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Style Manual for

International Development Research Centre

English Publications



Style Manual for International Development Research Centre English Publications

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Foreword

This manual sets forth IDRC style for spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc., within its English language publications.

The manual is intended for editors and writers within the Centre to ensure consistency within IDRC's publications. Although not everyone will agree on every point in the manual, it is based on recognized practice and style, and many grammars, dictionaries, and other style manuals, as well as staff within the Publications Division, have been consulted on its content.

This first "edition" contains rules on Spelling, Numbers, and the layout for *Cataloging in Publication Data*. It is being produced in an economical form with many blank areas to allow for planned additions. These will be sent to you printed on gummed paper for easy insertion. The additional material will include rulings on Punctuation, Hyphens, Abbreviations, Bibliographies, Plurals, and Capitals, as well as guidelines on the preparation of illustrations and photographs, and any other material that seems relevant. When the Style Manual reaches a more advanced stage of completeness, we will produce a permanent publication for your use, which will also include an index.

Please do not hesitate to ask for a clarification of any rule or to have topics other than those mentioned above included in future "editions."

March 1977

Marilyn Campbell
Senior Technical Editor
Publications Division

"Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts. This requires not that the writer make all his sentences short, or that he avoid all detail and treat his subjects only in outline, but that every word tell."

William Strunk, Jr.
From *The Elements of Style* by
William Strunk, Jr., and E. B. White
(second edition, The MacMillan Co.,
New York, 1972)

Spelling

- (1) The authority for spelling within IDRC English publications is Webster's Third New International Dictionary.

Please note the following exceptions to Webster's:

-*our* in such words as *honour, labour, favour, colour*

-*re* in such words as *centre, theatre*

-*ce* in such words as *defence, licence (noun and verb)*

- (Note: Please study the attached list of "Spellings" and "Words Frequently Confused" for your guidance.)

- (2) When -*ary*, -*ous*, -*ize*, or -*ation* are added to words ending in -*our*, the *u* of -*our* is dropped.

e.g., *humour, humorous*
 honour, honorary
 vapour, vaporize
 colour, coloration

- (3) When the spelling of the official name of a group, company, etc. differs from IDRC style, do *not* change the spelling.

e.g., Nutrition Center of the Philippines
 Land Reform Programme

- (4) When quoting material verbatim from another publication, retain within the quote the spelling contained in the original material, even if it differs from IDRC style. If you paraphrase, however, IDRC spelling should be used.

e.g., The problem, as reported in the newsletter, was explained by the program director in these words: "Organisation of such a programme requires the co-ordination of many centers of learning."

but The program director realized that the coordination of centres of learning would be required to organize such a program.

- (5) When deciding whether or not to double a letter when adding a suffix, follow the rule:

“A word that

(i) ends in a consonant,

that is

(ii) preceded by a single vowel,

and is

(iii) accented on the last syllable (hence all one-syllable words also)

doubles the consonant whenever a suffix beginning with a vowel (for example, *-ing*, *-ed*, *-er*) is added.”

e.g., *run* becomes *runner*, *running*
 occur becomes *occurred*, *occurring*
 bar becomes *barred*, *barring*

If any of (i), (ii), or (iii) does not apply to the word, then the letter is *not* doubled.

e.g., *program* becomes *programed*, *programming* (accent not on last syllable)
 bare becomes *baring*, *bared* (word ends in a vowel, not a consonant)

When the dictionary gives a choice of doubling a letter, please use the above rule.

e.g., *travel* becomes *traveler*, not *traveller* (accent not on last syllable)
 focus becomes *focused*, not *focussed* (accent not on last syllable)
 level becomes *leveled*, not *levelled* (accent not on last syllable)
 benefit becomes *benefited*, not *benefitted* (accent not on last syllable)

Additional Notes

Words Frequently Confused

affect, effect

affect — to have an influence on, produce an effect on, concern, effect a change in

effect — to bring about, cause, produce, result in, have a result

Example: A single glass of brandy may *affect* (alter for better or worse the prospects of) his recovery.

A single glass of brandy may *effect* (bring about) his recovery.

among, between

One divides something *between* two people or *among* three or more. But there are many constructions in which *between* is the correct word to express the relation of one thing to several others. *Between* governs a relationship severally and individually (a treaty *between* three or more countries; a choice *between* the three most promising candidates). *Among* expresses the relationship collectively and broadly (he fell *among* thieves; it is *among* my dearest possessions).

assure, ensure, insure

assure — to remove doubt, uncertainty, or worry from a person's mind

Example: I *assured* him that his expected arrival time would be early enough for the meeting.

ensure — to make sure, certain, or safe

Example: To *ensure* early delivery, call before noon.

insure — to make certain arrangements for indemnification for loss

Example: The car has been *insured* against damage.

consensus

Consensus means general agreement. It stands alone and the phrase *consensus of opinion* is redundant. Never spell it *concensus*. There is no such word.

principal, principle

principal — first in rank or importance, *adj.*; head teacher, sum of money lent, *noun*

principle — general law, fundamental truth, code of conduct, *noun*

stationary, stationery

stationary — standing still

stationery — paper, etc.

imply, infer

imply — the speaker implies

infer — the hearer infers

Example: I *implied* that I was interested and he *inferred* that he had a potential customer.

various, varying

various — of different kinds or aspects

varying — synonymous with changing or causing to change

Example: Various species of wild flowers were seen on the varying terrain.

lineage, lineage

lineage — descent

linage — number of lines

compare with, compare to

compare with — when the details of a supposed similarity are examined or set forth

Example: She compared him *with* Demosthenes.

i.e., She instituted a detailed comparison or pointed out where and how far he resembled Demosthenes.

compare to — when a similarity is suggested or stated

Example: She compared him *to* Demosthenes.

i.e., She suggested that he was comparable to Demosthenes or put him in the same class.

“-sede,” “-cede,” “-ceed”

Only one word ends in *-sede*: supersede.

Only three words end in *-ceed*: exceed, proceed, succeed.

All other words of this class end in *-cede*: e.g., concede, precede, secede, etc.

which, that

Use *that* for restrictive clauses and *which* for nonrestrictive clauses. A restrictive clause cannot be omitted from a sentence without greatly changing the meaning. A nonrestrictive clause merely adds incidental facts that do not significantly limit the meaning of the principal clause.

e.g., A satellite *that is inflated with gas* is very vulnerable.

(elimination of the italicized words, a restrictive clause, would change the meaning of the sentence.)

Echo I, *which is inflated with gas*, circles the earth every hour and a half.

(The italicized words, a nonrestrictive clause, may be omitted without affecting the meaning of the sentence.)

while vs. whereas, although, but, even though, even if

while means "at the same time as" when used as a conjunction:

e.g., While attending university he made many friends.

While is used incorrectly most of the time for *whereas*, *although*, *but*, *even though*, and *even if*, sometimes resulting in ambiguity:

e.g., While he arrived late, he did not miss the plane.

If "at the same time as" is substituted for *while* in this sentence, it then reads:

At the same time as he arrived late, he did not miss the plane.

which is not the correct meaning. The correct word to use in this instance is *although*:

Although he arrived late, he did not miss the plane.

since, because

since should be used to denote time, not as a substitute for *because*

e.g., Because snow fell yesterday, the roads have been slippery.

This sentence is correct, unless you wish to indicate "time" and not "why":

e.g., Since (the time that) snow began falling, the roads have been slippery.

Since (the time of) arriving in town, he has found a job.

Additional Notes

Prefixes

over-, under-

solid with the base word, except when the base word begins with a capital letter

bi-, semi-*, uni-

solid with the base word (*biennial*, *semiannual*, *unicellular*) except when the base word begins with an "i" or a capital letter

self-

requires a hyphen before the base word (*self-adjusting*, *self-restraint*)

co-

solid with the base word (*cooperative*) except when the base word begins with a capital letter or in the following words: *co-worker*, *co-op*, *co-opt*, *co-optate*, *co-optation*, *co-optative*, *co-optive*.

over-, non-, sub-, pre-, micro-, inter-, multi-, pre-, poly-, un-, hyper-, hypo-, macro-

solid with the base word except when the base word begins with a capital letter.

half-, mid-

please check the dictionary for the specific word as the form is determined by the word

post-

solid with the base word except when the base word begins with a *t* or a capital letter or is an adverb

e.g., *post-traumatic*, *post-Pleistocene*, a *postmortem* (noun), a *postmortem* examination (adj), but an examination was given *post-mortem*; the results were studied *post-harvest*

**Semi-arid* is the exception.

intra-, ultra-

solid with the base word except when the base word begins with an *a* (*intracontinental, ultra-atomic*)

re-

solid with the base word except (1) when the word formed (as *re-creation*) would otherwise be confused with another word (*recreation*); (2) when the word (as *re-recover*) has a second element beginning with *re-*; and (3) when the second element begins with a capital letter.

Suffixes

-self

solid with base word (*itself, yourself*)

-like

please check the dictionary for the specific word

-fold

solid with base word except for numbers over nine; e.g., *threefold, ninefold but 10-fold, 25-fold*, etc.

Spellings

(*sing*, singular; *pl*, plural; *n*, noun; *vb*, verb; *adj*, adjective; *adv*, adverb)

A

accepter (*not* acceptor)

accommodate

accumulate

acknowledgment

age, aged, aging

agenda, *sing*, agendas, *pl*

agglomeration

agroeconomic

airflow

airtight

alga, *sing*, algae, *pl*

all right, *not* alright

analyze

anemia

arctic

assess

assimilate

B

base line, *n*

birthrate, *n*

bottle-feed, *vb*

break up, *vb*; breakup, *n*

breast-feed, *vb*

buffalo, *sing* and *pl*

build up, *vb*; buildup, *n*

by-product, *n*

C

cannot

catalog

centreline

clean up, *vb*; cleanup, *n, adj*

coauthor

colour, colouring, colourable, colourless,
but coloration (*see spelling rule 2*)

commitment

committee

conscience

consensus

co-op

cooperate

co-worker

criterion, *sing*, criteria, *pl*

cross-reference, *n, vb*

cross section, *n*; cross-section, *vb*

cross-sectional, *adj*

D

datum, *sing*, data, *pl*

death rate, *n*

decision-maker, -making

defence, *n*, *vb*

dependant, *n*; dependent, *adj*

desiccate, desiccator

diarrhea

die, died, dying

diphtheria

dissect

donor

drier, *n*

dropout, *n*

dry, dried, dries *but* drying, *vb*

dry, drier, driest, *adj*

E

embarrass

endeavour

F

favour, favouring, favourable, favourless,
favourite, favoured

feces

fetus, *sing*, fetuses, *pl*

field test, *n*; field-test, *vb*

flavour, flavouring, flavourable,
flavourless, *but* flavorful (*see spelling
rule 2*)

flowchart

follow up, *vb*; follow-up, *n*, *adj*

freeze-dry, *vb*

fulfill

G

gauge

germ plasm

gram-negative, gram-positive

Gram stain

gray (*not* grey) *but* greyhound

groundwater

guarantee

guerrilla

H

handwheel

harass

hemorrhage

honour, honourable, honourably *but*
honorary, honorarium (*see spelling rule*
2)

humour, *but* humorous (*see spelling rule 2*)

I

innocuous

innovative

inoculate

inpatient

inquire (*not* enquire)

inquiry (*not* enquiry)

in-service, *adj*

J

judge, judgment

K

knowledge

L

liaison

licence, *n*, *vb*

life span, *n*

liquefy (*not* liquify)

M

maneuver

man-year, *n*

Mao Tse-tung

metre

midafternoon

midday

microorganism

mould

N

niacin

O

occur, occurred, occurrence

odour *but* odorous (*see spelling rule 2*)

omission

omit, omitted

onchocerciasis, *sing*; onchocerciases, *pl*

one-half, one-third, one-quarter, etc.

organization

outpatient

outturn

P

paddy, *sing*; paddies, *pl* (*not* padi) pursue
pamphlet
parallel, paralleled
pediatrics
percent (use % after numerals)
percentage
phenomenon, *sing*; phenomena, *pl*
phosphorous, *adj*; phosphorus, *n*
plow (*not* plough)
policymaker, policymaking
possess
postharvest, *adj*; post-harvest, *adv*
practice, *n*, *vb*
precede
prefer, preferred
preference
preventive (*preferred* to preventative)
principal, *adj*, *n*
principle, *n*
privilege
proceed
program, programing, programed *but*
 programmatic, programmer
pronunciation
prophecy, *n*; prophesy, *vb*

Q

R

regardless (*not* irregardless)

riboflavin (*not* riboflavine)

S

Saint John, N.B.

salable (*not* saleable)

savanna (*not* savannah)

savour, savoured, savouring, savoury

semi-arid

separate

set up, *vb*; setup, *n*

side effects, *n*

silkworm

skillful

skim milk

Southeast Asia

soybean

spoonful, *sing*; spoonsful, *pl*

St. John's, Nfld.

succeed

sugarcane

sulfur (*not* sulphur)

supersede

T

thiamine (*not* thiamin)

tie, tied, tying, *vb*

toward (*not* towards)

transfer, transferred, transferring, *vb*

transferability, *n*

transferable, *adj*

transferral, *n*

transferee, *n*

transference, *n*

transferrer, *n*

travel, traveler, traveled

trypanosomiasis, *sing*; trypanosomiasis, *pl*

U

V

vapour *but* vaporious (*see spelling rule 2*)

vigour *but* vigorous (*see spelling rule 2*)

vitamin (*not* vitamine)

W

wastewater

work load

worldwide

X, Y, Z

X ray, *n*

X-ray, *vb, adj*

Numbers

The following rules, although applicable to all publications, are meant primarily for technical and scientific publications. Writers / editors of more popular-type publications may wish to take a less rigid approach to writing numbers than these rules allow.

Use a numeral or numerals

- (a) for expressing any number that immediately precedes a standard unit of measure or its abbreviation:
3 h 1 g 3 g 18 mm 300 m²
- (b) for a date, an expression of time, a page number, a percentage, a decimal quantity, or a numerical designation:
7 Jan 1971; the time is 0815; page 179; 27%; 37.6 g; a magnification of 50.

In most situations not mentioned above, use words for numbers one through nine and numerals for larger numbers:
nine rabbits; two dogs; 14 parts; 29 trees.

In a series containing some numbers of 10 or more, and some less than 10, use numerals for all:
e.g., The 7 apple trees, 9 peach trees, and 20 plum trees were given six applications of dust.

Treat ordinal numbers as you would cardinal numbers:
third, fourth, 33rd, 54th.

Numbers from 1000 to 9999 are written without commas or spaces; numbers from 10 000 to 999 999 are written with a half space separating the components of the number. In tables, to save space, all numbers (10000 or 1000) are solid.

When writing a large number ending in several zeros, either substitute a word for part of the number or add an appropriate prefix to a basic unit of measurement:

\$6 million (not \$6 000 000 or 6 000 000 dollars)
23 μ g (not 0.000 023 g)

Do not begin a sentence with a numeral; either spell out the numeral, reword the sentence, or end the preceding sentence with a semicolon.

Additional Notes

Layout for Cataloging in Publication Data

A fairly recent innovation being adopted by many publishers is inclusion in books of *Cataloging in Publication Data*. In collaboration with the Centre library, we have developed a CIP format as shown below, which incorporates the copyright material, Centre address, etc. The key words and UDC number are prepared by library staff from a copy of the manuscript supplied by the editor. In most cases the material will appear opposite the title page, set 24 picas wide.

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