
Following is an alphabetical list of selected RTI Press style points. For clarity on a matter not covered in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, refer to a style manual particular to your field, such as the latest edition of the *AMA Manual of Style* or the *ACS Style Guide*.

**Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Initialisms**

Use abbreviations sparingly in text. If the abbreviation is used only a few times, consider just keeping it spelled out.

Spell out an unfamiliar term on first reference, followed by its acronym in parentheses. Some terms are so familiar that they do not need to be spelled out (e.g., AIDS, HIV).

Do not use periods with UK and US.

Spell out names of US states.

**Active Voice and Passive Voice**

Use active voice as much as possible. A good resource for active and passive voice is Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab (OWL) at [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/539/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/539/01/).

In some cases, passive voice is preferred: to stress the subject as a receiver of an action, or when the subject is unknown or irrelevant.

If another organization performed part of the work described, use active voice to clarify who did which parts of the work being described.

**Capitalization in Headings**

Capitalize major words, including two-letter verbs and prepositions of four letters or more.

**Footnotes**

Avoid use of footnotes for explanatory material. Instead, incorporate the explanation in the body text, inserting a parenthetical reference as needed. If the parenthetical note would be too long, then use a footnote.

**Gender Neutrality and Pronouns**

Be sensitive to the possibility of gender bias in the use of pronouns. For example, you should not use the masculine pronouns *he* and *his* when gender is unknown.

**Avoid**: A respondent can change his answer before the deadline.

Although the use of *his/her* or *he/she* has often been seen as a solution, these terms can still be viewed as distracting or noninclusive and, thus, should be avoided.

**Avoid**: A respondent can change his or her answer before the deadline.

You can usually rephrase the sentence to address this issue:

**Examples**:

**Plural subject**: Respondents can change their answers before the deadline.

**Article instead of pronoun**: A respondent can change an answer before the deadline.

**Passive voice** (less preferred option): Answers can be changed before the deadline.

**Singular they**: A respondent can change their answer before the deadline.

The singular “they” is a gender-neutral option that is inclusive of all genders (men, women, nonbinary, etc.).

**Numbers**

Spell out numbers one through nine in text. Use numerals for 10 and above. If you have a combination of numbers less than and greater than 10, use Arabic numerals when one or more of the numbers being compared is 10 or above. Zero is usually spelled out so it is not confused with the letter O.

In scientific text, express units of measure (e.g., age, time, money, units) and forms of numbers (e.g., decimals, percents) in numerals, even if they are below 10.
Do not mix types of numbers, fractions, or decimals. Use percentages or fractions or decimals consistently when comparing like numbers.

**References**

Prepare references in one of the following styles according to what is commonly used in your field of expertise:

- **APA citation style** (author-date style; link is to guidance from the Purdue OWL)
- **Uniform Requirements style** (numbered style, with superscript numbers)

References must follow a consistent format within the manuscript. General points:

- Include complete references for any supporting materials cited in text, including citations in tables/figures/exhibits.
- If footnotes have references, handle them in the same style as you are using for the main text.
- Avoid using abstracts as references.
- A URL is not sufficient for a reference.
- Except for literature reviews, cite the most important reference on a topic, instead of several related sources.

Policy Briefs and Research Briefs have limited space. To conserve space, include only essential references and use the numerical style (Uniform Requirements style).

**References to Unpublished Materials**

Citations to manuscripts “in press” are legitimate references. However, check again before your final submission (or even in the galley stage) to determine whether the publication has been published; if so, provide the final full citation.

Citations to works that are “in preparation,” “submitted,” or “under review” should be handled in text using a parenthetical entry. Authors should keep checking whether any such citations have moved to an “in press” status and thus should be added to the References.

Personal communications should be handled in text in a parenthetical entry specifying, for example, the following: “(personal communication with [initials and last name], [affiliation (e.g., university, agency, company)], [date]).”

**Quoted Material**

Double-check to be sure you have reproduced quotations exactly: punctuation, capitalization, spelling, etc. Use brackets to add anything to quoted material.

**Spelling**


Exception: Lowercase these terms: web, website, web page, internet

**Symbols**

%: Spell out *percent*, but % is appropriate to use in tables

In Research Briefs and Policy Briefs, use the symbol % to save space.

In mathematical operations or equations, insert a space before and after most symbols (e.g., +, =, /, ≥); the exception to this is for greater than or less than symbols—close them up when they are used with just one number (e.g., >3 mg).

**Tables and Figures**

Title: Use sentence case for the table/figure title; capitalize just the first word and any other proper nouns.

For the submittal and review process, embed figures and tables in the text. If your manuscript is accepted, you will need to provide high-resolution original artwork for figures, illustrations, and other graphic materials (such as maps and photographs). RTI Press cannot publish low-resolution images.

Avoid repeating in text what is on the face of the table or figure or easily deduced from it. Text should elaborate on the information presented in tables and figures, not simply repeat it.

Tables and figures should be understandable on their own without reference back to the text. Explain abbreviations used in the table or figure in table/figure footnotes.

Provide complete source information for tables and figures.

**Verb Tense**

Use past tense to describe work done in the past but present tense to discuss the meaning of the results.