



IWF EDITORIAL STYLE SHEET

Dates

Dates are to be represented as [month] [day] [year].

Numbers

In Nontechnical Contexts (report narratives but not necessarily statistical analyses):

Spell out numbers that are:

- Whole numbers from one through ten.
- Any number beginning a sentence.

Examples:

Survey responses came from 252 high schools and nine colleges.

Twenty states are involved in the project.

- Simple fractions – hyphenated when considered a single quantity:

Example:

Two-thirds (*not* 2/3rds)

- Exception: when numbers are part of a series:

Example:

1, 55, 130, and 300 (*not* one, fifty-five, 130, and 300)

In Statistical Analyses:

Use numerals for:

- Numbers of any size, especially when there are many numbers used in a single paragraph or section, except spell out numbers at the beginning of sentences.

Monetary amounts

- Isolated references to amounts of money are spelled out or expressed with currency symbols and numerals. If a number expressing an amount of money is spelled out, so are the words dollar(s) or cent(s); if numerals are used, they are accompanied by the dollar or cent symbol:

Examples:

Fifteen dollars or \$15

- Very large monetary amounts may be expressed by a mixture of numerals and spelled-out numbers:

Example:

\$3 billion (if a dollar sign is used, do not include the word dollars)

Punctuation

- Place commas and periods inside quotes.
- Place semicolons and colons outside quotes.

Examples:

The title of the report is “Improving Records Management.”

The agency handbook defines “records management,” but does not indicate whether an archival program exists.

Here is a list of “acronyms”:

- Use commas to separate series of three or more. Include an Oxford comma after the second to last item in the series, before “and.”

Example:

States with active programs include Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin.

- Don’t use apostrophes for plurals of years or other cases in which you don’t intend to make a word possessive

Example:

1970s (*not* 1970’s)

DVDs (*not* DVD’s)

- Don’t use periods in postal abbreviations

Example:

Washington, DC (*not* Washington, D.C.)

- Other punctuation:

Use a single space after period at end of sentences, not two.

Use periods at the end of each item in a list only if the item is a complete sentence.

References to tables and figures

- Enclose references to tables and figures in parentheses and place inside sentence.

Example:

Total number of high school graduates varies widely (Table 5).

Dashes and hyphens [en dash = Alt+0150, em dash = Alt+0151]

- Use em dashes (with no spaces on either side) to set off phrases in text.

Example:

Dashes are used – with great effect – to emphasize points in text.

- Use an en dash (not a hyphen) in “K-12” when referring to kindergarten through 12th grade.
- Use en dash instead of a hyphen to separate dates, e.g., 1950–1990, not 1950-1990.
- Use en dash instead of a hyphen to separate page numbers, e.g., pp. 45–59.

Spelling and Word Usage

Usage notes

- “Data” is a plural word and, therefore, requires plural verbs in agreement, e.g., “The data suggest that”

Preferred variations for spelling specific words

- nonprofit (*not* non-profit)
- email (*not* e-mail)
- lifecycle (*not* life cycle or life-cycle)
- on site (*not* onsite)
- off site (*not* offsite or off-site)
- website (*not* web site or Web site), but “the Web” (initial cap)
- online (*not* on-line or on line)
- grantmaking (*not* grant making, grant-making)

Style variations

- percent or percentage (spell out in text unless there are many such references in a single paragraph or section; use % in tables)
- P.O. Box (*not* PO Box) [in the IWF address]

Proper names used frequently in IWF documents and correspondence:

- Dawn Oliver Wiand (*not* “Oliver-Wiand”)
- Alison Ames Galstad (one “L” in both Alison and Galstad)

8/13/13