TECHNICAL DOCUMENTATION

ENC 4293

Acknowledgments

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Introduction

Communication is an important skill in academia and the workplace. Writers must create documents in many formats, styles, and subjects. The learning process towards becoming a good writer is lifelong, and every new document presents an opportunity.

Most students encounter their first style guide in college classes. As a college student, it is easy to assume that style requirements are just another layer of work irrelevant to the real world. However, learning about style guides can prepare students for the workplace. Style guides ensure that documents follow specific formats and aspire to a high level of quality. Many companies have style guides that they follow when creating documents. Some of these guides can be strict, especially those that deal with government or medical documents. The sooner students understand the importance of style guides, the better prepared they are to write professional documents. Style guides can be

teaching tools for many types of documents, guiding writers in the creation of clear and meaningful content.

The ENC 4293 class of 2020 has compiled this style guide as a reference for academic and professional writers alike. Rather than focusing solely on content or format, this guide also touches on the social responsibilities of a successful writer. These responsibilities include intercultural awareness, ethics, accessibility, and the importance of proper research. By adding these elements into the style guide, the class hopes to emphasize the fact that writing well involves more than stringing words together. Writing is a social activity, and effective writing is a conversation between writers and their readers.

"We are all apprentices in a craft
where no one ever becomes a master."
-Ernest Hemingway

Grammar

Parts of Speech

Nouns

A noun identifies a person, place, thing, or concept. In a sentence, a noun has several functions. They can be the subject, the object of a verb or preposition, a complement, an appositive, or a modifier. Only nouns can be modified to express plurality and possession.

Common Nouns

A common noun is a general reference to a person, place, or thing.

Examples:

computer, company, country, manager

Proper Nouns

A proper noun is a specific reference to a person, place, or thing.

Examples:

Acer, Microsoft, New York, Bill Gates

Plural Nouns

A plural noun represents more than one subject.

Examples:

emails, reports, headings, folders

Possessive Nouns

A possessive noun implies ownership of an object or idea.

Examples:

the student's book, the company's style guide

Compound Nouns

A compound noun is a group of nouns—usually two or three—joined together naturally or with a hyphen to make a single noun.

Examples:

copyediting, cross-reference, two-year-old

Collective Nouns

A collective noun represents a group of things. Treat collective nouns like singular nouns when they represent one group. *Examples:*

Society, committee, flock, organization

Pronouns

Pronouns are words that can replace a noun in a sentence. They are tools writers can use to add variety to their sentences rather than using the same nouns in every instance.

Singular Pronouns

A singular pronoun replaces a singular noun.

Examples:

Dave is a technical writer.

He is a technical writer.

Plural Pronouns

A plural pronoun replaces a plural noun.

Examples:

The team finished writing.

They finished writing.

Subject Pronouns

A subject pronoun replaces the subject noun in a sentence. It becomes the subject of the verb.

Examples:

Marta wrote this document.

She wrote this document.

Object Pronouns

An object pronoun replaces the direct or indirect object of the sentence.

Examples:

Marta gave Dave a task.

Marta gave him a task.

Object pronouns are also used for objects following prepositions.

Examples:

Marta has a project for you.

I can help you with it.

Possessive Pronouns

A possessive pronoun implies ownership. Possessive pronouns do not require apostrophes.

Examples:

Marta is proud of her work.

Your work is excellent.

Plural Pronouns

A plural pronoun replaces a plural noun.

Examples:

The team finished writing.

They finished writing.

Reflexive Pronouns

A reflexive pronoun is used when the subject of the sentence is performing an action on itself.

Example:

The computer restarted itself after the update.

Intensive Pronouns

An intensive pronoun emphasizes the subject. Intensive pronouns are usually redundant and should be avoided.

Examples:

I will write it myself.

You yourself are responsible.

Demonstrative Pronouns

A demonstrative pronoun implies proximity between the speaker and the object of the sentence.

Examples:

This is my paper.

Hand me that pen.

Interrogative Pronouns

Interrogative pronouns ask questions about the subject.

Examples:

What are you writing?

Who is your editor?

Indeterminate Pronouns

Indeterminate pronouns do not refer to a specific subject.

They are used to make generalities.

Examples:

Everyone likes the format.

Are there any questions?

Multiple Gender Pronouns

When writing to or about a group of multiple genders, there are two ways to write inclusively.

Examples:

Everyone should submit his or her work tomorrow.

Everyone should submit their work tomorrow.

Verbs

Verbs indicate actions performed by the subject of a sentence or a state of being. Together, subjects and verbs form the basis of all complete sentence structures. Verbs change their form in a process called conjugation, depending on when the action is taking place (i.e., past, present, or future tense).

Transitive Verbs

A transitive verb links the subject to a direct object. It answers the question "what?" or "who?"

Example:

Marta has increased productivity.

Intransitive Verbs

An intransitive verb does not require a direct object to form a complete sentence.

Example:

The computer crashed.

Linking and To Be Verbs

A linking verb links a subject to a complement that reflects the subject, usually an adjective or a noun phrase that could substitute for the subject.

Examples:

This assignment looks challenging.

Marta is the director of the writing team.

Action Verbs

An action verb shows what the subject is doing. It is also known as a helping verb.

Examples:

Marta directs the writing team.

The team composed the style guide together.

Modal Verbs

A modal verb conveys ability or possibility. It is used in conjunction with action verbs.

Examples:

David can help with editing.

We must complete the project by Friday.

Auxiliary Verbs

An auxiliary verb works with the main verb in negative or interrogative sentences. *To be* and *modal* verbs are also auxiliary verbs.

Examples:

We should have consulted the style guide first.

Do you know when the project is due?

Irregular Verbs

An irregular verb does not follow the rules of conjugation for past and present participles.

Examples:

I will write the introduction. (regular verb)

Who wrote the reference list? (irregular verb)

Have you written the index yet? (irregular verb)

Infinitive Phrase

An infinitive phrase is a compound verb joined with the word *to* in front of it. Infinite verbs can act as subjects, direct objects, complements, and modifiers.

Examples:

To delay publishing is not an option. (subject)

We wanted to finish today. (direct object)

Our goal is to publish a style guide. (complement)

Marta agreed to help me. (adjective)

Split Infinitives

A split infinitive occurs when the word *to* is separated from the infinitive verb stem. While it is acceptable in an informal context, split infinitives should be avoided in formal writing.

Examples:

We need to quickly finish editing. (casual)

We need to finish editing quickly. (proper)

Gerunds

A gerund is a verb ending in *-ing* that functions as a noun.

Examples:

Writing is therapeutic for some people. (subject)

Improve your writing with practice. (direct object)

You can take classes on writing. (preposition)

Participles as Nouns

A participle is a verb used as an adjective to modify a noun or pronoun. They usually end in *-ing* (present participles) or *-ed*, *-en*, *-d*, *-t*, *-n*, and *-ne* (past participles).

Examples:

The finished manuscript was approved.

The managing editor assigned the project.

Adjectives

Adjectives describe or modify nouns and pronouns using observational and sensory words. Adjectives answer questions like; *what color*, *how big*, *how many*, and *which one*, to name a few.

Descriptive Adjectives

A descriptive adjective is the most common type of adjective. It describes an attribute or quality of a noun or pronoun. They are also called qualitative adjectives.

Example:

The large dictionary is on her desk.

Adjective Degrees

Adjectives come in three degrees: positive, comparative, and superlative.

Examples:

This is a good book. (positive)

It's better than the last one. (comparative)

This is her best work yet. (superlative)

Compound Adjectives

A compound adjective is two or more modifiers combined to modify a noun.

Example:

The sixty-page draft was sent over yesterday.

Quantitative Adjectives

A quantitative adjective provides numeric information. It answers the questions *how much?* or *how many?*

Examples:

I have twelve articles to edit.

Turn in the whole assignment on Friday.

Proper Adjectives

A proper adjective is a proper noun used as an adjective.

Examples:

The publishing company uses the Chicago style.

A Shakespearean sonnet has fourteen lines.

Demonstrative Adjectives

A demonstrative adjective is a direct reference to a person or thing.

Examples:

That manuscript is ready for printing.

This manuscript needs further revision.

Possessive Adjectives

A possessive adjective suggests ownership of the subject.

Examples:

My assignment is nearly finished.

His manuscript needs formatting.

Interrogative Adjectives

An interrogative adjective asks a question: *which*, *what*, or *whose*. A noun or pronoun always follows an interrogative adjective.

Examples:

Which style guide did you use?

What font is this?

Indefinite Adjectives

An indefinite adjective is a general or unspecific modifier.

Examples:

Several writers were assigned to the project.

It is due in a few days.

Articles

An article is an adjective that determines the specificity of the noun it modifies.

Examples:

The manuscript is ready for printing.

A manuscript is ready for printing.

Participles as Adjectives

A past participle can take the place of an adjective without using an auxiliary verb.

Example:

I have the edited copy of that manuscript.

Adverbs

Adverbs are words that modify verbs, adjectives, and even other adverbs. They indicate manner, quality, and degrees, as well as when, where, and how often actions occur.

Conjunctive Adverbs

A conjunctive adverb connects a phrase or independent clause, demonstrating a relationship between the different sentence segments.

Example:

The team missed the deadline; consequently, the publication date was pushed back.

Sentence Adverbs

A sentence adverb begins a sentence and modifies the entire sentence.

Example:

Hopefully, the editors will finish in time.

Adverbs of Time and Frequency

An adverb of time or frequency answers the questions *when?* or *how often?*

Examples:

The project is due Thursday.

The writing team is never late.

Adverbs of Place and Direction

An adverb of place or direction answers the question *where?*

Examples:

The manuscript was sent to the publisher.

File it under the Completed Task tab.

Adverbs of Degrees and Manner

An adverb of degree or manner answers the questions *how much?* and *how?*

Examples:

I completely forgot about the deadline.

I emailed my editor quickly.

Prepositions

Prepositions indicate a relationship between a noun and the rest of the sentence.

Prepositions of Time

A preposition of time indicates a time-based relationship between the noun and the rest of the sentence.

Example:

The project is due before noon on Friday.

Prepositions of Measurement

A preposition of measurement indicates quantity.

Example:

Pens are sold by the dozen, and paper by the ream.

Prepositions of Place and Movement

A preposition of location or movement demonstrates a location-based relationship between the noun and the rest of the sentence.

Example:

The meeting is across the hall in room 102.

Prepositions of Agency and Manner

A preposition of agency or manner suggests an action being performed by a noun.

Example:

This manuscript was edited by Marta with the *OED*.

Prepositions of Instrumentality

A preposition of instrumentality suggests an action done *to*, *with*, or *on* a noun.

Example:

I wrote this page on a Word document.

Prepositions of Source and Possession

A preposition of source or possession implies origin or ownership of a noun.

Example:

It was written by the intern with gold glasses.

Phrasal Prepositions

A phrasal preposition is a compound phrase that functions like a preposition. It is not the same as a prepositional phrase.

Example:

According to the style guide, use a 16pt font.

Conjunctions

Conjunctions connect phrases and clauses to the rest of the sentence, demonstrating a relationship between multiple elements in a sentence.

Coordinating Conjunctions

A coordinating conjunction is used to join two words, phrases, or independent clauses.

Example:

The style guide was edited and formatted in Microsoft Word.

Correlative Subordinate

A correlative conjunction is used to compare or contrast correlating parts of a sentence. They are usually paired with a second conjunction.

Example:

Neither the index nor the forward are finished.

Subordinate Conjunctions

A subordinating conjunction is used to join unparallel parts of a sentence, like a dependent clause and an independent clause.

Example:

Before publishing, they format the document.

Interjections

Interjections are unusual and stylistic additions to sentences. They express surprise or sudden emotions with an implied pause. They are not common in formal writing but are frequently used in written dialogue that captures real speech.

Emotion or Surprise

An interjection of emotion or surprise demonstrates a sudden emotion with added emphasis.

Examples:

Wow! That's a long manuscript.

Interruptions

An interjection of interruption breaks the flow of the sentence, usually with a sound, not a word.

Examples:

You, uh, missed a typo on page four.

Approval and Disapproval

An interjection of approval or disapproval provides a direct *yes* or *no* answer.

Examples:

Yes, the manuscript is ready for printing.

No, I'm not finished editing.

Attracting Attention

An interjection of attention is meant to attract attention.

Example:

Hey! Can you hear me now?

Prefixes

A prefix is a type of modifier joined to the beginning of a root or stem word.

Examples:

anticlimax, extract, foretell, pretext

Suffixes

A suffix is a type of modifier joined to the end of a root or stem word. Sometimes the ending of the word is altered and replaced by the suffix. Suffixes are used in many verb and adjectival variations as well as nouns.

Examples:

intern<u>ship</u>, opin<u>ion</u>, simpl<u>ify</u>, creat<u>ive</u>

Usage

Once you understand the basic elements of English grammar, usage techniques help you arrange these elements and form coherent sentences. Many of these techniques ensure agreement and consistency between subjects and verbs.

Agreement

Subject-verb agreement is a set of rules that govern the subject-verb relationship in a sentence. There are several rules that a sentence must follow to establish agreement.

Singular and Plural

Singular nouns require singular verbs. Plural nouns require plural verbs.

Examples:

<u>I am</u> writing. <u>She is</u> researching. (singular)

<u>We are</u> writing. <u>They are</u> researching. (plural)

Prepositional Phrases

A prepositional phrase modifying the subject does not change the verb's conjugation.

Examples:

A flyer about rules is going around. (singular)

Rules about agreement are in the style guide. (plural)

Conjunctions

When the conjunction *and* joins two or more nouns, the subject phrase becomes plural.

Example:

Marta and Dave are editing the manuscript.

Conjunctive Phrases

When a conjunctive phrase like *as well as*, *along with*, *together with* replaces *and*, the verb is not affected.

Example:

Marta, along with Dave, is editing the manuscript.

Indefinite Subjects

Indefinite pronouns are usually singular and therefore require a singular verb.

Examples:

Someone is bringing coffee. (singular)

Neither of you is on the writing team. (singular)

The exceptions to this rule are the plural indefinite pronouns *many*, *several*, *others*, *both*, and *few*.

Examples:

Both of us are on the editing team. (plural)

Several of them are working together. (plural)

When *none* is paired with the prepositional phrase *of the*, the verb becomes plural.

Example:

None of the writers are here today. (plural)

When referencing an indefinite number of subjects with the phrase *a number of*, the verb is plural. If the number is known, the verb is singular.

Examples:

A number of writers are on the project. (plural)

The number of writers on the project is 17. (singular)

Plural Nouns

Some nouns like *scissors*, *pants*, and *glasses* are always plural, even in a singular context. If the plural noun is preceded by the phrase *a pair of,* then they are considered singular.

Examples:

My glasses are broken. (plural)

This pair of glasses is broken. (singular)

Correlative Conjunctions

When nouns are paired using *either...or* or *neither...nor*, the verb agrees with the last noun in the sequence.

Examples:

Neither Marta nor Dave is attending the meeting.

Either Marta or the writers are bringing coffee.

Here/There Sentences

In *here/there* sentences, the subject comes after the verb. The rules of subject-verb agreement still apply.

Examples:

Here is the manuscript you asked for. (singular)

There are the manuscripts you asked for. (plural)

Collective Nouns

Collective nouns are usually treated as singular nouns.

Examples:

The team is finished editing.

The committee is holding a vote.

Gerunds

Gerunds are always paired with a singular verb.

Example:

Writing is therapeutic for some people.

Adjectives as Nouns

When an adjective is used as a noun, the verb will always be plural.

Example:

The industrious are reliable.

Voice

Voice is a technique that determines how the subject and verb relate to each other. In English grammar, there are two types of voice: active and passive.

Active Voice

Active voice is when the subject of the sentence is performing the action or verb. It is the most direct means of expression.

Example:

Marta is editing the manuscript.

Passive Voice

Passive voice is when the subject is having an action performed on it.

Example:

The manuscript is being edited by Marta.

While active voice is preferred in professional and academic writing, there are cases where passive voice is the better choice. In cases where the sentence's focus is the action, use passive voice to emphasize the verb. Regarding perfect tenses, passive voice is preferred to reduce verbosity.

Example:

Marta was hired by the former lead editor.

Mood

Mood is the overall feel of a document reflected in the author's vernacular and how they present the information. There are three kinds of mood: indicative, subjunctive, and imperative.

Indicative

A sentence written in indicative mood implies that something is factual.

Example:

Marta is the best lead editor.

Subjunctive

A sentence written in subjunctive mood expresses a possibility or hypothetical statement.

Example:

If I finish this task, I'll have tomorrow off.

Imperative

A sentence written in imperative mood is making a command or request. A second person or subject is the implied recipient of the command.

Example:

Bring me the finished copy, please.

Tense

Tense is a verb mechanic that modifies an action to reflect when that action occurred. Present and past tense verbs represent the purest forms of conjugated verbs, while the verb forms use auxiliaries to modify the action.

Present Tense

Present tense suggests that the action is taking place in the present. There are four forms of present tense. Present indefinite or simple present tense implies a habitual or continuous action or state of being.

Example:

Marta edits technical documents. She is a good editor.

Present progressive or continuous tense suggests that action is taking place in the immediate present.

Example:

I am writing the next chapter.

Present perfect tense is used when the time of the action is unspecified, but the effect of the action on the subject is ongoing.

Examples:

I have read the manuscript several times.

Marta has worked in this office for over ten years.

Present perfect progressive implies that an action started in the past and is still ongoing in the present.

Example:

She has been working on this task all week.

Past Tense

There are four types of past tense. Past indefinite tense, or simple past tense, indicates that an action occurred in the past.

Example:

I submitted the manuscript last week.

Past progressive tense suggests that an action occurred over a period of time in the past.

Example:

I was editing when Marta visited my office.

Past perfect tense is used to show a sequence of actions, one after another.

Example:

I had finished editing before Marta visited my office.

Past perfect progressive tense shows when a past action occurred for a certain time frame but then stopped before a second action began.

Example:

Elis had been editing for 20 years before he retired.

Future Tense

Future tense indicates that an action will occur in the future. There are four types of future tense. Future indefinite or simple future tense promises that an action will happen in the future.

Example:

Marta will move into her new office soon.

Future continuous tense implies that an action will happen over a specific time period in the future.

Example:

I will be writing tomorrow morning.

Future perfect tense promises that an action will occur and finish by a certain time in the future.

Example:

The writers will have finished their work by Thursday.

Future perfect continuous tense suggests that an action that started in the past will continue into the future but stop before a second action begins.

Example:

They will have been writing for 8 hours by the end of the day.

Literary Present

Always use the present tense when writing an analysis of a literary work.

Example:

The new APA manual is divided into 12 chapters.

Consistency

To eliminate confusion, maintain a consistent tense throughout sentences and paragraphs.

Examples:

Marta edited the manuscript then sends it back to the writer for revision. They revised and will submit it again.
(inconsistent tense)

Marta edited the manuscript then sent it back to the writer for revision. They revised and submitted it again.
(consistent past tense)

When reporting on a past event or predicting a future event, a change of tense indicates a shift in time and is acceptable.

Examples:

I predict the project will take a month to finish.

As I recall, Marta asked us to stay late.

Usage Strategies

The best way to improve your writing is practice, but there are several strategies and techniques that can you polish your work and create a clear message.

Conciseness

Concise writing is a simplistic writing style that emphasizes close subject-verb relationships and a reduction in wordiness. In the following example, the sentence is too verbose, and the message is unclear.

Example:

The team came to an agreement about the idea of writing in a concise style for their assignment. (18 words)

In this example, *came to an agreement* is a noun phrase that can be replaced with the verb *agreed*. To make the sentence less wordy and more concise, eliminate unnecessary words and turn noun phrases into verbs.

Example:

The team agreed on a concise writing style for their assignment. (11 words)

Jargon and Word Choice

Be mindful of your audience when establishing your vernacular for a document. If your audience is not familiar with your terminology, you may have to define terms or use simpler ones.

Examples:

They sued for intellectual property theft.

They sued because their idea was stolen.

Be consistent in your word choices to avoid confusing the reader. For example, there are several names for the word *document*: form, piece, work, file, letter, paper. Once you've decided on a name, use the same identification mark for the entirety of the document.

Avoiding Adverbs

There is no rule against adverbs; however, excessive and misplaced adverbs can increase verbosity and distort your message. Use them sparingly, especially in formal writing. Remove redundant adverbs or replace them with stronger verbs or descriptors.

Examples:

The style guide is very long. (informal)

The style guide is lengthy. (formal)

Marta smiled happily. (redundant)

Marta smiled. (concise)

Clichés

Clichés are overused sayings and idioms. Avoid clichés in formal and academic writing.

Examples:

- in today's society
- follow the money
- in this day and age
- throughout history
- since the dawn of man
- little did I know
- in the nick of time

all walks of life

Parallel Structure

Parallel structure is a sentence construction that emphasizes balance between phrases.

Examples:

Our tasks include writing, an edited paper, and to publish.

(not parallel)

Our tasks include writing, editing, and publishing.

(parallel)

We edit consistently, accurately, and in a concise manner.

(not parallel)

We edit consistently, accurately, and concisely.

(parallel)

Misplaced Modifiers

A misplaced modifier modifies the wrong subject. In the first example, *edited* is modifying *author's*. In the second example, *edited* modifies *manuscript,* which is correct for this sentence's context.

Examples:

The edited author's manuscript was published. (incorrect)

The author's edited manuscript was published. (correct)

Structures

In writing, structures are like formulas that help authors organize their words and form a cohesive message. Smaller structures—subjects, verbs, objects, and phrases—are strung together to make complete sentences. Paragraph structures arrange sentences about a similar topic, and multiple paragraphs form larger documents.

Sentence Structures

Sentence structures provide frameworks for writers to organize their words. A writer can use a wide variety of word combinations and sentence elements in their sentence. However, to form a coherent sentence, these elements must be arranged in a certain way. All sentences follow a basic format called the subject-predicate structure.

Subject-Predicate Structure

Every sentence can be broken down into two basic parts: the subject and the predicate. The subject is the topic or the source of the action in the sentence. The predicate is what is being said about the subject or an action being performed by the subject. A sentence can be a simple as two words—a noun and a verb.

Examples:

Marta edits. David writes.

A sentence can also incorporate complex elements like phrases and clauses that modify the subject or enhance the predicate. Despite the additional details, these two sentences still adhere to the subject-predicate structure.

Examples:

Sitting in her office, Marta edits the new manuscript.

David, a fiction fan, writes the company blog.

Objects

An object is the focus or recipient of the action in the sentence. Objects are accessory elements in a sentence structure because not every sentence needs an object. There are two kinds of objects: direct and indirect.

A direct object is the direct recipient of the action in a sentence.

Examples:

Marta edits the manuscript.

David writes the blog.

An indirect object is the indirect recipient of the action in a sentence. In this sentence, *David* is the indirect object of the action, *gave*. *The manuscript* is still the direct object.

Example:

Marta gave David the manuscript.

Complements

Complements describe or redefine the subject or object of the sentence. In this sentence, *Marta* is redefined as *an optimist*. *Marta* is the subject, and *an optimist* is the subject complement (it is also a noun phrase).

Example:

Marta is an optimist.

In this sentence, *David* is described as *puzzled*. *David* is the subject and *puzzled* is the subject complement (it is also an adjective phrase).

Example:

David looked puzzled.

In this example, *the manuscript* is the direct object, and *a best-seller* is the object complement (it is also a noun phrase).

Example:

Marta called the manuscript a best-seller.

Phrases

A phrase is a small group of words that modify and add meaning to a sentence. A phrase does not have a verb. Therefore, it cannot stand alone. A phrase can be a single word used to modify another element in a sentence.

Examples:

Marta is a very experienced editor.

Editing memoirs is her specialty.

There are eight types of phrases: noun, adjective, adverbial, prepositional, conjunctional, interjectional, participle, and dangling.

Noun Phrases

A noun phrase is a group of words that form the subject, object, or complement. It usually includes a headword (a noun) and a determiner (*the*, *a*, *this*, *to*, *for*, etc.) that signals the noun.

Examples:

The manuscript is ready. (subject)

We are ready to edit the manuscript. (object)

We will use the APA 7th edition. (complement)

Adjective Phrases

An adjective phrase is a collection of words that modifies a noun.

Examples:

Marta is a very thorough editor.

The author made a lot of changes.

Adverbial Phrases

An adverbial phrase is a group of words that modifies a verb.

Examples:

The editors worked as quickly as possible.

The author writes very slowly.

Prepositional Phrases

A prepositional phrase is a group of words that act like a single preposition to connect a noun to the rest of the sentence.

Examples:

The manuscript is on the way to the publisher.

By working diligently, the editors finished the task.

Conjunctional Phrases

A conjunctional phrase works the same way as a conjunction to join parts of a sentence.

Examples:

Marta left early in order to beat the traffic.

We will edit as soon as we get the manuscript.

Interjectional Phrases

An interjectional phrase is a group of words that acts like a singular interjection. Its purpose is to inject a dramatic statement.

Examples:

The manuscript is ready. What great news!

Oh no! Marta left already.

Participial Phrases

A participial phrase is a verb phrase comprised of a participle and a modifier. Participial phrases function as adjectives to modify a noun.

Examples:

Marta saw David writing in his office.

Editors interested in the seminar sign up here.

Dangling Participle Phrases

A dangling participle phrase is a group of words that open or close a sentence. It is also called a dangling modifier. It is not a complete sentence because it does not contain a subject, but it modifies the subject of the sentence it is joined to.

Example:

Sitting at the desk, Marta finished the manuscript.

A dangling modifier that does not modify a noun is a syntax error. In the previous example, *sitting at the desk* is modifying *Marta*. In the example below, *sitting at the desk* is not modifying a noun—*the manuscript* is not the subject of the sentence.

Example:

Sitting at the desk, the manuscript was finished.

Avoid this syntax error by verifying the relationship between the dangling participle and the noun it is supposed to modify.

Clauses

A clause is a group of words that contains one subject and predicate. The subject can be implied, but the verb must be apparent.

Examples:

Marta writes. David edits. The interns proofread.

There are five types of clauses: independent, dependent, relative, absolute, and elliptical.

Independent Clauses

An independent clause functions and looks like a complete sentence.

Examples:

Marta finished the manuscript.

David edited it.

Two independent clauses can be joined using a coordinator (*and*, *but*, *so*, *for*, *or*, etc.)

Example:

Marta finished the manuscript, and David edited it.

Dependent Clauses

A dependent clause cannot stand on its own. It is joined to an independent clause to modify the sentence. It is also called a subordinate clause.

Example:

If we work hard, we will beat the deadline.

Relative Clauses

A relative clause is a modifier in a noun phrase. It functions as an adjectival phrase, but it uses a complete subject-predicate idea to modify the headword inside the noun phrase.

Examples:

The author who won last year's award emailed me.

The manuscript sitting on Marta's desk is ready.

Absolute Clauses

An absolute clause is a stylistic element of a sentence that modifies the subject or the whole sentence.

Examples:

Marta edited, her pen moving across the paper.

Writing finished, the author submitted his work.

Elliptical Clauses

An elliptical clause is an adverbial modifier that implies a subject while modifying the verb of the sentence.

Examples:

While reading the book, the team enjoyed donuts.

When stripped of adverbs, the document flows.

Paragraph Structures

Paragraph structures are writing mechanics that help writers organize their sentences and form a coherent piece of writing. A standard paragraph should include basic structures like a topic sentence and a conclusion. The body or bulk of the paragraph is where writers organize supporting or relevant information. How a writer organizes their paragraph will depend on several factors like the topic, the audience, and the document's purpose.

Topic Sentences

A topic sentence introduces a subject at the beginning of a paragraph. It tells the reader what the section is going to discuss. There are several different kinds of topic sentences, also referred to as introduction sentences. You can begin a paragraph with a general topic, a specific topic, or a question, to name a few. A good topic sentence will draw the reader in—a technique called a hook—and encourage them to keep reading.

General-to-Specific

The general to specific paragraph structure begins with a topic sentence that introduces the paragraph's overarching subject. As the paragraph progresses, each sentence introduces more details about the main topic. This paragraph style is one of the most common. It is designed for documents like this style guide, where the reader is more likely to skim the pages looking for a specific topic. They read the first sentence—maybe two—and move on to the next paragraph if they do not think the section contains what they need.

Specific-to-General

A specific-to-general paragraph begins with small, supporting details about a subject. As the paragraph progresses, the subject expands to encompass larger topics with greater implications. Persuasive writing uses this style most often. For example, a persuasive essay written for the Department of Education might begin with a small subject—an inner-city teacher using her own money to buy supplies for her classroom—then transition into the larger topic—the problems with the public school system.

Question-and-Answer

A question-and-answer paragraph presents the reader with a question at the beginning of the paragraph. The author spends the rest of the section answering that question. The question is usually hypothetical; its purpose is

to get the reader to think about the subject but not answer directly. The writer can also use the question-and-answer technique to introduce a new topic. Asking a question is generally less formal, and the writing feels more personable to the reader. It is an excellent way to engage with your audience.

Conclusion Sentences

Conclusion sentences, as the name implies, finish a paragraph. They are usually the last sentence in the section. The conclusion sentence summarizes the main points cover in the previous paragraph.

Rhetorical Structures and Tools

Rhetorical grammar tools are writing techniques that help writers present information. How a writer chooses a tool depends on the purpose of the document. For example, if they are writing an educational presentation, the writer might use definitions and descriptions to introduce new terms or ideas. If it is a persuasive essay, the writer might use comparison and contrast to convince the audience to think a certain way about the topic.

Definition, Description, & Narration

A definition is one of the most common rhetorical grammar tools. It describes or explains the key features of a subject or an unfamiliar term. In

technical writing, this is especially important for defining new technology and ideas. Definitions are usually short—1 or 2 sentences.

A description is an elaborate definition. A description communicates the unique features of the subject: color, shape, size, purpose. It demonstrates movement, function, sight, sound, and other sensory observations.

A narration is a description of an event, usually in chronological order. Narration tells a story in fiction or recalls history in nonfiction. In technical writing, a narration can describe a step-by-step procedure.

Comparison, Contrast, & Analogy

A comparison demonstrates how two or more subjects are similar. Comparisons use connecting words like *like*, *similar*, *resemble*, *same as*, *also*, and *too*.

A contrast shows how two or more subjects are different or how one thing is better or worse than another. Contrasts use words like *unlike*, *as opposed to*, *different from*, and *whereas*.

An analogy is similar to a comparison. It juxtaposes two or more subjects, using one object to explain or describe the other, for example, explaining an atom's anatomy by comparing it to a solar system.

Enumeration & Classification

An enumeration is a numeric organization system within paragraphs and documents. An enumeration introduces a new subject or idea, usually at the start of a sentence: *firstly, secondly, finally*. They are also transitions that signal a change or the next step in a procedural. They suggest chronological order or a sequence of events.

Classification is both a comparison technique and an organization tool. Similar subjects are organized in a list either in a paragraph or in bullet points. For example, comparison, contrast, and analogy are classified or categorized as rhetorical writing tools.

Cause-and-Effect

Cause-and-effect is similar to enumeration. It demonstrates, usually chronologically, how one action or subject is affected by the actions or presence of another subject. In technical writing, cause-and-effect is used to describe manufacturing processes like how lithium becomes a battery through a series of activities that affect the raw materials. Words like *therefore*, *consequently*, *because*, and *as a result* signify a cause-and-effect relationship between the subjects.

Documentation and Citation

MLA Format

MLA format is one of the most common formats you will use in college. It is often a requirement in Language Arts and Humanities courses. MLA style has been modified over time to accommodate resources found on online platforms and other technological media.

MLA is an abbreviation for Modern Language Association, an association of instructors and scholars in language and literature. The *MLA Handbook* establishes standards and guidelines for writers and editors to follow for academic or scholarly writing. This guide also provides a framework for citing sources at the end of your paper. While most MLA principles focus on structure and organization, other guidelines increase readability and create uniformity.

Basic Guidelines

Format is one of the first elements of an MLA style document. MLA papers are entirely double-spaced. While no specific font is required, Times New Roman is recommended. Choose a readable font and use 12-point font size, even for titles and citations. Indent the first word of each paragraph half an inch. Leave one space after each period or punctuation mark.

Page Layout

Set page margins to 1 inch on all sides. The header of your first page should include your name, your instructor's name, the course title, and the date, each on separate lines. Do not make a title page unless specifically directed to. The running head of a document appears on every single page. In an MLA document, this should include the author's last name followed by the page number, positioned in the top right of every page. The running head should be positioned half an inch from the top of the page. Applications like Microsoft Words and Google Docs will automatically format this for you.

Bibliographic Information

Citations are necessary to properly credit the work of others and avoid plagiarism. Any work that is not yours must be documented according to MLA guidelines.

You should always document:

- Direct quotations from a text
- Paraphrases, summaries, and shared ideas from another text
- Any borrowed material from another source
- Information that is otherwise not regarded as common knowledge

In-text citations are required when referencing any material described above. In-text citations, also known as parenthetical citations, are written in parenthesis after referencing a work. At the end of the sentence describing

your cited material, include the author's name and the page of the text you acquired the information from (do not include the word *page* in the citation).

Quotation with parenthetical citation

There is a clear opposition between native land and European influence in *Heart of Darkness*, otherwise examined as an "antagonism of town and country" in *The German Ideology* (Marx 731).

Quotation with attributive tag

The novella explores Marxist ideology as Marlow himself witnesses the hierarchical structure established within Europe's colonization of Africa. Karl Marx speaks of an "antagonism of town and country" in *The German Ideology*. In Marlow's journey, the jungles of Congo represent the "country" Marx refers to (731).

Paraphrase with parenthetical citation

It is briefly described in the *German Ideology* that rural life and city life are an antithesis to one another (Marx 731). They are opposing forces that clash in *Heart of Darkness*, reinforcing one of the novella's driving themes.

Paraphrase with attributive tag

> In Heart of Darkness, the wilderness of Africa acts as the countryside Marx refers to, otherwise known as unconquered land through the eyes of European colonists (731).

Block Quotations

A direct quotation from another text that is four lines or longer must be formatted as a block quotation. To format a block quotation, indent the entire quotation half an inch from the left margin and *do not* include quotation marks. Place the parenthetical citation after the period that closes the block quotation.

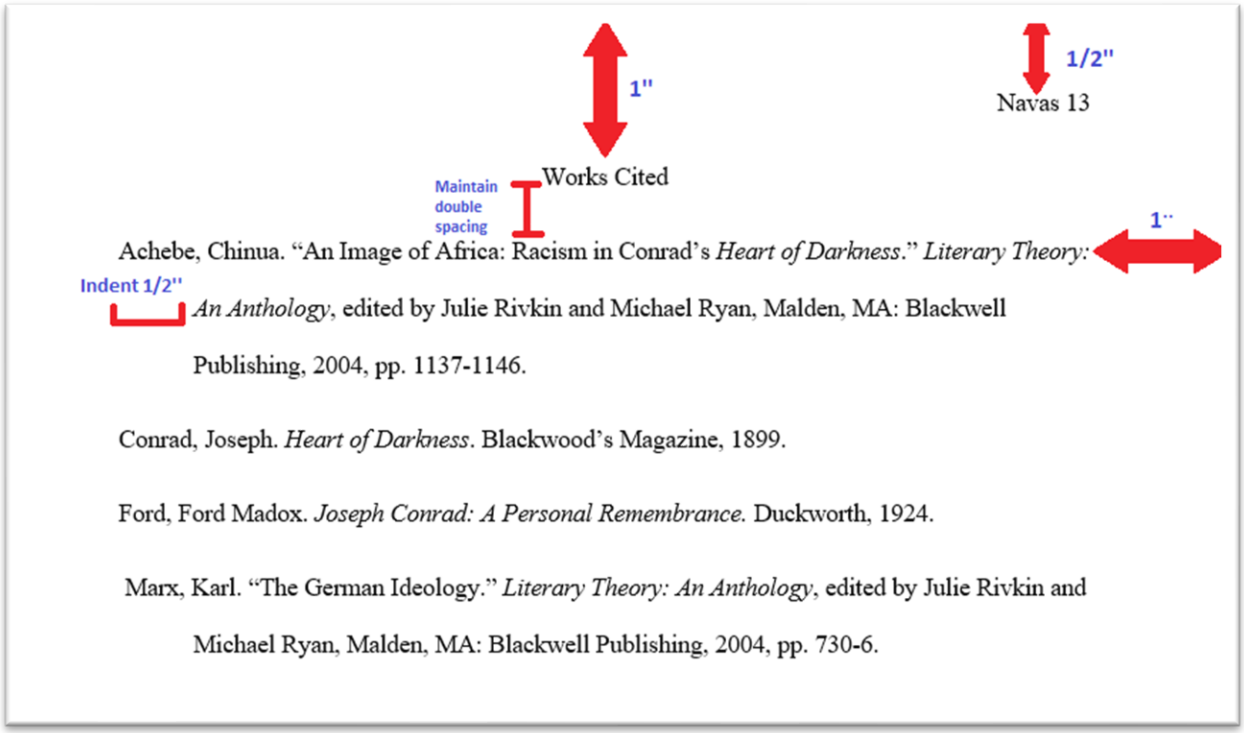
Example:

Even as the "ruling class," Mr. Kurtz himself becomes corrupt in his expedition for ivory. Marlow exposes Mr. Kurtz's desire to take everything as his own:

> You should have heard him say, 'My ivory.' Oh, yes, I heard him. 'My Intended, my ivory, my station, my river, my—' everything belonged to him. It made me hold my breath in expectation of hearing the wilderness burst into a prodigious peal of laughter that would shake the fixed stars in their places. Everything belonged to him— but that was a trifle. The thing was to know what he belonged to, how many powers of darkness claimed him for their own. (Conrad 80)

The Works Cited page is an alphabetical list of all sources referenced in your work. It is required at the very end of your paper on a separate page. If one citation continues onto a second line, that line must be indented half an inch. While citations vary depending on the medium the piece is from, or what form in which the information is presented, they all follow a similar structure: Include the author's name (last name, first name), the title of the work, and the container. The container includes information about where the source can be found (in print or online) and other details such as the publisher and the date in which the work was published. Figure 10.1 shows a sample of the Works Cited for a previous essay about *Heart of Darkness* and different literary themes that are observed in Joseph Conrad's novella.

Figure 10.1 *Top of a Works Cited page*



APA Format

In college, you will most likely learn many formats for documentation. APA is often used in courses related to Social Sciences, History and Psychology. APA is an abbreviation for American Psychological Association. It is important to evaluate what type of source you are working with before citing any of your sources when following APA guidelines.

The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* provides direct instructions for structuring a paper according to their guidelines.

The Basics

Like MLA format, leave margins of one inch on each side of the page. The line spacing for the entire text (including headings, quotations, and references) will also be double spaced. Indent the beginning of each paragraph half an inch. One key difference between MLA and APA papers is that a cover page is required for an APA paper, and sometimes an abstract.

On the title page, include the title of the paper, the author's name, and the affiliated institution on separate lines in the center of the page. The running head is a shortened version of your paper's title and should not exceed 50 characters. If required, left-align the text, and begin with the words *Running head*, followed by a colon and the short version of the title. The title should be no more than fifty characters long.

An abstract (if requested) should immediately follow the cover page, with the word *Abstract* centered on the first line of the page. An abstract is about a paragraph long, or 150-250 words. It is a brief summary of the major findings covered in your work. Choose a standard, readable font. Font size can range from 10pt to 12pt. Keep the size consistent throughout the paper. The basic format for in-text citations includes the author's name, publication year, and page number(s).

Citations

The basic format for in-text citations includes the author's name, publication year, and page number. However, a page number is not necessary if you are not quoting directly from the text. Use the abbreviation "p." for one page and "pp." for multiple pages when citing a quote. Here are some examples of APA in-text citations:

Borrowing Directly from Another Work

Marlow makes it quite obvious that he deeply admires and respects the white man, for he "took him for a sort of vision" and continues to glorify his individualism (Conrad, 1902, p. 26).

Referring to Another Work

Kurtz is fixated on retaining power in favor of capitalistic profit, in turn, using the working class below him to fulfill his capitalistic interests (Marx, 1932).

There are several ways to cite a source within your writing. Incorporating a short quotation in the text allows you to introduce the author as a signal phrase, or a short introduction phrase, and follow their name with the publication date in parenthesis. The closing parenthetical citation would only require the page number you obtained the quote from.

> Example: According to Chinua Achebe (2004), Africa is set as the "antithesis of Europe" in *Heart of Darkness* (p. 1138).

Long quotations (four or more lines) are formatted as a block quotation indented half an inch below the text. Remember to add the citation after the closing punctuation mark. Refer to the example below to properly format a block quotation in APA style:

Conrad (1902) vividly describes the slaves at work:

> Six black men advanced in a file, toiling up the path. They walked erect and slow, balancing small baskets full of earth on their heads, and the clink kept time with their footsteps. Black rags were wound round their loins, and the short ends behind waggled to and fro like tails. (p. 23)

References

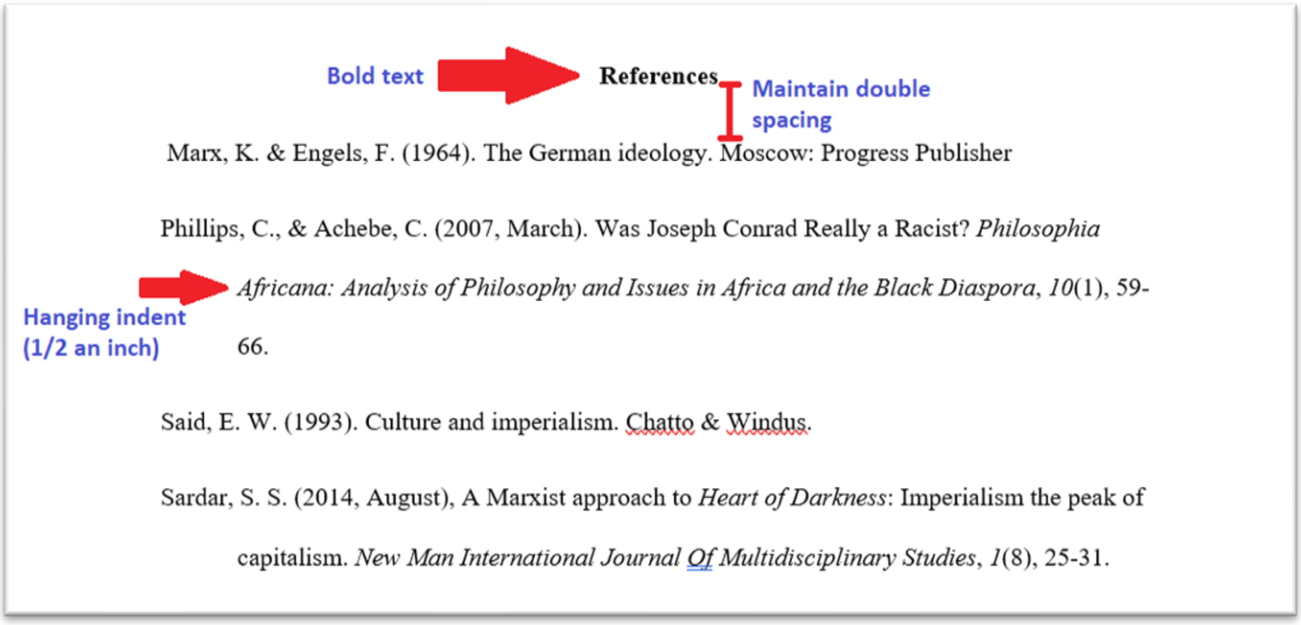
Instead of a Works Cited section, APA documents use a reference list at the end of the paper. Label the list "References" on a new page separate from the body text. Bold and center the title on the top of the page. Include every source you used in your paper on the list, as well as any additional references you used for background research that you did not explicitly write into the text. Format every line after the first line of a source with a hanging indent, half an inch from the left margin. Each reference begins with the author's last name, followed by the initial of their first name (and middle name if they have one). Write the year of publication in parenthesis right after the name. The full title is italicized after the date. There should always be a period after each piece of information. Include the location (the edition, publisher) of the source after the title. If there is a link available, paste the link after the words "Retrieved from." If you are using a source that can only be accessed online, you will want to provide the link.

Here is an example of a standard APA reference:

Pratchett, T., & Gaiman, N. (1991). *Good Omens: The nice and accurate prophecies of Agnes Nutter*, Witch. London: Corgi Books.

Notice that when there is more than one author, a comma is placed between each of their names, and an ampersand (the "&" symbol) separates the final author's name. When there are eight or more authors, list the first six, add an ellipsis, and list the last author. Note that not all words are capitalized in the title. For the title (and the subtitle), you only need to capitalize the first word—but keep proper nouns (names, places) capitalized. Below is a sample of a reference list. The second reference cites an article in a magazine. Note that the periodical title is italicized, and the volume and issue numbers are included. The source ends with the page numbers (using "p." or "pp." is not required).

Figure 10.2 *Top of a References page*



Chicago Style

The Chicago Manual of Style is used for professional writing work or historical research. This documentation style uses footnotes because they are effective for citing evidence and sources throughout the text. Chicago documentation has two varieties. Researchers can choose to format their references in the "Notes and Bibliography" style or to use the "Author-Date" system.

You may have heard of Turabian style, a spin-off of Chicago style developed by an educator named Kate Turabian. There are a few differences between the two; the Turabian style focuses more on design and structure. Refer to the 6th edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* to get specific guidelines on how to format your information in a Chicago style document. In most cases, Chicago style is used for published professional work and research.

Two Styles

The Notes and Bibliography style is the traditional format that utilizes footnotes and endnotes that direct readers to the original source. A footnote is a comment or reference found at the bottom of a page. If necessary, this style may also include a Bibliography at the end of the document. The Author-Date System is a good alternative for those who prefer to use in-text citations. The parenthetical citation—similar to the MLA and APA style—tells the reader to see the list at the end of the document for full citations.

General Formatting

The Chicago Manual of Style does not provide many guidelines for page formatting. Considering that Chicago documentation is publicized more often, specific formatting is the publisher’s discretion. Authors must follow the publisher's rules and style guides while keeping some general guidelines in mind. Like most other formats, the body text of the document needs to be double-spaced. This excludes block quotations, table titles, list appendices, footnotes/endnotes, front matter like the table of contents, and references—these should all be single-spaced. While the content of a Bibliography is single-spaced, keep each separate list item double-spaced. The margins of your document should be at least one (1) inch on each side. In some publishing houses, the left margin is slightly larger.

As most formats suggest, use a readable font. Times New Roman and Arial are often recommended. Times New Roman is more common in professional documents and research papers—make sure that the font is at least 12pt if you choose to use it.

Use regular numerical values for your page numbers. Front matter such as your title page or table of contents should use lowercase roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.).

Writing a Chicago style document does not require a cover page. If specifically requested to include one, center-align the title and double-space the text. The title should appear about one-third of the way down the first

page. Include any additional information (this could be your name, a course title, the date) about two-thirds down the page. Separate each piece of information on a new line. Do not include a page number on the title page. The cover page is included in the page count, so the second page of your paper should start with the number two. Any visuals included in your paper should be placed as close as possible to their relevant text.

Figure 10.3 *Sample Chicago-style Cover Page*

Content

Headings

Chicago style allows but does not require headings. Turabian style offers five different ways to format your headings. While the *Chicago Manual of Style* does not give any formal rules, the text recommends that writers use the following guidelines:

- Use headline-style (capitalizing all major words)
- Begin subheadings on a new line
- Distinguish headings by changing the font size
- Maintain consistent typographical features (font size, parallel structure, capitalization)
- Differentiate the presence of subheads by changing its type style (by bolding or italicizing the font) and by altering its placement on the page (flush left or center the subheading)
- Ensure that each hierarchy level is consistent and logical
- Use no more than three levels of hierarchy
- Avoid ending subheadings with periods

Block Quotations

Block quotes in a Chicago document are necessary for quotations that are five lines or longer. Unlike the rest of your Chicago paper, the block quote will not be double spaced. Omit quotation marks and indent half an inch on a separate line below the body text.

Example:

Shigeru Miyamoto discusses the Switch's success after the console reached its third anniversary:

> The Switch released with good timing in this age where people are walking around and using devices like smartphones. And yet, they get loaded up with a lot of data. So for this reason, we thought it should be relatively easy for a single console with a single technological architecture to succeed, given the situation. (Dino 2020)

In-text Citations and Notes

Remember that citations appear as footnotes or endnotes in the Notes and Bibliography style.

Bibliographic Information

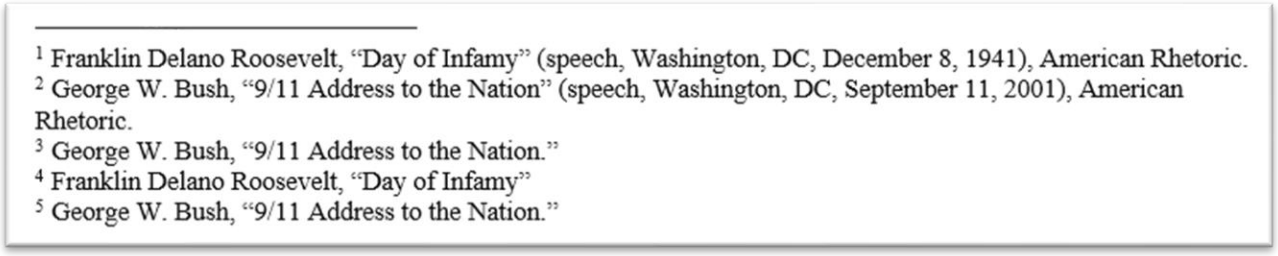
Citing Sources

Remember that the Notes and Bibliography style utilizes footnotes and endnotes to cite sources in the text. Use superscript numbers to mark citations in the text.

Format the superscript after the ending punctuation of the sentence that contains the source material. Number the citations sequentially throughout the text.

To format a footnote, indent the first line of each note half an inch and begin with a number and a period. Add a space after the period and enter the note—this will include the author's name, the title of the work, the city of publication and the publisher, the year, and the page number(s). After providing the full information for a work you have already cited, you only need to include a shortened version of the footnote. Additional references to the work only need to include the author's name, a comma, a short version of the title, a comma, and the page number.

Figure 10.4 *Sample of Footnotes*



[1] Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "Day of Infamy" (speech, Washington, DC, December 8, 1941), American Rhetoric.
[2] George W. Bush, "9/11 Address to the Nation" (speech, Washington, DC, September 11, 2001), American Rhetoric.
[3] George W. Bush, "9/11 Address to the Nation."
[4] Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "Day of Infamy"
[5] George W. Bush, "9/11 Address to the Nation."

The 17th edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* eliminates the use of the Latin abbreviation *Ibid*. Using *ibid* can accidentally lead to citing the wrong source or confuse readers who are unfamiliar with the abbreviation.

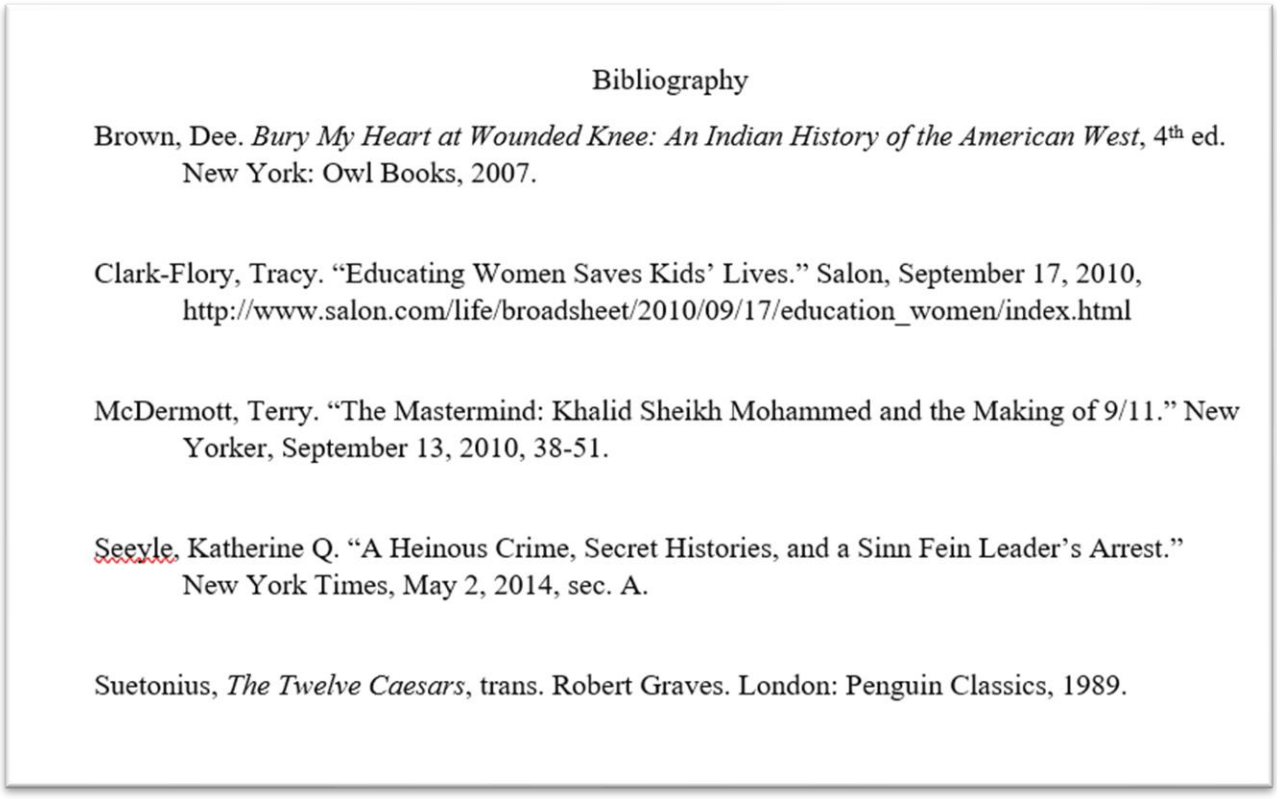
The author-date style uses in-text citations. In parentheses, the citations usually contain the author's name, the year of publication, and the pages being referenced.

> Example: In his lecture, Achebe accuses the young writer of painting African landscapes in a negative light (Chinua Achebe 2004, 1138).

Bibliography

If writing a *Chicago* document that follows the Notes and Bibliography style, begin your list of sources after the main text and any endnotes. Center the title *Bibliography* on the top of the page. For a bibliographic entry, include the information from the first footnote of the source but omit page numbers. List the author's last name and first name (separated by a comma) and separate the remaining elements with periods instead of commas. Single space your sources and list them alphabetically. Italicize titles of books and periodicals; shorter works can be enclosed in quotation marks. Leave a blank line between entries. Indent the second line of every source by half an inch.

Figure 10.5 *Sample Bibliography Page*



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McDermott, Terry. "The Mastermind: Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and the Making of 9/11." New Yorker, September 13, 2010, 38-51.

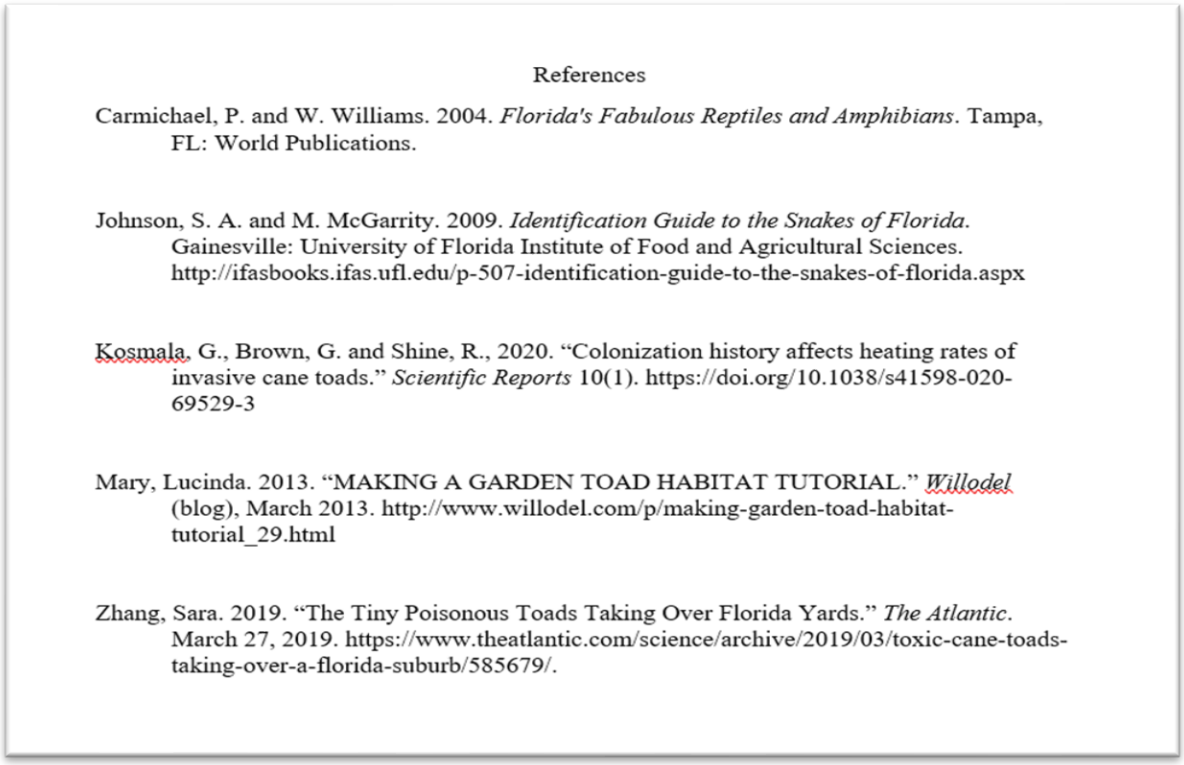
Seeyle, Katherine Q. "A Heinous Crime, Secret Histories, and a Sinn Fein Leader's Arrest." New York Times, May 2, 2014, sec. A.

Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*, trans. Robert Graves. London: Penguin Classics, 1989.

References

A reference list is used for Author-Date citations. Reference lists must be included at the end of your paper, fully citing any sources used throughout the work. The reference list follows the same format as the Bibliography for the other style—the text is single-spaced, and you must add a line between each source. Organize your entries alphabetically. The second line of longer references also require a hanging indent of half an inch. Page numbering continues for both the Bibliography and Reference List. The 17th edition of the C*hicago Manual of Style* advises against using 3 em-dashes to cite multiple works by the same author. Simply rewrite the author's name for repeated sources in your citation list.

Figure 10.6 *Sample References Sheet*



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Locating Reference Information

As a writer, it is important to understand and break down different sources you are working with. You may gather information from interviews, surveys, print articles, online articles, magazines, or scholarly websites. When you locate a source, make sure to differentiate between primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources are raw information directly taken from books, photographs, pieces of art, films, or your own field research. Primary sources provide firsthand knowledge. Secondary sources report or analyze the research of others, discussing original information obtained from another source. Distinguishing between these two will help you understand what elements you need to include in a list of sources.

This coincides with the first step of documentation: evaluate your sources. It is easy to locate information quickly through search engines and databases. It may seem easier to pick the first results you see, but how do you know that these sources are trustworthy? Relevance and credibility are two significant criteria to consider when evaluating a source. Most universities offer students access to databases maintained by the institution. Library databases, scholarly journals, published books, or government documents are the safest forms of research in terms of credibility. Learn as much as you can about a source to evaluate its credibility properly. Can you identify the author? Can you locate the date of publication? Is the publisher reliable? What are the author’s credentials and qualifications that enable them to speak knowledgeably about the topic?

After evaluating a source for its relevance and credibility, collect the information you will use to create a citation. Key source elements to look for include:

1. The author
2. The title of the source
3. The title of the container
4. Other contributors
5. Version/Edition
6. Number
7. Publisher
8. Publication Date
9. Location

Use this list as a guide to gather as much information as you can.

The purpose of a citation is to credit the author of a work from which you have borrowed ideas. Citations also guide your readers to the source that contains the borrowed material.

Lastly, organize the information according to the document format you are writing. Your citations should include enough information so that readers can quickly understand the type of source and locate the source themselves.

Avoiding Plagiarism

It is essential for writers to know the difference between quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing. Quoting takes words directly from a text or audio source. Paraphrasing is a restatement of someone else's words into your own. Summarizing focuses on the main ideas of another source. It is important to highlight the originality of your own ideas to distinguish it from the sources you are using. Use other works as support for your own ideas. Rather than copying ideas, you will be adding to them by providing your own insight. Remember to analyze and evaluate different sources before choosing them. When in doubt, cite your sources.

Accessibility

Introduction

Accessibility is a content creation principle. Proper execution ensures that anyone who wishes to consume content can do so regardless of physical, cognitive, or other limitations. Most discussions about accessibility center around web content, but many web accessibility concepts can translate to other media. Print, audio, and video are important means of content delivery on and off the web. Relaying information by touch is becoming increasingly important as well, from Braille to haptic communication.

Once you realize how many ways there are to consume content, the idea of accessible content itself can seem overwhelming. Do you need to make sure every document you create can be perfectly translated into every one of them? The answer depends on who will be consuming your content. When deciding how to present content, writers should be aware of their audience's abilities. Always plan your content according to the abilities of your readers.

What does this mean for students, then? As any university student knows, most documents they create are papers, dissertations, and similar texts. With few exceptions, these documents are printed out on 8.5 by 11-inch white paper with black text in 12-point font. This is standard for academia around the world. Why is the standard problematic? The answer is that these de facto presentational standards are not an effective way for everyone to consume content. For example, could a professor or classmate who was

visually impaired consume content presented in the de facto standard way? Effective technical communication reaches every demographic in its potential audience, not just those in the majority.

Documents in the workplace always have a variety of readers, so accessibility is even more important there. While academic documents are usually for students and their professors, professional documents have even more readers. Business clients, the public, adults, children, and people from cultures worldwide are all potential workplace document readers.

Anyone with any form of physical or cognitive difficulty can benefit from accessible content. This is not limited to people with visible disabilities, either. Accessible content also benefits able-bodied people with temporary difficulties. How many times have you gotten home from a difficult day and just wanted to read a book, but your eyes were tired? Most sighted people have experienced words swimming in front of their eyes because they are too hard to read. If the content is accessible via large font or audio formats, that frustration can be a thing of the past. Perhaps you were watching one of your favorite TV shows, and someone said something you could not hear. Sometimes, even if you turn up the volume and rewind the scene, you cannot make it out. Subtitles can help you figure out what you missed, whether you can hear the show or not. If you think back, you can almost certainly think of a time when accessible content made your life easier. Although there will certainly be many differences between your document’s potential consumers, accessibility is not as complicated as it might seem.

This chapter covers many accessibility concepts that are universal to all media, as well as some concepts that are specific to media types. Students, professionals, and casual content creators can all use these guidelines to help their content reach the people who need it.

Principles of Accessible Text

Plain Language

Plain language in content occurs when "wording, structure, and design are so clear that the intended readers can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information" (Center for Plain Language, 2020). Present important information in simple terms and leave out any details that could distract your readers. Sentences should be logical and straightforward. Try to base every sentence around a single idea. Do not add more than one idea to a sentence unless there is no other way to clearly express those ideas. Writers should prioritize the clarity of their content and structure their sentences accordingly. A series of many short sentences with more words may be clearer than a long sentence with many words. Different writing styles recommend different ideal sentence lengths, but the number of words is less important than the singular idea a sentence expresses.

It is common to see recommendations for, or restrictions on, the number of sentences allowed in paragraphs (Purdue Writing Lab, 2020). This can happen in both academic and professional settings. These recommendations

aim to create plain language, but they sometimes have the opposite effect. Writers sometimes feel that the only way to minimize the number of sentences is to make each sentence long and complicated. When this happens, plain language falters. The more ideas a sentence contains, the harder it is to keep track of ideas as you read. This problem is common in the workplace, especially in technical or scientific writing. You can see this with almost any professional journal article where single sentences contain many ideas connected with commas. Long sentences like this are also common in web content.

Short, simple sentences are especially important for people who cannot see your content on a page. This includes people who use screen readers, people who listen to audiobooks, and people who are watching videos. Tiny distractions can make your audience lose their place or train of thought, but simple sentences can help them reorient themselves.

Transforming sentences into plain language makes it easier for readers to understand them. The following example is from the Accessible Instructional Materials Center of Virginia (2020). Its rewrite into plain language clarifies confusing sentence structure and provides a clear distinction between ideas.

Example Without Plain Language:

> NIMAS is the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard. NIMAS means the standard established by the Secretary of Education

to be used in the preparation of electronic files suitable and used solely for efficient conversion into specialized formats.

Example Using Plain Language:

The National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) was established by the Secretary of Education. NIMAS is used to prepare electronic files that can be converted into specialized formats.

Readability and Vocabulary

Readability statistics give writers a clear estimate of how easy their writing is to read and understand. Even when using the guidelines for plain language discussed earlier, writers can create surprisingly complex texts without realizing it. Richard Redfearn, director of scientific writing at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, explains this concept well: "Often, [truly praiseworthy content] falls flat because the text is difficult to read." Difficult text is inaccessible text. The Flesch Reading Ease and Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level are two common readability metrics. They both use the average sentence length and the average number of syllables in a word to determine how easy a text is to read (Redfearn 1). As the reading ease of a text goes up, the grade level of the text goes down. The ideal reading level in the United States is 8th grade, while the United Kingdom encourages writing for the reading level of age nine (Center for Plain Language, 2020).
This variability in reading level highlights another consideration between readability and accessibility. Different countries, companies, and

organizations have different standards about what they consider most accessible. Redfearn acknowledges this in his discussion of readability metrics, stating that "[t]hese measurements are sometimes not very useful for scientific writing." However, Redfearn also assumes that readers' scientific knowledge can make up for deficits in clarity exposed by readability metrics. This is not always the case, and complex vocabulary or technical terms may not be the only reason a reading metric is low. Thus, readability metrics are useful as a starting point, but they should not be the only indicator for text accessibility. This is proven through the online peer-reviewed journal *Frontiers in Young Minds*, which fosters collaboration between scientists and children. *Frontiers in Young Minds* states that "distinguished scientists are invited to write about their cutting-edge discoveries in a language that is accessible for young readers." They foster accessibility by focusing on simple, inclusive language, and their lower readability metrics are a byproduct of this approach.

It is also important to understand how readability metrics can be misleading for simple sentences. Although they can be useful in many types of writing, highly technical writing may have low readability scores no matter how simple it is. As mentioned previously, complex language and complex vocabulary can both impact readability. It is possible to do something about complex language, but it is not always possible to do something about complex vocabulary. In these cases, writers should be more concerned with making sure complex vocabulary is well-defined. Clear and precise definitions for complex vocabulary can often compensate for undesirable

scores in readability metrics. Writers should also be aware that "complex vocabulary," in terms of readability metrics, may include common words containing many syllables, like *conversation*.

The following example shows the usefulness and limitations of readability metrics. The sentence with complex language contains many ideas in a complex sentence structure. This results in a reading level that could easily be understood only by those who have completed many years of higher education. The rewritten paragraph with simpler language splits the longer sentence into 5 shorter sentences logically connected by their ideas. The reading level is still higher than the ideal, but this is not because of complex sentence structure or length. Instead, it is due to required words that have many syllables, such as *engineering*, *electronic*, and *technologies*.

Example with Complex Language and Low Readability Score:

> Electrical engineering is a complex topic, involving knowledge of electronic components, lots of schooling, and years of real-world experience, including continued learning as standards and technologies change over time. (30 words, 1 sentence, grade level over 19)

Example with Simple Language and High Readability Score:

> Electrical engineering is a complex topic. Knowledge of electronics concepts requires years of schooling. Real-world experience is essential to success. Standards and technologies change over time. This means that continued learning is necessary. (34 words, 5 sentences, grade level under 10)

Typography

The standard in print typography for years has been Times New Roman font at a size of 12pts. As knowledge of accessibility has grown, however, other fonts now exist that could be much easier for people to read. The problem with Times New Roman is that it is a serif font. That means the font has little lines, or serifs, on the ends of some of its letters. These tiny visual flourishes can make it challenging to read the text, especially if the text is small. Modern typography in print and on the web is best done with a sans-serif font, as described by Janice Redish, a prominent content specialist. The sans-serif font used in this style guide is called Verdana. It was initially designed for computer screens but has also found a home in print documents due to its easy legibility. Different fonts take up different amounts of space in print and on-screen, even if they are technically the same point size. Redish advocates for legibility over flair in both print and web formats, emphasizing sans-serif fonts for low-vision readers in print and on the web.

Since legibility is a primary concern in typography, small changes to fonts can determine how easy they are to read. Fancy or cursive fonts are not useful for accessibility purposes because their decorative features can make characters unclear. Small flourishes in fonts can make it dramatically more difficult for people to read them. Conversely, small changes to established fonts can make them much easier to read. An example of this is the Dyslexie font, created specifically for people with dyslexia (Dyslexie Font B.V., 2020). The rationale behind the font is that the lower parts of the glyphs are thicker, which helps people with dyslexia keep letters in their proper places as they read. Another font specifically designed for people with dyslexia is Lexie Readable (K-Type, 2020). Accessible fonts like these focus on increasing distinctions between similar characters, such as between a lowercase *b* and a lowercase *d*. Unfortunately, accessible fonts can have trouble gaining traction in the mainstream since they sometimes look significantly different than standard fonts most readers are used to.

Creating documents with larger font sizes is a major step toward accessible typography. The American Council for the Blind recommends 18-point font for people with low vision (Sutton, 2002, p. 16) but implicitly advocates for a range between 14 and 18pts. Sutton acknowledges that many federal regulations in the United States consider 14-point font to be acceptable. However, she explicitly points out that a font size larger than 14pts increases a document's potential audience. The de facto standard on the web is smaller at 12pts (Scacca, 2018) since no guideline laws currently exist. Many websites focused on accessibility use larger default font sizes,

especially when viewed on mobile devices. For example, the web accessibility organization Web Accessibility in Mind acknowledges the 12-point standard but uses a font size of nearly 14pts (WebAIM, 2020a). This echoes the minimum font size suggested by the American Council for the Blind for print documents. Large text is useful in all media, not just print.

Example of Standard Font Size:

This is a 12-point font, readable for most but not large enough for many.

Example of Minimum Recommended Size:

This is a 14-point font, a minimum accessible size according to Sutton.

Example of Median Accessible Print Size:

This is a 16-point font, which is accessible but not considered large print.

Example of Large Print:

This is an 18-point font: very accessible but it takes up more space.

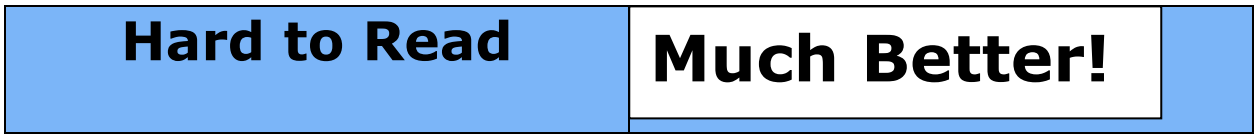
Color Contrast

Color contrast is an issue most often discussed in web accessibility, but it also has implications for print accessibility. Regardless of the medium, writers should make sure that their text stands out well enough from its background to be easily read. This is especially important for readers who are partially or fully colorblind and rely on contrast alone. Writers can apply modern web design contrast rules to achieve acceptable contrast ratios for text in their documents. Dark text on a light background is the most reasonable format in terms of contrast (WebAIM, 2020b). Dark backgrounds with light text can also have acceptable levels of contrast. Using light or dark backgrounds is a matter of preference; the important thing to consider is the amount of contrast between text and its background. WebAIM has a contrast checker that helps writers decide whether their color combinations are accessible. Sometimes, the results are surprising, as the following image shows. It makes sense that a pale orange would contrast well with black and that a light gray would not contrast well with white. So, it could be a surprise that light orange against blue does not have high contrast, even though they are complementary colors. Testing color combinations for any document is important; sneaky color combinations like this can cause headaches for readers. Whenever you are in doubt, use the color contrast checker.

Figure 19.1 *Good, Bad, and Less Than Ideal Contrast*

Never use gradients or patterns in text. Whether as the text color itself or as the background, shifting colors can cause contrast problems that could make text almost unreadable. This happens because a pattern or gradient contains contrast inside itself with multiple colors. Readers must identify those colors while trying to determine the shapes and positions of text characters. It is too much information for readers to process at once. They end up lost in colors and shapes rather than the message conveyed by the text. The same thing happens when text is against a background gradient. Unless you change the text color with the gradient, there is no way to keep a high level of contrast throughout the entire gradient. Changing text colors can be distracting and make readers lose their place. Background gradients and patterns, when isolated from the text, are okay if they are not intrusive. In the figure below, the text on the left is difficult to read because the background pattern interferes with the text. The text on the right, isolated from the background pattern, does not have this problem.

Figure 19.2 *Text on a Pattern*



Text with Images and Tables

Images and tables should be accessible just like the text they complement. They can convey important information to readers, and writers should tailor them to everyone in their potential audience. Regions of a document that are more complex than plain text are just as important as the text itself. The American Council of the Blind says that "[i]mages need text descriptions, graphics should be labeled, and tables require careful formatting" (Sutton, 2002, p. 27). This means that writers should always associate text with non-text content consistently. Once you choose a style rule, stick to that rule throughout the document. It does not matter exactly where text descriptions and labels are if they are clearly associated with the object they describe. For example, Sutton does not recommend that table captions always be placed below a table or that text descriptions always be placed before images. Consistency and clarity are more important than specific placement.

If images are decorative, it is not necessary to make them accessible. An image is decorative if it does not convey information and is there only for visual flair or layout. "[I]t is not necessary for a blind person to hear about the existence of all separators or blank space images on a page" (Sutton, 2002, p. 28). Descriptions of these things are unnecessary at best and confusing at worst because they could distract from important information.

Decorative images should not overlap with text and should not make it more difficult to consume information. Avoid images of text whenever possible since problems with resolution and color contrast could make them more difficult to read than the text itself (Yale University, 2020a).

Table formatting is vital for accessibility. They should be used to illustrate data, and not for layout, according to Yale University. Table headers and captions are vital sources of context for the information in a table (Yale University, 2020b). The context of information in a table should always be obvious. As tables become complex, it is easy to lose that context, especially if a reader cannot see the table layout. This means that data tables often benefit from long descriptions of the information they describe. The description can be a simple summary or a linearized list of all the information in the table. Many tables can be expressed in a more accessible way as lists. Table cells should not contain sentences or paragraphs; they should each contain single pieces of information that are easy to interpret.

The rules for tables and images also apply to more complex displays of visual information, like graphs, charts, and diagrams. Writers should always present them in the simplest way possible and pay attention to the way they convey information (Sutton, 2002, p. 14). There are many ways that writers can describe the same visual information, but context can provide clues. For example, a simple flow chart could be converted into text as an ordered list, while a complex flow chart might be better described as an outline. A single sentence might be enough to describe the important elements of a

photograph, but a longer paragraph might be necessary to describe a graph or diagram. No matter how a writer decides to structure their words, an accessible description conveys all the important information contained in visual information. The idiom that "a picture is worth a thousand words" might be literally true with some complex visual information. This truth emphasizes how much a person with a disability might miss if they cannot understand the image without explanatory text.

Figure 19.3 *An Image with an Accessible Description Below*

A view of a hurricane from space. Cloud bands extend far beyond the circular vortex, and the vortex covers a large amount of landmass.

Accessible Text Considerations in Non-Print Media

WAI-ARIA for the Web

Making information accessible on the Internet is a complex process. Web browsers allow readers to experience many content types, including static text, images, and dynamic widgets. Information display on the Internet depends on interactions between computers, peripherals, and people. Accessible information on the Internet must include as many people as possible, regardless of the hardware they use or their ability levels. The World Wide Web Consortium, or W3C, is an international organization that works to establish accessibility standards for the Internet. Their most well-known accessibility project is WAI-ARIA, otherwise known as Web Accessibility Initiative Accessible Rich Internet Applications. WAI-ARIA defines a group of practices, structural markups, and roles that are compatible with assistive technologies (World Wide Web Consortium: WAI-ARIA Initiative, 2017). Web developers integrate these design strategies, markups, and attributes into websites to give assistive technologies context clues about the content displayed through web browsers. The WAI-ARIA specification is massive and far too complex to cover in its entirety within this chapter. When creating content for the Internet, however, writers should be aware of some basic WAI-ARIA concepts.

WAI-ARIA requires a writer to modify the code that displays a website. This code has a name that almost everyone is familiar with: HTML. HTML allows writers and developers to add specific information to code pieces called

attributes (World Wide Web Consortium: WAI-ARIA Initiative, 2017). These attributes tell a web browser or assistive technology what code pieces do and how to interpret them. WAI-ARIA defines three types of specialized attributes: roles, states, and properties. Roles describe what purpose a piece of code serves on a website. These can be a navigation link, a section heading, a list item, or many others. Adding roles into HTML code gives browsers and assistive technologies a sense of a website's structure that they can translate to a user. States describe the condition of a piece of code or an object on a website. These can describe whether a dropdown menu is open, whether a button has been pressed, or whether a piece of text is visible, among other things. States are often dynamically changed when a user interacts with a website. Adding states into HTML code gives browsers and assistive technologies information about a website's condition so they can relay changes to the user as they happen. Properties describe data that is unlikely to change but is essential to a user's understanding of the page. These can be content descriptions formatted for screen readers, connections between components on a website, or information that helps the website work, among other things.

As of this writing, WAI-ARIA is a W3C recommendation rather than a requirement (World Wide Web Consortium: WAI-ARIA Initiative, 2017). This is because the implementation of WAI-ARIA concepts on a website is so variable that it is extremely difficult to run conformance checks in all contexts. Writers should not take this status as an indicator that accessibility can be ignored on websites. Best practices and strategies for accessibility

through WAI-ARIA are constantly evolving. The W3C has made accessibility one of its priorities for the modern Internet. For more details on WAI-ARIA, writers can refer to one of the W3C's excellent tutorials on the subject.

Information on Mobile Devices

A substantial fraction of people access the Internet from mobile devices. Most web accessibility principles apply whether viewing a website on a traditional computer or on a mobile device. The World Wide Web Consortium's Mobile Accessibility Task Force explains this concept well: "While mobile is viewed by some as separate from [desktops and laptops], and thus perhaps requiring new and different accessibility guidance, in reality there is no absolute divide between the categories." The task force continues by saying, however, that "mobile devices do present a mix of accessibility issues that are different from the typical desktop/laptop" (World Wide Web Consortium: Mobile Accessibility Task Force, 2018). This means that mobile devices require a slightly different application of accessibility guidelines than desktops and laptops for Internet viewing.

Web accessibility of all kinds has its basis in four gold standards called POUR principles (World Wide Web Consortium: Mobile Accessibility Task Force, 2018). POUR principles dictate that Internet content should be Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, and Robust. This means that websites should have easily accessible information, be easy to operate, contain easily understandable information, and be functional in many contexts. There are

multiple accessibility considerations for each POUR principle that are specific to mobile devices. A common concern with mobile devices in terms of perceivability is their small screen size. Writers may need to reorganize or eliminate information so key concepts can fit on small screens. In addition, high contrast is particularly important on small screens because people tend to use mobile devices in varied environments. When designing mobile content for operability, writers should make sure that their content can be entirely navigated without using a mouse. People on mobile devices must move between parts of pages quickly, and scrolling is difficult for many people who use mobile devices. Understandable mobile content has a consistent layout, which writers can create by making their content visually and functionally predictable. This includes keeping navigation elements in the same places, making it obvious where content contains links, and making sure navigation and links are easy to access. Robust mobile content presents itself in an unobtrusive way that matches what users expect on mobile devices. This can mean using larger text sizes, ensuring word wrap, so users do not need to scroll horizontally, or making sure text is still legible when zoomed. POUR principles add another layer to web accessibility that puts the user first.

Designing containers for content on the Internet can be challenging. Websites often must look different depending on the screen size they are viewed upon. There are two schools of thought on how to do this: responsive design and adaptive design (Soegaard, 2020). Responsive design embraces the idea that website layouts should transition seamlessly between screen

sizes as users move to different devices or increase window sizes. It shows content that fits the space a browser provides, and the content arranges itself based on the available space. While responsive design can handle any screen size in theory, implementation is often difficult in practice and requires precise knowledge of a website's users. Adaptive design, by contrast, involves creating multiple individualized layouts that fit different screen sizes. The browser selects the most appropriate layout for the screen instead of trying to organize content by the amount of available space. One of these layouts can be a standalone mobile design, if necessary. Text content can be presented equally well with either of these strategies, but other media may be more difficult to handle. For example, it is common for images to fill the mobile screen in a responsive design, but an adaptive design may prevent that problem.

Audio and Video

Accessibility of audio is not limited to the Internet, although most discussion of the topic centers around web content. Pure audio content becomes accessible when it is written in plain language (World Wide Web Consortium: WAI-ARIA Initiative, 2020b), which was described earlier in this chapter. Long, complex sentences make audio content difficult to follow, just like what happens with written content. Background noise can also be a problem because it can obscure what is being said on an audio recording. High-quality audio is vital to accessibility; the smallest amount of static or muddled sound can cause great frustrations for people with disabilities. When recording audio, writers should have a script ready, and they should

speak clearly and slowly. Social cues that signal transitions in thoughts and ideas are less detectable in recordings. Pausing between important ideas and giving listeners time to process them greatly aids in understanding. This is especially important when providing instructions in an audio format. When providing instructions, try to explain as many sensory characteristics as possible so people with different abilities can understand. For example, an instruction to connect a blue wire is useless to someone who is visually impaired. Instead, say that a person should connect a blue wire that also has a specific size connector on the end. Provide as much information as possible to help listeners distinguish between objects.

Accessible video starts with accessible audio (World Wide Web Consortium: WAI-ARIA Initiative, 2020a). The two forms of media are tightly linked together. Even if a video is silent, it still requires accessible audio. This means that the video's audio track should strive for the accessibility principles already described, and it should give users a visible translation of that audio. Audio translations can be captions, longer descriptions of what is happening on the screen, or sign language. Captions and subtitles are different words for the same concept: visible text on a screen. Visual translations of a video's audio track should follow the principles of accessible text, particularly appropriate size and color contrast. The reason most captions on television screens are white text on a black background is that the high contrast makes it easy for people to read. Other types of captions can lose their contrast against images on the screen, making them harder to read. Longer descriptions of screen activity include captions but also contain

context required to understand what is happening beyond sight. For example, long descriptions may include people's facial expressions, people's actions, or descriptions of the world around them. At their best, long descriptions turn video into something like an audiobook.

Writers should always provide a written transcript of any audio or video they create (World Wide Web Consortium: WAI-ARIA Initiative, 2020a, 2020b). People with sensory disabilities may have a difficult time processing information in audio or video if it is presented too quickly. Written transcripts allow readers to absorb information in their own time without needing to slow down or pause media. There are two types of transcripts: basic and descriptive. Basic transcripts provide a text version of information needed to understand the content, including speech and non-speech audio information. Descriptive transcripts are more in-depth, providing descriptions of visual information. Deaf-blind people require descriptive transcripts to get the full experience from media, so writers should strive to produce these transcripts whenever possible.

Tactile

Although it is far less common than other media, writers should be aware of how to translate their words into tactile information. Tactile communication benefits people who are blind or deaf-blind. Braille is perhaps the most well-known tactile communication system, and it is more flexible than many realize. Tables and spreadsheets can be translated into braille if their layouts

are conserved (Sutton, 2002, p. 19). Tactile graphics are also possible and are often interspersed with braille text. The creation of braille text and tactile graphics are specialized services, so they almost always require the assistance of professional contractors. Writers can create an electronic file that braille text professionals can translate and bind into a physical document for the appropriate readers (Sutton, 2002, p. 25). These binary files, when placed online, can save the hassle of printing out Braille but keep the information available to visually impaired users. As physical media declines and assistive technology like braille readers for computers increases in popularity, tactile binary files will likely become more important. Writers should always provide these with their work.

Deaf-blind people in the workplace and in academia often feel that other people's attitudes toward them are more limiting than a disability (Arndt, 2011, p. 3). They often struggle to find accessible information and activities because tactile information is lacking. This makes it more difficult for them to succeed through no fault of their own. Providing tactile information for these readers can be challenging because what works for one person may not work for another. Arndt emphasizes that "expressing what they need may be difficult for many young adults who are deaf-blind. It is important that [writers] take some of this burden on themselves, reach out to [them], and work with them to meet their needs." The necessity of this communication also emphasizes one of the most important unspoken truths of accessibility. The best accessibility practices come from empathy and attempting to understand how others experience the world.

This philosophy is perhaps best exemplified by another form of tactile communication called protactile principles. The principles come from “the realization that DeafBlind [sic] people’s intuitions about tactile communication are stronger than the intuitions sighted people have” (Granda and Nuccio, 2018, p. 1). Although protactile principles were developed specifically for American sign language, many concepts can be applied more broadly to tactile communication. For example, the concept of reference space establishes a type of physical contact that refers to a specific person or idea (Granda and Nuccio, 2018, p. 4). In sign language, this refers to a specific type of touch on the body. Translated words could accomplish the same goal by interspersing specific glyphs or tactile images with braille. Protactile principles can express any emotion or create any emphasis that other forms of communication can. Since everyone interprets touch differently, some people with disabilities may find protactile principles the easiest way to understand information.

Glossary

Abbreviation - A shortened word or phrase. E.g.: "app" for application.

Accessibility - A content creation principle that focuses on universal design, making information easy for everyone to access and understand.

Accidental Plagiarism – Forgetting to cite borrowed content; unintentionally writing an identical piece of writing as someone else; writing a similar sentence that conveys the same idea as someone else without realizing it.

Active Voice - Unmarked voice for clauses featuring a transitive verb in the nominative.

Acronym - An abbreviation where each letter is taken from the initial letter of other words, but it is pronounced as one word. E.g.: NASA

Alt Text – Embedded code that allows the screen readers to turn text into sound.

Analog Information – Analog information is content created in analog, or physical form. Examples include paper, business cards and flyers.

Animosity - A strong feeling of hostility or distaste.

Apparatuses – a set of materials or equipment designed for a particular use

Appropriate - Suitable or proper for a given subject or circumstance.

Attitude - Perspective adopted by the author in certain work

Availability – Availability is how available your content is. This includes having content in multiple forms (across device types, Microsoft vs MacIntosh), is available through clickable links that work as intended, and can even refer to flyers and cards or other handheld material.

Block Quotation - A long quotation that is set off from the main body text in a written document.

Body Language - The process of communicating what you are feeling or thinking by the way you place and move your body rather than by words.

Citation – The act of quoting a book, website, magazine, or any other piece of writing that is used for reference when writing.

Code of Conduct – A set of standards developed by an organization or institution which outlines the rules and expectations for those within the organization.

Colon – Used to separate two independent clauses when the second explains or illustrates the first

Color Contrast - The visible distinction between elements and their background or other nearby elements, such as text and its background.

Communication Tools - a set of tools or programs that allow you to communicate efficiently in any dynamic setting.

Concise - A style of communication marked with brief and precise language; a language style that is free of excess elaboration and superfluous detail.

Conclusion – A judgment or decision reached by reasoning.

Confidence - The feeling or belief that one can rely on someone or something

Conflict Resolution - The informal or formal process that two or more parties use to find a peaceful solution to their dispute.

Contrast - the difference in luminance or color that makes an object distinguishable.

Copyright - A type of intellectual property that gives its owner the exclusive right to make copies of a creative work, usually for a limited time.

Credibility - The quality of being trusted or being believable.

Credible Source - A source that is unbiased and supported with facts or evidence.

Culture - The arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively

Declarative Sentence - A complete sentence that ends with a period.

Domain Name – The part of a network address that identifies it as belonging to a particular domain.

Digital Information – Digital information is content created in digital form, used on the internet. Digital information can be found using a search engine, image libraries like Getty Images or content on sites like YouTube.

Direct Plagiarism – Blatant use of someone else's work without citing sources.

E-mail (electronic mail) - Messages distributed electronically from one computer user to one or more recipients.

Ethics – The practice of determining what is morally good and bad based on a set of standards set forth by an organization, culture, or other groups.

Ethnocentrism - Evaluation of other cultures according to preconceptions originating in the standards and customs of one's own culture

Excessively – In greater amounts than is necessary

Exclamative Sentence - A complete sentence that exclaims a surprise and ends with an exclamation mark.

Font Size – The size of the font used in a text.

Footnote - Notes placed at the bottom of a page; also called an endnote.

Formal - Respect to the audience suggesting seriousness about the topic.

Gestalt Principles - Gestalt psychology or gestaltism is a school of psychology that emerged in Austria and Germany in the early twentieth century based on work by Max Wertheimer, Wolfgang Köhler, and Kurt Koffka.

Group Norms - A set of informal and formal ground rules that dictate how people interact in a group setting.

Hyphen - A punctuation mark used to join words and to separate syllables of a single word.

Imperative Sentence - A complete sentence that employs an order and ends with an exclamation mark.

Informal - Casual and spontaneous communication when writing in conversation.

Information Literacy – Information Literacy encompasses how content is read. It covers organization and target audience. For example, creating content for doctors may require a more advanced lexicon. Therefore, the content designed for doctors may be 'illiterate' for normal people.

Initialism - An abbreviation consisting of letters that are pronounced individually. E.g.: CPU

Instructions- Detailed information telling how something should be done or assembled.

Intercultural - Occurring between or involving two or more cultures

Intercultural Awareness - The verbal and nonverbal interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds

Interrogative Sentence - A complete sentence that ends with a question mark.

Line Height – The distance between two lines of text.

Line Length – The average number of characters in a line of text.

Mosaic Plagiarism – Paraphrasing a quote without referencing the author and/or using synonymous words and sentence structures. Also includes citing a source while not using quotations.

Negative Space - The space around and between the subject of an image.

Norm - A standard or pattern, especially of social behavior, that is typical or expected of a group.

Object - In a sentence, the object is subject to the actions of the verb; the target or receipt of the action in a sentence.

Oral Rhetoric - The art of using language so as to persuade or influence an audience.

Passive Voice - Grammatical Subject expresses the theme of the main verb.

Patchwriting – Paraphrasing someone else's work but using too much of the original content within the paraphrase.

Paywalled Information – Online resources that can only be accessed if a fee is paid or a subscription is made.

Plagiarism – Using someone else's work and taking credit for it as your own.

Plain Language - Text that is clear enough where readers can easily find and understand the information that they need.

Point Size – Used to measure elements apart from font size.

Predicate - The part of the sentence that contains the action verb; the action being performed by the subject of a sentence.

Presentation - A manner or style of speaking to a group of people in which something is taught or displayed.

Progress Report - A report about how much work has been done on a project.

Proposal - A formal plan or suggestion put forward for consideration or discussion by others.

Punctuation Pauses - Pauses in a sentence or term that use the colon, semi-colon, or comma.

Punctuation - Marks in writing used to separate sentences, place emphasis, and overall clarify the message.

Rational – Based on or in accordance with reason or logic.

Readability Metric - A mathematical calculation that provides an estimate of how easy text is to read, usually by schooling grade level.

Running Head - A header printed at the top of each page in a document; a short version of a paper title.

Salutation – Is a gesture or utterance made as a greeting of another's arrival or departure

Sans Serif – A type of font without serifs.

Self-Regulation – The fact of something such as an organization regulating itself without intervention from external bodies.

Self-Plagiarism – When an author submits work that includes content from a previous assignment or work.

Serif – Small strokes or extensions attached at the end of a larger stroke in certain typefaces.

Signal Phrase - A short phrase that introduces a quote, paraphrase, or summary.

Socrates – An ancient Greek philosopher who is credited as one of the founders of Western philosophy.

Spacing - The spaces used between letters, words, and sentences to properly separate them from each other.

Statistics - Analyzing data for the purpose of having numerical data.

Subject - In grammar, the subject is the focus of the verb; the person or thing performing an action.

Subject-Verb Agreement - When a subject and verb agree in terms of singularity, plurality, tense, and comparison.

Symbol - A symbol is a mark, sign, word, or special character that represents an idea, object, a relationship or connection.

Tactile Communication - Expression of text, images, and other complex concepts in a physical form for people who are visually impaired or deaf-blind.

Teleprompters - A device used to project a speaker's script which is normally always hidden from the camera.

Thesis - A statement or theory that is put forward as a premise to be maintained or proved.

Trademark - A symbol, word, or words legally registered or established by use as representing a company or product.

Typography - The visual elements of a text. Typography includes, but is not limited to, font, spacing, alignment, line breaks, and punctuation.

WAI-ARIA - Web Accessibility Initiative Accessible Rich Internet Applications, a cornerstone of modern web accessibility.

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Leland Dutcher, a Central Florida native, is majoring in Information Technology and Computer Science. He enjoys the outdoors and expects to spend more time outside in the coming months after graduation. He plans to continue freelancing for a career while maximizing his ability to travel and spending as little time as possible doing things he does not enjoy.

Jessica Entwistle is from Shreveport, Louisiana. She is a first-generation graduate with her Bachelors in English Literature from UCF. She is currently obtained her Publishing and Editing Certificate from UCF. Jessica plans on looking for a job in editing and pursuing her dream of working with books. In her free time, she loves reading anything she can get her hands on and teaching her niece to read.

Chris Estevez is a New York-born Dominican student at UCF. He is a junior who will be graduating in the Fall of 2020 with a Bachelor of Arts in Information Technology. After graduation, he plans to find a job in his field where he can use the technical skills he has developed both in and out of school. In his free time, he enjoys going to theme parks with his friends, watching movies, playing video games, and reading thought-provoking books.

Francisco Fonseca Rodriguez is from Miami, Florida. He is currently pursuing a degree in Information Technology. He has a passion for technology, specifically building computers. His interests and hobbies include wrestling, running, and playing video games in his free time.

Steven Freire was born in Hoboken, New Jersey. Steven is a sophomore at the University of Central Florida, where he is majoring in Information Technology. He is currently in the Air Force ROTC program; after graduation, he plans to enlist as an officer in the U.S. Military. In his free time, Steven enjoys playing the ukulele, playing lacrosse, and spending time with friends and family. He recently took up a new hobby, modifying cars with his best friend.

Hela Lily-Rose Holiday is from Tucson, Arizona. She is pursuing a double major in Technical Communication and Writing & Rhetoric. In the future, she plans to obtain her master's degree from Florida State University, write fiction books that make the New York Times Best-sellers lists, and make the world a better place as a high school English teacher.

Jessica Lang is a full-time mom from Central Florida, majoring in Technical Writing. She is pursuing her degree while working full-time and using what she is learning to strengthen her writing skills. She plans to remain at her current job long-term because she enjoys writing client plans and managing the company's written policies. Jessica is devoted to her family and church; she spends her free time with family or serving the people around her.

Joseph LaRosa is from Queens, New York. He was majoring in Computer Science before switching focus to Information Technology. After graduation, he plans to work with a major corporation while keeping up with his hobbies, such as building computers and streaming. Joseph continues working full time and moving towards making his goals a reality with dedication and hard work.

Yehowshua Leonard is a native Floridian from Orlando. He is currently pursuing an education in Technical Communication while working full time assisting our veterans through military unemployment. After earning his bachelor's degree, Yehowshua will pursue a job as a technical editor and study programming through continuing education courses. Yehowshua plans to use both his bachelor’s degree and his minor in pre-law to build a career in his home city. During his free time, Yehowshua enjoys walking and meditating.

Nancy Jean Lopez is a writer for an online marketing firm. She will graduate from the University of Central Florida in the Fall of 2020 with a Bachelor of English and Literature. After graduation, she plans to pursue a career in publishing as an editor. In her free time, she is either reading nonfiction or studying web design; Nancy is always striving to improve her craft and add new skills to her writer’s toolbox.

Keyur Mistry was born in Gujrat, India. He will graduate from the University of Central Florida in the Fall of 2020 with a degree in Information Technology. After working in the IT industry for a couple of years, he plans to start his own IT business in the future. For the last six years, he has turned one of his hobbies, photography, into a side business that has supported him while pursuing his education.

Christopher Narciso is from Wauchula, Florida. He is a first-generation graduate in his family. After completing his Computer Science degree, he plans to use his skills to improve everyday lives through technology. In his free time, he enjoys working on programming side projects and playing video games.

Rebecca Navas is a senior studying Technical Communication from Miami, Florida. She has a completed minor in Digital Media and is planning to become more involved in video game development. In her spare time, she enjoys writing, streaming gameplay, and cuddling her cats.

Michael Otero is a lifelong Floridian from Melbourne's east coast, but he's been based out of Orlando for the last ten years. He is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Technical Communication, with a minor in Mass Culture and Collective Behavior. From 2013 to 2017, he spent much of his time as a performing and recording artist for an Orlando-based alternative rock group; he hopes to rekindle his musical endeavors again in the future.

Stephanie Peters is an undergraduate student at the University of Central Florida, where she is working towards a bachelor's degree in Technical Communication. Additionally, she is taking courses towards a Writing and Rhetoric minor and a certificate in Editing and Publishing. In the future, she hopes to find work alongside an aspiring author as a book editor.

Valery Pion-Rosario was born in Bayamon, Puerto Rico. She is a junior at UCF, majoring in Technical Communication and minoring in French. After graduation, she plans on working as a technical writer. Her interests include learning languages, running, and reading.