y to i and add es.**

    fly/flies party/parties daisy/daisies

  - **For nouns ending in y preceded by a vowel, add s.**

    monkey/monkeys valley/valleys

- **For nouns ending in o preceded by a consonant, add es.**

hero/heroes potato/potatoes

- **For nouns ending in o preceded by a vowel, add s.**

Oreo/Oreos radio/radios patio/patios

- **For musical terms ending in o, add s.**

solo/solos alto/altos piano/pianos

- **For nouns ending in f or fe, usually change the f or fe to ves.**

leaf/leaves shelf/shelves wolf/wolves

Exceptions: chief/chiefs chef/chefs safe/safes

- **Add s to the end of singular nouns ending in ful.**

cupful/cupfuls spoonful/spoonfuls

- **Change the spelling of some words.**

cactus/cacti mouse/mice goose/geese woman/women

- **Leave some nouns as they are.**

sheep/sheep deer/deer fish/fish moose/moose

- **Add s to the most important noun in a hyphenated word.**

editor-in-chief/editors-in-chief brother-in-law/brothers-in-law

- **Add s to proper nouns which do not end in s. Add es to proper nouns which do end in s.**

Mr. and Mrs. Walker/the Walkers Mr. and Mrs. Ross/the Rosses

The following two examples related to abbreviations that are commonly confused:

Examples:	GAL's statement (possessive abbreviation)	GALs (plural abbreviation) Note lowercase s and no apostrophe

Present versus Future Tense

Write in the present tense when referring to the immediate results of an action. Choose words that convey sequential events in the task or process.

Examples:

Use	Instead of
When you call ChildLine, the report is evaluated and given to a case worker to investigate.	When you call ChildLine, the report will be evaluated and given to a case worker to investigate.

Use the future tense to describe what will happen after a significant delay or to someone other than the reader, for example, "If you leave your position, one of your fellow case workers will take your cases."

Pronoun Agreement

- Almost everyone makes this mistake: *Everyone should get out their resource manual*.
- A pronoun must agree in number with its antecedent (the word to which the pronoun refers).
- Rewrite the sentence using singular pronouns: *Everyone should take out his or her resource manual*.
    - Singular pronouns include: *each, either, neither, one, everyone, no one, everybody, nobody, anyone, someone, somebody*.

Punctuation

The following punctuation guidelines are common:

- When using sub-bullets, the lead-in sentence should end with a colon (i.e., the sentence above this bullet).
- Use a comma after each item in a series.

Example:	Do not capitalize spring, autumn, winter, and summer.

- Use a semicolon to separate a series of items internally punctuated with commas.

Example:	Our firm has offices in Columbia, Maryland; Atlanta, Georgia; and Houston, Texas, to name a few.

- Use commas to enclose parenthetical elements and nonrestrictive clauses (A clause is **nonrestrictive** [or *nonessential* or *non-identifying*] if the meaning of the sentence would remain the same even without it. Always use commas with nonrestrictive clauses). As a general rule, use a comma with the word "which" and omit the comma with the word "that". Resource: http://wps.ablongman.com/long_longman_ohb_1/27/7023/1798001.cw/content/index.html

Example:	The revised Safety Assessment, which will go into effect on July 2013, is currently being trained to all Pennsylvania case workers.

- Do not use a comma to connect two sentences or independent clauses. Use a comma, however, if a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, nor) links the two clauses.

- Do not set off restrictive clauses with commas.

Examples:

Use	Instead of
I need the name of the curriculum writer who is assigned to this project.	I need the name of the curriculum writer, who is assigned to this project.

- Use an ellipsis to show that you've omitted words. If you're quoting someone and you want to shorten the quote, you use ellipses to indicate where you've dropped words or sentences. *Do not use ellipses to change the meaning of a quotation*. Resource: http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/ellipsis.aspx

Example:

Original Lawrence Schulman quote: "In addition, the argument goes, even if the worker guesses correctly, the client may not be ready to deal with that particular feeling or concern and may react defensively, be overwhelmed or not come back."

Shortened quote with ellipsis: "In addition…the client may not be ready to deal with that particular feeling or concern and may react defensively, be overwhelmed or not come back."

- Use a colon to introduce any list, bulleted or non-bulleted.

- Do not place a period after each item in a list unless each of the items is a complete sentence. ***All items in a list must have the same format, either all phrases or all complete sentences***.

Quotation Marks

- Place periods and commas inside quotation marks:
  - Example of period inside of quotation marks: Martha said, “I need help filling out the risk assessment for the Noble family.”
  - Example of comma inside quotation marks: “I need help filling out the risk assessment for the Jones family,” said Donna.
- Place colons and semicolons outside of quotation marks:
  - Example: Williams described the experiment as “a definitive step forward”; other researchers disagreed.
- Place a question mark or exclamation point within closing quotation marks if the punctuation applies to the quotation itself:
  - David asked, “Do you need this book?”
- Place the punctuation outside the closing quotation marks if the punctuation applies to the whole sentence:
  - Does Amy always say to her participants, “You must pay attention and participate”?
- Do not use quotation marks for words used as words themselves. In this case you should use italics:
  - The word *interactional* means “capable of acting on or influencing each other.”

Run-On Sentences

- Run-ons occur when you try to make one sentence do too much. For example: *Rory returned to the office after meeting with the Williams family he filled out the safety assessment*.
- Avoid run-ons by:
  - Breaking the long sentence into separate sentences: *Rory returned to the office after meeting with the Williams family. He filled out the safety assessment.*
  - Reducing one of the clauses to a subordinate clause and adding a comma: *After Rory met with the Williams family, he filled out the safety assessment.*
  - Adding a comma and coordinating conjunction between the two clauses: *Rory returned to the office after meeting with the Williams family, and then filled out the safety assessment.*

Semicolons

- Semicolons are used to separate clauses or phrases that are related and that receive equal emphasis.
  - Semicolons join independent clauses in a compound sentence if no coordinating conjunction is used.
    - Example: *Michael seemed preoccupied; he answered our questions abruptly*.
  - Semicolons are used before a conjunctive adverb (transition word) that joins the clauses of a compound sentence.
    - Example: *The emergency room was crowded; however, Warren was helped immediately*.
  - Semicolons help avoid confusion in lists where there are already commas.
    - During her time in foster care, Tammy has lived in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Dayton, Ohio; and Syracuse, New York.

Sentence Fragments

- Fragments occur when you've written only part of a sentence. For example: *Because the family wanted to stay together*.

- Fix fragments by making sure your sentence contains both a subject and a verb: *Amelia created a safety plan that everyone agreed to because the family wanted to stay together*.

Sentence Improvement

- Sentences should be written in a manner that is **complete and mature**. The most common errors preventing complete and mature sentences in our documentation are:
  - Fragments- groups of words used as a sentence, but lacking one of the critical components of a sentence, a subject, verb, or other essential piece.
  - Comma fault- joining two independent clauses together using only a comma. Also known as a comma splice.
    - Run-on sentences- the result of two sentences being joined without adequate punctuation or connecting words. Also known as a fused sentence.
- Rambling sentence- is one that goes on and on. Usually brought about by the overuse of the word *and.*

- Sentences should be **clear and exact**. Confused or "muddied" writing is frustrating to the reader. To write clearly, you must think clearly about the subject, be prepared to rethink (revise and edit) carefully. Avoid the following:
  - Incomplete comparisons- results from leaving out words which are necessary to make the sentence clear and complete.
  - Ambiguous wording- constitutes wording with two possible meanings
  - Indefinite reference- the problem caused by careless use of pronouns. As a result, the reader isn't sure what the pronoun is referencing.
  - Misplaced modifiers- modifying clauses that are placed incorrectly and therefore the meaning of the sentence is unclear.
  - Dangling modifiers- are modifiers appearing to modify a word which isn't in the sentence, or the wrong word in the sentence.

- Sentences should be **concise and natural**. Somehow we've come to the conclusion that concise writing is not effective writing. We've decided that flowery, artificial writing is expected. Participants should work to develop a personal style that produces natural and honest expression. Guard against the following common errors:
  - Wordiness- using redundant expressions, double subjects, and saying the same thing twice in a phrase or word group.
  - Flowery language- Using bigger words than necessary, or too many adjectives or adverbs.
  - Deadwood- using many unnecessary words to express a simple thought.
  - Trite expressions- resulting in flat and unnatural writing
  - Euphemism- substituting a word or phrase so as to be less offensive
  - Jargon- use of language that is particular to a certain field or profession
  - Cliché- overused word or expression that offers nothing new or interesting to the reader.

- Sentences should be **smooth and graceful**. Move your reader along without interruption or re-reading. Some common mistakes to avoid are:
  - Period faults- short, choppy sentences that generally are the result of overuse of the period. The resulting sentences have that "primer" style to them, reading like your third grade paper entitled, "What I did on my Summer Vacation".
  - Split construction- resulting when a word or phrase is placed in the middle of the main thought.
  - Mixed construction- beginning a sentence with one plan of construction, and then switching midway through the sentence.

- Sentences should be **correct and appropriate.** You should stick to language that is appropriate and correct when writing reports, summaries, petitions, and case file notes. Avoid using the following:

- Nonstandard language which might be acceptable in conversation, but not in official writing.
    - Colloquial expressions (Wait up)
    - Double prepositions (Get off of the couch)
    - Substituting *and* for *to,* or *of* for *have* when combined with should, could, would. (Try and find out. I could of been the worker.)
    - Slang, or the use of *in'* for *ing* endings (Yo, dude, what's happenin'?)

- Double negatives can take on a meaning completely opposite, but always sound bad. Using hardly, barely, or scarcely with a negative results in a double negative, too.

- Sentences should be logical and consistent. Ask yourself if the ideas in your sentences are arranged logically. Does the reader see clearly and accurately what you're attempting to show? Some errors you might make or see in writing are:
    - Upside-down subordination- the main idea of the sentence is expressed as the dependent clause rather than the independent clause.
    - Anticlimax- beginning with the most important idea and continues with details that are unimportant or out of place.
    - Inconsistent (nonparallel) construction- changing the structure of the words or phrases being used in the sentence.
    - Shifts in construction- look for shifts in number, tense, person, and voice.

Sentence Structure

- Should be clear, concise, and get to the point
- Front-load your sentences, put the most important information towards the beginning
- Organize to help readers who skim
- Cull anything that isn't pulling its weight
    - Start with deadwood: useless words that clutter sentences and may obscure your meaning.
- Look for single-word modifiers that do not enhance your meaning, such as *very*, *really*, *totally*, *quite*, *actually*, *already*, *fairly*, and *much*. Words like *very* are unnecessary and redundant.
    - Incorrect: *If you want to write good sentences, make it super-clear and very concise and get to the point as quickly as possible*.
    - Correct: *Good writing is clear and concise and gets to the point*.
- Examine your verbs. Are your helper verbs truly helping? Watch out for constructions such as *you can*, *you can choose to*, *you can decide to*, and *you need to*.
    - Incorrect: *You can visit your grandmother by taking the bus from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia*.

- Correct: *To visit your grandmother, take the bus from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia*.

Spelling

- "i" before "e," except after c – in other words, after "c" use "ei"
  - After "c" always use "ei": *receive*, *deceive*
  - If the sound is "ay," use "ei": *neighbor, weigh*
  - In most other words, use "ie": *believe*, *relieve*
- When the prefixes *dis*, *mis*, or *over* are added to a word, the spelling of the original word remains the same.
  - *Dissatisfy*, *misspell*, *overreach*
- When the suffixes *–ness* or *–ly* are added to a word, the spelling for the word remains the same.
  - *Meanness*, *finally*
- If a word ends in *y*, change the *y* to *I* before adding the suffix.
  - *Heaviness*, *readiness*
- When a word ends in *e*, drop the final *e* before a suffix beginning with a vowel.
  - *Caring*, *writing*
- When a word does not end in *e*, simply add the suffix.
  - *Studying*
- Keep the final *e* before a suffix beginning with a consonant.
  - *Careful*, *careless*
- Double the final consonant when adding a suffix to words of one syllable ending with a consonant.
  - *Clap / clapped*
  - *Shop / shopped*
- Double the final consonant when the accent falls on the last syllable of a word ending with a consonant.
  - *Control / controlling*

- *There will always be exceptions to the above rules*. Everyone should use a dictionary (there are many dictionary resources online) or turn on Spell Check. If you have any doubt about the spelling of a word, look it up.

Stereotypes and Biased Language

- Stereotyped Language
  - Language that assumes a stereotype about a group of people. For example, don't assume a common stereotype about blonde women:

        - Incorrect: *Although she was blonde, Mary was still intelligent*.
        - Revised: *Mary was intelligent*.

- Non Sexist Language
    - Writing in a non-sexist, non-biased way with both ethically sound and effective. Non-sexist writing is necessary for most audiences; if you write in a sexist manner and alienate much of your audience from your discussion, your writing will be much less effective.
    - The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) suggests the following guidelines:
        - Generic Use: Although MAN in its original sense carried the dual meaning of adult human and adult male, its meaning has come to be so closely identified with adult male that the generic use of MAN and other words with masculine markers should be avoided.

            - **Original:** mankind
            - **Alternatives:** humanity, people, human beings

            - **Original:** man's achievements
            - **Alternative:** human achievements

            - **Original:** man-made
            - **Alternatives:** synthetic, manufactured, machine-made

            - **Original:** the common man
            - **Alternatives:** the average person, ordinary people

            - **Original:** man the stockroom
            - **Alternative:** staff the stockroom

            - **Original:** nine man-hours
            - **Alternative:** nine staff-hours

        - Occupation: Avoid the use of MAN in occupational terms when persons holding the job could be either male or female.

            - **Original:** chairman
            - **Alternatives:** coordinator (of a committee or department), moderator (of a meeting), presiding officer, head, chair

            - **Original:** businessman
            - **Alternatives:** business executive, business person

            - **Original:** fireman
            - **Alternative:** firefighter

- **Original:** mailman
- **Alternative:** mail carrier

- **Original:** steward and stewardess
- **Alternative:** flight attendant

- **Original:** policeman and policewoman
- **Alternative:** police officer

- **Original:** congressman
- **Alternative:** congressional representative

▪ Historically, some jobs have been dominated by one gender or the other. This has lead to the tendency for a person of the opposite gender to be "marked" by adding a reference to gender. You should avoid marking the gender in this fashion in your writing.

- **Original:** male nurse
- **Alternative:** nurse

- **Original:** woman doctor
- **Alternative:** doctor

Subject/Verb Agreement

❖ Subject and verb must agree in person and number.

- Singular objects require singular verbs, i.e. *Robert is late for the hearing*.
- Plural or compound subjects require plural verbs, i.e. *Robert and Bill are late for work*.
- A subject of the first person requires a verb of the first person, i.e. *I am confused by the new policy*.
- A subject of the third person requires a verb of the third person, i.e. *She is confused by the new policy*.

❖ Determining the number rules:

- Two subjects joined by *"and"* require a plural verb.
  - **Example:** The in-home safety assessment and the risk assessment are covered in Mods 4 and 5 respectively.

        - There are exceptions; a compound subject thought of as a unit uses a singular verb: i.e. Peanut butter and jelly is my favorite kind of sandwich.

    - Collective nouns (family, majority, personnel) can be both. When the idea of "oneness" predominates, use the singular verb.

        - If the collective noun refers to individuals or items within the group, use the plural verb

        - **Example:** *A group of placement records and protective service case files were requested by the field representative*.

    - Use the singular verb with nouns that are plural in form but singular in meaning, i.e. *Measles is a preventable disease*.

    - Pronouns:

        - *Another, each, every, either, neither,* and *one* are always singular. As are *anybody, anything, anyone, nobody, nothing,* and *no one*.

        - *Both, few, several, many,* and *others* are always plural, i.e. *Many are called, but few are chosen*.

        - Relative pronouns like *who*, *which*, and *that* are singular or plural depending on what word they stand for

        - Subject and pronoun should agree in number, i.e. *The Democratic Party has nominated its candidate*.

Ten Types of Words to Avoid (adapted from *Smart Moves*, [1990])

- **Jargon-** Using the technical language of your profession is confusing to those who don't use it everyday. Readers become alienated, and judge you as inconsiderate. Save the *perp*, the *FC*, the *CY-47*, and *PACWIS* for worker notes, not formal documentation and business letters.

- **Euphemisms-** Confusion results from glossing over the negative concepts in our profession. Euphemistic language weakens the images in our writing, as well. Avoid those *engage in* and *dealing with the issue* expressions that pervade our records and cloud the significance of what's taken place in the case.

- **Idioms-** The language of a particular community or people can be interesting and colorful, but tends to be confusing to outsiders. Regional and childhood idioms can cause others to lower their opinion of you and your work product.

- **Slang-** If it is not in the dictionary, avoid using it.

- **Profanity-** The impact of the off-color remark or word can be offset by the offense taken. Unless quoting an irate client, or it's germane to the issue, drop it for another expression.

- **Office or Company Specific Phrases-** Much like the professional jargon, it's important to realize that others are not familiar with your lingo. SCOH is not a familiar term to those in the western part of the state. But **S**ervices to **C**hildren in their **O**wn **H**omes is one that's understood by all.

- **Red Flag Words-** Referring to a woman in the office as a "girl" might be offensive. Suggesting that the "boys" in the office will move the desk and file cabinet might not get the help you had hoped to get!

- **Vague or Abstract Language**- In writing and service plans, we need to be as specific as we can. The job is hard enough without having to quibble over the meaning of an objective that could have been spelled out in concrete, measurable terms.

- **Overly Complex Words-** Don't go for the $100 word when a $5 one does the job. You'll do well if you remember to **write to express, not to impress**.

- **Cliches-** Worn out expressions lend little to your writing, and make you appear trite and hackneyed.

Titles: Capitalization and Format

- If the source stands alone, the title will be written in italics and title case in a paragraph:
  - For example: books, e-book, report (technical, government, etc.), dissertation, thesis, film, video, television series, podcast, YouTube video, artwork, map, music album, unpublished manuscript

- If the source is part of a great whole, the title will be written inside of double quotation marks and in title case in a paragraph:
    - For example: journal article, book chapter, e-book chapter, newspaper article, magazine article, blog post, television episode, webisode, webpage, tweet, Facebook update, encyclopedia entry, Wikipedia entry, dictionary entry, song

Resources

Capitalization Rules: http://www.grammarbook.com/punctuation/capital.asp

Tips on when to capitalize “federal” and “state”:
http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/quickreference/dash/dashfederal.cfm

Six part series on APA blog about creating lists:
http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2010/02/lists-part-1-parallelism.html

Purdue OWL: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/05/

Commas with restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses:
http://wps.ablongman.com/long_longman_ohb_1/27/7023/1798001.cw/content/index.html

Hyphens: http://www.tedmontgomery.com/punctuation/hyphen-b.html

Plural and Possessive: http://www.meredith.edu/grammar/plural.htm

Uncommon Plurals: http://voxy.com/blog/index.php/2012/08/top-ten-uncommon-english-plurals/

Quotation Marks with Periods and Commas:
http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/quotation-marks-with-periods-and-commas.aspx

Subject and Verb agreement:
http://www.grammarbook.com/grammar/subjectVerbAgree.asp

Handout Design:

http://www.pcc.edu/resources/tlc/cascade/documents/PCCHandouts_handout.pdf

Designing Instructional Materials:

http://create.coloradovirtuallibrary.org/training-outline-designing-instructional-materials

General Resources:

www.grammarbook.com

http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/

http://grammar.about.com/

http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop/writers/

www.dictionary.com

www.thesaurus.com

www.reference.com

http://blog.apastyle.org/

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