Style Sheet for California HealthCare Foundation

For Writers and Editors
To answer your writing and editing questions, consult these resources in this order:

1. This style sheet
2. *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed. (*References in parentheses are to CMOS.*)

**Abbreviations, Acronyms, Initialisms**
If a term or an organization’s name will be used more than once, spell it out the first time, followed by its abbreviation in parentheses. Afterward, use the abbreviation (10.3, 10.23, 10.24) in text and heads.

I work for the California HealthCare Foundation (CHCF). The headquarters of CHCF is in Oakland.

But treat an executive summary or a sidebar as an independent document for purposes of abbreviations.

Rewrite to avoid making an acronym possessive, but if a phrase is introduced in the plural, write its acronym in the plural:

Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs)

See also Academic Degrees, Company Names, Names.

**Academic Degrees**
Omit internal punctuation (10.20) with academic degrees (MD, MS, PhD, RN) and generally do not use other credentials (*CMT, FACP*, etc.) unless important to topic of report.

**Ages**
Hyphenate an age as a noun or adjective (7.85, 5.220).

an eight-year-old boy
85-year-olds
six- to 12-year-old kids

But:
people age 65 [not aged]
65 years of age or older
five years old
age 65+ or >65 [okay in graphics]

**Authorship**
On title page, list only names, degrees (Madelyn Walters, MS, MPH), and organization.
In the “About the Author” section, list names, appropriate degrees, title, and organization: Al Malamute, PhD, MD, director of surgery, Stanford University Hospital. Any brief, factual description (up to 50 words) should not be promotional in tone.

**Bias-free Language**

To avoid gender bias, use these strategies (5.225):

- If possible, rewrite to avoid *him* and *her*, or recast in the plural: *a doctor must wash his hands often* becomes *doctors must wash their hands often*.
- Use nonsexist words instead of “man” words: *people* not *mankind*, *chair* not *chairman*.

When referring to someone with a disease, emphasize the person, not the disease (5.230): *a patient with diabetes* (preferred) or *a diabetic patient*. Never employ as a noun: *diabetics*, *schizophrenics*, or the like.

**Capitalization**

Capitalize generic terms as part of proper names, but lowercase them in references (8.65, 8.67): *California HealthCare Foundation*, *the foundation*; *the Department of Disease Eradication*, *the department*; *Stanford University*, *the university*.

For headings and the titles of books, journals, articles, etc. (8.157).
- Always capitalize the first and last words of a title and subtitle.
- Capitalize all other major words, including nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, except as noted below.
- Lowercase articles: *a, an, the*.
- Lowercase prepositions of four or fewer letters: *for, in, of, on, with* but *Above, Between, Within*.
- Lowercase conjunctions: *and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet*.
- Lowercase *to* as a preposition and as an infinitive (to Examine); lowercase *as*.
- For hyphenated words (8.159), capitalize both elements.

Pre-Existing Condition; Post-World War II Health Care.

**Citations and References**

Use endnotes, not footnotes (except when necessary in sidebars). Apply arabic numbering (1, 2, 3). Word’s Reference feature will number them automatically.

All endnote numbers should be superscripted and follow the sentence’s final punctuation.

The numbered examples below are of primary notes and subsequent references to the same notes. Consult the Chicago-Style Citation Quick Guide and Chapter 14 of CMOS for more examples.
Blog entry

Book
One author

Two or three authors

Four or more authors

Journal article
Printed

Online

Paper presented at a conference

Company Names
Use the full name, including ampersands and abbreviations, but may omit Inc., & Co., LLC, and the like (10.23): Rand Corp., Merck not Merck & Co, Inc.

Composition Titles
Titles of books, articles, etc.

- Entire works: Italicize the names of books, journals, magazines, newsletters, newspapers, movies, TV shows, and blogs (8.161, 8.187): *Gray’s Anatomy*, *Journal of Oncology*. 
• Smaller works: Use quotation marks for articles, speeches, blog posts, and the like (8.161, 8.175, 8.187): “Miracle Cure Found in Amazon.”
• Websites, surveys, and databases: Capitalize, but do not italicize or surround with quotation marks (8.186):

This year, PubMed is expected to serve up 1 billion page views.

• Initial the: An initial the in the title of a newspaper or periodical is lowercased (unless it begins a sentence) and not italicized (8.168): the New York Times.
• Subtitles: Use a colon to separate a subtitle from a title (8.162): The Avocado Diet: Lose Weight and Help California’s Economy.

See also Capitalization.

Dates
• Capitalize and spell out months in running text. In tables, notes, and the like, use three-letter abbreviations with periods (10.40): (November, Nov.).
• If no date is specified, do not use a comma after the month (6.45): March 2001.
• If a date is specified, use commas after both the date and the year (6.45): on April 2, 2001, we left.
• Use ordinal numerals (9.32): June 30 not June 30th.
• Centuries: Spell out and hyphenate (9.33): the twenty-first century.
• Use apostrophes only to indicate missing numbers (9.34): the 1800s, the ’70s, the 1970s not the 70’s and not the 1970’s.

Fractions
Spell out and hyphenate simple fractions as nouns, adjectives, and adverbs (9.14).

four-fifths of the doctors
a two-thirds majority
one-half complete
one and three-quarters

Government
Capitalize the full names of legislative and administrative bodies, departments, bureaus, and offices (8.61).

U.S. Congress
the House, the Senate
the California State Assembly
the San Francisco Board of Supervisors

Adjectives derived from them and paraphrased references to them are usually not (8.61).

assembly meeting
legislature agenda
city council member
state senate
congressional but Congress

Lowercase certain generic governmental terms (8.64): administration, city hall, federal.
Lowercase state when used generically: the state of California.

**Hyphenation**
Consult the spelling list herein, then CMOS 7.77-7.85, and then M-W.

**Illustrations (Tables and Figures)**
All illustrations require a title and a source notation at the bottom that includes the year.

Illustrations should be numbered continuously. Tables are numbered separately from other figures such as graphs and illustrations. Appendices are lettered. (Table 1, Table 2, Figure 1, Table 3, Figure 2. Appendices A, B, C.) A table or figure within an appendix includes the appendix’s letter (Table A1, Figure B1).

Notes for illustrations belong below the illustration and not in the endnotes. Illustration notes use these symbols in this order: *, †, ‡, §, #. If more are needed, use double marks in the same order: **, ††, ‡‡, §§, ##.

*See also* Citations and References and Page Numbers, Chapters, and the Like.

**Internet, Web**
Leave URLs intact. In production, they may be condensed.

Proper nouns spelled with an initial lowercase letter followed by a capital needn’t be capitalized at the beginning of a sentence or a heading (8.153).

iPads are growing more popular in hospitals.
eHealth sells thousands of items.

**Job Titles**
Capitalize a job title when it precedes a name: Vice President Barnes, Dean Gomez. Lowercase a job title after a name or when used alone (8.18, 8.21, 8.26).

Jed Beam, president; the president
Governor Brown; the governor
Jesus Gomez, dean of students; the dean
Kim Chou, director of funding; the director

**Lists**
Use parallel construction for list items, whether in running text or as bulleted or vertical lists—all nouns or all verbs (6.121).

internists, general practitioners, and physician assistants
greet the patient, consult the patient’s chart, wash your hands, and examine the patient

Use the serial comma before the conjunction in a list of three or more items (6.18). If any item has internal punctuation, separate the items with semicolons (6.19).
We ordered cotton balls, gloves, and x-ray film.
We ordered cotton balls; small, medium, and large gloves; and x-ray film.

A list is best introduced by a complete grammatical sentence, followed by a colon (6.124). Use closing punctuation only if the items are complete sentences (6.124).

In a numbered list, follow each numeral with a period and a capital letter (6.124).

Order these supplies weekly: Every morning, perform these steps:
Nitrile gloves 1. Boot your computer.
Tongue depressors 2. Log in.
Rubbing alcohol 3. Check your email.

Money
Use the currency symbol and numerals (9.25): $21.09, $3 million.

Names
Use periods and a space between initials (A. B. Cooper) but omit periods and spaces in names replaced by initials (10.12): JFK.

In subsequent references, use the last name: Jan Jackson then Jackson; Mortimer Brown, MD, then Brown [not Dr. Brown].

See also Company Names.

Numbers
- Spell out one through nine; use numerals for larger numbers (9.3). For very large numbers, use numerals and words (9.8): 3 million, 4.6 billion.
- At the beginning of a sentence, either spell out a number or reword the sentence (9.5): Eighty-six respondents answered every question or Every question was answered by 86 respondents.
- Use commas for numbers of four digits or more except page numbers, addresses, and years (9.55): 1,541 therapists agree, 23502 Cleaver Avenue.
- Noun/verb agreement
  - With percentages: Use a singular verb if the noun is collective (40% of the electorate is Latino); use a plural verb if the noun is an ordinary plural (15% of participants are women).
  - With fractional phrases: Singular subjects take singular verbs (one in four counties is rural; more than one in five participants is unmarried; two-thirds of the public say so).

See also Ages, Dates, Fractions, Money, Percentages, Rankings, Time.
**Pages Numbers, Chapters, and the Like**
Spell out and uppercase references to parts of a document, tables, figures, charts, appendices, and the like: *Chapter 9, Section 2.38, Table 2, Figure 4, Appendix B.*

**Percentages**
Use numerals, except at the beginning of a sentence, and don’t hyphenate even in adjectival form. Use the percent symbol (%) throughout except at the beginning of a sentence (9.18).

- a 3% chance
- and 35.6% responded

Twenty-six percent of patients agreed.
The proportion of patients agreeing was 26%.

**Places**
In running text, spell out the names of states and of the country (10.28): *California, United States* (or *US*). In bibliographies, addresses, tables, etc., use two-letter postal abbreviations (10.28): *CA, DC, and the US.*

Words such as *state, county, city,* and so forth are capitalized when they are used as an accepted part of a proper name: *Alameda County, Southern California,* but *southern Idaho.*

**Punctuation and Spacing**

**Colons**
Capitalize a word that follows a colon only if it starts a complete thought (6.61).

- Include these items: aspirin, gauze, and tape.
- Here’s the reason: Many nurses wear soft-soled shoes.

**Dashes**
For number ranges, use a hyphen: *2004-2007, pp. 4-9.*

Form an em dash in Word with Ctrl-Alt-Numpad minus. One space before and after. No need to use an en dash.

**Ellipsis points**
Ellipsis points represent text omitted from a quoted passage. Use three spaced periods within sentences (13.48) and four spaced periods between sentences (13.51).

- I will apply . . . all measures that are required. . . . I will remember that there is art to medicine as well as science.

**Parentheses and brackets**
When making a parenthetical statement within another one, use brackets for the innermost set (6.99).
(For details, see Tyson [2003] and Anderson [2005].)

**Periods**
Use *i.e.* and *e.g.* only in parentheses, add periods, and follow with a comma (10.43): (i.e., this way).

**Quotation marks**
Place commas and periods inside quotation marks (6.9), colons and semicolons outside (6.10).
Place question marks and exclamation marks inside only if they are part of the quotation (6.10).

> “That’s what I thought,” she said. “What did the doctor say?” he asked.
> “Respect”: my all-time favorite song. Did he say, “The doctor went home”?"

**Spacing**
Use one space between sentences and after colons (2.9). Avoid using more than one space in a row. Use tabs to align columns (2.11).

**Race and Color**
Use these preferences unless dictated otherwise by the source material (8.37).

- African American (do not hyphenate even as an adjective).
- Native American
- Latino (*not* Hispanic)
- White
- Black

**Rankings**
Use cardinal numbers (9.6): *they came in 57th in the state.*

**Time**
Use *AM* or *PM* with a leading space (10.42): *8:00 AM, 2:45 PM.*

**Voice**
Use the third person, and avoid *I, we,* and *us:* *the institute found* not *we found.*

**Spelling and Vocabulary**
If a term is not in this list, consult *M-W.* If an entry has more than one spelling, use the first one.

- acknowledgments
- acute care (adj.)
- African American (no hyphen even as adj.)
- appendices (*not* appendixes)
- applications (*or* apps)
payers (not payors)
pay for performance (no hyphens even as adj.) or P4P
persons—avoid using. Use individuals, people, or populations as appropriate.
policyholder
policymaker
pre-existing (always hyphenate prefix pre when followed by e)
pre-admission (generally hyphenate prefix pre)
post-hospital visit (generally hyphenate prefix post) preventive (not preventative)
primary care, primary care physician (no hyphen even as adj.)
readmission (generally do not hyphenate prefix re)
re-engineering (always hyphenate prefix re when followed by e)
rehospitalize
safety net, safety-net patient
skilled nursing facility (no hyphen)
small-employer (adj.)
smartphone
spring (season)
stakeholders
state exchanges, exchanges in general
statewide
summer
systemwide
telehealth
trade-offs
underserved
UC campuses: UCLA, UCSF, UC Berkeley (other campuses spelled out for first mention, with comma before city: University of California, San Diego; in lists, use consistent format for all)
up-to-date
versus (spell out in running text, vs. can be used in tables, heads, etc.)
voicemail
web, the (7.76)
web page (7.76)
website (7.76)
winter
workflow
workplace (noun or adj.)
x-ray (noun or adj.)

For Website Editors
To ensure compatibility with the broadest array of browsers and hardware, avoid using special characters.

- Replace accent marks (e.g., cafe not café, resume not résumé).
- Use singles hyphens for en dashes, doubles hyphens for em dashes.
- Use straight quotes (', "), not curly (‘’, “”).