

## I. Style and Format

### Acronyms and Abbreviations

Just because something has an acronym, doesn't mean it's a proper noun. Not all acronyms should be capitalized, only those that are proper nouns.

- For the first reference, use the full version of the word or term, followed by its acronym in parentheses
  - Department of Labor (DOL), Internal Revenue Service (IRS), registered investment advisor (RIA), highly compensated employee (HCE)
- For subsequent references, use only the acronym
  - RIA, DOL
- Always use periods in the acronym for the United States
  - U.S.
- Do not use periods in the acronym for the United Kingdom
  - UK
- Country acronyms are acceptable when the name of the country is used as an adjective
  - U.S. foreign policy
- Spell out the quarter name in body copy
  - Third quarter (*not* Q3)
  - Q3 is acceptable in labels and headers
- Dates
  - 9.30.2020 is the way way to list a date that is not in prose.
  - Identify decades using figures—1980s—*not eighties*
  - If you use shortened numbers for decades (that is, without their century), use a preceding apostrophe
    - Rock 'n' roll flourished in the '50s
    - According to the report, the '90's figures are astonishing
  - Do not use s when listing numerical years unless they're possessive
    - Rock 'n' roll flourished in the 1950s
    - In the report, 2006's figures are astonishing
  - Full dates in the body of a sentence require commas after both the day and the year
    - March 3, 2007, was the exact date of the concert
    - On March 10, 2017, Teri was promoted
  - In the body of a sentence, the date should be spelled out: September 30, 2020.
    - Don't use forward slashes: 9/30/2020
  - A year is not necessary when the date is in the current year
  - Do not use ordinal letters in dates
    - November 10, 2016 (*not* November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016)
    - This rule applies even when no year is listed
      - March 26 (*not* March 26<sup>th</sup>)
- States
  - Do not include period punctuation when using a state abbreviation
  - In prose, do not use postal abbreviations for states
    - She was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1985 (*not* She was born in Boston, MA)

### Capitalization

- Capitalize a noun that identifies a single entity and is used to refer to that entity (proper nouns)
  - London, Jupiter, Sarah, S&P 500 Index, or Microsoft
- Capitalize full names of governmental bodies and offices.
  - Department of Labor
  - Federal Reserve
    - The Fed in 'Fed policy' is capitalized as it is referring to the Federal Reserve
  - Federal Bureau of Investigation
  - U.S. Department of Agriculture
  - U.S. Air Force
  - U.S. Army

- Peace Corps
  - European Union
- Capitalize the word party when it is preceded by the official name of a political party, unless it is used as a generic term:
  - He was a member of the Social Democratic Party
  - A new agrarian party was founded at the rally.
- Adjectives and nouns referring to the ideas, actions, documents and members of specific political parties, movements, and groups are capitalized
  - A Liberal policy paper (of the Liberal government or party)
  - New Democrats
  - A Progressive Conservative government (refers to the Progressive Conservative Party)
- General terms describing political movements are lowercase unless derived from proper nouns
  - democracy
  - capitalist
  - communism
  - fed funds
  - fascism, fascist
  - Marxist (proper noun)
  - Thatcherite (proper noun)
- Types of currency are lowercase
  - Japanese yen
  - U.S. dollar
  - British pound
- Regions are capitalized
  - North, South, West, Southern, Northern, etc.
  - Phrases such as the Northern California, Mid-Atlantic, Silicon Valley, Dixie, Sun Belt, and Midwest are capitalized
- Seasons and directions are lowercase
  - spring
  - fall
  - north
  - east
- Asset classes are lowercase
  - equities (stocks)
  - fixed income (bonds)
  - cash and cash equivalents
  - real estate
  - commodities
  - futures
- Use lowercase when referring to a generation
  - baby boomers
  - millennials
  - gen z

### Currency

- When you have a round dollar amount, do not include a decimal point followed by zero cents
  - \$20 (*not \$20.00*)
- Use the word cents for amounts less than a dollar and the dollar sign for amounts of more than a dollar
  - 10 cents
  - \$102.85
- If the monetary amount is more than a million dollars, use the dollar sign and the lower-case version of million, billion, etc. following the number
  - \$2 million
  - \$127 billion
    - Do not use abbreviations or shorthand for thousand, million, or billion, such as \$3k, \$1M, \$2.5B

### Footnote references

- Numbers should be placed outside of the last bit of punctuation, whether its closing parentheses, quotation marks, or periods
  - “This,” wrote George Templeton Strong, “is what our tailors can do.”<sup>1</sup>
  - (In an earlier book he had said quite the opposite.)<sup>2</sup>

## Headings

- For headings, use title case style. Meaning, the first and last words and all nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and subordinating conjunctions (if, because, as, that) are capitalized
  - The verbs is and are must be capitalized in title case style
  - A, an, the, coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or, for, nor), and prepositions, regardless of length, should be lowercase unless they’re the first or last word in the heading
- The word ‘to’ should also be lowercase in titles, unless it’s the first or last word
  - To Invest or Not to Invest
  - Show Them a Smarter Way to Save for College

## Italics

- Italicize
  - Titles of books
  - Movies
  - Blogs
  - Magazines
  - Newspapers
    - *The Guardian*
    - *The New York Times*
    - *The Wall Street Journal*
    - *USA Today*
    - *The Chicago Tribune*
  - TV Shows
    - *The Today Show*
  - Radio Shows
  - Podcasts
  - Websites
    - *fastcompany.com*
  - The name of a ship, aircraft, or spacecraft
  - Words that belong to another language or a foreign term that has not yet been adopted as a common English expression
    - He was living *la dolce vita*
    - Order a *croque monsieur* at a cafe
- Italics can be used to emphasize part of a quoted expression
- Use italics when defining a term, as an alternative to using quotation marks

## Lists (Numbered and Bulleted)

- Always apply the serial comma (also called the Oxford comma) that comes before the last item in the list
- If one or more of the items in a vertical the list is a complete sentence, each list item should begin with a capital letter and end with a period. A complete sentence contains a subject and a predicate (e.g., noun and verb)
- Items in the list are separated by commas, except when the items themselves contain commas, in which case they're separated by semicolons (;)
- If the items in the list are phrases or clauses with punctuation in them, put a semicolon at the end of each item. Put and (or, if logic dictates, or) after the next-to-last item in the list and a period after the last item. The items are not capitalized (except for proper nouns)

## Names and Titles

- Capitalize the names of divisions and departments
  - Advisor Group
  - Consulting Research Group
  - Business Operations Group
  - Client Solutions Group

- Investment Group
  - Department of Labor
- Capitalize full titles of military branches but lowercase their shortened versions
  - Army Special Forces
  - the army
- Capitalize titles preceding a person's name
  - Chief Executive Officer Fielding Miller is also our co-founder
- Lowercase titles when used as descriptors, in place of a name, after a person's name, or in constructions that set them off from a name by commas
  - the president and regents of the university
  - the governor of Illinois
- Use lowercase titles in formal prose and other general text following the person's name
  - Fielding Miller is our chief executive officer
  - ... said James Stenstrom, CAPTRUST senior manager

## Numbers

- 09.30.2020 is an acceptable way to write out a date
  - See above for more comprehensive information on dates
- Small numbers ranging from zero to ten are spelled out in prose
- Spell out numbers that begin sentences
- Twenty-one through ninety-nine are hyphenated
- Use numerals in percentages, unless in table format or at the beginning of a sentence
  - 4 percent
  - 117 percent
- In a range of numbers, the word 'to' should be used if the word from and/or between precedes the first element in such a pair. Otherwise, use an en dash between the numbers
  - She was in college from 1990 to 1994
  - The legislature voted 101–13
- Use periods in phone numbers, instead of dashes
  - 1.800.216.0645 (*not 1-800-216-0645*)
- Round to the nearest tenth in decimals (except in cases talking about the treasury)
- Examples of common numerical terms:
  - 10-year bond
  - two-and-one-half days
  - two-drink minimum
  - 24-hour hotline
  - The 10th-largest RIA
  - three-fourths, two-thirds, one-half
  - three- to five-year period
  - 10-year U.S. Treasury

## Plurals

- Plurals of proper nouns formed by adding s, even when the person's name ends in s. The apostrophe shows possession
  - a woman's hat
  - the boss's wife
  - Mrs. Chang's house
  - the firm's Raleigh headquarters
  - the Stevens's dog
  - Illinois's football team

## Word Choices/Word Formats/Key Terms

- 10-year bond
- 10-year U.S. Treasury
- 24-hour hotline
- after (not post)
- amid (not amidst)
- among (not amongst)

- avoid use of the before names of funds unless it is a part of the formal name
- client (lowercase)
- Do not use and/or (pick one or the other, never use a slash)
- Earth (capitalize when used as a proper name)
- European Union
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Federal Reserve
- financial crisis (lowercase)
- fiscal cliff
- handcrafted (one word)
- healthcare (one word when used as an adjective)
- health care (two words when used as a noun)
- high-net-worth
- high yield bonds
- index (lowercase when used alone)
- indexes (not indices)
- investment policy statement
- large-cap stocks
- small-cap stocks
- Life span (two words)
- macroeconomic (not macro)
- Peace Corps
- plan participant (lowercase)
- plan sponsor (lowercase)
- policymaker
- recordkeeper (one word)
- Roth (capitalized)
- small-cap companies
- Social Security (capitalized)
- Stoplight (one word)
- The 10th-largest
- the Fed
- three-fourths, two-thirds, one-half
- three- to five-year period
- toward (not towards)
- two-and-one-half days
- two-drink maximum
- Treasurys (not Treasuries or Treasury's)
- Washington D.C. (with periods)
- UK (no periods)
- U.S. Air Force
- U.S. Army
- U.S. Department of Agriculture

## II. Punctuation

### Apostrophes

- Use apostrophes to show omitted letters, such as in contractions.
  - don't, can't, they're
- Do not use 's when listing numerical years unless they're possessive
  - Rock 'n' roll flourished in the 1950s
  - In the report, 2006's figures are astonishing
- If you use shortened numbers for decades (that is, without their century), use a preceding apostrophe
  - Rock 'n' roll flourished in the '50s
  - According to the report, the '90's figures are astonishing

## Colons

- Use colons to introduce a series or a list
- The text following a colon should only be capitalized if it is a complete sentence

## Commas and Periods

- Use one space after periods
- Place commas and periods inside quotation marks
- Colons and semicolons should be placed outside quotation marks
- If punctuation is part of the quotation, put it inside the quotation marks. If it is not, put it outside
- Commas should be used before a conjunction that joins two independent clauses in a compound sentence
  - She wanted to go swimming, but her mom told her to wait
- Commas should be placed outside of brackets and parentheses
- In a series of three or more phrases or words, separate all parts of the series with commas (Oxford commas)
  - Jessica, Caitlin, and Stephanie went to the store

## Dashes and Hyphens

| TYPE    | MS WORD SHORTCUT                         | FORMAT   | USE  | EXAMPLE   |
|---------|--|--|--|---|
| Em dash | ctrl + alt + minus sign on number keypad | Approximately two hyphens in length; no spaces before or after           | Used to indicate a sudden break in thought or to create emphasis   | Can she—will she—make the right decision?         |
| En dash | ctrl + minus sign on number keypad       | Shorter than an em dash; longer than a hyphen; no spaces before or after | Used to indicate inclusion   | We're open for business Monday–Friday.            |
| Hyphen  |  | Shorter than en dash   | Used with some prefixes, as well as compound words and phrases. Also used with numbers, dates, or times that aren't inclusive. | red-headed boy, recession-related, best-in-class. |

- When adverbs not ending in ly are used as compound words in front of a noun, hyphenate.
  - The well-known actress accepted her award
  - The highly publicized book has just been released
  - The ill-fated voyage
- When such a combination of words is used after the noun, do not hyphenate
  - The actress is well known in the movie industry
- Compounds with self, mid, or other word fragments are hyphenated regardless of whether they precede or follow a noun
  - self-assured, self-obsessed, self-confident
  - mid-year, mid-career
- When using a generic fund term before a noun, always hyphenate
  - Many small-cap companies have been outperforming recently
  - My brother prefers to invest in companies with large-cap stocks
- When using a number followed by a noun, hyphenate
  - ten-minute intervals
- Twenty-one through ninety-nine are hyphenated

## Quotations

It's our strongly held option that quotation marks are greatly overused.

- Use the word says when attributing a quote—do not use 'exclaimed' or 'remarked' or 'stated'—just the word says.
  - Wrong: "The temperature on the moon is colder than Earth," Victor responded.
  - Revised: "The temperature on the moon is colder than Earth," Victor says.
  - Wrong: Roger concluded that "the paint was still orange."
  - Revised: "The paint was still orange," Roger says.
- Use quotation marks to indicate the exact words spoken or published

- Charlie said, "I love playing ice hockey in the winter months."
- Do not use quotation marks with cliches, slang, or trite expressions that you have doubts about using. Instead, avoid the cliché or trite expression. Here is an example:
  - Wrong: All they want is "a piece of the action."
  - Revised: All they want is involvement.
- Place commas and periods inside quotation marks
- Use quotation marks around the titles of articles
  - Jan read the article "Bitcoin's Epic Run Is Winning More Attention on Wall Street," yesterday afternoon.
- Poem titles are in quotation marks unless the poem is book-length
- Use single quotation marks inside double quotation marks when you have a quotation within a quotation.
  - Example: Bobbi told me, "Delia said, 'This will never work'".

### Semicolons

- Semicolons should be used:
  - between items in a list or series if any of the items contain commas
    - There are basically two ways to write: with a pen or pencil, which is inexpensive and easily accessible; or by computer and printer, which is more expensive but quick and neat
  - to separate closely related clauses
    - Some people write with a word processor; others write with a pen or pencil

### Slashes

- Slashes are not used. Ever.
- There is no such thing as and/or

## III. Citations

### No periods after sources.

#### Book:

- James, Henry. *The Ambassadors*. Serenity, 2009
- Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations*. Dodd, Mead, 1942

#### Book Online

- James, Henry. *The Ambassadors*. Serenity, 2009. *Google Books*, [www.books.google.com/ambassadors](http://www.books.google.com/ambassadors)
- Bodnar, Kipp, and Jeffrey L. Cohen. *The B2B Social Media Book*. *Google Books*, [www.books.google.com/b2b](http://www.books.google.com/b2b)

#### Journal, Magazine, or Newspaper Article:

- Cohen, Jon, "Scientists Are Moving at Record Speed to Create New Coronavirus Vaccines—but They May Come Too Late," *Science*, 2020

#### Website

- Ritchie, Hannah; Roser, Max, "Urbanization," *ourworldindata.org*, 2019

## IV. Charts

- All charts must be cleared. AKA, described in the copy—what is it, why is it there, what is it showing.
- Title case should be applied to chart names
- Always include a proper source underneath the chart
  - Refer to it as Sources only when more than one source is used. Otherwise call it Source.
- Capitalize Figure One in both the chart header and body text
  - Do not use numerals, example: Figure 2, Exhibit 1
- Always include proper unit of measurement labeling (dollars, hours, miles)
- Always include X and Y axis titles
  - The Y-axis of the graph is the vertical line running top to bottom

## V. Biographies for captrust.com

### Education

- Names of degrees are uppercase, but academic subjects are not capitalized
  - He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Richmond
  - She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in public relations
    - Wrong: she earned a bachelor's degree
    - Revised: she earned a Bachelor of Science degree
  - Master of Business Administration degree
  - Master of Commercial Science
    - Wrong: Master's degree in
    - Revised: Master of Economics degree
- Academic subjects are not capitalized unless they form part of a department name or are themselves proper nouns
  - During her sophomore year, she focused her studies mainly on history and English
  - Bachelor of Science degree in finance from the Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech

### Some Designations and Registered Marks

- CFA (unless spelled out, then use ®)
- CPA
- AIF®
- PRP
- PFS
- CLU
- ChFC
- CFP® or CFP® Professional
- CIMA®
- CRSP