



## **Style Guide**

**January 2006**

# Holy Family University

## Style Guide

One of Holy Family University's chief assets is the intellectual capital of its faculty and staff, and this is often expressed in writing. Because bad writing is associated with sub-par ability and performance, our writing should be clear and free from error; words must be used, spelled, and punctuated correctly and consistently. The Style Guide aims to help everyone at Holy Family who works with words achieve these goals.

Adherence to the guidelines outlined in the Style Guide will help ensure the consistency and quality of our documents. Consistency is especially important because many Holy Family University publications originate from many different departments within the University and are written by many different people.

The Style Guide is not intended as a guide for writing clear and effective prose. Many issues that are vitally important to good writing — e.g., appropriate tone, avoidance of jargon, clarity of expression — are beyond the scope of this guide. Nevertheless, if our writing is riddled with jargon and is difficult to understand, we appear to be stereotyped and lose credibility.

This text reflects American usage and conventions.

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# Abbreviations

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## Academic Degrees

Abbreviate according to the list that follows:

AS	MA
BA	MBA
BS	MSN
DEd	PhD
EdD	RN

Abbreviated academic degrees written after a person's name in running text should be preceded and followed by a comma.

*example:*

Jane Doe, MA, attended the meeting.

## Addresses

If space allows, to avoid inconsistency, spell out qualifying names when used as part of an address, including avenue, boulevard, court, and street. Otherwise, abbreviate.

*examples:*

111 Roosevelt Boulevard; 111 Roosevelt Blvd.  
9801 Frankford Avenue; Frankford Ave.  
555 Old York Road; 555 Old York Rd.

## Courtesy titles

Never spell out Mister or Misses.

Use Mr., Mrs., or Ms.

## Directions

Spell out North, East, South, West, etc., whether they are used as part of an address or not. Lowercase directions only when they are used as compass points.

*examples:*

The University is in Northeast Philadelphia.

Your hometown is northeast of campus.

## Esquire

Abbreviate as Esq.

*example:*

John Smith, Esq.

## Parts of names

Abbreviate Junior (Jr.) and Senior (Sr.) with a period and comma. I, II, and III directly follow a person's name.

*example:*

John Doe, Jr.; John Doe III

## Political/professional titles

Spell out titles such as Doctor, Father, Sister, Senator, Governor when first used. If these titles are used subsequently, use the abbreviation (Dr., Fr., S., Sen., Gov.).

## Sister

Abbreviate as S. not Sr. (see also RELIGIOUS WORDS, Sister).

## State names

Always spell out state names in running text, even when preceded by a city. A comma follows the city and state.

*example:*

The University has facilities in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Newtown, Pennsylvania.

If spacing does not allow for spelling out state names in running text, abbreviate the state's name according to postal codes.

AL	KS	NY
AK	KY	NC
AZ	LA	ND
AR	MA	OH
CA	MD	OK
CO	ME	OR
CT	MI	PA
DE	MN	RI
FL	MS	SC
GA	MT	SD
HI	NE	TN
IA	NV	TX
ID	NH	UT
IL	NJ	VT
IN	NM	VA
WA	WI	
WV	WY	

State names written as part of addresses should always

be abbreviated. In these instances, abbreviate the states according to the two-letter postal abbreviations.

**example:**

Holy Family University  
9701 Frankford Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19114

**Academic Degrees**

Use an apostrophe when the degree modifies a noun. If the degree is followed by of or in, do not use an apostrophe.

**examples:**

John Doe earned a master’s degree from Holy Family University.

John Doe earned a master of education degree.

Joe Doe was awarded a master of arts in liberal studies.

She enrolled in the bachelor’s program.

**Addresses**

Use the following addresses for the University’s three locations.

**Northeast Philadelphia:**

Holy Family University  
9801 Frankford Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19114-2009

**Newtown, Bucks County:**

Holy Family University  
One Campus Drive  
Newtown, PA 18940-0992

**Woodhaven, Bensalem:**

Holy Family University  
1311 Bristol Pike  
Bensalem, PA 19020-6415

**Capitalization**

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**Academic Years**

Use lower-case for freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior.

**Building Names**

Always capitalize when using as proper nouns.

**examples:**

Holy Family Hall

Marian Hall

Campus Center

Family Learning Center

Alpha House

**Committee Names**

Capitalize when used as proper nouns. When not writing the official, proper name of the committee, do not capitalize.

**examples:**

Strategic Planning Committee

Public Relations and Development Committee

**examples:**

the building committee

the planning committee

**Course Names (also see Program Names)**

Use initial caps when referring to courses.

**examples:**

My Counseling Psychology course meets today.

The Information Systems Management class requires a lot of reading.

**Departments, Offices, and Divisions**

Always capitalize, regardless of the context in which they are written. Use a lower-case d in division.

**examples:**

John J. Doe, MA, attended the meeting in the Office of Alumni and Parents.

The Careers Center is open daily.

The Extended Learning division is located on Bristol Pike.

Program Names (also see Course Names)

Use initial caps when referring to programs, but use a lower-case p for program. The same rule applies for division.

The Nursing Education program is very popular.

That program is quite new.

He plans to take all the course work in the Nursing Education program.

The Sport Marketing-Management program is taught by professional marketing directors.

### Room Names

Always capitalize.

*examples:*

Dining Commons

Executive Conference Room

Student Lounge

### Room Numbers

Always capitalize the word Room when it is followed by a number

*example:*

Classes are always held in Room 217.

Room 2 holds the various conference equipment.

### Schools

Always capitalize.

*examples:*

School of Arts and Sciences

School of Business Administration

School of Education

School of Nursing and Allied Health Professions

### Titles

Always capitalize, regardless of the context in which they are written.

*examples:*

John Doe, MA, Provost, Academic Affairs, attended the meeting with the new Director of Housing, Jane Smith, MA.

Joe Smith, Mail Services Coordinator, sorted out the mix-up with the packages.

For Holy Family University purposes, capitalizing all mentions of offices and titles will ensure consistency throughout all University publications and be a subtle way to draw attention to major divisions and offices.

### University Locations (also see Addresses)

Do not refer to Newtown and Woodhaven as campuses; instead, refer to them as centers, facilities, or locations. (Without libraries, they are technically not campuses.)

*examples:*

Northeast Campus (always capitalize Campus)

Holy Family University–Newtown  
Holy Family University–Woodhaven

*or*

Holy Family University (Newtown)

Holy Family University (Woodhaven)

### University Name

Always capitalize Holy Family University. “University” or “the University” should be capitalized whenever they refer directly to Holy Family University.

*example:*

Holy Family University is a commuter school. The University offers day and evening classes.

### Chair

Use the word Chairperson.

*examples:*

John Doe is the Chairperson of the committee.

The committee was formed by its Chairperson, John Doe.

### Computer Terms

The following is a list of the proper use of technology terms per Barron’s most recent Dictionary of Computer and Internet Terms.

Internet (always capitalize)

World Wide Web (always capitalize)

Web site (two words, no hyphen, always capitalize)

on line (used as a noun)

on-line (used as an adjective)

e-mail (lowercase, hyphen)

### Cooperative Education

When spelled out, cooperative education is never hyphenated. When abbreviated, it should be written as co-op (this, according to AP style, differentiates the term from animal coop).

### Cost

When referring to the cost of attending Holy Family University, the word “cheap” should not be used to refer to anything associated with the University, especially tuition.

*examples of substitute terms:*

Affordable – able to bear the cost.

Competitive tuition – seeking to secure the business of others by offering the most favorable terms.

## Course Work

Spell as two words.

## Dangling Modifiers

Dangling modifiers describe or modify a noun in a manner that does not make sense.

### *example of dangling modifier:*

Running down the street, my head began to spin.

“Running down the street” modifies (describes, refers to) “my head,” which obviously does not make sense.

### *change to:*

As I was running down the street, my head began to spin.

My head began to spin as I was running down the street.

### *example of dangling modifier:*

As a student at Holy Family, the School of Business Administration offers you several concentrations.

“As a student at Holy Family” modifies (describes, refers to) “the School of Business Administration,” which obviously does not make sense.

### *change to:*

The School of Business Administration offers you, as a student at Holy Family, several concentrations.

As a student at Holy Family, you are offered several concentrations by the School of Business Administration.

## Days

See TIME.

## Dean’s List

Lowercase in all instances.

### *example:*

Mary Smith was on the dean’s list last semester.

## Education

The field of study concerned with pedagogy and learning

### **Use lower case e.**

### *example:*

His background in education really helps him with his classes.

## Emerita

Add to a formal title to denote a woman who has retired but retains her rank or title. Place Emerita after the

formal title.

### *example:*

Professor Emerita Alice Doe.

## Emeritus

Add to a formal title to denote a man who has retired but retains his rank or title. Place Emeritus after the formal title.

### *example:*

Professor Emeritus John Doe.

## En Dash

May be used in place of the word “to” when linking two numbers or two words that represent a continuous sequence. Do not leave space before or after the en dash. (How to insert en dash: From the Menu toolbar, click Insert, click Symbol, click Special Characters, select En Dash, click Insert.)

### *example:*

during January–June

from 1987–1989

## Em Dash

May be used in place of the comma, semicolon, the colon, or parentheses. Also, the em dash is often used for emphasis. Do not leave spaces before or after. (How to insert em dash: From the Menu toolbar, click Insert, click Symbol, click Special Characters, select Em Dash, click Insert.)

### *examples:*

The speakers—and the food—were superb.

Many students—far too many students—are reluctant to contribute to class discussions.

“I refute it—thus!” said Dr. Johnson, kicking the rock.

## Faculty

Singular noun that takes a singular verb.

### *example:*

The faculty is scheduled to meet before school opens.

## Foreign Words

Foreign words that have been accepted universally into the English language may be used without explanation. Such words include alma mater, ex officio, and ad hoc.

## Freshman

**Use lower-case f.**

She is a freshman.

I'm in my freshman year.

**Full-Time (see also part-time)**

Hyphenate when used as an adjective. When beginning a sentence, only capitalize the F, not the T.

*examples:*

Full-time students carry at least 12 credits.

He is attending school full time.

**Fundraise**

Write as one word. Do not use hyphens.

*examples:*

Fundraise, fundraising, fundraiser.

**Health care (noun)***examples:*

Health care consumes a large portion of our income.

**Health-Care (adj.)***examples:*

The health-care crisis in Pennsylvania continues to grow.

**Honorary Degrees**

Always specify that an honorary degree is honorary. Do not use Dr. before the name of a person whose only doctorate is honorary. Use H followed by an apostrophe and the year in which the degree was conferred to indicate the honorary degree.

*example:*

Cheryl Jones H'98 presented the keynote address at the dedication ceremony.

**Junior****Use Lower-case j.**

I am a junior.

We are in the junior class.

**Liberal Arts**

Technically, Holy Family University does not qualify as a liberal arts university, so it is not referred to as a liberal arts institution. The preferred way to describe the University is "a Catholic, four-year institution that emphasizes liberal arts."

**Life Cycle (noun)**

The equipment is not expected to malfunction throughout its life cycle.

**Life-Cycle (adjective)**

The course takes a life-cycle approach to learning.

**Lifelong**

Spell as one word.

**Life Span (noun)**

Spell as two words.

**Money**

See NUMBERS.

**Months**

See TIME.

**Northeast Campus (see also addresses)**

Write as Northeast Campus (capital N, Capital C)

**Facilities: Names and Titles**

Academic Advising Center

Academic Skills Center

Admissions Office

Alpha House

Aquinas Hall

Athletic Playing Field and Recreation Area

Audiovisual Services

Bookstore

Business Office

Campus Center

Campus Ministry

Career Planning and Development

Computer Labs

Cooperative Education Department

Curriculum Library

Educational Technology Resource Center

Financial Aid Office

Graduate Studies Office

Holy Family Hall

Holy Spirit Hall

Human Resources/Payroll Department

Language Laboratory

Lourdes Hall

Marian Hall  
 Michael Hall  
 Nurse Education Building  
 Preview Room  
 Registrar’s Office  
 St. Frances Hall  
 St. Joseph Hall  
 Special Collections  
 Student Parking Lots  
 Student Services  
 University Archives  
 University Center  
 University Library  
 University Parking Lot  
 Videoconferencing Classroom  
 Newtown Center (see also ADDRESSES)  
 Write as Holy Family University–Newtown.  
 Names and Titles for Newtown Facilities are as follows:  
 Center for Counseling Studies and Services  
 Computer Labs  
 Conference Room  
 Information Technology Training Room  
 Learning Resource Center (LRC)  
 Multi-media Videoconferencing Room  
 Multi-purpose Room  
 Nursing Lab  
 Portable Language Lab  
 Science Lab

**Ms.**

Many women prefer to use Ms. instead of Miss or Mrs.

**Numbers**

Spell out numbers below 10, and use figures for 10 and higher.

Special circumstances apply to numbers when used in the ways that follow: Except for years (1999), numbers are always spelled out if they start a sentence. (With years, if possible, recast the sentence so that the year does not come at the beginning of the sentence.)

When writing large numbers, use a hyphen to connect a word ending in y to another word. Do not use commas between separate words that are part of one number.

*example:*  
twenty-one

one hundred fifty-five

**Ages**

Always write as figures. Ages expressed as adjectives before a noun or as substitutes for a noun use hyphens.

*examples:*

The 7-year-old boy has a 3-year-old sister.

The boy, 7, has a sister, 3.

The race is for 3-year-olds.

The woman is in her 30s.

**Casual use of numbers**

Spell out numerical casual expressions, such as “a thousand times no” and “he walked a quarter of a mile.”

**Decades**

See TIME.

**Decimals**

Use a period and figures to indicate decimal amounts.

**Fractions**

Spell out amounts less than 1 with hyphens. Use figures for precise amounts, and convert to decimals when practical. Always use figures in tables and convert to decimals.

*examples:*

one-third

11.5 liters

5.5, not 5 1/2

**Hours**

See TIME.

**Money**

Use figures for dollar amounts. Do not use zeros and decimals (see TIME, Hours). Use commas for dollar amounts exceeding one thousand. Mathematical reports are the exception.

*examples:*

\$6, not \$6.00

\$1,500, not \$1,500.00

## Ordinals

First, second, third and 1st, 2nd, 3rd are ordinals. Spell out first through ninth when they indicate sequence in time or location. Use figures for all ordinals when the sequence has been assigned in forming names.

## Pages

Use figures and capital P (Page) when used with a figure. Do not use hyphens or spaces when letters are appended to a figure.

*examples:*

Page 10

Page 10A

## Percent/Percentages

Always spell out as one word. Use a singular verb when standing alone or when a singular word follows “of.” Use a plural verb when a plural word follows an “of” construction. Use the symbol (%) in tables.

examples:

He said 50 percent of the membership was present.

He said 50 percent of the members were present.

## Proper Names That Are Expressed As Numbers

Use words or figures according to the practices of an organization

*examples:*

Big Ten

3M

## Sentence start

Spell out numbers that begin a sentence. If possible, recast the sentence so figures can be used. However, years should always be written as figures. See NUMBERS.

## Years

Use figures without commas. When written as time spans, years take a lowercase s without an apostrophe. Use an apostrophe to take the place of omitted ordinals (see also TIME).

*examples:*

the 1930s

2003

the '90s

## Page Numbers

See NUMBERS.

## Percent

See NUMBERS.

## Nursing

The profession of a nurse.

Use lower case n.

*example:*

She has been in nursing for 20 years.

## Part-Time (see also Full-time)

Hyphenate only when used as an adjective. When beginning a sentence, only capitalize part.

*examples:*

He is a part-time faculty member.

She teaches part time.

Part-time students should inquire about parking arrangements.

## Possessives

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Two names but individual (not joint) possession: Use the possessive form after both names if the objects are individually owned.

*example:*

Jane's and John's books. (Refers to Jane's books and to John's books.)

**Two names with joint possession:** Use the possessive form after only the last word if ownership is joint.

*example:*

Jane and John's house. (The house belongs to both Jane and John.)

**Plural nouns not ending in s:** Add apostrophe and s.

*example:*

women's rights

**Plural nouns ending in s:** Add only an apostrophe. Add the apostrophe after the ending s.

*example:*

the girls' toys

the states' rights

**Nouns plural in form and singular in meaning:** Add only an apostrophe.

**examples:**

mathematics' rules

measles' effects

**Formal name of a singular entity:** Apply the same principle when a plural word occurs in the formal name of a singular entity.

**example:**

the United States' wealth

**Nouns the same in singular and plural:** Treat these the same as plurals, even if the meaning is singular.

**example:**

the two deer's tracks

**Singular nouns not ending in s:** Add apostrophe and s.

**examples:**

the fox's den

Butz's policies.

**Singular common nouns ending in s:** Add apostrophe and s unless the next word begins with s.

**examples:**

the hostess's invitation

the hostess' seat

**Singular proper nouns ending in s:** Use only an apostrophe.

**example:**

Arkansas' schools

## Publications

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Always italicize publication names.

**examples:**

Co-op Works

The Familogue

The Family Tree

The Folio

The Holy Family University Catalog

MOSAIC

The Student Handbook

Student News

Tiger Talk

The Tri-Lite

## Punctuation (see Punctuation Appendix)

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For a more detailed list of punctuation guidelines, refer to the Punctuation Appendix at the end of this guide.

### Commas

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Use serial commas (place before the word and in a series of three or more).

**example:**

The fruit salad contained melon, kiwi, and pears.

**Always place the comma inside quotation marks.**

**example:**

"The assignment is due," she said.

**Use before a conjunction (and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet) to join two independent clauses.**

**example:**

He enjoys walks in the country, and he likes backpacking on his vacations.

### Hyphens

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The prefixes self- and all- almost always require a hyphen.

**examples:**

self-aware

all-inclusive

**When a prefix comes before a capitalized word, or when the prefix itself is capitalized, use a hyphen:**

**examples:**

non-English

A-frame

I-beam

**Use a hyphen after a prefix in order to separate two similar letters.**

**examples:**

He made a non-negotiable demand.

A re-education plan was announced.

We want to de-emphasize the mistakes.

He took a very anti-intellectual approach.

However, words such as cooperate and coordinate are used without hyphens.

**Use a hyphen after ex- when it is used to mean former.**

*examples:*

ex-wife

ex-treasurer

**Use a hyphen to connect two words acting together as an adjective before a noun.**

*examples:*

She is a well-known candidate.

That is a public-safety issue.

**Generally, do not use a hyphen with two such words coming after the noun.**

*examples:*

She is well known.

That issue concerns public safety.

**Do not use a hyphen to connect -ly adverbs to the words they modify.**

*examples:*

We passed the slowly moving truck.

It was a hastily organized press conference.

**Hyphenate the written form of fractions.**

*examples:*

one-fourth

three-fifths

There are exceptions to these general guidelines; when in doubt, consult a dictionary.

## Semicolons

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When there is no connecting word or a connecting word other than a conjunction (and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet) between two independent clauses, separate the clauses with a semicolon.

*examples:*

He watched television; she preferred to read a book.  
(Use the semicolon instead of “but.”)

We wanted to go to the restaurant; she asked to join us.  
(Use the semicolon instead of “and.”)

## Religious Words

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Mass: Always capitalize the word Mass.

Priests: Use Reverend before a name on first mention. Thereafter, use Father.

*example:*

Reverend John Doe, OSFS, MA, attended the meeting. Jane Smith spoke first, and Father Doe spoke second.

**Sisters:** On first mention, follow the format Sister M.\* first name last name, religious community affiliation, highest degree earned. Thereafter, use the sister’s first name. When abbreviating, use S.

*example:*

Sister Jane Doe, CSFN, PhD, University President, attended the meeting. Sister Jane spoke first at the meeting.

\* Some of the sisters use Mary or derivations of Mary spelled out with their other names. If there is a question as to the preferred rendering of a sister’s name, contact the sister.

## Schools

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School of Arts and Sciences

School of Business Administration

School of Education

School of Nursing and Allied Health Professions

## Titles

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After their first mention, people may be referred to by their social title and last name. See ABBREVIATIONS. See CAPITALIZATION.

*examples:*

Mrs. Doe

Dr. Doe

Ms. Doe

## Time

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**Days:** Never abbreviate days.

**Decades:** Use figures to indicate decades of history. Use an apostrophe to indicate numerals that are omitted. Show plural by adding s.

*examples:*

1890s

'90s

mid-1930s

**Hours:** Do not use zeros after the hour. Always use am and pm (lowercase, no periods). Noon and midnight should be written as words and should not be preceded by the number 12. Do not write as 12 am or 12 pm or 12 noon or 12 midnight.

*examples:*

9 am

9:30 pm

noon

midnight

**Months:** To remain consistent with days, never abbreviate.

*examples:*

June

June 2003

June 1, 2003

further vs farther

hopefully vs I hope/we hope

-ible vs -able

its vs it's

podium vs lectern

regardless vs irregardless

since vs because

who vs which vs that

who and whom

whoever and whomever

your and you're

## Word Usage (see Word Usage Appendix)

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For the proper use of the following words, refer to the Word Usage Appendix at the end of this guide:

accept vs except

compared to vs compared with

effect vs affect

fewer vs. less

## Years

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See NUMBERS.

# USAGE: Problem Words and Phrases

This section addresses a number of the more common questions about proper usage, but it cannot substitute for an authoritative usage dictionary or reference grammar book. You should consult with an editor if you want to know more on a given issue.

## — A —

### **about**

See on, about.

### **accept, except**

#### **accept**

To receive, admit, approve, recognize.

#### **except**

To exclude, leave out, object to. We accept the contract, except for one paragraph that we found objectionable.

### **adviser, advisor**

Both are acceptable; advisor is preferred in Holy Family documents..

### **affect, effect**

#### **affect**

Almost always appears as a verb meaning to modify, influence, act upon, or produce a result. The change will affect us in different ways. Alternatively, affect can mean to make a show or pretense of. She affected to be impressed with his expertise. As a noun, an affect is a technical term in psychology.

#### **effect**

Can also be either a verb or a noun. As a verb, effect means to accomplish, complete, bring about. We will effect a major change in our systems. As a noun, effect means a result. The effect of the lighting was remarkable.

### **all ready, already**

#### **all ready**

Completely prepared. Our presentation is all ready for delivery.

#### **already**

Before now. We have already given our presentation.

### **all right, alright**

Both are now considered standard, but all right is the preferred spelling.

### **all together, altogether**

#### **all together**

At one time or in one place. They were gathered all together.

#### **altogether**

In sum. We produced two reports in the first week and six reports altogether.

### **allude, elude**

#### **allude**

To mention in passing, suggest or refer indirectly to. He alluded to an earlier meeting but didn't say what had been discussed.

#### **elude**

To escape, slip away from. The thief eluded the police by ducking into an alley.

### **among**

See between.

### **and/or**

Try to avoid this awkward hybrid if you can. Use one or the other, or reconstruct the sentence. Students interested in a career in law might want to concentrate on English or history, or both.

### **ante, anti**

#### **ante**

Prefix meaning "before." The antebellum period refers to the pre-Civil War era.

#### **anti**

Prefix meaning "against." Antibacterial agents are effective against bacteria.

### **anxious, eager**

#### **anxious**

Implies fear, frustration, failure, disappointment. We are anxious to learn whether the earthquake affected our office.

#### **eager**

Implies enthusiasm, impatience at delay or restraint. I am eager to see the play.

### **appraise, apprise**

#### **appraise**

To evaluate worth, significance or value.

**advise**

To inform, give notice to.

Your supervisor will advise your performance and advise you of your rating.

**as if, as though**

These phrases are interchangeable and are generally (though not always) followed by the subjunctive or conditional form of the verb. He looks as if he were ill. The volcano is rumbling as though it would erupt.

**as much . . . more than**

The correct construction is as much as . . . if not more than.

**assist**

Assist with or in, not to.

**assume, presume**

These two words are close in meaning, although a distinction can be made.

**assume**

To take something for granted without any evidence, to pose a hypothesis. This model assumes that inflation will remain constant over the period.

**presume**

To suppose something to be true, to believe it to be a fact. Dr. Livingston, I presume? Presume tends to be more positive in its supposition than assume, except in the legal catchphrase presumed innocent until proven guilty.

**as to**

Preferred wording is on, regarding, concerning, about. Give us your thoughts on this complicated subject.

**assure, ensure, insure**

We assure persons, ensure events, insure objects or lives.

**assure**

To remove worry, suspense, or doubt; to inform positively. Let me assure you that you will graduate this year.

**ensure**

To make an outcome certain or inevitable. She took steps to ensure her financial success.

**insure**

To contract to give or take insurance. I need to insure my life for an amount equal to my projected earnings at this (that) point in time

**Use now or then.**

— B —

**based on**

When this phrase is used, be sure based on modifies the subject of the main clause to which it is attached. Based on the committee's recommendations, the plan was adopted. (The plan was based on the committee's recommendations.) On the basis of may also be used in this context. If the subject is not based on something, then use because of, from, or some other construction. Do not write: Based on our recommendations, the University adopted the plan. (The University itself is not based on our recommendations.)

**because of**

See due to.

**beside, besides****beside**

At the side of. He sat down beside her.

**besides**

In addition to. Her presentation demonstrated skill and good humor, besides.

Though the two words are often used interchangeably, the most common U.S. usage is as stated here.

**between, among**

Some writers prefer to use between only for two items and among only for more than two. This preference is by no means obligatory, however.

**between**

Best used to denote a one-to-one relationship regardless of the number of items. The differences between these three options are minor.

**among**

More appropriate when the emphasis is on distribution. The bonus will be divided among the 13 sales representatives.

**cite**

See site.

**complementary, complimentary**

**complementary**

Matching or serving to fill out or complete. He wore a mauve suit and a complementary tie.

**complimentary**

Free or expressing a compliment. A complimentary breakfast will be served. The professor's evaluation of our work was very complimentary.

**complement, compliment**

**complement**

To complete, fill in, round out. His analysis complements our own discussions on the subject.

**compliment**

To praise or commend. The professor always compliments the students on their presentations.

**comprise, compose**

**comprise**

To contain, include, embrace. The University comprises six schools.

**compose**

To form or create by putting together. The department is composed of several units. Do not use comprised of.

**continual, continuous**

**continual**

Recurring at intervals, ongoing but with pauses or breaks. A continual reassessment will take place.

**continuous**

Ongoing, without interruption or breaks. A continuous improvement process ensures the quality of our work.

**convince, persuade**

**convince**

To satisfy by argument or evidence; takes of or that. She will convince the class that hers is the best plan.

**persuade**

To induce, urge, entreat, advise; takes to. We persuaded our client to try a new approach.

Do not use incent to mean persuade; no such word exists.

**damage, injury**

**damage**

Impairment of value, loss.

**injury**

Hurt, impairment of beauty, utility, integrity, dignity. The storm caused irreparable damage to our house. Fortunately, there was no injury to people or animals.

**data**

Usually considered as a mass noun and used with a singular verb.

This item has been the subject of much controversy. Proponents of maintaining the traditional distinction between Greek and Latin singular and plural forms (e.g., datum/data, criterion/criteria, medium/media) tend to see failure to do so as a species of illiteracy, whereas those who maintain that acceptable usage now is for data to be treated as singular tend to view those who insist on standing by tradition as insufferable prigs.

Sixty percent of the American Heritage Dictionary's Usage Panel (third edition) accepts data with a singular verb or pronoun. The Chicago Manual of Style (15th edition) also says that data "is now commonly treated as a mass noun and coupled with a singular verb; however, Chicago recommends using a plural verb with data in formal writing and always in writing for the sciences. (Although this would pertain to writing for academic and scientific peer-reviewed journals it is not likely to pertain to writing from Holy Family's Graphic Arts & Publications department.)

Of course, writers are free to use such analogous words as information or facts.

**differ from, differ with**

**differ from**

To be unlike. Because they include distinct nationalities, the two survey groups differ widely from one another.

**differ with**

To disagree with. I differ with him about the meaning of the data.

**disinterested, uninterested**

**disinterested**

To be neutral. We need a disinterested person to monitor the results.

**uninterested**

To be indifferent to, lack interest in. The client was far from uninterested in the outcome of the study.

**dot-com**

A “new economy” company: i.e., one doing business over the Internet. Last year dot-coms were the toast of the town; this year they’re just toast.

Do not use dot.com, .com, dotcom or dot com. “Not-com” may be used in quotation marks to refer to a failed dot-com.

**due to**

due to, because of. If you can substitute attributable to for due to in a sentence and the sense is not destroyed, then due to is used correctly. If the sentence does not read correctly with this substitution, then change due to to because of.

Correct: His absence was due to illness.

Incorrect: He was absent due to illness.

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— E —

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**eager, anxious****eager**

Implies enthusiasm, impatience at delay or restraint. I am eager to see the play.

**anxious**

Implies fear, frustration, failure, disappointment. We are anxious to learn whether the earthquake affected our office.

**e.g.**

From the Latin *exempli gratia*, “for example.” Always set off by commas, but do not italicize or underline. Our reference list contains a large number of categories, e.g., verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs. Do not use etc. with e.g.

**elude**

See allude.

**ensure**

See assure.

**enthusiastic, enthused**

Use enthusiastic; enthused is considered slang and is not used in formal writing.

**equable, equitable****equable**

Balanced, uniform, not varying. She has an equable disposition.

**equitable**

Fair, just, impartial. The provisions of the revised admissions plan call for more equitable accommodations for newer students.

**equally as, equally as well**

As and as well as are almost always unnecessary.

**et al.**

From the Latin *et alii*, “and others.” The report was compiled by M. Brown, D. Green, et al. Et al. always refers to people, not things. While al. is always followed by a period, no period is needed after et as it is not an abbreviation. Do not italicize or underline et al.

**every day, everyday****Every day**

An adverbial phrase. I work every day.

**Everyday**

An adjective used to modify a noun. Running late is an everyday event.

**etc.**

Avoid in formal usage; instead, use and so on, and the like, and so forth. Do not use with i.e. or e.g.; i.e. indicates that there are no others and e.g. assumes that there are, making etc. wrong in the first instance and redundant in the second.

**experience, expertise****experience**

Practical knowledge, skill, or practice derived from direct observation or participation in a particular activity. Experience implies actual participation in some field or activity and the acquisition of skill or knowledge gained through that participation.

**expertise**

Special skill or knowledge in a particular area.

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— F —

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**feasible, possible****feasible**

Capable of being done. Improving productivity is feasible.

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— H —

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**possible**

Capable of happening. It is possible that it will rain tomorrow.

**fewer, less**

**fewer**

Fewer generally refers to a number or to items that can be counted as separate units, and less generally refers to a quantity of things that cannot be counted as separate units.

**less**

people will require less space. Some college instructors earn less than \$18,000 a year.

Also use less with percentages: less than 20 percent.

**flaunt, flout**

**flaunt**

Display in a boastful manner. The winners flaunted their expensive prizes.

**flout**

Mock or scoff at. The speeding motorist flouted the law.

**forego, forgo**

**forego**

To go before, precede. The pension change will forego the merger.

**forgo**

To abstain from, to do without. He's on a diet, but he can't forgo his afternoon candy bar.

**for the purpose of**

Use to instead.

**for the reason that**

Use because instead.

**future plans**

Redundant. Plans invariably concern the future, unless you are referring to benefit or pension plans.

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— G —

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**guarantee, guaranty**

Guarantee is more common, but both noun forms are correct.

**happening**

Do not use in place of occurrence, performance, spectacle.

**hopefully**

Hopefully means “in a hopeful manner” but is now frequently used in the sense of “we hope” or “it is to be hoped.” Some stylists frown on such usage as the report will hopefully motivate sales managers, preferring we hope the report will motivate sales managers. Avoid such usage if you fear it will be objected to.

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— I —

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**i.e.**

From the Latin id est, “that is.” Always set off by commas, but do not italicize or underline. The employee won the case, i.e., the employer was forced to rehire her. Do not confuse with e.g.

**impact**

Do not use as a verb, except when referring to teeth; use influence, affect, impinge upon.

**implement**

An overworked synonym for accomplish, achieve, begin, carry out, complete, execute, fulfill, put in place.

**implementor, implementer**

This term is not widely used outside or within Towers Perrin; TP employees who perform the initial setup of clients in our proprietary software (e.g., Health & Welfare Module, DB Module) use it frequently to describe their jobs. In the absence of an authoritative external opinion, use either spelling, but be consistent within a document.

**imply, infer**

**imply**

To hint or suggest. She implied that we will lose the assignment.

**infer**

To deduce, draw a conclusion. I infer from this report that we should change our system.

**incentive, incenc**

Incentive: something that incites action. The back-formation incenc is not a word and should never be

used. Use motivate, persuade or encourage instead.

### **in excess of**

Use more than or over instead.

### **injury**

See damage.

### **in order to**

Where brevity is preferred, delete in order. Use to, so, so that.

### **input**

Useful as a noun, especially when referring to computerized information, but avoid the plural inputs. Also avoid using as a verb meaning enter.

### **insure**

See assure.

### **in terms of**

Use in, about, by, in view of, in view of the fact that

Use because or because of.

### **intense, intensive**

#### **intense**

Extreme, strained to the utmost. An intense dislike.

#### **intensive**

Highly concentrated, exhaustive. An intensive study.

### **Internet, internet, intranet**

The Internet is a proper noun and thus the first letter is uppercase. An intranet (always lowercase) is, on the other hand, a private network within an organization.

### **irregardless**

Substandard. Use regardless or irrespective.

### **its, it's.**

Its is a possessive pronoun. The plan lost its value over time. Although it indicates possession, no apostrophe is required, no more so than with his, hers, yours or mine.

It's is a contraction for it is. The apostrophe indicates that a letter has been left out. It's not nice to fool Mother Nature.

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## — J —

### **junction, juncture**

#### **junction**

A crossroads. We met at the junction of Lake Avenue and Broad Street.

#### **juncture**

A point in time. Because the results of the study are not yet complete, we cannot draw conclusions at this juncture.

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## — L —

### **large number of, large portion of**

Use many, most, much of.

### **launch**

Overworked synonym for begin, inaugurate, initiate, open, start.

### **lead, led**

Present and past tense of verb. She will lead the organization going forward. Prior to coming here, she led another firm.

### **less**

See fewer.

### **like**

Those who are fastidious in their usage will not use like in place of as, i.e., as a conjunction, except when it precedes a noun not followed by a verb. He works like a maniac. Do as the manager advises.

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## — M —

### **mean, average, median**

#### **mean**

A middle point obtained by dividing the sum of quantities by the number of items (also known as the arithmetic mean or average). The mean for the numbers 45, 65 and 70 is 60.

#### **median**

The point in a series at which one-half of the elements of the series are larger and one-half are smaller. The median salary in the group (\$20,000, \$60,000, \$65,000, \$80,000 and \$90,000) is \$65,000. The mean or average salary for this group is \$63,000.

### **mentee**

No such word exists. A person who has a mentor is a protégé.

### **junction, juncture**

#### **junction**

**midsize, midsized**

Of intermediate size. Our clients are midsize corporations in the financial industry.

Midsized is an alternative spelling of midsize. Both are acceptable.

**minimal, minimize****minimal**

Least possible amount or barely adequate. A minimal expenditure is anticipated.

**minimize**

Reduce to the smallest possible amount. Choose assumptions that minimize a client's costs. Now often used to mean diminish, belittle or underrate.

**misled**

Past tense of mislead.

**mitigate, militate****mitigate**

To soften. Her praise mitigates the criticism.

**militate**

(Used with against) Have an adverse effect on. A bad performance review militates against success.

**monetize**

To coin into money and establish as legal tender, to purchase debt and thus free for other uses moneys that would have been devoted to debt service. The Euro will be monetized in January 2002. To demonetize is to remove a currency from circulation and thus invalidate transactions. Marks, francs and pesetas will be demonetized shortly after the Euro is monetized. The dictionary does not class monetize as a synonym for appraise or assign value. Benefits are not monetized by being given a financial value; they are appraised or valuated.

**most**

Do not use as a short form of almost.

**myself**

Do not use instead of me. Incorrect: You may call Tom or myself if you have any questions. Correct: I wrote the report myself.

**on**

See upon.

**on, about**

Do not use on in place of about or regarding. Incorrect: The police officer questioned the man on his wounds. (It must have hurt!) on account of

Preference is given to because or due to.

**on the basis of**

Use on, by, after, because of or from, depending on the meaning needed. However, on the basis of is an acceptable substitute for based on.

**operationalize**

No such word exists. Use put into effect, put into operation or words to that effect.

**optimal, optimum****optimal**

Most desirable or satisfactory. The optimal outcome of our presentation would be to win the account.

**optimum**

Most favorable conditions, greatest degree attainable. The car reached optimum speed in 30 seconds.

**out-of-pocket, out of pocket**

Hyphenated when used as adjective. Refers to expenses which in our business are reimbursable. We will bill for our out-of-pocket expenses at cost. We were out of pocket \$4,509.47. Often used in the Towers Perrin universe to refer to time: I will be out of pocket all day Friday. Evidence is lacking for such usage outside Towers Perrin.

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**— P —**

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**partially, partly**

These terms are interchangeable.

**percent, percentage****percent**

One part in 100 (noun); figured on the basis of a whole divided into 100 parts (adjective).

**percentage**

A part of a whole expressed in hundredths, or the result obtained when a number is multiplied by a percent. The interest rate rose 2.5 percentage points from 7.5 to 10 percent. The price decreased by 25 percent, from \$10 to

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**— O —**

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\$7.50.

**per your request**

Overused and archaic. Change to as you requested.

**perquisite, prerequisite**

**perquisite**

A special privilege, often in addition to pay. The perquisites of the position include an automobile and an expense account. Commonly abbreviated as perk.

**prerequisite**

Something required as a condition. Hard work is considered a prerequisite for success.

**persuade**

See convince.

**possible**

See feasible.

**precedence, precedents**

**precedence**

Going before, preceding. Which takes precedence, the chicken or the egg?

**precedents**

Established usage or authority. There are many precedents for changing the benefit plan as we have suggested.

**preparatory to**

Use before instead.

**presently, at present**

**presently**

Either now or before long. The show will begin presently.

**at present**

Now. There is nothing to say at present.

**prescribe, proscribe**

**prescribe**

Lay down an instruction or direction.

**proscribe**

Forbid, denounce, outlaw. The physician prescribed bed rest and proscribed tobacco.

**principal, principle**

**principal**

Chief or leading; a person in a leading or controlling position; also a title at Towers Perrin. The principal reason for change is to save money. She is a principal at Towers Perrin.

**principle**

A rule, doctrine or assumption. Nondiscrimination in employee benefit plans is an important principle in tax law.

**proved, proven**

These are interchangeable as past participles. He has proved his point; she has proven her worth to the company. As attributive adjectives, proven is much more common.

The company owns proven gas reserves.

**provide**

An overworked verb. Consider changing to aid, assist, ensure, establish, furnish, give, help, inform, notify, offer, present, send, supply, tell.

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— Q —

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**qualified expert**

Redundant. Use expert.

**question as to whether**

The words as to should be deleted from this phrase. I question whether his judgment is sound. Note, however, that question as to by itself is perfectly fine. There is no question as to her qualifications.

**quick**

Do not use as an adverb instead of quickly.

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— R —

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**reason is because**

This is a case of illogical predication, meaning that the sentence as constructed makes an illogical equivalence. One cannot properly say that a subordinate clause, because more employees are expected to retire, is equal (equivalent) to a noun, reason, but we can say that a noun clause, e.g., that more employees are expected to retire, is. The reason the plan was adopted is that more employees are expected to retire (noun = noun clause).

**recur, reoccur**

Recur is the correct form.

**refer**

See allude.

**reference**

Do not use as a verb.

**regarding**

Preferable to relative to, in regard to, with regard to, with respect to.

**regardless**

Takes the preposition of. Irregardless is substandard.

**reject, refute**

**reject**

To deny, contradict, refuse. The committee rejected our advice.

**refute**

To destroy by argument, prove false or mistaken. By proving that the calculations were incorrect, he refuted the analyst’s findings.

**represent**

Do not use in place of is or are.

**revolve around**

See center on.

**rules and regulations**

Redundant. Use one or the other, but not both. IRS rules and IRS regulations are used interchangeably. However, an IRS ruling is a separate matter. In a ruling, the IRS determines whether a company or individual has complied with a specific rule or regulation.

— S —

**salary, wages**

**salary**

Fixed compensation, as for exempt workers.

**wages**

Payment for services on an hourly, daily or piecework basis. However, in tax law the term wages has a specific meaning that encompasses salary.

**simple, simplistic**

**simple**

uncomplicated. Because the problem is simple, the solution is clear.

**simplistic**

Oversimplified. Because he has a simplistic view of the problem, his proposal adds little to our effort to find a solution.

**sit**

Used in the Towers Perrin universe to refer to a staff member’s work location. Where does Joe Shmoe sit?

**site, cite**

**site**

A location. The product management team visited the manufacturing site.

**cite**

Give as an example. The chairman said he would cite last year’s earnings in his forecast for continuing growth this year.

**so as to**

Redundant. Use to.

**stationary, stationery**

**stationary**

Adjective meaning still or in a fixed position.

**stationery**

Noun meaning writing paper.

**strategy, tactics**

Strategy is the overall plan and tactics are the means by which the plan is carried out.

— T —

**that, which**

Many stylebooks advise using that only to lead restrictive clauses and which only to lead nonrestrictive clauses. This convention is by no means obligatory however. Usage will accept either that or which to introduce a restrictive (defining) clause: The plan that is described here is voluntary. The policy which the president announced today was immediately denounced by his opponents. There is no dispute that usage will accept only which to introduce a nonrestrictive (descriptive but not defining) clause. The new benefit plan, which is described below, goes into effect next

month. Note that the pronoun that or which can be deleted from a restrictive clause when followed by a subject: Use the style (that/which deleted) you prefer. their, there, they're

**their**

A possessive pronoun. Their time is up.

**there**

An adverb. Stand over there. Also used as a placeholder. There are three options available.

**they're**

A contracted form of they are: They're painting the roses red.

**timely, untimely**

**timely**

In time, on time. She made a timely entrance.

**untimely**

Too soon, unnaturally early; often misused to mean late. Because she was thought to have a long career ahead of her at the company, her resignation was considered most untimely.

**trained expert**

Redundant. Delete trained.

**type**

Do not use as an adjective, e.g., an intellectual type person.

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— U —

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**uninterested**

See disinterested.

**unique**

Without equal. Use of modifiers such as most and quite is common, but the careful editor will let unique stand alone. Do not use with very.

**untimely**

See timely.

**upon, on**

Except in the sense of being on top of, there is no real difference between these words.

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— V —

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**vendor, vender**

Vendor is the preferred spelling.

**verbal, oral**

**verbal**

Something expressed in words, either spoken or written.

**oral**

Only something spoken. A verbal contract might be either spoken or written, but an oral contract specifically means a spoken one. If you need to be exact, use written as an opposite for oral. Oral also has other connotations having to do with the mouth, as in oral hygiene, to give one example.

**verbiage**

An excess of words. Often misspelled as verbage and frequently misused to denote language, text or copy. Correct: If you want this letter to be easy to understand, you'll have to cut the verbiage. Incorrect: We need some verbiage to go with the illustration.

**vs., versus**

Spell out in formal writing, or use as opposed to or compared to (with). In legal terminology, the abbreviation v. is used with a period: Jardynce v. Jardynce.

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— W —

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**wages**

See salary.

**Web, web**

Use uppercase with the when referring to the World Wide Web and lowercase when referring to a generic web or wired network.

**which**

See that. with the exception of Use except instead.

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