

Style and Conventions

This is an abbreviated form of the Style Guide. Its organization matches the full Style Guide, but it only includes the key points for brevity. In addition, this document contains a **Why?** section to explain the reasoning for each guideline.

1. Titles and Header Case

For titles and section headers, we use NYT style:

- All words are capitalized, except prepositions, conjunctions, and articles that are three letters or fewer.
- Treat hyphenated words as separate.
- Multi-word verbs are all capitalized.
- The first and last words are always capitalized.
- The first word of a subtitle should be capitalized.
- Follow proper stylization for product/company names.

For help, use [Title Case Converter](#) set to NY Times and it will be right 99% of the time.

Why? This ensures consistency across the site and looks neat.

2. Article Structure

Intros, Conclusions, and Article Length

- Limit your intros to 100 words or under. Avoid links in intros.
- Make sure you have a dedicated conclusion header and use it to summarize the article's content in 100 words max. Do not include links in the conclusion.
- Be intentional about article length. Cover what needs to be covered, but no more. Don't re-explain entire concepts if there are internal links you can use instead.

Why? Quick intros and conclusions without links serve to bookend the article without being distracting.

Sections and Headings

- All articles should use H2 headers to break the content up into logical sections.
- Start with H2 headers and use H3 under those when necessary.

Why? Headers help readers skim the article and know what's coming up. They also show Google what the piece is about.

3. Tone and Voice

- Be concise. Don't stretch out or repeat points to increase word count.
- Use simple English that's easy for readers to understand.
- Use a friendly tone, but not overly casual. Write with authority, not like a blogger or a dry instruction manual.

Why? People come to use for clear explanations, and we don't want them to get bored or confused.

First-Person and Addressing the Reader

- Try to avoid first-person. If you need to talk about the site generally, use "we" statements.
- Only use "I" statements if your personal experience is highly relevant to the topic at hand.
- In general, prefer "you" statements to talk directly to the reader. Words like "users" are cold and impersonal.

Why? We want to help the readers directly and avoid talking about ourselves.

Passive Voice

While it's not the end of the world, try to avoid passive voice if you can.

Why? Active voice is more interesting for our style of writing.

4. Readability

- Sentence fragments are okay. Don't abuse them.
- Avoid [comma splices](#), which are two independent clauses joined by a comma. You need to either use a semicolon or split them into two sentences instead.
- Paragraphs should rarely have more than 4 sentences.

Why? Writing clearly with proper grammar shows the high quality of our articles and makes potentially confusing concepts easier to follow.

5. Images

Original screenshots or photographs are preferable for images. Only use stock images where there's no other option; YouTube videos are usually better than stock photos.

If needed, see these screencasts on how to resize images so you don't distort them:

- [Resize featured images on Windows using Paint.NET](#)
- [Resize featured images in your browser using Photopea](#)

If you need to highlight something, place a red box around the element or slightly blur the rest of the image.

Image Sizes

- For your featured image, **the size needs to be 1680x840px exactly.**
- When uploading images for the body of the article, the **minimum width is 750px.** But the **preferred width is at least 1,200px.**
- If your image is smaller than 750px wide, add a **light gray background of color #F2F2F2** so that the image is properly 750px wide. Watch a [video guide to this here](#). This should not be done for mobile screenshots, which are uploaded in Galleries (see below).
- There is no maximum width. For the aspect ratio: 2:1 is ideal, while 1:1 (square) is unacceptable. Somewhere in the middle is OK.
 - Wider ratios like 3:1 are also fine, as long as the image is clear.

All images must be saved in JPG format. PNG images are no longer allowed, except in special circumstances.

Why? Smaller images will appear blurry, and 1:1 (square) images take too long to scroll past. PNG images aren't served efficiently by our server.

Image Alt Text

Alt text must be added for every image. This visually describes the image for anyone who can't see it, such as "Woman looking at Amazon website on an iPhone".

Don't include hyphens in alt text.

Why? So people who use screen readers, or those with slow connections, can still digest the images.

Image Credits

If you didn't create an image, you need to make sure you have permission to use it. To credit an image we're allowed to use, use the following format in the **Caption** field of the image. Omit the Artist if it's from a press release or similar.

Image Credit: Artist/[Shutterstock](#)

For all images, **you must include the origin of the image in the Description box:**

- For images that require a caption, copy the Caption to the Description.
- For no-attribution images, put "No attribution required -- Pexels" or similar, along with the URL of the image page.
- For your own images, use "Screenshot by John Doe -- no attribution required".

Why? If we don't credit images or use ones that aren't licensed for reuse, we could get in legal trouble.

6. Written Style

- Use American English, US units of measurement, and avoid non-US idioms.
 - As part of US English, refer to companies as singular entities: "Apple has unveiled its latest MacBook", not "Apple have unveiled their latest MacBook".
- We use the Oxford comma (also known as serial comma), which is the final comma in a list of three or more items. "You can buy an iPhone, iPad[,] or Mac from Apple."
- Spell out numbers between one and nine. Use numerals for 10 or higher. Hardware specifications are an exception and should always use numerals.
- Use bold for references to on-screen elements. Don't put them in quotes.
- Make sure to use proper stylization for company and product names (for example, it's JavaScript, not Javascript).
- Use "double quotes," not 'single quotes,' and put punctuation inside quotes.

Why? The majority of our readership is in the US. Other rules are for consistency and readability.
