

OUR LADY OF LOURDES EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE

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About this Guide

Welcome to the Our Lady of Lourdes Style Guide. The purpose of this tool is to communicate the preferences of style for information that Our Lady of Lourdes is publishing in its bulletin, flyers, and website. Since word processing became the norm of publication, many punctuation rules have changed. There are also many styles that are acceptable for expressing things like time or date, but we need to write them consistently. Although there are different schools of thought on some grammar rules, this document outlines the rules we will follow. The goal is to provide guidance for basic grammar and punctuation to make it easier for everyone to produce content and to expedite the eventual editing and production processes.

Please note that with any submissions for publication by Our Lady of Lourdes, the author agrees his/her work is subject to these style guides and will be edited to meet these standards by Our Lady of Lourdes wherever needed.

A separate style guide published by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee establishes use of capitalization concerning certain terms specific to the Church. It is not an exhaustive guide but is quite helpful. Please use this tool if you unsure if particular words are uppercase or not.

<http://www.archmil.org/ArchMil/Resources/COMM/FinalMilwArchStyleGuide2011.pdf>

Abbreviations

Avoid abbreviating any words that the audience will not understand immediately. For common abbreviations, include a period.

Ex. Capt. Smith wrote a memo for Mrs. Mayfair reminding her to pick up a pound of apples at the store.

Do not use Greek symbols and Latin abbreviations (i.e., e.g.). Instead, write the English equivalent of the Greek letter (alpha, omega) or Latin abbreviation (that is, for example).

Acronyms

Spell out full name on first reference followed by the acronym in parentheses. It's okay to use the acronym after that.

Ex. The New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) reported a loss in the company's stock in March. A few weeks ago, however, the NYSE reported a large gain.

To make an acronym plural, just add s (no apostrophe).

Ex. There were 16 CEOs in the boardroom.

Ampersands

Avoid using ampersands (&) in general text, headings, or subheadings—use “and” instead. An ampersand may be used in charts or tables where space is tight or when it's part of a company name or book title.

Capitalization

After a colon

Do not capitalize the word after a colon. The only exception is when there is a very long quote.

Ex. I'm about to list several things: one, two, and three.

Book titles and other completed works

Titles of books, periodical publications, songs, and movies are always in title case everything but articles, conjunctions, and prepositions capitalized. See [Titles](#) for more information.

Ex. Today I finished *Anne of Green Gables*.

Department names

The names of departments are always capitalized.

Ex. The staff members in Youth Ministry love to play card games.

Job titles

Job titles are capitalized only when referencing a specific person; otherwise, they're lowercase.

Ex. The staff is excited to meet Jessie, the new Youth Minister.

Ex. The role of the youth minister in faith formation is to...

Headings and subheadings

Capitalize important words (everything but articles, conjunctions, and prepositions) in headings—the same goes for subheadings.

Correct: 10 Things You Didn't Know about Using Technology in Mass

Incorrect: 10 Things You Didn't Know About Using Technology In Mass

Contractions

A contraction is a shortened form of a word group (for example, **can't** is a shortened version of cannot). Try not to use contractions. Readability experts have shown that a reader needs more time to decode and process a contraction than a complete phrase. Use contractions (it's, you're, they're, she's) in your writing only to make the tone conversational, not stuffy or rigid.

Formatting and Font Style

Hard returns

A hard return is an actual symbol (§) inserted into the text. The hard-return symbol is usually invisible, but you can view it when the § symbol is activated in the tool bar. Whenever you press the Return or Enter key while editing a document, Word inserts a hard return. A hard return is used in word processing to represent the end of a paragraph. Do not use hard returns to format the middle of a sentence or paragraph (nor the space bar). Word formats on its own. Adjust the formatting to meet your needs. If you must drop to the next line in a title, paragraph, or sentence, press Shift+Enter to create a soft return.

Sentence spacing

Use only one space to separate sentences. Two spaces were standard when typewriters were in use. Now with word processing, one space is preferred.

practice. Using more than one space will impact formatting and spacing throughout the rest of the document.

Showing emphasis

Never use all capital letters, underlining, or italics to show emphasis. All caps can come across as yelling or be confused with an acronym. Italics can be confused with published works. Underlined words can be confused with hyperlinks. Instead, use the bold font setting to create emphasis in your text; however, do not use too much of it. If you put bold on too many words, nothing will stand out.

Titles

Book and eBook titles, periodical publications, and movie titles should be in italics. Song titles should be in quotation marks.

Ex. My favorite movie is *Blade Runner*, which is based on the book *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* by Philip K. Dick.

A part or section of a larger work is put in quotation marks. (This includes a chapter of a book, the title of an article in a magazine, etc.)

Ex. Chapter two, “World War Terminus,” talks about a war that was so bad they skipped the numbering system.

Ex. The *Vanity Fair* article “How to Tell if She’s an Android” provides examples.

Ex. Check out the blog post “How to Launch a Rocket” for more information.

Lists

Do not use any punctuation after list items, even if they form complete sentences. Similarly, do not use “and,” “but,” or “or” after list items. Make sure list items are parallel in structure, such as each item beginning with an action, order, or adverb.

- Ex.**
1. Invest in relationship-building
 2. Position communication as part of your core strategy
 3. Make a plan

Numbers

Write out numbers up to and including ten, except in percents (see below) and hard data. The exception to this rule is if you have a list of numbers that includes numbers under and above ten: in this case, just make the list consistent (see the second example).

Ex. Of the 20 parish employees, only 3 decided to go to the party.

Ex. The table was stocked with 2 cakes, 10 pizzas, and 24 sodas.

Write out numbers at the start of a sentence.

Ex. Twenty-two of the experts agreed.

Dates

Monday, September 1, 2014

Monday, September 1, [TEXT]

September 2014 (no comma)

Ordinal numbers

Ordinal numbers (adjectives describing the numerical position of something) should always be written out.

Ex. First, third, tenth.

Percents

Use numeric form for percents, but write out at the start of a sentence. Don't include a space between the number and the percent sign.

Ex. The survey results showed that 70% of teens wear Converse sneakers.

Ex. Sixty percent of adults also wear Ray-Bans.

Phone numbers

Use only (414) 545-4316. All phone calls are answered in the office, so there is no need to publish more than one phone number.

Put the area code in parentheses and a space separating it from the phone number.

(414) 545-4316

Extensions: add a space, then an "x" and the extension number

(414) 545-4316 x12

Time

Use the full expression of time to keep parallel structure between times on the hour and past the hour. Designate morning or evening using the abbreviation in lowercase letters with no periods and a space.

9:00 am or pm

Use am or pm after each notation of time to avoid any confusion of when something is happening.

9:00 am – 3:00 pm

9:00 am – 10:00 am

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Use an en dash (short dash) to express a time frame.

Correct: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Incorrect: 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Punctuation

Apostrophes

In general, only use an apostrophe when you need to form the *possessive* of the word not the plural. The exception to this is the possessive of it, which is “its.”

Ex. The new Pastor’s office had its own entrance.

Ex. A hard day’s work.

Ex. Laura’s book was damaged by the rain.

If the word ends in s, just add an apostrophe to form the possessive.

Ex. The bishops’ mass hysteria was witnessed by most of the staff.

Ex. Everyone stared at Charles’ new car, a Tesla Model S.

Commas

Use the serial (Oxford) comma before the “and” or “or” in lists.

Ex. Idea generation, content creation, distribution, and ROI optimization.

Dashes

Em dashes (—) are the width of a lowercase “m.” They are used to indicate added emphasis, a pause, or a change of thought.

Use em dashes for setting off text or emphasizing a point in a sentence.

Em dashes are the “wait for it” of punctuation, creating a pause that is conversational in tone, while still drawing your eye to the next sentence or phrase fluidly.

Em dashes can have the same effect as a colon but with more of an artistic spin and less of an abrupt stop. (They are also used when attributing a quote!)

Ex. “I’ve been looking for a girl like you—not you, but a girl like you.”
(Groucho Marx)

Ex. Some of the pain points—compliance, customer trust, and the proliferation of digital information—are so pressing that financial services marketers hold off on launching innovative campaigns and stick to the basics.

Ellipsis

Use a non-spaced ellipsis, like this: ... (not this: . . .). An ellipsis is **only** three periods. Use an ellipsis to show where you have omitted words (such as in a long quote).

“Four score and seven years ago...”

Hyphens

Use hyphens in numeric ranges, but try to use “to” (instead of a hyphen) when including a numeric range in a sentence.

Ex. Numbers 11 to 25 are from the second experiment.

Ex. 9:00 am – 10:00 am

Semicolon

Semicolons are used to link two related independent clauses (complete sentences) or to list items separated by a comma.

Ex. My aunt came over to visit today; she brought her yappy little dog.

Ex. We went to so many awesome places on our trip: London, England; Madrid, Spain; Berlin, Germany; and Miami, Florida.

The semicolon can also be used more creatively, as long as it is conjoining two independent clauses (complete sentences), and does *not* include a conjunction (with, and, but, because, for, etc.):

Correct: Someday I’ll have to teach you how to use a crossbow; it’s a solid piece of weaponry.

Incorrect: Someday I’ll have to teach you how to use a crossbow; because it’s a solid piece of weaponry.

Using Correct Verb Agreement

Grammatical agreement means that parts of a sentence must agree in terms of person and number. As a general rule, a subject must agree with its corresponding verb, and a pronoun must agree with its corresponding antecedent (for example, I go, she/he goes, we go.)

Apply the following rules in your sentences:

- Make certain the verb agrees with the subject. Do not let clauses or phrases that appear between the two confuse you. In this example, **one** is the subject, not **alarms**.

Correct: Only one of the alarms sounds when the system fails.

- When thought of as a unit, express subjects of quantity, measurement, weight, mass, or distance as singular subjects with a singular verb.

Correct: Fifty filters is enough to last a week.

- Express mass nouns as singular subjects with singular verbs.

Correct: A series of meetings was held about the project.

- Express compound subjects as singular or plural, depending on the conjunction with which they are joined. If the subject is joined with **and**, it is usually treated as a plural subject and should have a plural verb form.

Correct: An actuator and a damper are both necessary for the Heating, Ventilating, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system to run smoothly.

Note: There are some exceptions to this rule, primarily when the items joined by **and** form one unit (for example, bacon and eggs could be grouped as an item).

- If the subject contains a singular and a plural element joined by or or nor, the verb should agree with the element closer to the verb.

Correct: If either the valves or the damper is open, turn the hand crank to the right.

Quotes

Use said (not says) when quoting someone.

Ex. “The general consensus is not to do the hokey-pokey at work,” said Shawn.

Always use double quotation marks with single quotation marks inside.

Ex. “I read the article ‘The Dog’s Computer,’” said Bobby.

Periods and commas *always* go inside quotation marks.

Ex. “I was riding my bike,” Carol said, “when a deer jumped over the trail.”

Question marks and exclamation points go inside quotation marks only when they’re part of what the speaker is saying.

Ex. Sally said, “Would you like fries with that?”

Ex. Sally asked if John would like fries with that. Can you believe he said “I would”?

Colons, semicolons, and dashes always go outside quotation marks.

Ex. The following should report to the room marked “Staff”: office managers, marketers, social media managers, and customer service agents.

Do not always rely on the spell and grammar check in Office as it is not always correct.

Appendix – Other Grammar Notes

Using Active Voice

Active voice tells who or what is performing the action of the sentence. Use the active voice whenever possible.

Incorrect: (Passive Voice): Many multimedia features are included in M-Graphics.

Correct: (Active Voice): M-Graphics includes many multimedia features.

Avoiding Dangling Modifiers

A dangling modifier is a verb phrase that does not logically refer to the proper noun or pronoun. Dangling modifiers often appear at the beginning of a sentence written in the passive voice.

Types of dangling modifier phrases:

- dangling gerund (verbal that ends in -ing and acts as a noun)
- dangling participial (verbal that functions as an adjective)
- dangling infinitive (the basic, bare form of a verb; generally preceded by **to**)
- dangling subordinate clause (phrase that functions as a noun, adjective, or adverb)

Correcting Dangling Gerund Phrases

To correct a dangling gerund phrase, add an actor (noun or pronoun) for the phrase to modify.

Incorrect: Installing the new software is easy.

Correct: You can install the new software easily.

Correcting Dangling Participial Phrases

To correct a dangling participial phrase, add a subject near the phrase.

Incorrect: Opening the M-Graphics display, the entire floor plan appears.

Correct: When you open the M-Graphics display, the entire floor plan appears.

Correcting Dangling Infinitive Phrases

To correct a dangling infinitive phrase, add the noun or pronoun that provides the subject of the infinitive phrase.

Incorrect: To improve computer programming skills, practice is needed.

Correct: To improve computer programming skills, you must practice.

Correcting Dangling Subordinate Clauses

To correct a dangling subordinate clause, add the missing subject and verb.

Incorrect: When in engineering school, his father started the company.

Correct: When Bill was in engineering school, his father started the company.

Avoiding Nominalizations

A nominalization is the combination of a weak verb (for example, make, do, conduct, perform) and a noun, which is used in place of the verb form of the noun, when the verb form of the noun would communicate the same idea more effectively in fewer words. To correct a nominalization, change the weak verb and noun combination to a simple verb.

Incorrect: The engineering team conducted an investigation into the cause of the electrical fire.

Correct: The engineering team investigated the cause of the electrical fire.

Writing in Parallel Structure

Always check your writing for parallel structure. A sentence is parallel if the elements are expressed in the same grammatical form (for example, all the verbs are infinitives).

Incorrect: The procedure includes installation, mounting, and wiring.

Correct: The procedure includes installing, mounting, and wiring.

Faulty parallelism often occurs with correlative conjunctions (either ...or, neither...nor, not only ...but also).

Incorrect: The new refrigerant not only decreases energy costs but also spoilage losses.

Correct: The new refrigerant decreases not only energy costs but also spoilage losses.