



Canadian Environmental  
Assessment Agency

Agence canadienne  
d'évaluation environnementale



# Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency English Style Guide

June 2011

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This online version of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency English Style Guide* may be more current than the printed version.

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## Symbols used in the English Style Guide



This symbol highlights a note.



This symbol indicates an exception.

## Introduction

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the Agency) has prepared this reference tool to help its employees draft reports and documents in English.

The *Canadian Environmental Assessment English Style Guide* (the English Style Guide) aims to cover the most common errors found in Agency documents, both internal and external. It states Agency style preferences and words that may have more than one accepted form.

This guide provides several writing tools: the basic principles of clear and concise writing; some common spelling and usage errors to avoid; a quick reference to proper punctuation; and entries dealing with elements of style, including the proper use of italics, acronyms and initialisms, and capitalization. The English Style Guide also provides a list of online resources and references. Finally, “Words to Watch” is a handy reference to the correct use of words and terms that are inconsistent in their usage or often misspelled.

This guide is meant as a reference to help employees meet the Agency’s objectives for uniformity, clarity, and consistency in its written communications. Consult *The Canadian Style* for a detailed guide on writing and editing.

The Agency also offers the *Ministerial and Executive Correspondence Guide* and the *Guide de la correspondance du ministre et des hauts fonctionnaires*. Both documents are available on Atrium.



# Good Writing Practices

Below are five basic practices for good writing that will enable you to communicate effectively with your target audience in clear and concise language.

## 1. Know your target audience.

Develop the content and format of your document with your target audience in mind. Consider the target audience's learning style, specific needs, level of education, and reading skills.

## 2. Focus on the reader's needs.

Highlight what readers want to know. Focus on what is essential. The text should answer questions readers would ask themselves.

## 3. Develop a logical plan to organize your ideas and your text.

- Present information logically, from most important to least important.
- Organize ideas in chronological order. Backtracking confuses readers.
- Express one main idea in each paragraph.

The following may help introduce readers to the topic: a table of contents, a short introduction, a short user's guide, a summary at the beginning of the text, examples, and comparisons.

## 4. Make your writing clear, simple, logical, and to the point:

- Provide complete, accurate information; fact-checking is essential.
- Present information concisely; it is better to focus on quality and not quantity.
- Use simple, familiar words.
- Use specialized terminology, define each term, and provide an example if possible. Add a glossary if needed.
- Avoid long, complex sentences and paragraphs longer than seven lines.
- Favour the active voice and the positive form.
- Use vertical lists and bullets where appropriate for increased readability.

## 5. Make a habit of using these writing tools:

- spell-check programs
- dictionaries (such as the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*)
- style guides (particularly the *English Style Guide* and *The Canadian Style*)

- the Agency lexicon found on Atrium
- the Agency acronym list found on Atrium
- TERMIUM Plus

# Spelling and Usage

## Adjectives

Use the word **fewer** when referring to quantifiable units.

Use **less** when referring to a singular mass.

### Examples

- **fewer** people, fewer animals
- **less** space, less interest

## Collective Nouns

Ensure verbs agree in number with the subject. Particular care is needed with collective and plural nouns.

### Examples

- government **is**
- staff **is**
- information **is**
- data **are**

## Conjunctions

Avoid **and/or** in all writing, except in legal text. Instead use either one “and” or the other “or”, depending on the context.

<i><b>Avoid</b></i>	<i><b>Use</b></i>
General media advertising <b>and/or</b> promotion	General media advertising <b>or</b> promotion
	<i><b>Or</b></i>
	General media advertising <b>and</b> promotion

## Expressions to Avoid

Do not use **hopefully**.

Avoid **a lot of**—use **many**.

<i><b>Avoid</b></i>	<i><b>Use</b></i>
This development results in <b>a lot of</b> secondary effects.	This development results in <b>many</b> secondary effects.

Avoid **as well as**—use **and**.

<i><b>Avoid</b></i>	<i><b>Use</b></i>
Courses are offered to external clients <b>as well as</b> to Agency employees.	Courses are offered to external clients <b>and</b> to Agency employees.

Avoid **get** or **got**—use **obtain** or **obtained**.

<i><b>Avoid</b></i>	<i><b>Use</b></i>
Efforts were made to <b>get</b> the information.	Efforts were made to <b>obtain</b> the information.

Avoid **in order to**—use **to**.

<i><b>Avoid</b></i>	<i><b>Use</b></i>
Consultation exercises were conducted <b>in order to</b> engage the public and Aboriginal groups.	Consultation exercises were conducted <b>to</b> engage the public and Aboriginal groups.

Avoid **since** unless referencing time—use **because**.

<i><b>Avoid</b></i>	<i><b>Use</b></i>
The project was subject to an environmental assessment <b>since</b> the project components required authorization.	The project was subject to an environmental assessment <b>because</b> the project components required authorization.

### Preposition Usage

Avoid **assist + infinitive**—use **assist + in + verb ending in “ing.”**

<i><b>Avoid</b></i>	<i><b>Use</b></i>
They will <b>assist to develop</b> some changes.	They will <b>assist in developing</b> some changes.

Avoid **compare to**—use **compare with**.

Avoid **in comparison to**—use **in comparison with**.

Avoid **different than or different to**—use **different from**.

Avoid **participate at**—use **participate in**.

### Relative Pronouns

Use **that** for defining or restrictive clauses.

#### **Example**

The girl knocked on the door **that** was open. (There were several doors, but she knocked on the only one that was open.)

Use **which** for non-defining or non-restrictive clauses. Always include the comma before “which.”

#### **Example**

The girl knocked on the door, **which** was open. (The door she knocked on happened to be open.)

## Verbs

Avoid split infinitives.

<i><b>Avoid</b></i>	<i><b>Use</b></i>
The countries agreed <b>to fully implement</b> the directives.	The countries agreed <b>to implement</b> the directives <b>fully</b> .

Verbs should be consistent in tense, mood, and voice. The context of the document should determine the appropriate verb tense. Once the main tense has been determined, only shift to other verb tenses to indicate changes in time frame.

## Some English–French Considerations

Ensure there is no space before a colon or percent sign in English-language texts.

Do not superscript ordinals in English.

### **Example**

20th century

**NOT 20<sup>th</sup> century**

Use a period not a comma as a decimal maker in decimal numbers and monetary values.

### **Example**

- 25.14

**NOT 25,14**

- \$15.00

**NOT 15,00 \$**

Watch for spelling differences between words that are similar in English and French.

<b><i>English</i></b>	<b><i>French</i></b>
address	adresse
correspondence	correspondance
environment	environnement
example	exemple
gas	gaz
pavilion	pavillon

# Punctuation

## Period [ . ]

Only one space follows a period between sentences.



English ministerial correspondence has two spaces after the period. See the *Ministerial and Executive Correspondence Guide* for more information.

## Comma [ , ]

Insert a comma before, but not after, “including”, “such as”, and the abbreviations “e.g.” or “i.e.”

Insert a comma before the final “and” or “or” in a series of words.

### **Example**

The program focuses on human rights, good governance, **and** democracy.

## Semicolon [ ; ]

Use the semicolon between independent clauses that are too closely related to be separated by a period.

Semicolons should be used to separate parallel elements in a series, when these elements are complex or contain internal punctuation, such as a comma.

### **Example**

The project focuses on the environment; human rights, good governance, and democracy; and gender equality.

Avoid overusing a semicolon. Instead, consider using a dash, colon, or comma if possible.

## Colon [ : ]

The colon is used primarily to introduce a list, quotations, or declaration.

### Example

These projects are focused in three sectors: minerals and metals, oil and gas, and electricity.

## Hyphen [ - ]

Insert a hyphen to form compound adjectives, nouns, and verbs.

### Examples

- The **five-year** review of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*.
- Environmental assessment is a complex **science-based** undertaking.

Do not insert a hyphen if the meaning is immediately clear from common usage.

### Example

Private sector participation

Insert a hyphen in a written fraction only if it is used as an adjective.

### Examples

**Three quarters** of the country is forest.

**BUT** They won by a **two-thirds** majority.

Do not insert a hyphen between an adverb ending in “-ly” and a participle.

### Example


The methodology was **poorly documented**.

**NOT** The methodology was **poorly-documented**.

Do not hyphenate a compound containing an adverb plus past participle that follows a noun or pronoun.

#### Examples


- The reasons for this decision are **well known**.  
**NOT** The reasons for this decision are **well-known**.
- The applicant is **ill suited** for the job.  
**NOT** The applicant is **ill-suited** for the job.

 There are no spaces on either side of a hyphen.

## Dash

### En Dash [ – ]

Use an en dash to join inclusive numbers and place names, or to modify compound nouns.

 There are no spaces on either side of an en dash.

#### Examples

- fiscal year 2000–2001
- pages 3–12
- Canada–Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board
- post–Cold War diplomacy

In MS Word, the en dash is obtained by typing simultaneously Ctrl and - (minus sign on the numerical keypad).

### Em Dash [ — ]

Use an em dash to introduce a phrase or clause that summarizes, emphasizes or contrasts what has gone on before.

Use an em dash to set off mid-sentence lists punctuated by commas.

Use an em dash when commas would create confusion.

★ There are no spaces on either side of an em dash.

**Example**

The initiative will increase opportunities for all Canadians—individuals, businesses, and communities—to acquire skills and knowledge in this field.

In MS Word, the em dash is obtained by typing simultaneously Ctrl and Alt and - (minus sign on the numerical keypad).

### Oblique [ / ]

Do not insert a space before and after the oblique when it separates single words, letters, or symbols.

Insert a space before and after the oblique when it separates longer groups of words with spaces between them.

**Examples**

- French/English
- Operations Sector / Secteur des opérations

Do not use an oblique when indicating fiscal years, use an en dash.

### Ampersand [ & ]

Do not use the ampersand as a substitute for the word “and.” Use the ampersand if it is part of a corporate name (AT&T). It can be used where space is very limited, such as in tables and figures. It is used for the abbreviated forms of “research and development” (R&D), “questions and answers” (Qs & As) and “science and technology” (S&T).

### Apostrophe [ ' ]

Plurals ending in “s” take only the apostrophe to indicate possession.

**Examples**

- Check your employees’ annual leave balances.  
**NOT** Check your employees’s annual leave balances.

Do not insert an apostrophe to indicate plural acronyms or initialisms.

#### Examples

- Environmental assessments (EAs)  
**NOT** environmental assessments (EA's)

### Quotation Marks [ “ ” ]

Use quotation marks to set off the exact words of a speaker or written source from the main body of a text.

Use double quotation marks:

- to highlight quotes and non-italicized published works, such as the title of an article published in a magazine; and
- to highlight the first mention of a technical word used in non-technical writing, or a word used ironically.

Use single quotation marks for headlines and within a quote that already has double quotation marks.

Use periods and commas inside quotation marks, but use semicolons and colons outside quotation marks.

#### Examples

- According to authorities, the process was considered to be “effective” and “thorough” in all cases.
- The President of the Association announced: “The process was considered to be ‘effective’ and ‘thorough’ in all cases.”



Ensure that quotation marks match the font being used.

# Elements of Style

## Short Form

Always spell out the full title, followed by the short form in parentheses, the first time it appears in the document. However, in a long document, re-establish the short form in each chapter or major section if it appears more than once.

### **Example**

The Joint Review Panel (**the Panel**) for the Joslyn North Mine Project (**the Project**) is an independent body.

See page 14 of the English Style Guide for information on capitalization of short form.



The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency is “the Agency”

**NOT** “the CEA Agency” or “CEAA”

The *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* is “the Act”

**NOT** “the CEA Act” or “CEAA”

## Capitalization

Avoid overcapitalization.

Capitalize official names of programs, strategies, and initiatives. Distinguish between an official name and a generic description.

<i><b>Avoid</b></i>	<i><b>Use</b></i>
The Translation Bureau is <b>a Special Operating Agency</b> of Public Works and Government Services Canada.	The Translation Bureau is <b>a special operating agency</b> of Public Works and Government Services Canada.

## **Acronyms and Initialisms**

Capitalize acronyms or initialisms in their entirety.

### **Example**

Notice of Commencement (**NOC**)

**NOT** Notice of Commencement (**NoC**)

See page 16 of the English Style Guide for more information on acronyms and initialisms.

## Short Form

Capitalize the short form only when it is part of the official name or title.

<i><b>Avoid</b></i>	<i><b>Use</b></i>
Castle Resources Inc. ( <b>the Proponent</b> )	Castle Resources Inc. ( <b>the proponent</b> )

Capitalize the short form of government bodies, such as “the Agency” for the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, or “the Government” for the Government of Canada.

### Example

**The Agency** has reviewed the project description.

Write the short form in lower case when used in a non-specific sense or as an adjective, or preceded by “a”, “our”, “this”, “its”, “their”, or an adjective.

### Examples

- **Our division** is working on a proposal.
- **This government** is committed to protecting the environment.
- The **proposed project** is subject to a comprehensive study.

See page 13 of the English Style Guide for more information on short form.

## Titles and Names

Capitalize official document titles.

### Examples

- The **Comprehensive Study Report** is available for public viewing.  
**BUT A comprehensive study report** will be prepared for this project.
- The **Joint Review Panel** will be holding public hearings.  
**BUT A joint review panel** will be appointed.
- The **Report on Plans and Priorities** sets out the Agency's objectives.  
**BUT Our report on plans and priorities** will be submitted shortly.
- The **Departmental Performance Report** focuses on results-based accountability.  
**BUT This departmental performance report** is organized by strategic outcomes.

### *Professional Titles*

Capitalize professional titles when following a person's name, or referring to a specific person.

### Examples

- The Honourable Rona Ambrose, former **Minister of the Environment**.
- According to **the Vice-President**, the project will be completed in the near future.  
**BUT** All expenditure requests need to be approved by **a vice-president**.
- All completed forms are to be sent to Josephine Blue, **Human Resources Advisor**.  
**BUT** Please send an email to **your human resources advisor**.

### *Government of Canada Names*

Capitalize all levels of government and the names of federal government bodies, committees, boards, and royal commissions.

#### **Examples**

- The Government of Canada
- The House of Commons
- Environment Canada
- The Government of Ontario

### **Headings**

Capitalize all words, except articles, conjunctions, or prepositions of fewer than five letters in titles and headings.

<i><b>Avoid</b></i>	<i><b>Use</b></i>
Promoting Rural Development <b>through</b> Agriculture	Promoting Rural Development <b>Through</b> Agriculture

See page 18 of the English Style Guide for more information on headings.

### Acronyms and Initialisms

An acronym is pronounceable as if it is a word, and tends not to be preceded by the definite article, “the,” for example, SEA, NAFTA, and NATO.

An initialism is not pronounceable as if it is a word, but is by its individual letters, and is usually preceded by “the,” for example, the FCPC, the AEC, and the SMCEA.




IBM and CPR are not preceded by “the.”

Never assume all readers will be familiar with an acronym or an initialism and avoid inventing initialisms or using initialisms that are not commonly understood.



In the body of a text, write out the full name of an acronym or initialism at first mention, followed by the acronym or initialism enclosed in parentheses.


Use an acronym or initialism only if it appears more than once in a text. However, in a long document, re-establish acronyms or initialisms in each chapter or major section if they appear more than once.

 Do not use acronyms or initialisms in titles, headings, or subheadings.

Use the correct spelling used by the organization or program, even if individual elements of the name differ from the English Style Guide.

#### Examples

- OECD is written in full as **Organisation** for Economic Co-operation and Development.
- UNDP is written as United Nations Development **Programme**.

 In a long document that may not be read from cover to cover, a short list of acronyms and other abbreviations should be placed at the beginning to be used as a quick reference.

Include a period after each letter when writing the abbreviated form of a province or country in general text.

#### Examples

- B.C.
- U.S.A.

See page 13 of the English Style Guide for more information on capitalization of acronyms and initialisms.

## Italics

Use **italic** font for the following items if they are published works:

- newspaper
- magazine
- report
- book
- brochure
- film/video
- name of a ship, train, aircraft, or spacecraft
- scientific name of an organism
- full names of acts, statutes, court cases, regulations, agreements, and cabinet directives
- word(s) to be emphasized in a text

**Example**

*The Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals*

Italicize foreign-language and French words that are not assimilated into English.

Do not italicize foreign-language proper names, including the names of organizations.

Do not italicize the name of a province if it is not part of the official name of the act or statute.

**Example**

**Quebec's** *Environment Quality Act*

**BUT** The **Yukon** *Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*

Use **roman** (regular) font enclosed by **quotation marks** for the titles of these items:

- article
- television program
- radio program
- chapter or section of a report

**Example**

"The best of Canada's national parks: an insider's guide", *The Globe and Mail*.

## Headings

Ensure consistent and logical use of headings and subheadings in terms of the font, size, and attributes that distinguish between heading levels. Avoid elaborate numbering of headings and subheadings (1, 1.1, 1.2.1) in short and medium-length documents.

Either title case or sentence case may be used for headings. One style should be followed consistently throughout the document.

**Examples**

- This is an Example of Title Case
- This is an example of sentence case

See page 16 of the English Style Guide for more information on capitalization of headings.

## Vertical Lists

Punctuate lists the same way as sentences; they must read clearly from start to finish.

Do not punctuate or capitalize if entries are very short.

Do not insert a space before the colon.

### **Example**

The following equipment was on sale:

- radios
- televisions
- cameras

When the bullet points of a vertical list are long segments and are not complete and independent sentences, the following guidelines apply:

- Do not capitalize the first word of each bullet point, as the introductory sentence is completed by each bullet point in the list.
- Ensure the first word of each bullet point is from the same part of speech, for example, noun, article, verb (conjugated in the same tense).
- Put a semicolon at the end of each bullet point, except the second-to-last and last bullet points.
- Put a semicolon followed by the word “and” at the end of the second-to-last bullet point.
- Put a period at the end of the last bullet point, because it completes the sentence.

### **Example**

Since the 2003 amendments, several bodies have examined ways to improve the federal environmental assessment process, including:

- the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development;
- the External Advisory Committee on Smart Regulation; **and**
- the task group mandated by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment.

When the bullet points of a vertical list are complete and independent sentences, the following guidelines apply:

- Provide a relevant and clearly expressed introductory sentence.
- Ensure each bullet point in the list completes a meaningful, grammatically correct sentence.
- Capitalize the first word in each bullet point.
- Use a period after each bullet point in the list.

**Example**

A unique Canadian Environmental Assessment Registry reference number is assigned, as follows:

- The first two digits represent the year the environmental assessment started.
- The next two digits correspond to the type of assessment.

## Referencing

### **Bibliography**

#### ***Books***

Author's last name, first initial. (Publication date). *Title of Book*. Additional information.  
City of publication: Publishing company.

**Example**

Allen, T. (1974). *Vanishing wildlife of North America*. Washington D.C.: National Geographic Society.

#### ***Specialized Periodicals***

Author's name. Date. Title of Article. Title of Publication. volume and issue number:  
inclusive pages.

**Example**

Ivanovic, M., and K. Higita. 1991. Advances in cellular and development biology.  
Can. J. Biochem. 125: 539-41.

## ***Website or Webpage***

### **Online periodical**

Author's name. (Date of publication). Title of article. *Title of Periodical*, volume number, Retrieved month day, year, from full URL

### **Online documents**

Author's name. (Date of publication). *Title of work*. Retrieved month day, year from full URL

## **In-text Notes**

Put the author's name and publication date in parentheses at the end of the sentence to be referenced. Include the full reference in the bibliography.

### **Example**

The scope of project to be assessed, to be established pursuant to section 15 of the Act, must include at a minimum, and will generally coincide with, the project as proposed by the proponent. (Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency 2010)

## **Footnotes**


Put a numeral in superscript at the end of the sentence to be referenced. At the foot of the page, put the numeral in superscript followed by the reference information.

### **Example**

The breadth and specificity of the monitoring program will be determined by the biological diversity goals and objectives established during the project planning and environmental analysis stage.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Council on Environmental Quality. (January 1993). *Incorporating Biodiversity Considerations into Environmental Impact Analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act*.

 Avoid using Ibid. On second or subsequent mentions use a shortened form of a previous footnote, adding new page numbers if necessary.

## Photos, Tables, and Graphs

### **Photos**

Identify the people, places, and features in the photograph in a caption in italic font at the bottom left of the photograph.

Include the required photo credit at the end of the caption in parentheses and in a different font size. If known, include the photographer's name in a smaller font size parallel to the bottom or side of the photograph.

#### **Example**



Photo: Janice Lang

*Ward Hunt Island airstrip on the ice.* (Photo courtesy of PCSP/NRCan. CHS/DFO.)

If the photograph appears on the cover of a publication, include the description and photo credit on the inside of the cover page.

#### **Example**

Cover photo: Ward Hunt Island airstrip on the ice. (Photo by Janice Lang, courtesy of PCSP/NRCan. CHS/DFO.)

If most or all of the photographs are from a single source, include the photo credit on the inside of the cover page and a description in a caption below each photo.

**Example**

All photographs are credited to the Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority.

## Tables and Graphs

No credit or reference is needed for tables or graphs that are created by the author of the publication. However, all tables and graphs require a title to explain to the reader what they represent.

Use footnotes directly below the tables or graphs, not at the foot of the page or end of the document, if certain elements of the tables are borrowed from another source, or if additional information is needed to clarify a section of the tables or graphs.

Reference the original source at the end of the table if the tables or graphs are reproduced in their entirety from another source in a publication.

See page 20 of the English Style Guide for more information on referencing.

**Example**

Table with footnotes created by author.

**Table 1: Foreign Currencies: Codes and Values**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Currency</i>	<i>Code<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Value (C\$)<sup>2</sup></i>
Australia	dollar	AUD	\$1.0774
Austria	schilling	ATS	0.1356
Belgium	franc	BEF	0.0464
Brazil	real <sup>3</sup>	BRC	1.4871
France	franc	FRF	0.2796

1. Source: International Standard ISO 4217.
2. Source: Bank of Montreal, March 6, 1996.
3. Official/restricted rate.



This example has been taken from TERMIUM plus, © Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2011, and is based on *The Canadian Style*.

### Example

Table with footnotes taken from a source.

**Table 2: Non-respendable Revenue**

(\$ thousands)

Program Activity	Forecast Revenue 2009-10 <sup>1</sup>	Planned Revenue 2010-11	Planned Revenue 2011-12	Planned Revenue 2012-13
Transportation Infrastructure				
Canada Port Authority stipends	13,143	<b>13,772</b>	14,168	14,997
Hopper cars (lease and damage settlements)	15,800	<b>14,000</b>	14,000	17,000
Non - navigational assets - St. Lawrence Seaway	7,638	<b>7,783</b>	7,954	8,121
Airport Authorities lease payments <sup>2</sup>	0	<b>252,812</b>	266,892	277,953
<b>Total Non-respendable Revenue</b>	<b>36,581</b>	<b>288,367</b>	<b>303,014</b>	<b>318,071</b>

1. Reflects best forecast of planned spending to the end of the fiscal year based on actual information at November 30, 2009.

2. Starting in 2010-2011, the majority of revenue from Airport Authorities lease payments will be deposited directly into the Consolidated Revenue Fund instead of being treated as respendable revenue.

Source: Transport Canada. (2009). *Reports on Plans and Priorities*. Retrieved June 14, 2011 from [www.tc.gc.ca/eng/corporate-services/planning-625.htm](http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/corporate-services/planning-625.htm)

## Numbers, Units, Dates, and Times

### Numbers

Spell out numbers one to ten.

Insert a space to separate groups of three numerals once four numerals are exceeded, except with monetary values.

Use a period as a decimal marker.

#### Examples

- The project is expected take **one to four** years to complete.
- The project is expected to produce **5300** kilograms of gold and **100 000** kilograms of copper.
- It will cost **\$150,000** to develop the land.
- The door measures **1.25** metres.

Use numerals for percentages—even those less than 10 (except when beginning a sentence).

#### Examples

He negotiated a **1-percent** salary increase.

**BUT One percent** is a small margin.

The word “percent” (written as one word) is preferred over the symbol (%), unless space is limited, as in tables and figures. There should be no space between the numeral and the symbol, for example, 95%.

Telephone numbers for voice and data transmission are written with hyphens separating groups of numerals, including area codes.

#### Example

819-555-5555

## Units

### *Monetary*

Write monetary units, such as million, billion, in full, except where space is limited, for example, tables.

#### **Example**

Budget 2007 allocated \$150 **million** over five years to programs.

### *Measurement*

Write units of measurement, such as kilometres, in full, except where space is limited, for example, tables.

#### **Examples**

- The settlement area covers 72 520 **square kilometres** of land.
- The project is expected to generate approximately 4800 **megawatts** of electricity.

Always write the symbol of a unit of measurement in lower case.

Always insert a space between the value and the symbol of a unit of measurement.

Use the symbol of a unit of measurement in tables or where space is limited.



Capitalize megawatts (MW), kilovolt (kV) and kilowatt (kW).

## Dates

When writing inclusive years, including fiscal years, use all four numerals and separate them with an en dash without spaces on either side.

#### **Examples**

These are the most common ways of referring to inclusive periods:

- 2000–2004
- in 2000–2004
- from 2000 to 2004
- between 2000 and 2004

Insert a comma after the day of the week, when included in the date.

**Example**

Monday, June 6, 2011

Do not use ordinal numbers, such as “1st”, “2nd”, “3rd”, or “4th”, in dates.

<i><b>Avoid</b></i>	<i><b>Use</b></i>
September <b>21st</b>	September <b>21</b>

When referring to a decade, add an “s” without an apostrophe.

**Example**

The 1990**s**

**NOT** The 1990’s

Insert actual dates for the sake of clarity.

<i><b>Avoid</b></i>	<i><b>Use</b></i>
The meeting was held <b>last month</b> .	The meeting was held in <b>September 2010</b> .

## Times

The time of day should always include the hour, a colon, the minutes, a space, and the abbreviation for *ante meridiem* “before noon” or *post meridiem* “after noon.”

**Examples**

- 5:36 **a.m.**
- 1:56 **p.m.**



It may be desirable to use the 24-hour system in bilingual government documents.

Always indicate “noon” or “midnight” after “12:00” to avoid confusion.

**Examples**

- The meeting will be held at **12:00 noon** today.
- The system update will start at **12:00 midnight**.

## Honorifics

Use the appropriate honorific before the last name of an individual. Use “Ms.” for the name of a woman, unless she has another preference. Use “Dr.” only for medical doctors, dentists, and veterinarians.

### **Examples**

- **Ms.** Carmichael lives in California.
- **Mr.** Milton has a PhD in English.
- **Dr.** Downes is a veterinarian.

The name of government ministers should be preceded by “the Honourable” on first mention and “Minister” thereafter.

### **Example**

**The Honourable** Peter Kent, Minister of the Environment participated in Environment Week. **Minister** Kent made four appearances in total.

When referring to the federal, Ontario or Quebec minister responsible for the environment write “the Minister of the Environment”. When referring to ministers responsible for the environment in all other provinces write “the Minister of Environment.”

Quebec provincial ministers are addressed as Mr. or Mrs. in all English correspondence.

### **Examples**

- **Mr.** Jean Charest, Premier of Quebec
- **Mr.** Jean-Marc Fournier, Minister of Justice

## Geographical Names

In English text, Quebec the province does not take an accent, whereas Québec the city does. Use the official French name, including accents, for cities in Quebec.

### **Examples**

- Montréal  
**NOT** Montreal
- Trois-Rivières  
**NOT** Three Rivers

## Addresses

Mailing addresses take the two-letter Canada Post provincial symbol, for example, BC.

Do not use a comma between the city and the provincial symbol.

Insert two spaces between the provincial symbol and the postal code.

### **Example**

Pacific and Yukon Regional Office  
Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency  
757 West Hastings Street, Suite 320  
Vancouver BC V6C 1A1

The abbreviation for post office box is P.O. Box.

## Website Addresses

Website addresses should be hyperlinked.



Website addresses should be italicized not hyperlinked in all English ministerial correspondence. See the *Ministerial and Executive Correspondence Guide* for more information.

Do not put http:// at the beginning of a website address if it begins with www.

Do not put a period at the end of the website address as this could be seen as being part of the website's address.

### **Example**

Visit the Agency's website for more information: [www.ceaa.gc.ca](http://www.ceaa.gc.ca)

# Online Resources

## General Terminology

- TERMIUM Plus (<http://btb.termiumplus.gc.ca>)
- Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary ([www.merriam-webster.com/home.htm](http://www.merriam-webster.com/home.htm))
- Gender Neutral Terminology ([www.justice.gc.ca/eng/dept-min/pub/legis/n15.html](http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/dept-min/pub/legis/n15.html))

## Reference Tools

- Language Portal of Canada ([www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca](http://www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca))
- *The Canadian Style*  
(<http://btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/tpv2guides/guides/tcdnstyl/index-eng.html?lang=eng>)
- HyperGrammar 2 (verb tenses and more)  
(<http://btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/tpv2guides/guides/hyper/index-eng.html?lang=eng&page=usetense.html>)

## Agency-specific Information

- *Ministerial and Executive Correspondence Guide* (<http://atrium.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=7E193ABE-1#min>)
- Agency Lexicon and Acronym List (<http://atrium.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=E8B3AA31-1#redaction>)

## Appendix—Words to Watch

Word	Note
3D	
aboriginal	Regarding worldwide groups
Aboriginal	Regarding Canada's First Nations
aboveboard	
above-mentioned	
abridgment	Not <i>abridgement</i>
acknowledgement	Not <i>acknowledgment</i>
Act	Not CEA Act
ad hoc	Not italicized
advice	Is the noun
advise	Is the verb
advisor	Not <i>adviser</i>
aesthetic	
affect	Is the verb. See effect.
Agency	Not CEAA or the CEA Agency
allocable	Not allocatable
all right	
allotment	
allotted	
analogue	
analyze	Not <i>analyse</i>
Anglophone	
any more	Regarding quantity
anymore	As in “any longer”
appall	
appalling	
appendix	Not annex
appendixes	Not <i>appendices</i>

assist + in + gerund or noun	Not assist + infinitive verb
audiovisual	
axe	Not ax
B.C.	Not BC
bachelor's	
biased	
bipartisan	
BlackBerry	Plural BlackBerrys
bonuses	
break-up	Is the noun
break up	Is the verb
businessperson	
bylaw	
c.v.	
cancelled	
carry-over	Is the noun
catalogue	
centre	Not center
centred	Not centered
channelled	Not channeled
child care	Is the noun
child-care	Is the adjective
citywide	
co-author	
co-chair	
coloration	
colour	
colouring	

committee	
compare + with	Not compare <i>to</i>
compared + to	
connection	Not connexion
convenor	
co-op	
councillor	Meaning council member
counsellor	Meaning advisor
counter-productive	
courseware	
crosscutting	
curriculums	Not curricula
cutback	
cybersecurity	
data bank	Use database
day care	Is the noun
day-care	Is the adjective
defence	Not defense
dialling	
dialogue	
different + from	Not different + to
diffuse	
Director General	Plural is directors general
disk	Not disc
distill	
distilled	
double-check	
downtime	
drop-out (drop-in, drop-off)	Is the noun

drop out (drop in, drop off)	Is the verb
e.g.	not italicized
eco-friendly	
ecosystem	
elite	
email	not e-mail
enrol	
enrolled	
ensure	Meaning “to make sure”, not <i>insure</i>
equalled	
every day	
everyday	Is the adjective
extracurricular	
farther, further	farther is for literal distances, further for all
fast track	Is the noun
fast-track	Is the verb
fervour	
First Nation(s)	
first-hand	
flood water	
flowchart	
flyer	Meaning pamphlet
focused	
focuses	
focusing	
follow up	Is the verb
follow-up	Is the noun or the adjective
forego	Meaning “precede” cf. forgo

forestall	
forestalment	
forgo	Meaning “relinquish” cf. forego
formulas	Not formulae
forums	Not fora
Francophone	
fresh water	Is the noun
fresh-water	Is the adjective
fuelled	
fulfil	
fulfilled	
fulfilment	
fundraising	
gases	
GC	Meaning Government of Canada
grey	
ground swell	
groundbreaking	
groundwater	
handmade	
handout	
head-on	
health care	
honorary	
honourable	Not honorable. Note: the Honourable
hydroelectric	Not hydro-electric
i.e.	Abbr. of namely, or that is

in-depth	
indexes	
Indian	Avoid re First Nations
indices	Technical use
indigeneous	Regarding non-Canadians
Indigeneous	Regarding Canadians
infill	
in-house	
install	
installation	
instalment	
instil	
instilled	
instilment	
interagency	
interbranch	
intergenerational	
intergovernmental	
interministerial	
Internet	
interregional	
intranet	
Innu	Aboriginal people who live in Northern Quebec and Labrador
Inuit	Aboriginal people of Arctic Canada
Inuk	Singular of Inuit
its	Is the possessive form
it's	Meaning "it is"
jewellery	

judgment	
jump-start	Is a noun or a verb
keyword	
kick-start	
kilometer	
km	As in 10 km
know-how	
L20	Leader forum based on G20
La Francophonie	
labeled	
landlocked	
levelled	Not leveled (US spelling)
libelous	
licence	Is the noun
license	Is the verb
life cycle	
lifespan	
lifelong	
lifesaving	
lifestyle	
life skills	
likable	
livable	
log in, log out	Is the verb
log-in, log-out	Is the noun
long-standing	
long-time	
makeup	Is the noun

make up	Is the verb
man-made	
manoeuvre	
marshaled	
marvellous	
master's	Meaning the degree
meagre	
memorandum	Plural is memoranda
Métis	
mid-Atlantic	
midcontinent	
midcourse	
midday	
mid-life	
mid-size	
midstream	
midsummer	
mid-term	
mid-winter	
midyear	
moneys	
mould	
movable	
multi-billion	
multi-channel	
multicultural	
multi-dimensional	
multidisciplinary	
multi-faceted	
multilateral	

multilingual	
multimedia	
multi-million	
multinational	
multi-party	
multisectoral	
multistakeholder	
multi-year	
nationwide	
Native	Avoid re First Nations
non-governmental	
north	
the North	the Arctic in Canada
noticeable	
occurrence, occurring	
odour	
offence	
offline	
off-site	
online	Not on-line
on-site	
order-in-council	
organize, organization	
orient	Not orientate
panelist	
paragovernmental	
paralleled	

paralyze	Not paralyse
Parliament	
parliamentarian	
pastime	
percent	Not per cent
per diem	Not italicized
<i>per se</i>	Italicized
person-day	
P.O. Box	Not PO Box
policyholder	
post-doctoral	
postgraduate	
post-secondary	
practice	Is the noun
practise	Is the verb
predate	
predetermined	
pre-empt	
preset	
pretence	
program	
public service	But “the Public Service”
Quebecker	
R&D	Acronym for Research and Development
realign	
re-establish	
referendums	
reintegrate	

reprofile	
resupply	
revegetation	
rigour	
rollout	
round table	
run off	
salt water	Is the noun
saltwater	Is the adjective
seawater	
second-hand	
semi-annual	
semimonthly	
semiofficial	
semiskilled	
semi-yearly	
set-up	
signaling	
sizable	
skeptic	Not sceptic
skillful	
skillfully	
somber	
south	
southern	
spinoff	
splendour	
stakeholder	
start-up	Is the noun

start up	Is the verb
stopgap	
sub-basin	
sub-branch	
subclass	
subcommittee	
submitted	
subnational	
subproject	
subregion	
subtotal	
takeoff	Is the noun
take off	Is the verb
targeted	
task force	
think-tank	
time frame	
time line	
toolkit	
totaling	
toward	Not towards
trade-off	Is the noun
tranquelize	
transatlantic	
transborder	
transboundary	
transpacific	
traveler	
travelling	

turnout	Is the noun
underappreciated	
underpopulated	
underrated	
underreport	
up-to-date	Is the adjective
up to date	Is the adverb
underway	
username	
valourous	
valour	
value added	Is the noun
value-added	Is the adjective
vaporize	
vapour	
vice-president	
vigorous	
vigour	
vs.	Abbr. for versus
waste water	
water borne	
Web	the Internet
web browser	
Web page	
webcam	
webcast	
weblog	

website	
well-being	
whole-of-government	
wiki	
wilfulness	
willful	
willfully	
work station	
workforce	
workplace	
worktable	
worldwide	
work plan	
X-ray	
yearlong	