



Online Quick Reference Style Guide

These conventions ensure that your online writing looks consistent from story to story.

STYLES

Use %, not percent or per cent

Ampersands (&) are never used in story text—spell out "and." But the & is okay in titles or subtitles.

Generally, numbers 0-9 are spelled out like "zero chance" or "one apple." Other numbers are written in common Arabic numerals (20, 30, 40, etc.).

Titles can be in sentence case with only the first word capped, or in title case with significant words capped. Check capitalization here.

<https://capitalizemytitle.com/style/AP/> All verbs are capped, even "is."

United States is abbreviated US, without periods. Use vs. for "versus" *with* a period. "AI" not A.I.

Avoid beginning a sentence with a lowercase name like iPhone or eBay. Avoid starting a sentence with a numeral, a digit, or a sign like % or \$ or &.

In a series, put a comma after each item — including the last item (that last comma is known as an Oxford comma. Ex: I bought apples, oranges, and pears.

When using quotation marks, commas and periods go inside the closing quote. Dashes, colons, and semicolons go outside. Question marks are sometimes one way, sometimes the other. Sandy asked, "Why do you guys always fight?" or Did Sandy say, "I'm bringing dinner"?

Single quote marks are for quotes within quotes. I said, "Did you hear her say 'Hi' before?" You can also use them like 'air' quotes.

To signify words used as words, use italics. For example: *Inhale* means to take a breath.

Put a space between paragraphs to make the text more appealing. Vary the lengths of paragraphs—do not make every sentence a paragraph. That destroys the rhythm and pacing of your prose.

Use **one** space after a period.

Italicize references to titles. This applies to books, magazines, articles, poems, songs, movies, TV shows, webinars, and almost all other titles. Most publications do not put quotes around these. Examples: I read a good book called *The Lost World*. Have you watched *Scary Movie*? Isn't *Jingle Bells* a great song?

Comma Rules

<https://grammar.yourdictionary.com/punctuation/comma-rules.html>)

Missing Commas in a compound sentence — A compound sentence expresses two complete and related ideas and usually includes a conjunction to connect the two. There should be a comma before the conjunction. Readers will notice an error.

Comma splice — A run-on sentence is a sentence that joins two independent clauses without punctuation or conjunction. EX: The clouds were dark, we thought it would rain." Add a conjunction, a colon, or a period.

These are not absolutes. If you submit work to a website or publication, always ask if they have a preferred style like Chicago Manual, AP, etc. or an in-house style sheet.

You can always learn more from the ebooks at [Pen2Profit bookstore](#).