



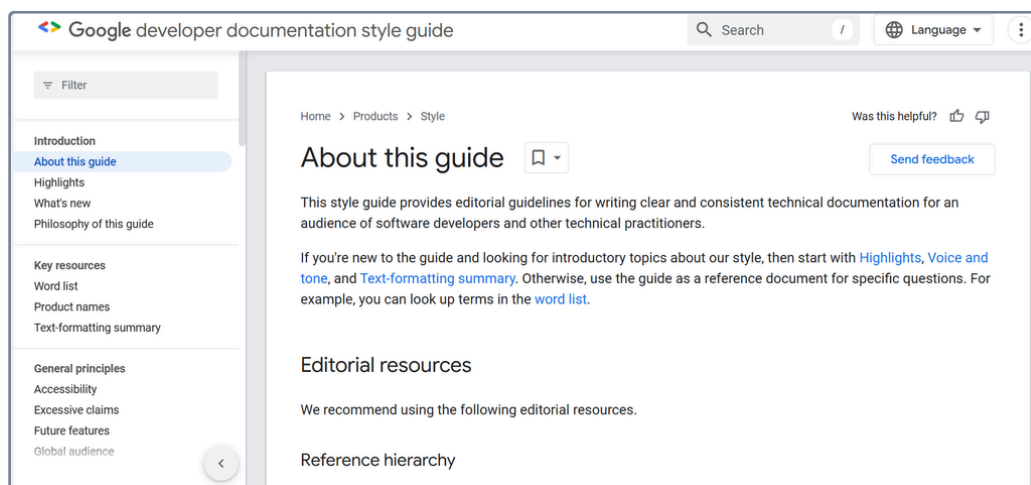
## Essential Style Guide for Technical Writing

This guide outlines the best practices for technical writing including style and formatting guidelines that help a technical writer to write comprehensive documents for customers. Style guides provide uniformity in format across various documents. Organizations choose different styles for writing, and often the decision to choose a style depends on which field, organization, or purpose you are writing for. A distinctive writing style also helps to distinguish your organization from the other competitors in the market.

A technical writing style educates the writers about certain parameters that need to be considered while writing. For example, we have tone, structure, terminologies, abbreviations, and so on. You can find here a brief overview of the most commonly used guides in technical writing.

## 6 Commonly Used Technical Writing Style Guides

### 1. Google Developer Style Guide



Source: [Google Developer Style Guide](#)

The Google style guide is particularly designed for developers and other technical professionals. It contains editorial guidelines for writing clear and consistent Google-related technical documentation. The style contains guidelines, not rules, and users are free to adapt it according to their needs.

These guidelines include tips for text formatting and organization, linking, and language and grammar principles like capitalization, contractions, sentence structure, and so on.

## 2. Microsoft Writing Style Guide

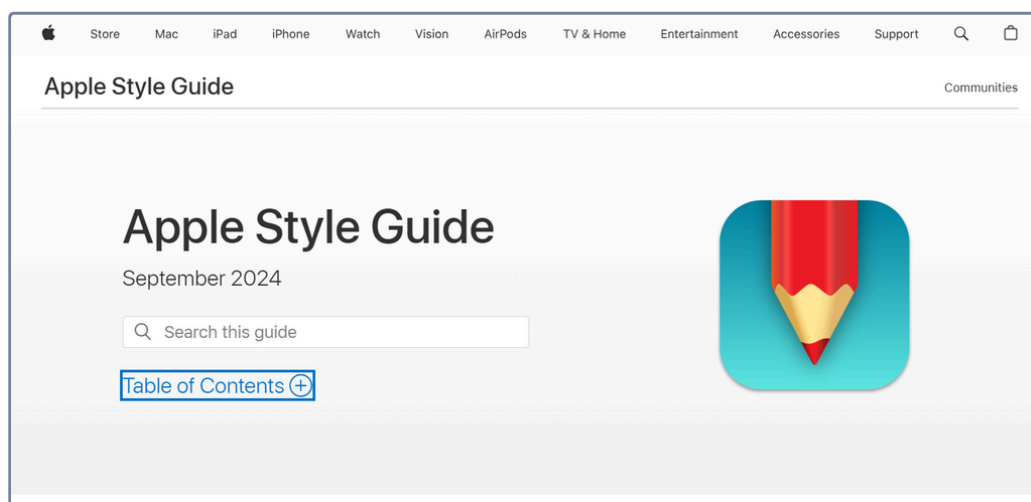


Source: [Microsoft Writing Style Guide](#)

The Microsoft writing style is used in places where a clear, consistent, and user-friendly document is required. For example, it is useful for technical writers working with digital interfaces that must be presented clearly and simply.

The Microsoft Writing Style Guide emphasizes the use of 10 writing tips for enhancing user-friendliness, clarity, and simplicity of the text. Moreover, the bias-free style of writing makes the text inclusive. It also utilizes translation and localization tools to enhance the accessibility of the information to all audiences across the globe.

## 3. Apple Style Guide

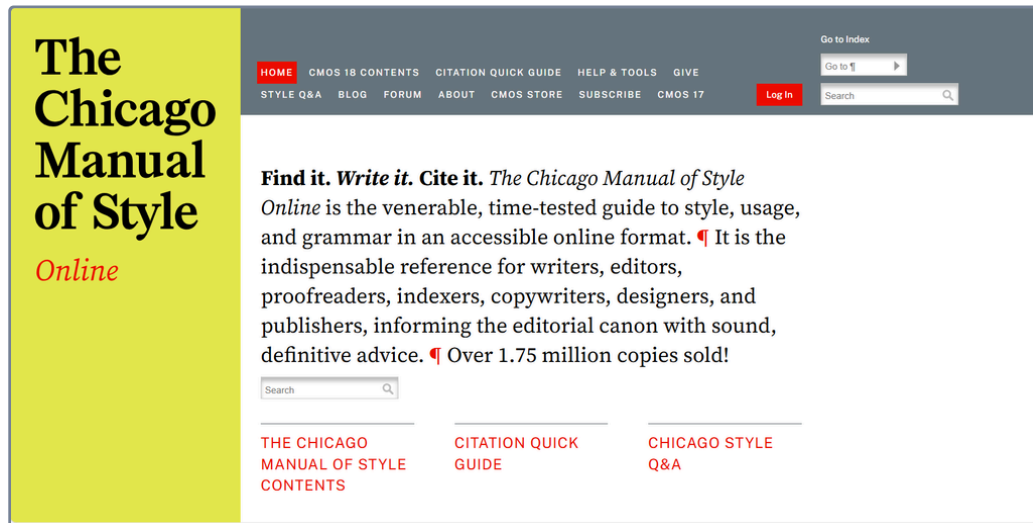


Source: [Apple Style Guide](#)

Writers use the Apple Style Guide to document and organize information for instructional materials, technical documentation, reference information, training programs, user interfaces, and so on.

The Apple Style Guide familiarizes writers, developers, and editors with Apple product terminology, tone, and usage. It helps writers to deliver high-quality, readable, consistent materials. Apple's design is heavily influenced by simplicity which is also obvious in their writing style.

#### 4. The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS)

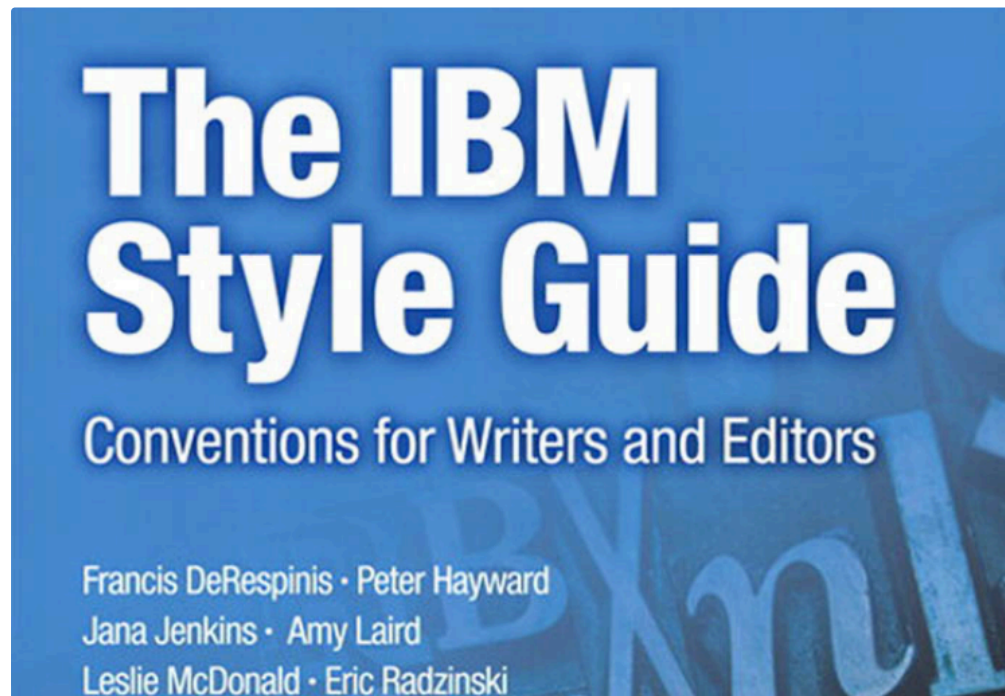


Source: [chicagomanualofstyle](http://chicagomanualofstyle.org)

The Chicago Manual of Style was one of the first style guides to be published in the book form and the only one from an academic press in North America. The guide lays out a comprehensive set of rules for document formatting and citation. It is widely used in different writing domains like academic, business, technical writing, copywriting, and so on. Generally, it is used for documents that require detailed citation practices.

The Chicago Manual of Style follows strict formatting rules for layout, word usage, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and so on.

#### 5. The IBM Style Guide



Source: [Pearson](http://Pearson.com)

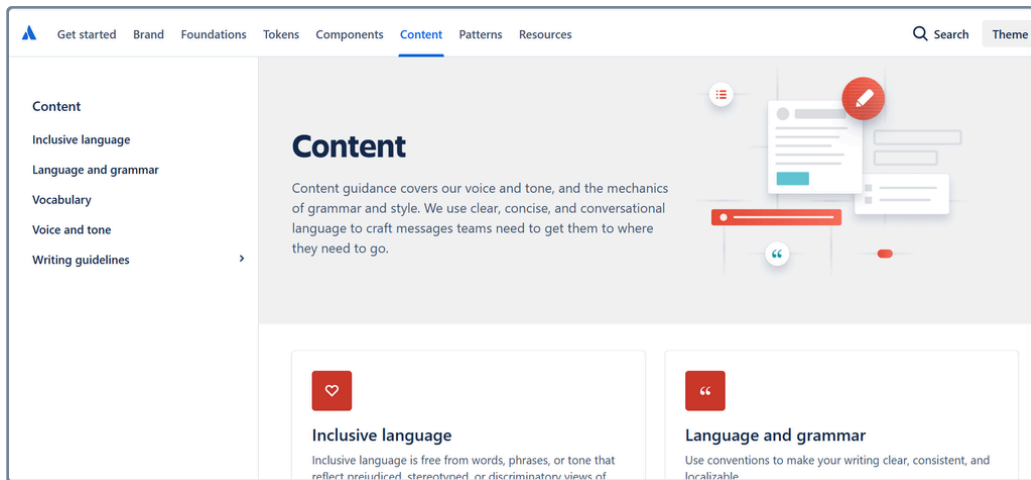
The IBM Style Guide is specifically designed to document IBM user manuals and technical documentation. However, any organization can adopt the style to deliver create, and manage content more effectively. It outlines examples of correct and incorrect usages with an illustration of examples.

The guidelines cover topics like language and grammar, punctuation, formatting, footnotes, reference links, writing for diverse audiences, and so on. The key features of the guide include a focus on practical guidance on topic-based writing, writing content for different media types, and writing for global audiences.

In 2011 the IBM press released a 300+ page IBM style guide for writers and editors. The guide encloses ten major sections, including grammar, punctuation, formatting, structure, references, numbers, interfaces, glossaries, indexes, and diversity.

Find a 44-page sample of the guide [here](#) as it is not freely available online.

## 6. Atlassian Design System



Source: [Atlassian Design System](#)

The Atlassian design system is a comprehensive set of design principles for covering different aspects of the Atlassian brand like Jira, Confluence, Trello, and so on. It helps users navigate the tools needed to create a simple and beautiful user experience. The design system includes foundations, components, patterns, and content of the Atlassian brand.

The content section here provides specific guidelines for writing Atlassian content. This section is divided into six categories comprising of language and grammar, inclusive language, vocabulary, voice and tone principles, writing guidelines, and writing style.

## Why Do We Need a Writing Style for Documentation

Each style provides a structure and format that helps ensure congruency throughout the document. Writers could refer to this centralized document to maintain uniformity and avoid inconsistencies. This helps to make the document appear more professionally laid out and user-friendly. Using a consistent style helps to:

- Create a document that aligns with writing standards.
- Maintain consensus in terminologies.
- To improve the overall appeal of the document.
- Coordinate multiple writers working on a single project.
- Streamline workflow as documentarians do not have to spend extra time modifying and editing content.
- Condition the readers to expect a particular format and pattern.

Finding the right style for your work and incorporating it requires some time and effort. However, over time it works as a foundation that helps to enhance efficiency and quality of work.

## Conclusion

Although this article lists 6 widely used writing styles, there are many more. We must choose a Writing style based on how the style aligns with our organization's voice, tone, and purpose. It is also viewed as one way to credit authors for their work through references and

citations.

Style guides are valuable to writers and it makes work easy for them in the long run. If you find it burdensome right now, you will be happy to know that these guidelines will automatically be a part of your memory as you frequently use them. For example, when you learn to drive, the new rules might seem overwhelming, but as you drive more often, you master it. And it ultimately saves your time commuting. A style enhances a writer's writing abilities rather than limiting them.