

House style

Writing tips

Here are a few things for you to bear in mind as you are writing:

- Use correct and common terminology and definitions
- Use everyday examples wherever possible
- Avoid jargon
- Make sure you present key concepts clearly
- Define terms, concepts and acronyms on first reference
- Use examples, figures and so on to illustrate a point, but don't use them in place of explanations and instructions
- Tell readers what you are going to tell them, tell them why you are going to tell them, and then tell them
- Tell readers more than just what happens, tell them why something happens, how often it happens, when it will not happen and what the implications, effects and/or results are of each
- Give readers information that is relevant and useful outside the context of the book
- If appropriate, make use of electronic information to augment the printed content
- Verify names of products, books and authors
- Check dates of publication are given consistently in the text and references

How to make information accessible

Here are a few tips for making your book more accessible, easier to read and easier to reference:

- Write in a conversational style
- Write visually (use bullet lists, small tables etc.)
- Avoid cryptic headings and captions
- Avoid jargon
- Use non-sexist language
- Reference figures and tables in text
- Select or create artwork that explains or illustrates important concepts

Multiple author works

Where there is more than one author, close co-operation should ensure that sections are compatible in style and content, and that they neither contradict nor repeat each other. It is also worth spending some time to ensure that the styles and approaches of the separate authors do not differ too much. One of the authors should be designated as coordinator for the purposes of submitting final material to Cengage Learning.

Text style guidelines

The following suggestions should cover the most frequent grammatical and spelling conventions. We recommend that the following books be used as essential reference. If you have any questions, speak to your production editor who can advise. Use *Oxford Dictionary for Writers and Editors*; *Hart's Rules for Compositors and Readers*; *Butcher's Copy-editing: The Cambridge Handbook*; and *Fowler's Modern English Usage*.

Spelling

Use UK spelling; US spelling may be acceptable for a US author where the book has a predominantly US market, check this with your development editor. Above all be consistent.

Use -ize rather than -ise (e.g. generalize, standardize): words with a Latin root, such as compromise and comprise, have no alternative and should be spelt -ise.

Punctuation

Keep punctuation to a minimum: too many commas, colons, hyphens, dashes, etc. intrude on the flow of the text. Avoid use of the 'Oxford' comma which appears after the penultimate item in a list. e.g. 'apples, pears and bananas' and not 'apples, pears, and bananas'.

Use single rather than double quotation marks in the text. If a quotation is 40 words or more it should be set as a displayed text. Single quotes and double for quotes within quotes.

He / she

Avoid a writing style that could be termed 'sexist'. Convert nouns to the plural and use 'they' instead of using 'he' or 'she'.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations: Uncommon abbreviations should be given in full at their first time of usage and then used consistently throughout. Using % is fine for Maths books or books with equations, otherwise put the number in numerals and the per cent written out. Use % in tables. Do not use ampersands (&) unless quoting the name of an official organization or company.

Numerals

Numerals: Four-figure numbers in running text should be closed-up, without a comma, e.g. 4000. Five-figure numbers should be set with a thin space, e.g. 40 000.

Paragraphs

Paragraphs: Paragraphs immediately following headings should begin full out to the left margin. All other paragraphs should be indented. Do not leave any line space between paragraphs.

Bold / Italic

Avoid overuse of bold or italic for emphasis or intonation. Bold and italic tend to be overused or used erratically. The conventional use for bold and italic are as follows. Italic is used for variables and vectors in mathematical notation and to denote direct quotation. Italic is also used for Latin phrases, e.g. *et al.* and foreign words not in general usage (consult a dictionary). Bold may be used for new terms when they are first being introduced and defined.

If you do make comprehensive use of bold or italic in your manuscript, it is helpful if you let us know your reasoning behind it.

Displayed text

Displayed text: text with features which are to be ‘displayed’ should be indented with a single line space above and below the displayed text. Quotation marks are not necessary.

References

References to other features in the book should be exactly as they appear in the text, i.e. using initial capitals for Chapters, Figures and Tables but lower case for section. Avoid using ‘see’ in references.

If you have any questions, contact your development editor for further advice.