# Guidelines for Creating Lists

Adhere to the following guidelines when creating lists of any kind:

* Include 2-8 items in a list.
* Try to avoid splitting a list over two pages.
* Avoid overuse. There should always be explanatory text around the list.
* Adjust the surrounding spacing.
* Capitalize the first letter of each item.
* Use parallel phrasing for each listed item.
* Never use a heading to introduce a list.

# List Types and Their Uses

Each type of list serves a different purpose.

* Use **bulleted** lists if the order of the items is unimportant.
* Use **numbered** lists when the order of the items is important and ideas must be expressed in chronological order.
* Use **in-sentence** lists when you want to maintain a paragraph style, avoid having too many lists on one page, and when the items are relatively short.
* Use **labeled** lists when listing items that need further explanation.
* Use **nested** lists when you have a list within a list and need to avoid an overly long bullet list.

# List Punctuation

Conventions for punctuating list items vary depending on the context. Legal writing tends to use more punctuation than technical writing (list items often end in semicolons, and the final item is introduced by an “and”). In technical documents, because this style favors simplicity, you typically place a period only after the final item in your list.

If the lead-in is a complete sentence that contains both a subject and verb (ie. it could end in a period), it should end in a colon that introduces the listed items. If the sentence is not a complete thought, (ie. you could not put a period there) the lead-in should not end in any punctuation, and each listed item must be able to grammatically complete the lead-in sentence.