

Editorial Style Guide

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Editorial Style Guide

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation *Editorial Style Guide* is a writing and editing resource that helps us build a consistent brand and voice across the foundation for all external and internal written communications.

What you'll see in the pages ahead is an alphabetical listing of common words, phrases, and grammar rules much like you'd find in the *Associated Press Stylebook (AP)*, which we generally adhere to with exceptions, as noted in this document.

NOTE: this is a living document and will be updated occasionally. If you have any questions or see places where we can improve this guide, please reach out to [Debbie Bengtson](#) on the Foundation Voice team.

Abbreviations and acronyms

In general, spell out abbreviations and acronyms on first reference, with the abbreviation or acronym in parentheses immediately following the full spelling if it appears later in the document.

- *His Excellency Hailemariam Dessalegn, chairman of the board of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), traveled to Nairobi to visit the AGRA office.*

Consider repeating the spelled-out version at first mention in each chapter of a longer document (such as a white paper).

Terms that don't need to be spelled out on a first reference include CEO, FAQ, HIV, PATH, UK, URL, and others noted in the *AP Stylebook*.

Avoid using abbreviations of global health and development terms when writing for a general audience. These can include CHW, FSM, LMIC, MNCH, MNCAH, MNCAH&N, NTD, and WSH. Exceptions, in certain instances: UHC (for *universal health coverage*) and PHC (for *primary health care*).

Spell out the names of American states (contrary to AP style).

Academic degrees

Abbreviations and generic phrasing are both acceptable, even within one sentence.

- *Jane Smith, who has a doctorate in microbiology and a B.S. in biology...*
- *Jane Smith, who has a Ph.D. in microbiology and a Bachelor of Science in biology...*

However, when adding a person's degree after their full name, use an abbreviation (*B.A., B.S., J.D., LL.D, M.A., MBA, M.P.H., Ph.D.*) and set it off with commas:

- *Jane Smith, Ph.D., will present...*

Use an apostrophe in *bachelor's degree* and *master's degree*. There is no possessive in *associate degree*.

See also **leadership bios**.

Active vs. passive voice

The use of active voice in your writing is preferred and more engaging for the reader.

- *Passive: Reforms were made to the Indian health system.*

- Active: *India reformed its health system.*
- Passive: *There are many varieties of rice available to the farmers.*
- Active: *The farmers have access to many varieties of rice.*

Additionally:

- Clarity in our communication is our top priority.
- Avoid stilted or overly formal language when possible.
- Avoid idioms that international readers may not understand, including American sports metaphors.

Africa CDC

The full name of the organization is *Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention*. There is no *the*, unless at the start of a sentence.

Ages

Always use numerals with age.

- *The boy is 5 years old.*

Use a hyphen when the age is used as an adjective.

- *High-quality pre-k for all 3-and 4-year-olds*

When presenting an age range, separate the two ages with an *en dash* or *to*.

- *College graduates ages 25–44*
- *Students ages 10 to 15*

Also see **school grades**.

Ampersand

Use an ampersand (&) only when it is a part of a formal name.

Always use the ampersand when writing out the foundation's full name: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

These foundation programs use an ampersand without a serial comma in their official name:

- *Maternal, Newborn & Child Health team*
- *Water, Sanitation & Hygiene program*

- *Discovery & Translational Sciences*
- *Maternal, Newborn & Child Health Discovery Tools*

When referring to the foundation's intranet site, always capitalize *Ampersand*.

And/or

The use of *and/or* in a document is acceptable when not overused.

Antenatal

Prenatal is preferable.

Antibody and antigen

Be careful not to conflate antigens and antibodies, nor antigen tests and antibody tests: An antigen is a substance that can induce an immune response, whereas an antibody is a protein that recognizes and binds to antigens.

Asset attribution

Photos, charts, and other image assets must be properly attributed.

On the website, most photos are owned by the foundation and are covered by the blanket copyright notice on each page footer:

- © 1991-2021 Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. All rights reserved.

All other foundation materials must carry a similar copyright notice plus a sentence similar to the following (usually on or near the copyright line):

- *Photos provided by Gates Archive.*

Any assets not owned by the foundation must be clearly attributed to their source, with enough information to enable the reader to locate it, as in these examples:

- *Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2017*
Source: Journal of Development Studies, 2018, (54,7): 1171–95

See also **photo captions** and **photo credits**.

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Our formal, legal name is the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Use it on first reference in a document. Always use the ampersand (&) and always capitalize *Foundation* when *Bill & Melinda Gates* precedes it.

Use lowercase *foundation* when the word stands alone in subsequent references.

- *The foundation's new headquarters is near Seattle Center.*

If extra clarity is needed, use *Gates Foundation*—but only if context is clear. There is a Gates Family Foundation in Colorado, so we need to be careful.

- *The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Ford Foundation co-sponsored the event. A Gates Foundation staff member delivered closing remarks.*

On **individual foundation** webpages, it's OK to use *we*, *the foundation*, or *our foundation* on first reference.

The entity that manages the foundation endowment is formally, legally known as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Asset Trust. In the rare cases in which we refer to this entity, write it out on first reference and refer to it as the *asset trust* in subsequent references.

Bed net

Two words.

Billion

See **currency**.

Bombay

Use *Mumbai (Bombay)* on first reference and *Mumbai* thereafter.

Bulleted lists

List items should be grammatically parallel. Initial cap the first word of each item. Use terminal punctuation for all items if any single item is a complete sentence; otherwise, omit terminal punctuation (contrary to AP style).

Introduce the bulleted list with a colon:

The initiative has three areas of focus:

- *Contraceptive services*
- *Prenatal care*
- *Hospital-based delivery*

Calcutta

Use *Kolkata (Calcutta)* on first reference and *Kolkata* thereafter.

Cell phone

Two words.

Citations

For research reports or highly technical material, any academic citation style is acceptable, as long as it is applied consistently. For all other material, use the Chicago notes and bibliography style (www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html) with the following modifications:

- URLs in footnotes should be live links.
- Omit “http://” from URLs.
- Omit the final forward slash from URLs.

See also **footnotes**.

Clinical trials

Use Roman numerals when referring to clinical trials, and always capitalize *Phase*.

- *The company will begin Phase IV clinical trials in May.*

Co-

Retain the hyphen when forming nouns, adjectives, and verbs that indicate occupation or status, and as a part of a formal title before a name.

- *Melinda French Gates and Bill Gates are co-chairs and trustees of the foundation.*
- *Several team members co-authored the report.*
- *She met with Co-Chair Melinda Gates.*

Colons

Capitalize the first word after a colon (:) only if it begins a complete sentence.

- *The results were predictable: Pharmaceutical companies rushed to produce vaccines against SARS-CoV-2.*
- *The problem is due to several factors: limited access, lack of community outreach, and cultural perceptions.*

Commas

Use the serial (Oxford) comma for all lists of three or more elements.

- *The program provides food, water, and shelter after natural disasters.*

Contractions

Contractions are acceptable in all foundation materials.

Copyright notice

Foundation website content is generally owned by the foundation and is covered by the blanket copyright notice at the bottom of each page.

Branded collateral (such as PowerPoint templates, foundation-authored white papers, etc.) must include an explicit foundation copyright notice. Editors are responsible for asking whether a copyright notice is necessary for a given piece. If it is, use this format:

- © 2021 Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. All rights reserved.

Photos, charts, or other images that are not owned by the foundation do not require a copyright notice but must be clearly attributed to their source. See also **asset attribution** and **photo credits**.

See also **Trademark**.

Coronavirus, COVID-19

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause disease in people and animals. They are named for the crownlike spikes on their surface. COVID-19 is the disease caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2.

Always use *COVID-19*; do not use *COVID* except as part of a quote or in the name of an initiative.

Do not capitalize *coronavirus*, unless at the beginning of a sentence. Do not capitalize *delta variant*, unless at the beginning of a sentence.

When referring specifically to the virus, *the COVID-19 virus* and the *virus* that causes *COVID-19* are both acceptable, as is *the coronavirus* on second reference.

Inaccurate usages include *COVID-19 spreads through the air*, *catching COVID-19*, and *COVID-19 remains on surfaces*.

Avoid xenophobic phrasing such as where COVID-19 came from or where COVID-19 originated, including references to variants.

For example, use *the variant first identified in South Africa*, not *the South Africa variant*.

Currency

Specify the currency in all documents in the first reference to the amount (including U.S. dollars).

- *Microsoft has committed US\$250 million to the program.*

When appropriate for the context, it is acceptable to round up or round down the number and precede it with a qualifier such as *nearly*, *almost*, or *more than*.

Include the U.S. dollar equivalent when citing a foreign currency.

- *He earned 3,000 rupees (US\$70) a month.*

Spell out *million* and *billion* when referring to currency, and use decimals, not fractions. Do not go beyond two decimal places.

- *The foundation contributed US\$2.45 million to the United Way.*
- *More than CA\$8 billion was invested by Canada.*
- *The government will be investing 8 billion euros.*

Dashes

Use an **em dash** to indicate an aside or abrupt change in thought.

- *We work to make affordable financial services—particularly savings accounts—more widely available in India.*

Use an **en dash** with a numerical range. Exceptions: K-12, pre-K.

- *In the 2004 presidential election, 76% of U.S. college graduates ages 25 – 44 voted.*
- *For more information, see pages 9 – 11 of the report.*

- *The five-year plan for 1995 – 2000 will double investments in maternal and child health.*

Data

Treat as a singular mass noun, except in scientific writing when it can be used as the plural of *datum*.

- *Singular mass noun: Data for this year is not available, but it is available for last year*
- *Scientific use: The data are ready to be presented.*

Date format

Spell out months. Use a comma on either side of the year when a month/day/year appears in a sentence.

- *The conference will take place on April 19, 2022, in Addis Ababa.*

Decision-maker, Decision-making

Both words are hyphenated.

Delhi

Not *New Delhi*.

Diseases

Names of diseases are not capitalized unless they contain a proper noun (such as the name of a person or country).

- *malaria, tuberculosis, cancer*
- *Guinea worm disease*

Drug names

Generic drug names are not capitalized. Trade names of drugs are capitalized. Use the generic name whenever possible.

- *dolutegravir*
- *the HIV drug Retrovir (zidovudine)*

Exception: HIV/AIDS

e-words

Please refer to the *AP Stylebook* for additional words beginning with e-.

Examples:

- email
- e-commerce
- e-book
- e-governance

Education systems

Not *educational systems*.

European Union (EU)

For common audiences, spell out first reference, thereafter, use the initialism (no periods).

Farming families

Not *farm families*.

Footnotes

All footnote text takes terminal punctuation, including sentence fragments. Avoid placing a footnote number in the middle of a sentence.

Format footnote citations following the *Chicago Manual of Style* notes format and shortened notes format (for repeated references):

- Book, single author:
¹ Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 99–100.
- Shortened format:
³ Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, 16.
- Newspaper or magazine article:
¹ Daniel Mendelsohn, "But Enough about Me," *New Yorker*, January 25, 2010, 68.
- Website:
¹ "Google Privacy Policy," last modified March 11, 2009, www.google.com/intl/en/privacypolicy.html.

See also **citations**.

Foundation division, program, and team names

Capitalize the official names of all foundation divisions, programs, and teams. All divisions include the word *Division* as part of their official name:

- *Gender Equality Division*
- *Global Development Division*
- *Global Growth and Opportunity Division*
- *Global Health Division*
- *Global Policy and Advocacy Division*
- *Foundation Strategy Office*

If not part of the team's official title, *program* and *team* are lowercase:

- *Discovery & Translational Sciences program*
- *Tuberculosis team*

Go to gatesfoundation.org/our-work to view the full list of program names.

Frontline, Front line

One word as adjective, when referring to a specific work title, sector, or type of care (e.g., frontline health worker, frontline nurse, frontline treatment).

Two words as noun but be cautious of an over-reliance on military language and find an alternative whenever possible.

Game changer

Don't hyphenate the noun (game changer) but do so with the adjective (game-changing).

Gates family name

William Gates III is formally referred to as *Bill Gates* in all foundation documents, including internal ones. Never use a nickname or abbreviation in internal documents.

Use *Melinda French Gates* when formally referring to Melinda. Use *French Gates* on second reference.

Use *Bill Gates Sr.* (no comma) when referring to Bill Gates' late father, whose formal name is William H. Gates Sr.

Plural: *Gateses*

- *The Gateses attended the opening of the new University of Washington law building.*

Singular possessive: Gates'

- *Melinda French Gates' speech was well received.*

Plural possessive (two constructions): Bill and Melinda Gates' / the Gateses'

- *The Gateses' decision to provide free Internet access...*
- *Bill and Melinda Gates' decision to provide free Internet access...*

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance

Formerly known as GAVI. Use *Gavi* or *the alliance* on second reference.

Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

Use *the Global Fund* on second reference.

Graduate

As a verb, follow with a preposition.

- *Correct: Nic will graduate from college in 2026.*
- *Incorrect: Nic will graduate college in 2026.*

Grantmaker, Grantmaking

One word.

Grant seeker

Two words.

Great Recession

Avoid using this term in reference to the 2007–2009 global financial crisis. The term *Great Recession* is used only in the United States and has undertones that the crisis occurred only in the United States. Use *global financial crisis* instead.

Headings

On [gatesfoundation.org](https://www.gatesfoundation.org) headings must be sentence case, using the Heading X styles in Microsoft Word. Avoid using more than three levels of headings. Do not skip heading levels—e.g., do not immediately follow a Heading 1 with a Heading 3.

For web-based content, use subheadings throughout pieces for readability and for search engine optimization.

Health care and healthcare

Health care—two words—refers to provider actions. Healthcare—one word—is a system.

- *Health care in the United States is provided by many distinct organizations, made up of insurance companies, healthcare providers and hospital systems.*

Health equity vs. health equality

Health equity enables access and opportunities so all populations can achieve the same health outcomes.

Health equality provides all populations with the same health resources.

High-yield vs. high-yielding

Both terms are acceptable. *High-yield* is preferable when referencing crop varieties.

Higher education

In short form, *higher ed* is acceptable. *Postsecondary education* and *college* are acceptable synonyms, depending on the context.

HIV/AIDS

Use this construction with care. A person can be infected with HIV (the virus) and not yet have AIDS (the disease).

Do not include internal periods: *HIV* (not “H.I.V”) and *AIDS* (not “A.I.D.S”).

Never use the phrase “*beat AIDS*” or “*end AIDS*” (alternate options include *fight AIDS*).

Hyphenation

For suspended modifiers, hyphenate as follows:

- *low- and middle-income countries*

Do not hyphenate compound nationalities or ethnicities:

- *She is the first African American to lead the organization.*
- *outreach to Pacific Islander communities*

In published work, don't hyphenate the following items at the end of a line, rather push the entire word to the next line:

- Proper nouns
- Already hyphenated words

Never hyphenate a URL at the end of a line. Push entire address to the next line to avoid adding dashes or breaks that may interfere with successfully opening the link.

***Ideas* website section**

Italicize the name of this section of the foundation website.

internet

Always lowercase

Italics

Use italics for emphasis, new terms, and non-English terms not yet entered into the English lexicon when writing for U.S. audiences.

Jargon and idioms

Avoid business and technical jargon from all fields. Avoid U.S.-specific idioms that might not be understood by international readers. First-person articles in *Ideas* or *The Optimist*, *leadership correspondence*, *briefing*, and *speeches* may accommodate more jargon as part of the writer's voice.

Examples of terms to avoid when possible:

- *actionable*
- *catalytic*, *catalyze*
- *convenings*
- *core competency*
- *cross-cutting*
- *deliverable (n.)*
- *drill down*
- *drive (v.t.)—as in to drive improvements*
- *driver (n.)—as in a driver of improvements*
- *evolve (v.t.)—as in evolve the strategy*
- *incent (v.t.)*
- *incentivize*

- *impact (v.t.), impactful*
- *learnings*
- *lever*
- *leverage (v.t.)*
- *monetize*
- *operationalize*
- *platform*
- *optimal*
- *optimize*
- *prioritize*
- *proactive*
- *robust*
- *scalability*
- *scalable*
- *silo (v.t., n.), siloed (adj.)*
- *suboptimal*
- *synergy*
- *task (v.t.)*
- *incentivize*
- *impact (v.t.), impactful*
- *learnings*
- *lever*
- *leverage (v.t.)*

Job titles

Capitalize formal titles only when they precede a name.

- *President Trevor Mundel will lead...*

Lowercase formal titles when they come after a name.

- *Trevor Mundel, president of the Global Health Division, will lead...*

Lowercase and spell out titles when they are not used with an individual's name or generic descriptive terms.

- *The president issued a statement.*
- *The scholarship is named after astronaut Sally Ride.*

Commas are not needed when a person's title comes before the name but are needed when the name comes first.

- *Gates Foundation CEO Mark Suzman will be...*
- *Mark Suzman, CEO of the Gates Foundation, will be...*

Kolkata

Use *Kolkata (Calcutta)* on first reference and *Kolkata* thereafter.

Latin abbreviations

Latin abbreviations are acceptable, but it is preferable to spell out the meaning in standard English unless they appear within parentheses or in tables, charts, or graphics. The abbreviations *e.g.*, and *i.e.*, are always followed by a comma.

- *e.g.*: for example or such as
i.e.: in other words, that is, or such as
- *etc.*: and so on or and so forth
- *et al.*: use and others

Leadership bios

In leadership bios on the website, the name line should show the person's full name only. If the person is a medical doctor, it is acceptable to use *Dr.* in front of the full name in the first sentence of the bio.

Use the leader's first name on all subsequent references in the bio.

Less vs. fewer

Less means *not as much* of an uncountable noun, such as air or water.

- *The city gets less rain than in the past.*

Fewer means *not as many* of a countable noun, such as people or cases.

- *The country has had fewer cases of polio in recent years.*

See also **more than vs. over**

Links

See **URLS**.

Measurements

In general, use metric measurements. Use U.S. measurements if the piece is exclusively about the United States or written to/for an American audience.

Million

See **currency**.

More than vs. over

More than is used to describe a quantity of something or comparing two phrases.

- *The gum costs more than the candy bar.*
- *This car can travel more than 300 miles on one tank of gas.*

Over is a preposition. It describes an object's position as above or on top of something; it can mean figuratively "above" an upper limit.

- *The helicopter is hovering over the house.*
- *This car cannot travel over 300 mph.*

Mumbai

Use *Mumbai (Bombay)* on first reference and *Mumbai* thereafter.

Names of organizations

Use the official spelling and capitalization of organization names. If the name is in another language and has an official English-language translation, include the translated name in parentheses on first reference for English speaking audiences; this is unnecessary when the audience speaks that same language.

Spell the name in full on first use, with abbreviation or acronym following in parentheses.

Use the abbreviation or acronym in subsequent instances.

- *The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends...*
- *They are waiting for WHO to announce...*

Names of people

In general, use last names to refer to people on second reference. Exceptions include in leadership bios on the foundation website, when referring to children, in *Ideas* and

The Optimist pieces in which foundation leaders refer to one another, and in casual reference to Bill, Melinda, or Bill Sr.

See also **leadership bios**.

Neonatal

Newborn is preferable.

Non-hormonal

Always use a hyphen.

Numbers

In general, spell out numbers under 10 and use numerals for numbers 10 and above.

- *Last month, four program officers went on 13 site visits.*

Spell out numbers at the start of a sentence.

- *Thirty people participated in the study.*
- *Twenty-nine percent of voters...*

For ordinal numbers, spell out *first* through *ninth*.

- *fourth grade student, first grader*

For exceptions, see **ages**, **currency**, and **school grades**.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

The proper title of this organization uses the UK English version of "Organisation."

The Optimist

Always italicize both words of the title *The Optimist*, the foundation's online newsletter, and capitalize *The*.

Percentages

Use the symbol (%) when preceded by a number.

- *Almost 90% of the foundation uses the percentage symbol in its writing.*
- *Ninety percent of the foundation already uses the symbol in its writing, and the final 10% will follow soon.*

Phone numbers

When listing contact information, use periods to separate parts of phone numbers, and begin each phone number with a plus sign.

Because we work with people throughout the world, omit the international access code, which differs from country to country. (It's 011 in the United States.)

- *+1.206.709.3100 (United States)*
- *+91.11.4100.3100 (India)*

Photo captions

In general, omit names of people unless they are foundation leaders or other public figures.

Omit dates unless the photo depicts an event or milestone for which the date is important.

The photographer's metadata may not be accurate, so double-check names of institutions and geographic locations and stick with generalities when describing the content of the photo.

Try to reduce the location information to two place names, as appropriate for the context—for example, city/town and country, village and state, or state and country. For U.S. locations, generally list only the city and state.

- *A mother holds her child during a pediatric exam in Manhiça, Mozambique.*
- *A science class at John Hope College Preparatory High School in Chicago, Illinois.*

Try to limit captions to one sentence or sentence fragment. Keep the syntax style consistent throughout a related set of materials (either all full sentences or all fragments). Use terminal punctuation, even for sentence fragments.

In general, use present tense in photo captions.

Photo credits

If the foundation has purchased a license to use the image, you may need to credit the photographer.

The photo credit should immediately follow the caption and should generally take one of these forms:

- *(Photo © Photographer Name)*

Long-form pieces may gather all credits at the end.

- *All photos provided by Gates Archive, with the following exceptions:
“Examining Inequality”: photo courtesy of LightRocket via Getty Images
“Maternal Mortality”: photo courtesy of Jhpiego/Paul Joseph Brown*

For questions about photo credit requirements, contact the Communications Service Desk at CommunicationsServiceDesk@gatesfoundation.org

Pilot project, pilot study

Do not shorten the noun to *pilot*.

Policymaker

One word.

Postsecondary

One word.

Prefixes

In general, do not use a hyphen after a prefix unless the word would be difficult to parse without the hyphen. Exceptions: words that indicate occupation or status (such as *co-chair* and *co-founder*), *co-fund*, *co-infection*, *non-vaccine*.

Prekindergarten, pre-k

Use the full name upon first reference and the short form thereafter.

Prenatal

This is preferable to *antenatal*.

Pronouns

It is acceptable to use *they*, *them*, or *their* as a singular and/or gender-neutral pronoun in limited cases, particularly in more conversational content. Do not use *he/she*, *his/her*, or *him/her*.

See the *AP Stylebook* for further guidance.

Prophylactic, prophylaxis

Prophylactic as a noun is a preventive measure: a treatment, device, or drug. As an adjective, it can be used as a synonym for *protective*.

Prophylaxis can mean prevention of a disease or preventive treatment in general.

Pull quotes and pull text

Avoid modifying a direct quote for use as a pull quote. It is acceptable to slightly modify regular text for use in pull text.

Use an em dash (—) in front of pull quote attributions. No space before or after.

- *Worrying is like paying a debt you don't owe.*
—Mark Twain

In a pull quote attribution, include the person's title and organization name where appropriate.

Do not use quotation marks for pull quotes on the website or brand creative content. Instead, differentiate by point size and text style.

Quotation Marks

Use for direct quotes or dialogue. Do not use for pull quotes on the website.

If quoting a complete sentence, precede the quote with a comma and capitalize the first letter of the quote.

- *As I sat down with the researcher in Lesotho, she said, "We're pleased to have increased the number of women receiving health care."*

If quoting an incomplete sentence, don't precede the quote with a comma or capitalize the first letter.

- *She described the healthcare system as "fragmentated and weakened by the pandemic."*

R&D

Use the abbreviation after the first mention of *research and development*.

Rainfed

One word.

Regions

Capitalize directional references only when they are accepted as parts of proper names.

- *West Africa*
- *western Africa*

When possible and appropriate, avoid referring to Africa as a single entity. Alternatives include *African countries* and referring to specific country names.

- *...supporting the healthcare systems of African countries during the pandemic.*

Scale

Avoid using as a verb. It is acceptable to sparingly use *scale up* but *expand* or *replicate on a larger scale* are preferable.

School grades

Spell out school grades through ninth grade; from 10th grade on, use numerals. No hyphens for the adjective form. However, do hyphenate if needed to avoid confusion, such as when combined with another ordinal number.

- *grades one through five*
- *fifth graders*
- *a fifth grade student*
- *He was the sixth fourth-grade student to win the prize*

Scientific names

Capitalize and italicize scientific names in accordance with conventions in the scientific community. Use the full version of a scientific name on first mention and the abbreviated form thereafter.

- *Salmonella typhi* is abbreviated as *S. typhi*.

Sectors and industries

Name of sectors and industries are not capitalized.

- *international development, global health*

Semicolon

A semicolon links related independent clauses. Do not capitalize the first word after a semicolon unless it is a proper noun.

- *Newborn babies need to be kept warm; otherwise, they might not survive.*

Do not use semicolons at the end of bulleted list items.

Sign up/follow up

Both are two words when used as a verb; hyphenate when used as a noun.

- *Example: In order to follow up after the meeting, the CEO will write several follow-up letters.*

Smallholder farmers

Do not use *small farmers* or *small-scale farmers*.

Smartphone

One word.

Social media

Social media is a collective noun much like jury, group, class, or family. Each one of these words describes an organization with several individual pieces. *Social media* is the same. Depending on its use, you may use either a singular or plural verb.

When referring to *social media* as a group, use a singular verb.

- *Social media has played a huge role in spreading misinformation.*

When referring to individual parts of the whole, a plural verb can be used.

- *Social media create more threats to productivity than television ever did.*

Check your verb usage by inserting names of social media into the sentence, for instance:

- Wrong: *Facebook, Twitter, Spotify has played a huge role in the spreading of misinformation*
- Correct: *Snapchat and Reddit create more threats to productivity than television ever did.*

Spacing

Use a single space after a period and before the start of a new sentence. Line spacing and other formatting specifics are unique to the type of document being prepared. Please consult with the person/team managing the project.

sub-Saharan Africa

Lowercase the first letter; use a hyphen between *sub* and *Saharan*.

That vs. which

Use *that* with a defining clause.

- *The initiative that supports maternal and child health will commence in May.*

Use *which* with a non-defining clause (one that doesn't change the meaning of the sentence if it is removed). A *which* clause is always preceded by a comma and closed with either a comma or a period.

- *The new initiative, which supports maternal and child health, will launch in May.*

Therapeutics

Treatments or medicines is preferable.

Titles

In general, italicize titles of publications.

- published in *The Optimist* newsletter
- the July 7 edition of the *New York Times*
- *Goats and Soda* is NPR's global health and development blog.
- The statistics are from the *2020 Annual Report on Water and Sanitation*.

See also the **foundation program names** and **job titles**.

Toward vs. towards

Use *toward*, which is the American standard as well as AP style. *Towards* is more commonly used in the UK and Europe.

Trademark symbols

Trademarks should be followed by a notice of their status whenever possible. Use the registration notice (®) for those trademarks that are federally registered (e.g., Goalkeepers®), and use the trademark notice (™) for unregistered marks (e.g., REX™).

These markings should be large enough to be easily spotted and should be placed as either a superscript (“shoulder”) or subscript (“heel”) immediately following the mark.

Determine the status of the trademark beforehand to ensure the appropriate notice. Do not use the registration notice (®) unless the mark is actually the subject to a currently valid registration issued by the government for purposes the mark is being used.

United Nations, UN

Use the full name upon first reference and the short form thereafter.

United States, U.S.

The abbreviation is used only as an adjective. There are no spaces between the letters and the periods.

- *The United States is the third largest country in the world. The U.S. healthcare system includes private insurance.*

United Kingdom, UK

The abbreviation is acceptable as a noun or an adjective. However, unlike *U.S.*, there are no periods between the letters *U* and *K*.

Note: the UK includes Northern Ireland but not Ireland.

University names

In general, render university names (and their abbreviated versions) based on how they appear on the university's website. Exception: *George Washington University* (follow AP: drop the initial *The*).

- *University of California, Berkeley* (thereafter *UC Berkeley*)
- *University of Minnesota Twin Cities* (thereafter *UM Twin Cities*)
- *University of Wisconsin–Madison* (en dash; thereafter *UW–Madison*)
- *University College London*
- *London School of Economics and Political Science* (thereafter *LSE*)
- *Wageningen University and Research Center* (thereafter *WUR*)

- *Jawaharlal Nehru University*

For the University of Washington, *the UW* is acceptable on second reference.

URLs

Whenever feasible, construct link text to contain URLs rather than giving the URL itself. Keep wording succinct but descriptive; do not use generic phrasing such as *click here*.

- *As Melinda French Gates wrote in 2014, “We will...*
- *The team developed a research brief that outlines their key findings.*

One form of link text on the website invites users to discover more about a topic. This call to action uses sentence case, takes no ending period, and appears on a line by itself.

- *Learn more*
- *Visit website*

When giving the web address for an entire website or a home page, omit *http://www*.

- *gatesfoundation.org*

Do not include *http://* in URLs for individual web pages. Do retain the *https://* protocol, however.

- *https://www.gatesfoundation.org/about*

Never hyphenate a URL at the end of a line. If breaking the URLs is unavoidable, push entire URL address to the next line.

Ensure that only the URL or its link text is linked, but not any surrounding words or punctuation (such as an ending period). Generally, rewrite to avoid ending a sentence with a URL.

Use vs. utilization

As a noun, *use* is generally preferable. *Utilization* is acceptable in contexts where it has a specific meaning, such as when referring to *service utilization* in the healthcare system.

Vaccines

When referring to vaccines or other medical products, avoid language such as *safe* and *effective* except in the context of regulatory approval by a specific regulatory body.

- *The vaccine was deemed safe and effective by the FDA.*

Vaccines that are still undergoing clinical review or have not received regulatory approval should always be identified as *vaccine candidates*.

Vector control

Noun or adjective, no hyphen.

Visitor Center

The name has been changed to the *Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Discovery Center*.

Warren Buffett

Note two Rs, two Fs, two Ts.

Washington, D.C.

Never refer to the U.S. capital as “Washington” or “D.C.” but rather write out the entire name: Washington, D.C.

Washington state

Lowercase *state* unless it is a part of an official organization or initiative name.

The web

Lower case *web*.

webmaster

One word, lower case.

webpage

One word, lower case

website

One word, lower case.

whitepaper

One word, lower case

World Health Organization (WHO)

In short form, do not use *the* in front of *WHO*.

Resources

- *The Associated Press Stylebook*
- *Webster's New World College Dictionary* (www.yourdictionary.com) for spelling and usage not addressed by this style guide or the *Associated Press Stylebook*.