



Happy Holidays from Signal!

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Content Style Guide

A guide to help with writing clear, understandable content. It touches on grammar and punctuation, as well as voice, and writing for the web.

➡ See the full Signal Design System Style Guide v1.0.

Good writing principles

- **Clear:** Good writing should clearly guide users to the next step and leave them with no doubt about what will happen next in the task flow. It should never be convoluted or prioritize cleverness at the expense of clarity.
- **Concise:** Users want to complete their tasks quickly, without reading unnecessary text. Concise UX copy helps them do that—and it is also easier to read.
- **Accessible:** It is important to make sure that your UX copy works well with screen readers and other accessibility tools.
- **Brand-appropriate:** Every interaction a user has with your website or product is part of an ongoing conversation with your brand. Good UX writing leverages that conversation by making sure the copy is consistent with the brand voice.
- **Context-appropriate:** Effective copy depends on the user's frame of mind, and ignoring context can lead to a poor user experience.



Equifax voice is:

- Confident: A trusted resource, authentic and credible, and upbeat
- Dynamic: Innovative, flexible, and exciting
- Human: Personal, accessible, and approachable
- Smart: Creative, forward-thinking, and proven expertise

Tone is the company's attitude or emotional context (think of a person's tone of voice).

Equifax tone is:

- Objective
- Logical
- Empathetic
- Sincere

Write as if you are speaking as a trusted advisor.

Styles and conventions

- Spell out abbreviations and acronyms in full.
- Use bold for emphasis. Do not use underline or italics for emphasis. Do not use combinations of styles, for example bold and underline or bold and italic.
- Use title case capitalization:
 - On a web page for:
 - Page titles
 - Hyperlinks
 - In an application UI for:
 - Navigation (all levels)
 - Page titles
 - Table titles



- Use sentence case capitalization:
 - On a web page for headings and subheadings
 - In an application UI for:
 - Field labels
 - Checkboxes and radio buttons
 - Menu items in a drop-down list
- Hyperlink text should identify the page to where the link leads or describe the associated action. Do not use “click here,” “learn more,” or similar generic phrases.
- Include an approved Equifax copyright statement in the footer of a website or application UI.
- Use a generic equivalent instead of a trademark unless the trademark is essential to the content. If used, capitalize the trademark and use the appropriate trademark symbol inline on first occurrence only.
- Use a brand name only when it is essential to the content. If used, capitalize the brand name.
- Use superscript in text for numbering bibliographic notes.

Punctuation

- Use commas to separate all items in a series and in other circumstances to help users read and comprehend the content. (See a full list of guidelines)
- Use a semicolon between two independent clauses not joined by a conjunction, or to signal a closer connection between the clauses than a period would.
- Use a colon to introduce an element or series of elements meant to illustrate or amplify the text that preceded the colon. Do not use a hyphen or dash as a substitute for a colon.
- Use a hyphen to form compounds of two or more words and separate some prefixes and suffixes from root words. Do not use hyphens as a substitute for dashes.
- Use an en dash to connect numbers and, less often, words.
- Use an em dash to mark a break in a sentence. Do not precede or follow an em dash with a space.
- Use parentheses [()], also known as brackets, to set off material from surrounding text when you want something stronger than commas.



- Replace slashes with the appropriate word substitute except if the slash is part of a proper noun.
- Use double quotation marks ("") to set off direct quotations from other sources or to present speech and other forms of dialogue. Use single quotation marks ('') to set off a quote within a quote.

Write for clarity

- Use present tense.
- Use active verbs.
- Use appropriate articles.
- Eliminate slashes.
- Do not use the and/or structure.
- Use words precisely (link to common word use mistakes and words that confuse).
- Use consistent wording for the same concept.
- Proofread and correct grammar and punctuation errors.

Write for skimmability

- Use descriptive headers and subheaders.
- Use a consistent heading structure, for example, all headings begin with a verb, or all headings are nouns or noun phrases.
- Write short paragraphs.
- Use bulleted lists or tables.
- Eliminate unnecessary words.

Web considerations

On a web page:

- Use a unique title on each page.

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with a verb, or all page titles are nouns or noun phrases.

- Use clear, descriptive terms in titles and headings that describe the topic.
- Organize headings and subheadings in a hierarchy, with the heading first, followed by subheadings in order. Do not skip any heading levels.
- Use a consistent heading structure, for example, all headings begin with a verb, or all headings are nouns or noun phrases.
- Include the most relevant keywords in your headings and subheadings.
- Provide a link whenever you refer to a website, relevant content, and trusted external resources.
- Use lists to present steps, groups, or sets of information. Set up your list with a brief introduction. Number lists when the order of information is important.

In an application UI:

- Use a consistent page title structure within an application UI, for example, all page titles begin with a verb, or all page titles are nouns or noun phrases.
- Organize headings and subheadings in a hierarchy, with the heading first, followed by subheadings in order. Do not skip any heading levels.

Use a consistent heading structure, for example, all headings begin with a verb, or all headings are nouns or noun phrases.

Write for diversity, accessibility, and translation

The following guidelines, in addition to the guidelines provided in the previous sections, ensure that all users can access and understand your web or user interface content:

- Use simple English sentence structure.
- Use simple words.
- Eliminate contractions.
- Use inclusive language.
- Use descriptive text where possible instead of an image.
- Give each image descriptive alternative (alt) text.



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