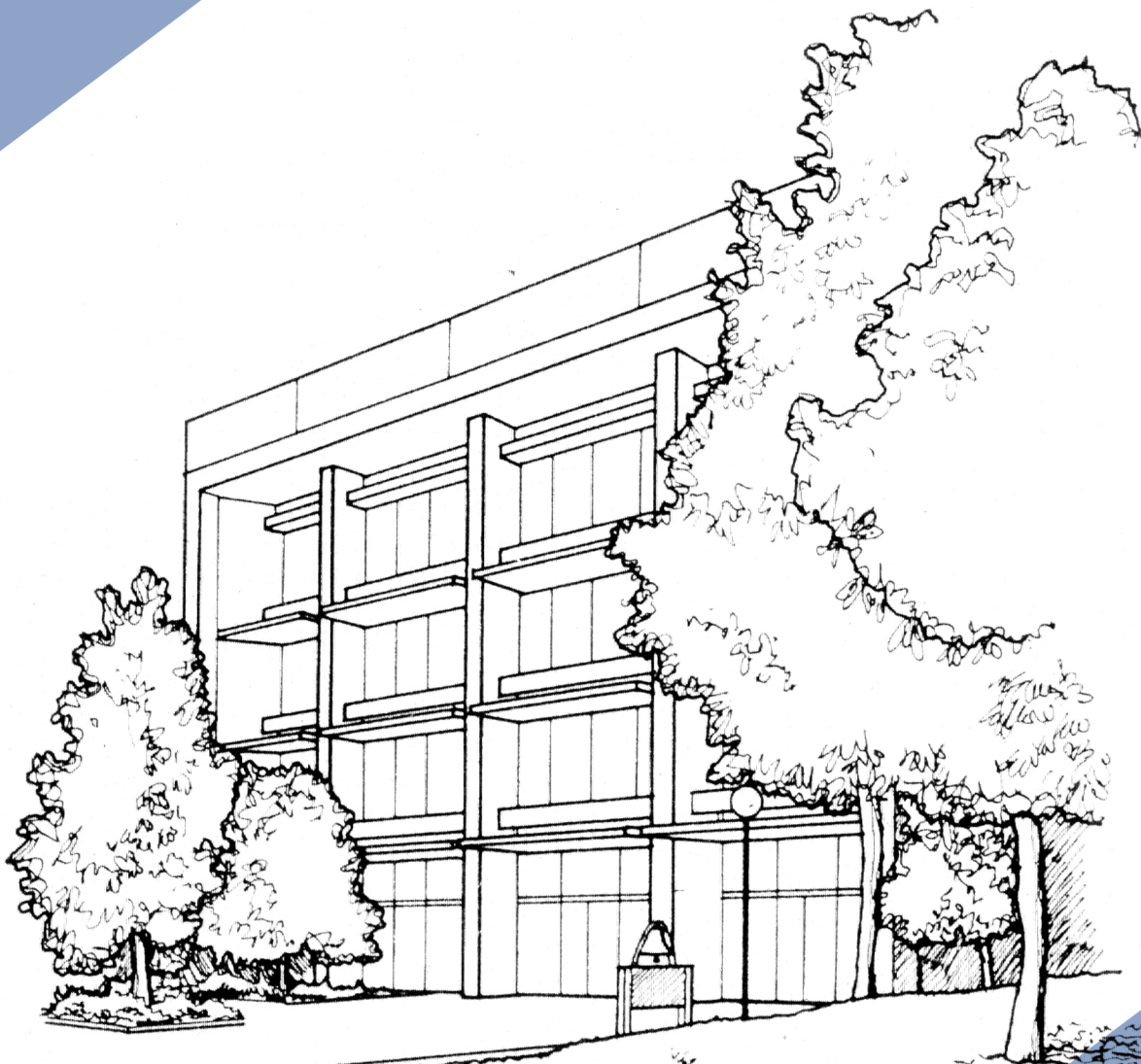


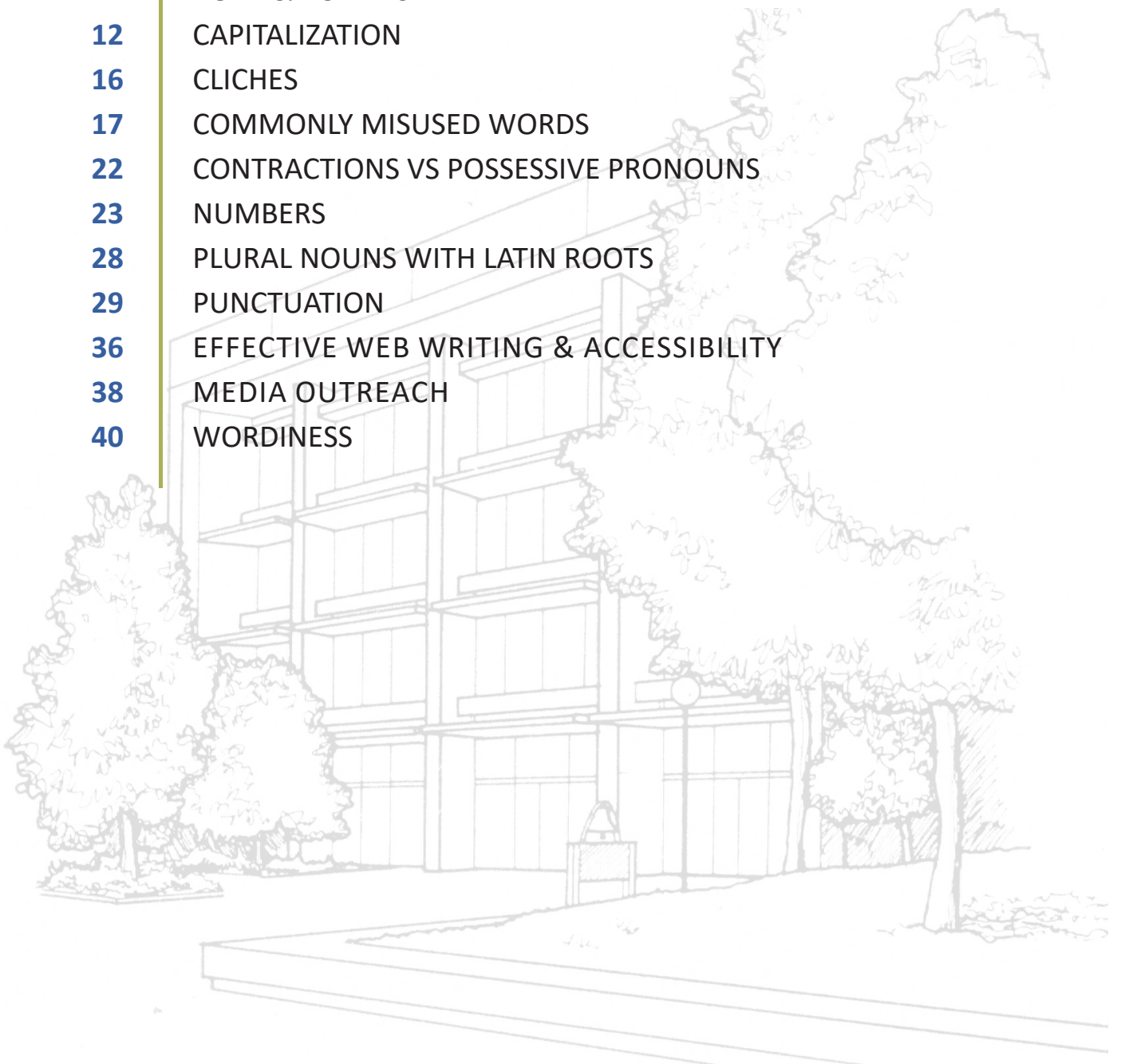
# EDITORIAL GUIDE

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# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guide is to assist you in writing effectively. To be an effective writer, you must convey information in a grammatically correct and stylistically consistent manner. The City of Fairfield style is a straightforward or “Plain English” style. We avoid jargon, acronyms, clichés and overly-technical writing.

## City of Fairfield Style

- We always consider the reader or audience for our writing.
- Our goal is to successfully convey our messages to them.
- We use shorter, fewer sentences.
- We prefer active to passive voice.
- We avoid using technical language or jargon.
- We use either first or third person point of view.
- We write the way we speak (in a professional manner).
- We use language that is clear, concise, complete, correct and courteous.

Our guiding principle: Write clearly and accurately, keeping the needs of the reader in mind. The reader should be able to read or scan your writing once and get the information they need. Always have someone else **proofread** pieces you write that will be disseminated to the public, checking for typos, errors, and effective conveyance of message.



# ABBREVIATIONS

- Use abbreviations sparingly. Relying too heavily on abbreviations can give informal, non-technical prose a choppy, jargon-like quality. Weed out all but the most necessary instances and make sure they're clearly defined.
- Abbreviations should never lead to ambiguity.
- Your readers must always understand exactly what the abbreviations mean.
- Abbreviations and most acronyms should be avoided in headlines.

**When in doubt, spell the word out.**

## Abbreviate:

**1** Complimentary titles, such as Mr., Mrs., and Dr., but do not use them in combination with any other title, or with abbreviations indicating scholastic or academic degrees. These and similar titles are typically not used in running text after first reference.

- **Paul Huston, Ph.D., not Dr. Paul Huston, Ph.D.**
- **Roger White, DVM, not Mr. Roger White, DVM**

**2** The degrees Bachelor of Science, Master of Science, Master of Arts, Doctor of Philosophy, Physician, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies, and Associate in Science to **B.S., M.S., M.A., Ph.D., M.D., B.F.A., B.A.I.S., and A.S.**, respectively. Except for Ph.D. and similar compound abbreviations, all degree abbreviations should be without periods.



## ABBREVIATIONS

- 3** When names of government agencies or other organizations are abbreviated as acronyms or initials (first letter of each word), use full caps with no periods:
  - **FBI (not F.B.I.), ROTC, CIA**
- 4** Use **a.m.** and **p.m.** with periods and lowercase letters. *In tables, graphics and social posts, omit periods to save space.*
- 5** Use **U.S.** in text only as an adjective. Spell out United States as a noun, e.g., the U.S. Senate, but a resident of the United States.
- 6** Abbreviate months only when they are used with a specific date. *Exceptions may be made in graphics, social media posts or tables.*
  - **December 2020, but Dec. 25, 2019**
- 7** Use the ampersand (&) only in corporate names, titles of published works (**Parks & Recreation Department**), *or if space demands it in the course abbreviations, social media posts, or graphics.*
- 8** With dates or numerals:
  - **Use the abbreviations: A.D. , B.C., a.m., p.m., No., etc.** *(Periods may be eliminated in tables, graphics or social media posts).*



## DO NOT ABBREVIATE...

**A** Given names, such as George, William, and Charles.

**B** In text, the words **association, avenue, boulevard, department, institute, street, etc.**

**C** Christmas in the form of **Xmas**.

**D** The name of an organization the first time it is used; spell out and put the acronym in parentheses. If the term appears only once, do not add the acronym.

- **Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG); thereafter, ABAG**  
Note: If you use an acronym throughout a multi-chaptered document, spell out the acronym the first time it appears in each chapter.

**E** We now use the % symbol in all but casual cases.

- **Of this year's program enrollment, 46% are men and 54% are women**
- **Fairfield and Vallejo each lost 0.2% of their 1960 population. The greatest percentage growth was experienced by San Francisco—115.2%**

**F** We now use accent marks and other diacritical marks in the names of people who request them.

- **Cloë, Zoë, Renée, Noël, Adrián, etc.**



# DO NOT ABBREVIATE...

## G

The names of streets or states when written in text. Only abbreviate street or state names when addressing letters and envelopes, or when numeral addresses are used.

- **Correct: The Community Center is on Kentucky Street, not Pennsylvania Avenue**
- **Incorrect: Ave, St, or Blvd in running text or invitations**

## H

Parts of geographic names, except Saint in St. Louis, St. Paul, etc., unless they are used in tables.

- **Correct: St. Helena, California (if in text)**
- **Incorrect: Ft. Sam Houston, Texas**

## I

Assistant and associate when used in a job title.

- **Assistant Director**
- **Associate Planner**

## J

Names of buildings in running text.

- **City Manager's Office Conference Room, not CMO Conference Room**

## K

Abbreviations of Latin terms are acceptable in tables and other situations where space is limited; in running text, however, the English equivalent is preferred. Latin abbreviations include periods and are lowercase.

- **e.g. for example**
- **e.g. for example**
- **i.e. that is**
- **etc. and other; and so on**



# DO NOT ABBREVIATE...

**L**

Units of measurement. Spell out units of weight and measure when used in nontechnical material.

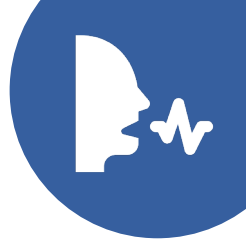
- **My office is 17 by 15 feet**

The sprinter took second in the 200-meter dash.

Abbreviate them only in technical material or tables.

Abbreviations of English measurements contain periods, metric abbreviations do not.

- **English: in., cu. ft., oz., lb., gal.**
- **Metric: cm, mm, kg, kWh, l**



# ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICES

Any sentence that pairs a verb with an object should be written in active voice. In active voice, the subject of the sentence does the acting. In passive voice, the subject is acted upon. *Use active voice unless the writing specifically calls for passive voice.*

Active voice moves your writing along more smoothly and powerfully. Passive voice is often wordy, slow, and confusing. *Remember that passive voice is not more formal than active voice; it is simply weaker and less direct.*

- **Active:** Public Works paves Fairfield streets.
- **Passive:** Fairfield streets are paved by Public Works.

## 1

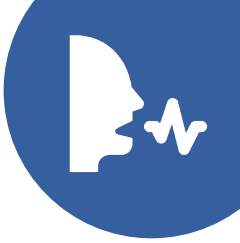
Reserve the passive voice for situations where it does something the active voice cannot do: For instance, when the doer of the action is unknown or unimportant, when you need to avoid sexual stereotyping, or when you do not want to indicate specific authorship for an action.

- **Passive:** The program participant was expelled.

[Emphasis is not on the actor, but the one acted upon. This helps deflect negative attention to the actor.]

- **Active:** We expelled the program participant.

[As is, the focus is on the actor. It places the responsibility on the actor.]



# ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICES

**2** Avoid sudden shifts between active and passive voice.

- **Poor:** The interns went to Allan Witt Park, where many trees were examined.
- **Better:** The interns examined many trees at Allan Witt Park.
- **Poor:** The noise of the explosion frightened us; we were scared by the fire and flying debris, too.
- **Better:** The noise of the explosion frightened us and the fire and flying debris scared us.



## BOLD & BULLETS

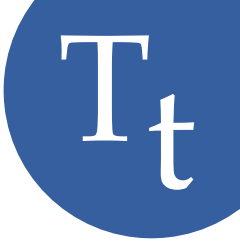
1. Use bold for emphasis, especially in web text or promotional materials.

2. As a general rule, do not bold/highlight punctuation that immediately follows a bold/highlighted word. We do make exceptions in some cases for clarity or as part of a graphic treatment.

- Please come to the meeting with your **completed XYZ form-VOTE!**

## BULLETS

- In bulleted lists within text passages, the bullet is the punctuation. No other punctuation is required to separate listed items. Do not use commas or semicolons at the end of each item but there should be a period at the end of complete sentences. Place a period at the end of the last item in the list.
- The first word of each sentence or sentence fragment should be capitalized.
- Avoid mixing sentence and non-sentence items in a bulleted list.
- Use parallel structures. Construction of the bulleted items should be alike; same verb tenses, all being fragments, or all sentences, and so forth.

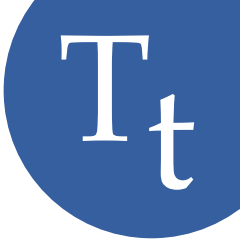


# CAPITALIZATION

## Capitalize...

- 1** Proper nouns, months, days of the week, but not seasons.
- 2** The City of Fairfield when referring to city government, but do not capitalize “city” when referring to the community.
  - **The City of Fairfield hosted a seminar for staff.**
  - **The city of Fairfield has a very diverse population.**
- 3** The official names of departments when used in text; do not capitalize the informal name.
  - **He works in the Police Department.**
  - **He placed a call to the police.**
- 4** All conferred and traditional, educational, occupational, and business titles when used specifically in front of the name; do not capitalize these titles when they follow the name or are used alone.
  - **City Manager Jon Smith, City of Fairfield**
  - **Jon Smith, city manager**
  - **Mayor Jon Smith is chair of the Solano Transportation Authority.**

*Note: In tables and addresses, these titles may be capitalized regardless of location.*



## CAPITALIZATION

**5** The words **Air Force, Army, Navy, and Marines**, when referring to U.S. armed forces, whether or not preceded by U.S.

**6** The words **association, building, center, club, conference, department, division, office, program, senate, street, etc.**, when used as part of a title; thereafter, do not capitalize the words when used alone to refer to that specific place or group.

- **the US Senate; thereafter, the senate**
- **the Public Works Department; thereafter, the department**
- **the Community Center; thereafter, the center**
- **the Housing Rehabilitation Program; thereafter, the program**
- **City Council; thereafter, the council**

**7** Entire geographic names.

- **Allan Witt Neighborhood Park**
- **Putah Creek**

**8** Geographical regions of the country, but not points of the compass (direction or locality).

- **Midwest, but middle western**
- **East Coast, Gulf Coast**
- **in the Southeast or Northern Hemisphere, but northern Atlantic**



## CAPITALIZATION

**9** Figure or Table, and their abbreviations, when used in text to designate a specific insert.

- **Figure 1 shows the flotation process.**
- **The flotation process (Fig. 1) removes the fish waste.**

**10** Names of all races and nationalities, but do not capitalize white and black when referring to groups of people.

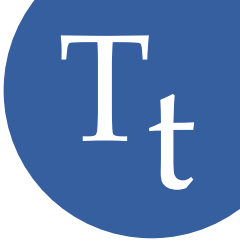
- **African American, Caucasian, Nigerian, Irish, Japanese**

**11** The word room when used to designate a particular room.

- **Community Development Large Conference Room**

**12** Official college degrees when spelled out.

- **Bachelor of Fine Arts, but bachelor's degree**
- **Master of Philosophy, but master's degree**



# CAPITALIZATION

## Do not capitalize...

**A** Words such as **city, department, division, association, program and project** when they stand alone, even if they refer to a specific, previously identified entity. The only exception to this rule is City when referring to the City of Fairfield as an entity.

**B** Titles standing alone or in apposition.

- **The city manager must approve all travel requests.**
- **Contact the finance director for further information.**
- **Jane Doe, program coordinator, will speak at the symposium.**

**C** Unofficial titles preceding a name: **comedian Amy Schumer.**

**D** Names of seasons.

**E** **DO NOT USE ALL CAPITALS.** *An exception is addresses on envelopes and digital graphics.*

Grammatical rules regarding capitalization are often bent for the sake of visual appeal in headings, display type, and tables.



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# CLICHÉS

Clichés are expressions once thought to be clever but are now overused and trite. Avoid using them.

If you've heard an expression before, consider it a cliché. Replace clichés with crisper, more original prose, or freshen them up with a new twist.

Examples of clichés are:

- **Let's touch base, in a nutshell, all walks of life, bring to the table, I'm giving it 110%, going forward, at long last, working in silo's etc.**



# COMMONLY MISUSED WORDS

Writers commonly confuse or misuse certain words, such as affect/effect or comprise/compose.

Here are some of the most troublesome:

## Affect/Effect

Use **affect** as a verb meaning “to influence”. Use **effect** as a noun meaning “result” or a verb meaning “to complete or bring about”.

- **The effect of the chemical fire on the business park was predictable; every single company was affected.**
- **Her actions effected a major change in policy.**

## Amount/Number

Use **amount** with imprecise quantities or quantities not easily counted, or when the focus is on the aggregate, not the individual parts. Use **number** with precise quantities you can count.

- **Do you know the number of books we have in the library?**
- **She has a huge amount of money.**

## And/Or

Do not use **and/or** as it can be confusing and sloppy. Instead, use A or B, or both.

- **Lunch includes a hotdog or hamburger, or both.**



# COMMONLY MISUSED WORDS

## Assure/Ensure/Insure

Use **assure** to mean to “say or write the guarantee or set the mind at rest”. Use **ensure** to mean to “do something to make sure that something happens”. Use **insure** to mean “guarantee something with insurance or other financial instrument”.

- **He assured me that he would finish the report today.**
- **IT installed the firewall to ensure that hackers don’t violate the system.**
- **The City requires that all its employees insure their cars against accidents.**

## Between/Among

Use **between** to connect two entities. Use **among** to connect three or more entities.

- **He can’t choose between an accounting course or a marketing course.**
- **The prize was divided among the five contestants.**

## Bring/Take

Use **bring** or **take** based on your point of reference for the action. Use **bring** when people are delivering things to the place you are located. Use **take** when people are moving things to where you are going or away from you.

- **Quick test: Bring things here and take things there.**



# COMMONLY MISUSED WORDS

## Compare to/Compare with

Use **compare to** when referring to resemblances between things that are essentially not alike. Use **compare with** when referring to things that are essentially similar.

- **Don't compare me to a summer's day. Compare me with my mother!**

## Complement/Compliment

Use **complement** as a verb meaning “to complete or bring to perfection” or a noun meaning “something that completes”. Use **compliment** as a verb meaning “to praise or flatter” or a noun meaning “flattering remark”.

- **Your blue scarf would complement my new blouse.**
- **Stefan is a complement to any team.**
- **He complimented me on my corner office.**

## Comprise/Compose

Use **comprise** to mean “to consist of”. Use **compose** to mean “to constitute or form.”

- **In other words, the whole comprises the parts; the parts compose the whole**
- **City Hall comprises four floors. Four floors compose City Hall.**



# COMMONLY MISUSED WORDS

## Continual/Continuous

Use **continual** to mean “repeated regularly with pauses and breaks”. Use **continuous** to mean “uninterrupted, without pauses or breaks”.

- Telephone solicitors call me continually at home.
- Yesterday, the fire alarm in the lobby wailed continuously.

## Farther/Further

Use **farther** to refer to physical distance. Use **further** to describe an extent or a degree (a nonphysical distance).

- I can't run any farther than five miles.
- Julie developed her arguments further than anyone in her department expected.

## Fewer/Less

Use **fewer** with numbers or items that can be precisely counted. Use **less** with quantities that cannot be precisely counted.

- They received fewer negative comments from the public this year, and they expect to hear even less criticism next time.



# COMMONLY MISUSED WORDS

## Stationary/Stationery

**Stationary** means “unmoving or unchanging”. **Stationery** refers to writing paper and envelopes.

## Toward

Use **toward** *not towards* to indicate direction.

- I was walking toward the parking lot before I realized I’d left my phone in the office.

## Who/Which/That

Always use **who** when referring to people. Use **which** or **that** when referring to animals, things, concepts, or groups.

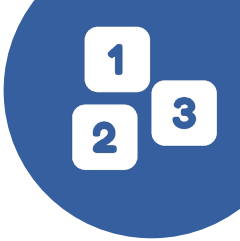
- She wondered why my mother, who is of Japanese descent, has blond hair.
- The new computer parts, which were just delivered, are the wrong size.
- The soccer team that usually makes it to the national championships didn’t qualify this year.



# CONTRACTIONS VS POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

Do not confuse certain contractions with sound-alike possessive pronouns or adverbs. Check carefully to avoid these potential errors. Your spell checker will **NOT** be able to pick them up.

<i>It's Contraction: "It is"</i>	<b>It's too hot outside today.</b>
<i>Its Possessive pronoun</i>	<b>The peacock lost its feathers.</b>
<i>You're Contraction: "you are"</i>	<b>You're standing in the wrong line.</b>
<i>Your Possessive pronoun</i>	<b>Your phone is on the desk.</b>
<i>Who's Contraction: "who is"</i>	<b>Who's there?</b>
<i>Whose Possessive pronoun</i>	<b>We have one person whose job is to fix that.</b>
<i>They're Contraction: "They are"</i>	<b>They're waiting in the conference room.</b>
<i>Their Possessive pronoun</i>	<b>We have their presentation loaded up.</b>
<i>There Adverb</i>	<b>There are five consultants competing.</b>



# NUMBERS

Writing numbers as words or numerals depends on whether the surrounding text is technical or nontechnical.

## In nontechnical text:

**1** Spell out whole numbers from one through ten.

- **three invoices**
- **four-by-six cards**

**2** Use numerals for all numbers 11 or over.

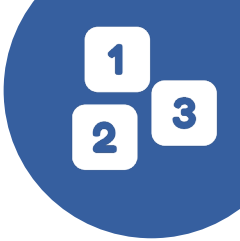
- **57 applications**
- **100 bricks**
- **374 parents**
- **1,985 manhole covers**

**3** Use numerals, followed by million, billion, and so on.

- **2 million ball bearings**
- **60 million particles**

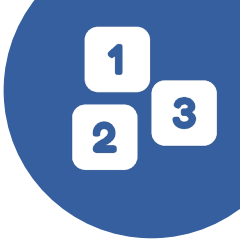
**4** Use a combination of numerals and words for dollar amounts in excess of a million and for large round numbers greater than ninety million. A hyphen is not used to join numerals and the words million, billion, etc.

- **a \$168 million budget**
- **300 million seedlings**



# NUMBERS

- 5** Numerals may not begin a sentence; rewrite to avoid.
- ***Incorrect:* 121 international visitors lived in Fairfield last year.**
  - ***Correct:* Last year, 121 international visitors lived in Fairfield.**
- 6** Days of the month should be written in numeric form, omitting rd, th, st, nd, etc.
- **April 6**
  - **June 1**
- 7** Use numerals and standard marks for degrees, ratios, percentages, and persons' ages.
- **longitude 67°03'06"W**
  - **91.5°F**
  - **16 percent**
  - **57 years old**
- 8** In order to maintain consistency, whenever several numbers modify the same kind of item or group within a sentence, style them the same way, either as words or numerals. The style for the larger numbers governs the lesser ones; the style for specific numbers governs round numbers.
- **22 hours, 12 minutes, 6 seconds**
  - **Twelve hats, five purses, and seven sweaters were sold yesterday.**
- Make sure, however, the numbers are modifying the same kind of items or groups; if they do not, a parallel style is not necessary.
- **I've heard that three engineers discovered 234 errors in the building's plans.**



# NUMBERS

- 9** Use parentheses around the area code and hyphens when writing phone numbers.

When set in display, precede the number by “O |” for office phone or “F |” for Fax and “C |” for Cell. Do not allow phone numbers to be broken at the end of a line and continued on the next.

- **O | (707) 428-7400**
- **F | (707) 428-7400**
- **C | (707) 428-7400**

- 10** Use extended zip codes wherever possible.

- **94533-4332**

- 11** Avoid unnecessary zeroes.

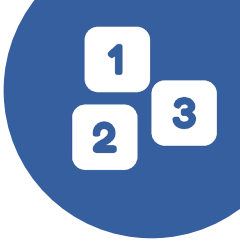
Hours of the day should be expressed like 7 p.m. or 7:30 p.m. Do not use 7:00 p.m. except in lists of events, to preserve alignment of type, or for formal invitations.

Keep amounts of money simple as well, with the dollar sign--unless tabulated in columns.

- **\$3, not \$3.00**

- 12** Number words under 100 (and those parts of numbers words for numbers above 100) should be hyphenated when they consist of two words.

- **Thirty-nine cars are in the lot.**
- **One hundred and twenty-two people attended the event.**



# NUMBERS

**13** Do not add a numeral in parentheses after use of a number word.

- **three copies, not three (3) copies**

**14** To ensure readability, whenever two numbers occur next to each other, spell out one number, and use a numeral for the other. When one number is a unit of measurement, make it the numeral.

- **Juan is taking two 4-credit courses.**

**15** To form plurals of numerals, add -s (not -'s).

- **In the 1980s, the City paved 500 roads.**

**16** Use commas as place markers in numerals of four digits or more. Exceptions are years of four digits or fewer.

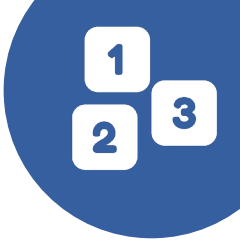
- **There are 9,850 residents online.**
- **The park was built in 1959.**

**17** Spell out short and simple fractions in nontechnical text.

- **That envelope is seven-eighths of an inch too long.**

Use numerals to express more complicated fractions (such as compound fractions). Fractions expressed in decimal form are sometimes the clearest and simplest format.

- **Nearly 0.3 percent of the U.S. population has seen one of the new Sprite commercials.**
- **The County Library holds 1.85 million volumes.**



# NUMBERS

Hyphenate all fractions expressed in words.

- **Three-fourths of the district's voters believe the incumbent will be re-elected.**

**18**

Sums of money are most often expressed in numerals, along with the appropriate currency symbol.

- **She paid \$125 for her permit.**

Round sums over a million dollars are expressed in a combination of numerals and words.

- **The state legislature voted to spend \$35.3 million on vaccinations.**

**19**

Spell out ordinal numbers that indicate rank or position within a series in running text.

- **His resignation was the twenty-first they received.**

Spell out ordinals in addresses (especially in formal text, such as invitations).

- **Fifth Street**

Do not use ordinal numbers in dates.

- **The deadline is January 9.**

## In technical text or measurements:

To express numerical information in mathematical, statistical, or scientific text, always use numerals.

- **9 centimeters**
- **240 volts**
- **5 degrees**



## PLURAL NOUNS WITH LATIN ROOTS

Certain nouns derived from Latin roots are often mistakenly treated as singular, when they are in fact plural. Verbs that accompany them must agree in number.

Plural	Singular
Data are	Datum is
Criteria are	Criterion is
Media are	Medium is

## CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTIONS

These words are used in pairs to link equal parts of a sentence. Some common examples include:

Either	or
Neither	nor
Not only	but also
Both	and
Whether	or



# PUNCTUATION

Important! Only use one space after a period, between sentences.

## Apostrophes

- 1** Use an apostrophe when making possessive a singular proper name ending in s.
  - **Achilles' heel**
  - **Dickens' novels**
- 2** In making the figures and abbreviations plural, do not use an apostrophe.
  - **The 1980s were fun.**
  - **Two ICUs**
- 3** In making single letters plural, an apostrophe is used.
  - **The three R's**
- 4** When writing numbers an apostrophe is used.
  - **The '80s**
  - **Class of '98**
- 5** Bachelor's and master's degrees should always be written with an "s". Associate degree has no apostrophe.
- 6** Use primes (keyboard apostrophe and quotes) to designate inches and feet and navigational notation.
  - **12", 12'**
  - **67°3'16"**



# PUNCTUATION

## Commas, Semicolons, Colons & Periods

**1** Use an oxford comma before the conjunction in a list of three or more items.

Exception: no comma necessary with an ampersand (&).

- **Directors, managers, and coordinators meet today.**
- **The Blues, Brews & BBQ Event is next week.**

**2** Place a comma after digits signifying thousands.

- **1,200 students**

**3** When listing names with cities or states, punctuate as follows

- **Jon Smith is a Fairfield, California, native.**

**4** When writing a date, place a comma between the day and the year as well as after the year.

- **July 4, 1980, dawned clear.**
- **Tuesday, July 6, was rainy.**

**5** Do not place a comma between the month/season and year when the day is not mentioned. And seasons are not capitalized.

- **June 2008 summer 2009**

**6** Do not use a comma before or after Jr. or Sr., and do not precede Roman numerals such as I, II, or III with a comma.

- **Please call Mr. William Case Jr. for the report.**
- **Contact Don James III for further information.**



# PUNCTUATION

**7**

Use the semicolon to indicate a greater separation of thought and information than a comma can convey, but less than the separation that a period implies.

**8**

Use semicolons to separate elements of a series when the items in the series are long, or when individual segments contain material set off by commas.

- **He is survived by a son, John Smith, of Chicago; two sisters, Jane Smith, of Wichita, Kansas, and Mary Smith, of Denver; and a niece, Martha, of Omaha.**

**9**

The most frequent use of a colon is at the end of a sentence to introduce lists.

- **There were three considerations: expense, time, and feasibility.**

**10**

If a phrase is within parentheses at the end of a sentence, place the period after the closing parenthesis. If a complete sentence is in parentheses, the period should be inside the closing parenthesis.

**11**

No word space should be used between the initials of an abbreviation or a person's name.

- **U.S.**
- **J.B. White**



# PUNCTUATION

## Dashes

### 1. Use a dash with no extra space before or after:

a. To indicate continuing (or inclusive) numbers, dates, times, or reference numbers.

1968–82 from	1968 to 1982
May–June 1967	from May to June 1967
10 a.m.–5 p.m.	between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.
pp. 38–45	from pages 38 to 45

b. To create lists (instead of using bullets)

- New ideas
- New direction
- New outcome

Capitalize the first word following the dash. Use a period at the end of each section, whether a full sentence or a phrase.

### 2. Use a space before and after dash:

**A** To denote a sudden break in thought that causes an abrupt change in sentence structure.

- **That is all I know — actually, there is one more thing.**



# PUNCTUATION

**B** In defining or enumerating complementary elements.

- **The votes of the seven mayors — Price, Rowlett, Kott, Sam payan, Patterson, Bogue, and Wilson — were of great importance to the County.**

**C** In sentences having several elements as referents of a pronoun that is the subject of a final, summarizing clause.

- **Jones, Smith, Davis, and Wright — all felt groggy after lunch.**

## Hyphens

Note: Please note that hyphenated words can be created for the sake of clarity.

**1** Use the non-hyphenated spelling of a word if either spelling is acceptable.

**2** Most pre-words are not hyphenated. The hyphen is used if a prefix ends in a vowel and the word that follows begins with the same vowel:

- **pre-election**
- **pre-exist**

**3** Do not hyphenate the words “vice president”, “vice mayor”, “nonprofit”, or “email”.



# PUNCTUATION

**4** Hyphenate other e-terms:

- **e-newsletter**
- **e-book**
- **e-commerce**
- **e-business**
- **e-services**

**5** Hyphenate part-time and full-time when used as adjectives.

**6** Hyphenate when using ex- in the sense of former: ex-president. Usually the word “former” is better than ex.

**7** Hyphenate any modifying word combined with well, ill, better, best, little, and lesser when used as an adjective preceding a noun. Do not hyphenate when the expression when it follows a noun.

- **Well-built engine**
- **The engine is well built.**

**8** Hyphenate a compound in which one component is a number and the other is a noun or adjective.

- **30-mile run**
- **10-year old child, but 10 years old**
- **12,000-square foot building**

**9** Whenever possible, avoid the hyphenation of proper names when breaking text lines.

**10** Use hyphens in a compound adjective where at least one element consists of two words or of a hyphenated word,

- **low-income**
- **quasi-public entity**



# PUNCTUATION

## Quotation Marks

**1** The following should be placed in quotation marks:

- *Radio and television program titles*
- *Article titles*
- *Song titles*
- *Book titles*
- *Movie titles*
- *Play titles*

**2** Use single quotation marks for quotations printed within other quotations.

**3** If several paragraphs are to be quoted, use quotation marks at the beginning of each paragraph, but at the end of the last paragraph only. No quotation marks are needed for passages set off from the text by additional space, an indent, or change of typeface.

**4** Set quotation marks after periods, exclamation points or question marks in a sentence. Commas always precede the quote and are outside of the opening quotation marks.

- **City Manager Jon Smith stated, “Fairfield is the best!”**

**5** Set quotation marks before punctuation marks for phrases.

- **He did not define the term “categorical exemption”.**



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# EFFECTIVE WEB WRITING

Writing for the web is different than writing for print. It is necessary to adjust our writing style to accommodate user preferences and browsing habits.

Long text blocks without images and keywords marked in bold or italic will be skipped. Promotional writing won't be read. Exaggerated language will be ignored.

## Talk business

Avoid cute or clever names, company-specific names, acronyms, jargon, and unfamiliar technical names. For instance, if you describe a service and want users to create an account, “sign up” is better than “start now!” which is again better than “explore our services”.

## Keep the reader in mind

Be aware of who is reading your text—it is not always a fellow government employee. Web copywriting would be easy if website visitors thought the same way you do, but they don't. Visitors are not necessarily interested in what you do and how you do it. They are, however, definitely interested in what you can do for them.

## Keep it concise

We have a knack for wanting to share everything. But just because you're passionate about something, it doesn't mean your audience is.

Avoid “information creep”, where the web content gets progressively complicated, to the point the important and relevant information gets lost in the mix.



# EFFECTIVE WEB WRITING & ACCESSIBILITY

Three compelling, relevant points are better than ten that readers don't really care about. Here are more points:

## Use short and concise phrases.

Come to the point as quickly as possible.

## Use a scannable layout.

- Categorize the content
- Use multiple heading levels
- Use visual elements and bulleted lists which break the flow of uniform text blocks

## Use plain, objective language.

Don't get lost in jargon or "governmentese". Keep your sentence structure simple. We communicate with a diverse audience and need to reach everyone as effectively as possible.

## Accessibility. (Screen readers, low vision)

Be sure to describe all of your photo's in Alt-tags.

PDF's must be text based.

Links need to be named (not click here).

Font should be no smaller than 12 pt.

Make sure headlines, sub-headlines, and text are identified as such (use the correct text in the toolbar dropdown).

Our web address: [fairfield.ca.gov](http://fairfield.ca.gov) (no need to include www)



# MEDIA OUTREACH

## Boilerplate information

All releases and advisories may have a boilerplate message below the conclusion, outlining what the department or program is about and important facts about the City (only if all information can be contained on one page).

Samples:

- **About the Fairfield Police Department**

*The Fairfield Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit operates programs that empower the community to combat crime, like Operation 10 Fingerprinting. To acquire more information from the Fairfield Crime Prevention Unit regarding its programs, contact Ilea Martin at 707-428-7789 or [Imartin@fairfield.ca.gov](mailto:Imartin@fairfield.ca.gov). For additional information on the City of Fairfield, visit [fairfield.ca.gov](http://fairfield.ca.gov).*

- **Fairfield Offers Important Business Benefits**

*Fairfield continues to appeal to retail and commercial entities seeking to grow their businesses. Fairfield offers an accessible Bay Area location, abundant space, value-priced real estate, a diverse workforce, and a unique set of regional amenities. For additional information on the City of Fairfield, visit [fairfield.ca.gov](http://fairfield.ca.gov).*

There are various ways of conveying your message to the media: press releases, media advisories, and calendar advisories.



# MEDIA OUTREACH

- **Media Advisory**

*A media advisory invites media to attend an event or function. It answers the basics of “who, what, where, when and why”. It does not provide enough information to write an article, but should spark an interest in attending your event. It is brief and to the point.*

- **Press Release**

*A press release is a more descriptive communication vehicle. You can convey information about an event or situation that has occurred or is about to happen. It can be run as an article or be used as the basis of a story. It contains the “who, what, where, when and why”, but it also includes quotes and more in-depth information.*

- **Calendar Advisory**

*This type of advisory is very similar to the media advisory, but is given so that the media sources can include our event in their calendar listings.*

## The process for sending these communications out is:

1. Write up the release or advisory using the template.
2. Have your supervisor and/or department head approve it.
3. Once it’s been approved, forward the release to the MOD Manager in the City Manager’s Office for final review and dissemination to media, and placement on the City website.



# WORDINESS

Unnecessary words lessen the readability and impact of your writing. Here are several ways to spot and eliminate them. Streamline phrases that contain a redundancy or other inappropriate modifier.

Examples include: true fact, important essentials, serious danger, separate entities, additionally, (in addition) quite unique, major breakthrough, help make, moreover.

- 1** In all these instances, the modifiers are either redundant or meaningless and should be deleted. If modifying words and subordinate phrases and clauses do not add necessary meaning, delete them.
  - **Poor:** **As you know, City of Fairfield Human Resources Department encourages City of Fairfield employees to evaluate their professional and career decisions in a timely fashion early on in their professional years.**
  - **Better:** **City of Fairfield Human Resources Department encourages employees to evaluate their career decisions early.**

- 2** Simplify sentence structure by strengthening the verb. Replace “to be” constructions with stronger, more explicit verbs whenever possible.
  - **Poor:** **As a coordinator, I am responsible for making sure all visitors sign in.**
  - **Better:** **As a coordinator, I ensure that all visitors sign in.**