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# **IES Style Guide**

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**U.S. Department of Education**

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The Institute of Education Sciences (IES), established by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, is the research arm of the U.S. Department of Education. Its mission is to expand knowledge and provide information on the condition of education, practices that improve academic achievement, and the effectiveness of federal and other education programs. Its goal is the transformation of education into an evidence-based field in which decisionmakers routinely seek out the best available research and data before adopting programs or practices that will affect significant numbers of students.

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# Contents

(To quickly find guidance on a specific topic, refer to the index at the end of this style guide.)

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Abbreviations and Acronyms</b> .....	3
Spell out on first occurrence .....	3
Repeat in major sections .....	3
Match articles to the abbreviation .....	3
Note apostrophe, plural, and possessive usage.....	4
Use fiscal year (FY) abbreviation; AY and SY are optional .....	4
Outlying area and freely associated state abbreviations—not used in text .....	4
State, DC, PR, and directional abbreviations—not used in text .....	5
Foreign country and Canadian province abbreviations—not used in text .....	5
United States: Spell out as noun, abbreviate as adjective .....	6
U.S. Department of Education .....	6
Department of Defense schools .....	6
Define abbreviations in tables .....	7
<b>Capitalization</b> .....	7
Titles and headings .....	7
Capitalize most words in titles and higher level headings .....	8
Use “sentence-style” capitalization in lower level headings .....	8
In-text capitalization .....	8
Capitalize proper names .....	8
Lowercase “figure,” “chapter,” “appendix,” etc., unless full title given .....	9
Capitalize per traditional usage and specified style .....	9
When to capitalize the first word of a sentence following a colon .....	9
Refer to this list of commonly used terms .....	9
Table and figure titles .....	10
<b>Compound Words</b> .....	10
Hyphens not always needed .....	10
Comparatives usually not followed by hyphen .....	10
“ly” words not followed by hyphen .....	11
Unit modifiers versus predicate adjectives .....	11
Prefixes and suffixes closed up .....	11
When “non” takes a hyphen .....	12
When the suffix “wide” takes a hyphen .....	12
Double vowels often separated by hyphen .....	12
No hyphen used with the unit modifier “Title IV eligible” .....	13
List of compound words .....	13

<b>Copyright, Brand Names and Trademarks, Permission</b> .....	14
Copyright .....	14
Brand names and trademarks .....	15
Permission .....	15
<b>Cross-References (within section you are in and to other parts of document)</b> .....	15
Cite in order (items within the section; appendixes) .....	15
Verify agreement .....	15
Lowercase references (if full title not given) .....	16
Place appropriately in sentence .....	16
Refer to other parts of your document by title, not page number .....	16
<b>Definitions</b> .....	16
<b>Errata Sheets</b> .....	17
<b>Figures</b> .....	17
Figures should have an identifier and title .....	17
Figure identifiers are different in different parts of report .....	18
Titles have special capitalization rules .....	18
Titles not footnoted.....	18
Scales must match .....	18
Scale breaks should be clearly visible .....	18
Labels and legends text should be horizontal .....	18
Tick marks should be outside the axis .....	19
Gridlines, if used, must be lighter than other elements.....	19
Line graphs should use distinctive lines and avoid geometric figures and legends .....	19
Pie charts have labels outside the wedges .....	20
Bar charts have data labels, may have legends .....	21
<b>Footnotes</b> .....	21
Limit the number and length .....	22
Integrate .....	22
Consolidate .....	22
Place on same page where referenced .....	22
Place superscripts after adjacent punctuation .....	22
Use Arabic numerals and number consecutively .....	22
Use asterisk for single footnote in text (see different rules for tables) .....	23
Separate adjacent superscripts .....	23

<b>Heading Styles and Levels</b> .....	23
Titles and heading levels .....	23
Capitalize per guidelines .....	24
Make sure each level is consistent and easily distinguishable .....	24
Sample scheme 1 .....	25
Sample scheme 2 .....	25
<b>Internet and Other Technical Terminology</b> .....	26
Internet and other technical terminology usage .....	26
Internet and e-mail addresses (see Punctuation section).....	26
<b>Lists</b> .....	27
Numbers are used in displayed lists only if needed .....	27
Bullets are used in most cases .....	27
General rules apply to both bulleted and numbered lists .....	28
Parentheses are used only with list numbers integrated into text .....	28
<b>Numbers and Rounding</b> .....	28
Numbers: Using words or numerals .....	28
Units of time and measurement, including percentages .....	28
General use .....	28
Sentence/heading beginnings .....	30
Millions and billions .....	30
Numbers that cannot have a value greater than 1 .....	30
Decades .....	30
Other examples .....	30
Number spans .....	31
Rounding: Different types of data, different contexts .....	31
In general .....	31
All tables .....	32
Number of decimal places to be reported .....	32
<b>Pagination</b> .....	33
Front matter: Use lowercase Roman numerals.....	33
Suppression of page numbers .....	33
Main body of report: Use Arabic numerals .....	34
Appendixes: In long reports, use alphanumeric page numbering .....	34
Positioning of page numbers .....	34

<b>Parts of the Document</b> .....	34
Front matter .....	34
Sections and order of front matter.....	35
Title page and templates .....	35
Boilerplate on back of title page .....	35
Executive summary or highlights .....	35
Foreword.....	36
Acknowledgments .....	36
Contents page(s) and automatic generation .....	36
List of tables and list of figures .....	37
Body of the report .....	37
Back matter .....	38
 <b>Plurals</b> .....	 38
 <b>Printing and Binding Regulations</b> .....	 39
 <b>Punctuation</b> .....	 39
Addresses (internet and e-mail) .....	39
Addresses (postal) and telephone numbers .....	40
Apostrophe .....	40
Comma .....	41
Dashes .....	41
Em dash .....	41
En dash .....	41
Hyphen .....	42
Miscellaneous (e.g., zip codes) .....	42
Compound words .....	42
Number spans (general).....	42
Preventing misunderstanding .....	42
Quotation marks .....	43
Placement with other punctuation .....	43
Use when citing titles in text .....	43
General style issues.....	43
Slash .....	43
 <b>Race and Ethnicity</b> .....	 44
Order of race/ethnicity categories in tables .....	44
Race aggregations .....	44

<b>References</b> .....	45
Cite appropriate sources when supporting statements of fact .....	45
Within your text, use brief, parenthetical references .....	45
One work by one author .....	45
One work by multiple authors .....	46
Multiple works within the same parentheses .....	46
Works that have identical authors <i>and</i> year of publication .....	46
Works that have same principal author, multiple other authors, and same year .....	46
At the end of your publication, provide a detailed reference list .....	47
General notes .....	47
Basic elements of individual entries .....	47
IES publications .....	47
U.S. government publications (non-IES) .....	49
Nongovernment publications .....	49
Works on the Internet .....	50
Some special types of reference-list entries .....	50
In publisher location, omit state or country name for internationally known cities .....	51
For Suggested Citation, use the style outlined in this References section .....	51
Include legal citations in the reference list .....	53
Federal statute .....	53
Federal regulation .....	54
Administrative notice .....	54
 <b>Statistical Symbols and Mathematical Operators: Style</b> .....	 55
 <b>Survey Titles</b> .....	 56
 <b>Tables</b> .....	 57
Tables should have an identifier and title .....	57
Do not footnote titles .....	57
Title information follows a specified order .....	57
Table identifiers are different in different parts of report .....	57
Sample table illustrates many NCES guidelines .....	58
Align column heads at bottom of cells; right justify in columns (except stub head) .....	58
In the body of tables, place footnote symbols/numbers to the right of column numbers—and flush right in empty cells .....	58
Table notes follow prescribed order; symbols have special meanings .....	59
Spacing in notes after symbols/superscript numbers .....	59
Special (symbol) notes and use of zero .....	59
Reference (numbered) notes/superscripts .....	61
General note .....	61
Source note .....	61
Detailed guidance is available on several additional topics .....	62
 <b>Titles</b> .....	 62

<b>Word Usage</b> .....	62
Affect/Effect .....	62
“And/or” .....	63
Between/Among .....	63
Bi-, Semi- .....	63
Compared to/Than .....	64
Complement/Compliment .....	64
Composed of, <i>not</i> Comprised of .....	64
Consistent terminology .....	64
Contractions .....	65
Data .....	65
Degrees, academic .....	65
Different from, <i>not</i> Different than .....	65
Education/Educational .....	65
Fewer/Less than .....	66
First person .....	66
Grade, -Grader (hyphen? numeral?) .....	67
“His or her” .....	67
i.e./e.g. ....	67
Limited English proficient (LEP)/English language learner (ELL) .....	67
Number of (singular or plural verb?) .....	68
Percentage/Percent/Percentage distribution/Share .....	68
Quartile/Quarter .....	68
Sex/Gender .....	69
“Technical/vocational education” or “Career/technical education” .....	69
Through/To (meaning in ranges) .....	69
Voice (active or passive) .....	69
Which/That .....	69
Who/Whom; Who/That .....	70
Word forms/Spelling .....	70
<b>Year Spans</b> .....	70
<b>Appendixes</b> .....	73
A. Abbreviations List: Organizations, Agencies, Surveys, and Terms .....	A-1
B. Abbreviations List: States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Outlying Areas, and Freely Associated States .....	B-1
C. Abbreviations List: Countries (Partial List) and Canadian Provinces and Territories ....	C-1
D. Web Links to Standards, Style Manuals and Guidelines, and Dictionary .....	D-1
E. Microsoft Word Shortcuts and Tips .....	E-1
F. Selected Proofreading Marks .....	F-1
G. Guidance for Producing Figures in Excel That Meet NCES Standards .....	G-1



H. Guidance for Producing Tables in Excel That Meet NCES Standards .....	H-1
I. <del>NCES</del> Graphic Standards for Publication and Other Product Covers, Title Page, and Back of Title Page <b>[UNDER REVISION]*</b> .....	I-1
<b>Index</b> .....	Index-1

**List of Sample Figures/Table**

Line graph .....	20
Pie chart .....	20
Bar chart .....	21
Table .....	58

(See other samples in Excel appendixes G and H.)

**\*The graphic standards are currently being revised to reflect new design requirements for the Department of Education.**




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## Introduction

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This document provides basic style guidelines for statisticians, researchers, project officers, writers, editors, contractors, and others who prepare and review reports and other publications for the public. The primary purposes of the style guide are to maintain consistency, correctness, and appropriateness regarding stylistic conventions, grammar, usage, and other areas related to producing publications; to inform users of policy and preferences in these areas; and to support compliance with the *NCES Statistical Standards* (NCES 2003-601).

The software standard of the U.S. Department of Education for presenting information is the Microsoft Office Suite, including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Therefore, a number of elements in this style guide have been tailored to efficient use of this software. For example, to support efficient use of Word, hyphens are used in lieu of en dashes. Authors may use en dashes for number spans if they prefer. Priority should be given to consistency within a document. Microsoft Word tips appear throughout the document and are marked, in the margin, by a  logo; and appendixes provide additional Word shortcuts and tips, as well as guidance for producing figures and tables in Excel that meet the NCES standards. The two Excel appendixes can be downloaded as Excel files from the online version of this style guide.

Institute of Education Sciences (IES) centers should comply, as appropriate, with the provisions of this style guide and the *NCES Statistical Standards* in print and web materials they prepare for the public. The four IES centers are the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance ((NCEE), National Center for Education Research (NCER), National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), and National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER).

To access clickable web attachments if you are using a hard copy of this document, go to <http://nces.ed.gov/statprog> and click on *IES Style Guide* for the online document.

This guide includes directives about the areas covered. In developing the guide, the following sources were also consulted:

*NCES Statistical Standards*  
*United States Government Printing Office Style Manual*, 2000 edition  
*The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition  
*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, fifth edition

When readers are directed to two or more of these resources for additional guidance on a section of this style guide, the first-named resource is the preferred one. To access a named resource if you are online, click on the underlined part of the reference (e.g., “[standard 5-4](#)”).

This guide includes the following sections:

Abbreviations and Acronyms	Cross-References
Capitalization	Definitions
Compound Words	Errata Sheets
Copyright, Brand Names and Trademarks, Permission	Figures
	Footnotes

Heading Styles and Levels	References
Internet and Other Technical Terminology Lists	Statistical Symbols and Mathematical Operators: Style
Numbers and Rounding	Survey Titles
Pagination	Tables
Parts of the Document	Titles
Plurals	Word Usage
Printing and Binding Regulations	Year Spans
Punctuation	Index
Race and Ethnicity	

In addition, appendixes provide the following resources:

- Appendix A. Abbreviations List: Organizations, Agencies, Surveys, and Terms
- Appendix B. Abbreviations List: States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Outlying Areas, and Freely Associated States
- Appendix C. Abbreviations List: Countries (Partial List) and Canadian Provinces and Territories
- Appendix D. Web Links to Standards, Style Manuals and Guidelines, and Dictionary
- Appendix E. Microsoft Word Shortcuts and Tips
- Appendix F. Selected Proofreading Marks
- Appendix G. Guidance for Producing Figures in Excel That Meet NCES Standards
- Appendix H. Guidance for Producing Tables in Excel That Meet NCES Standards
- Appendix I. NCES Graphic Standards for Publication and Other Product Covers, Title Page, and Back of Title Page

*Achieving error-free publications:* Producing and disseminating timely, accurate, and useful information and data is a key aspect of the IES mission. Such information and data deserve a presentation that fully supports their quality. Errors of any kind in a publication can affect credibility. In addition to the quality control procedures you follow in producing your data, do the following to enhance quality in the reports you prepare—and to come as close as possible to achieving error-free publications: (1) familiarize yourself with this style guide and apply its guidelines in your work; and (2) be sure to build into your production process adequate time for careful editing and proofreading, before print release or release on the Web.

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

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Abbreviations are short forms of words or phrases used primarily to save space. They occur most frequently in technical writing, statistical material, tables, and notes. They may or may not use all capital letters, and they may or may not end with a period (e.g., Jr., Ph.D., MD, IES). Acronyms are simply abbreviations that are pronounced like words. Use standard and easily understood abbreviations, when possible, and be consistent throughout a document.

In a Microsoft Word document, to ensure that an abbreviated title (e.g., Rep.) is not separated from the name that follows it when the name falls at the end of a line (i.e., to create a nonbreaking space), hold down the Ctrl and Shift keys as you enter the space after the title.



See appendixes A through C for the following lists of abbreviations (including acronyms): appendix A for organizations, agencies, surveys, and terms; appendix B for states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, outlying areas, and freely associated states; and appendix C for countries (partial list) and Canadian provinces and territories.

### Spell out on first occurrence

Spell out the phrase to be abbreviated and follow it with the abbreviation in parentheses. Thereafter, use the abbreviation, eliminating the article in front of the abbreviation where possible. It is unnecessary to include an abbreviation if it will not be used subsequently.

*Examples:* Information provided by the Common Core of Data (CCD) includes the number of students and full-time-equivalent (FTE) teachers . . .

The National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) followed a cohort of 1988 eighth-graders through the year 2000. Because NELS:88 followed the cohort for 12 years, . . .

[Do not repeat a word that is in an abbreviation unless it would make sense with the abbreviation spelled out (e.g., “The NELS:88 study” is redundant).]

### Repeat in major sections

In long works, repeat the full phrase (and the abbreviation) at the beginning of major sections of text and each appendix.

### Match articles to the abbreviation

If you must precede an abbreviation with an article, use the one that works with the abbreviation, not the one required by the spelled-out form.

*Examples:* “an NCES report,” *not* “a NCES report”

“an NCER program,” *not* “a NCER program”

Use the article that sounds right with the pronunciation of the abbreviation, which may be either letter by letter, or as a word.

Examples: “an NSOPF brochure” (pronounced N Sof)  
“a NPSAS brochure” (pronounced Nip Sass)  
“an OPE report” (pronounced Oh P E)

### **Note apostrophe, plural, and possessive usage**

Make all-capital abbreviations plural by adding lowercase “s” alone.

*Example:* LEAs, *not* LEA’s

Generally use an apostrophe and an *s* to form the plural of an abbreviation that has two periods or that includes both capital and lowercase letters (Ph.D.’s); and generally add an *s* before the period in an abbreviation that has one period (vols., eds.).

When you use an abbreviation as a modifier, as in the following example, it is not necessarily a possessive form and generally does not require an apostrophe.

*Examples:* IES grants, *not* the standard possessive form, IES’s grants  
NCES surveys, *not* the standard possessive form, NCES’s surveys

### **Use fiscal year (FY) abbreviation; AY and SY are optional**

Spell out fiscal year at first use (use lowercase), followed by the abbreviation in parentheses. Thereafter, use the shortened version.

*Example:* Data are provided for fiscal year (FY) 1999, FY 2000, and FY 01. Many changes occurred between FY 99 and FY 01.

The shortened version uses two digits for all years except 2000.

If you choose to use the academic year (AY) and school year (SY) abbreviations, first introduce them, as explained for FY. With AY and SY, use six digits (e.g., AY 1997-98) except for AY 1999-2000.

For more details about year-span usage with FY, AY, and SY, see the Year Spans section of this style guide.

### **Outlying area and freely associated state abbreviations—not used in text**

Spell out the names of these entities in text and, whenever possible, in table stubs. If abbreviations must be used in tables, define them in the table notes for each table that contains them.

*Outlying areas include the following:*

American Samoa	AS
Guam	GU
Northern Mariana Islands (Commonwealth of the)	MP
U.S. Virgin Islands	VI

*Freely associated states include the following:*

Federated States of Micronesia	FM
Marshall Islands (Republic of the)	MH
Palau (Republic of)	PW

When referring collectively to some or all of the above jurisdictions in, for example, tables that include states, use the term “Other jurisdictions.” Explain in a note what jurisdictions you are including in the term, if not listing them separately.

These groupings (outlying areas and freely associated states) are listed in Part C—National Center for Education Statistics, within the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, which established the Institute of Education Sciences. (Since 1990, none of the entities listed above has been officially termed a *territory*.) Under section 158 of part C of the Act, the term *state* means each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

### **State, DC, PR, and directional abbreviations—not used in text**

See appendix B of this style guide for a list of the two-letter Postal Service abbreviations for states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Spell out the names of these entities in text and, if possible, in table stubs. If abbreviations must be used in tables, define them—or state that standard Postal Service abbreviations are used—in the notes for each table that contains them.

In addresses, use two-letter Postal Service abbreviations for states (TX, VA), the District of Columbia (DC), and Puerto Rico (PR). Do not use periods with directional abbreviations, such as NW and its counterparts.

### **Foreign country and Canadian province abbreviations—not used in text**

See appendix C of this style guide for abbreviations of foreign countries (partial list) and of Canadian provinces and territories. These abbreviations are never used in text but may be used in tables when necessary. If abbreviations are used in tables, they must be defined in the notes to each table that contains them.

**United States: Spell out as noun, abbreviate as adjective**

Spell out United States when used as a noun; abbreviate it when used as an adjective.

*Example:* He emigrated to the United States and became a citizen; as a U.S. citizen, . . .

[Do not add a space between the two letters.]

**U.S. Department of Education**

Use *ED* as the abbreviation for the U.S. Department of Education. As with other abbreviations, spell out the Department name upon first use, give the abbreviation in parentheses following the name, and thereafter use the abbreviation. If you do not intend to use the abbreviation thereafter, do not introduce it. If your document includes only a few references to the Department, you may prefer to spell out each occurrence.

**Department of Defense schools**

The Department of Defense is abbreviated as DoD (note the lowercase “o”). On first occurrence of the term, spell it out and give the abbreviation in parentheses: Department of Defense (DoD).

The official DoD titles and abbreviations for the separate overseas and domestic components of the DoD education system for dependents are as follows:

DoDDS — Department of Defense Dependents Schools [the overseas schools]

DDESS — Department of Defense Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools [in the United States]

Since the above abbreviations are not easily remembered and are not entirely self-explanatory, you are encouraged to use the following forms instead to refer to the two principal components of the DoD education system for dependents:

DoD schools (overseas)

DoD schools (domestic)

Use consistent terminology throughout your document. When an abbreviation such as DoD is used in a table, define it in the table footnotes if it is not already defined in the table stub.

When referring, in text, to all of the DoD schools for dependents, first clarify that you are referring to all of these schools, both overseas and domestic. If you wish to use a shorter phrase thereafter, you may add “(DoD schools)” in parentheses and subsequently use the shortened form. (In the following examples, note lowercase.)



*Examples:*

*First use:* Department of Defense overseas and domestic schools for dependents  
(DoD schools)

*Subsequent use:* DoD schools

*First use, no subsequent use:* Department of Defense (DoD) dependents schools  
(overseas and domestic)

## Define abbreviations in tables

Define abbreviations used in tables in the notes at the bottom of the tables. For more guidance on table notes, refer to (or click on, in the electronic version of this style guide) [appendix C](#) of the *NCES Statistical Standards*, and see the Tables section of this style guide.

For guidance on abbreviations not specified in this section, see the rules and extensive examples in chapter 9 of the [United States Government Printing Office Style Manual](#) (2000 edition). (In the electronic version of this style guide, click on this underlined resource.) If you don't find the guidance you need there, see *The Chicago Manual of Style* (15th edition), chapter 15.

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## Capitalization

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Use capitalization to give distinction, importance, and emphasis to words only when and where it is warranted.

### Titles and headings

The titles and types of headings referred to in this subsection are as follows:

- Title – title of report or other publication; title of chapter or equivalent main division
- H1 heading – main heading level under title
- H2 heading – heading level under H1
- H3 heading – heading level under H2 (usually run in at the beginning of a paragraph)
- Lower level(s) if needed

Note that your publication does not have to use all of these levels of headings. For example, some publications use only titles and H1 headings, and many publications do not use H3 headings. More levels (e.g., H4, H5) may be used if needed. See the Heading Styles and Levels section later in this style guide for more about appropriate styles to use in differentiating levels.

The table of contents generally includes two or three levels of headings. See “Contents page(s) and automatic generation” in the Parts of the Document section of this style guide for guidance on creating your contents page(s) automatically.

***Capitalize most words in titles and higher level headings***

In full or short titles of books, periodicals, series of publications, annual reports, and historic documents—and in chapter/report/article titles, H1 headings, and H2 headings—capitalize the following:

- the first word and all important words (e.g., nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives);
- prepositions and conjunctions of four letters or more (e.g., from, with);
- the second element of a hyphenated compound if it would be capitalized standing alone (e.g., Degree-Granting, College-Bound); the sole exception is the second element of a compound numeral (e.g., Twenty-third); and
- the first element of a hyphenated compound even if it would usually be lowercase (e.g., For-Profit).

Note that some publications may have designs that vary somewhat from the above. For example, the H2 headings may capitalize only the first word and proper names. If the style does vary from that described here, be sure it is consistent for each heading level throughout your document.

Do not capitalize the following unless they begin a title, subtitle, or heading (or comply with a specified style, e.g., to capitalize the name of a reporting category):

- the articles *a*, *an*, and *the*;
- the prepositions *at*, *by*, *for*, *in*, *of*, *on*, *to*, and *up*;
- the conjunctions *and*, *as*, *but*, *if*, *or*, and *nor*; and
- the word *to* as part of an infinitive (e.g., Collecting Data to Make a Difference...).

***Use “sentence-style” capitalization in lower level headings***

In H3 headings (and other low-level headings), as in sentences, generally capitalize only the first word and proper nouns (names, states, etc.).

**In-text capitalization**

This subsection describes and gives examples of three categories of capitalization in text (proper names, traditional usage, and specified style). Examples of terms commonly used in IES reports are given in the list at the end of this subsection. For a much more extensive capitalization list, refer to (or click on, in the electronic version of this style guide) the [United States Government Printing Office Style Manual](#) (2000 edition), chapter 4.

***Capitalize proper names***

A proper name is the formal name of a specific person, place, program, study, survey, geographic area, or other entity. Capitalize proper names wherever they appear.

*Examples:* National Academy of Sciences, National School Lunch Program, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Lake Michigan, January, Vermont, England, Mary Jones

***Lowercase “figure,” “chapter,” “appendix,” etc., unless full title given***

Lowercase and spell out “figure,” “chapter,” “table,” and “appendix” in text, even when combined with a number indicating sequence (e.g., figure 3). However, if the full title is given, the word is considered a proper name and is capitalized (e.g., “Figure 1. Percentage of students enrolled in grades 1–12, by public and private school type: 1993, 1996, and 1999” and “Chapter 2. Arts Education in Public Elementary Schools”).

***Capitalize per traditional usage and specified style***

Some words or phrases are capitalized according to traditional usage or specified style.

*Traditional usage:* Old Dominion (for Virginia), Great Depression, Third World, Eastern Europe, the East (section of the United States), Bluegrass region

*Specified style:* Black, White (racial designations); fall, spring, etc. (seasons)

***When to capitalize the first word of a sentence following a colon***

It is always permissible to capitalize the first word of a sentence (independent clause) following a colon. However, you may—but are not required to—lowercase the word after the colon if you wish to emphasize a close relationship between the independent clauses before and after the colon. (This is similar to the common practice of using a semicolon instead of a period to separate two closely related independent clauses.) Capitalizing the first word after a colon is *required*, however, when the first word is a proper name or when the colon introduces two or more sentences.

***Refer to this list of commonly used terms***

Capitalize

Advanced Placement (AP) courses

Black, White (and other racial/ethnic categories)

the East (*but* east coast)

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

National School Lunch Program

United States of America (*but* the nation, a nation, national, the government, federal government, federally)

Washington State (*but* state of Washington)

Western Hemisphere (*but* western United States, western Pennsylvania)

**Do not capitalize**

algebra I (and other subjects of study, except proper names such as “Latin”)

computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI)

Department of Defense overseas and domestic schools

English language learners (ELL)

figure 3 (if no title given; *but* cap if full title included)

limited-English-proficient (LEP) students

winter (and other seasons)

**Table and figure titles**

For capitalization in table and figure titles, see the sample titles in the Figures and Tables sections of this guide. If you need additional guidance, refer to (or click on, in the electronic version of this style guide) [appendix C](#) of the *NCES Statistical Standards*.

For guidance on capitalization not specified in this section, see the rules and extensive examples in chapters 3 and 4 of the [United States Government Printing Office Style Manual](#) (2000 edition). (In the electronic version of this style guide, click on the underlined resource to access it.) If you do not find the guidance you need there, see the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (fifth edition), pp. 94-99.

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**Compound Words**

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Compound words are written either solid (closed up), open (with a space between words), or hyphenated.

**Hyphens not always needed**

Use restraint in forming hyphenated compounds of words used in normal, familiar sequence. For example, do not hyphenate “per capita expenditure,” “per pupil expenditures,” “high school students,” or “elementary school grade.” For more about the use of hyphens with compounds, see the rest of this section.

**Comparatives usually not followed by hyphen**

Do not use a hyphen in a two-word modifier, the first word of which is a comparative or superlative.

*Examples:* better paying jobs; higher level degree; best known teacher; higher performing students  
*but*  
 good-paying jobs; high-level degree; well-known teacher; high-performing students

*Exception:* For uniformity of style in a sentence, hyphenate a comparative or superlative when using it in juxtaposition with a hyphenated compound (e.g., “The performance of middle-performing eighth-graders declined, while that of the highest-performing eighth-graders improved.”).

### **“ly” words not followed by hyphen**

Do not use a hyphen in a two-word modifier the first word of which is an adverb ending in “ly.”

*Examples:* congressionally mandated report; federally funded program; highly praised teacher; nationally representative sample; poorly defined task; scientifically based research; statistically significant effects; unusually high percentage

### **Unit modifiers versus predicate adjectives**

A unit modifier immediately precedes the word modified, whereas a predicate adjective follows the word modified. In most cases, compounds that are hyphenated when used as unit modifiers are open (with a space instead of a hyphen) when used as predicate adjectives.

*Examples:* well-qualified teacher; hard-of-hearing students; far-reaching effects; field-tested survey; pilot-tested survey  
*but*  
 the teacher is well qualified; the students are hard of hearing; the effects are far reaching; the survey was field tested; the survey was pilot tested

### **Prefixes and suffixes closed up**

Generally close up prefixes and suffixes to base words, except where the base word is capitalized (non-Hispanic, pre-World War II) or ambiguity is possible (preposition or pre-position; resort or re-sort). Also, use a hyphen with the prefixes *ex*, *quasi*, and *self* (ex-governor, quasi-academic, self-educated).

Make the following one word (e.g., coworker):

A compound beginning with

anti  
co  
counter  
de  
extra  
inter  
intra  
meta  
multi  
non (see exceptions below)  
over  
post  
pre  
pro  
re  
socio  
under

A compound ending with

like  
maker  
making  
over  
person  
wide (see exceptions below)  
wise  
work

### **When “non” takes a hyphen**

As with other prefixes and as noted above, use a hyphen after “non” if it joins a capitalized word (e.g., non-English).

Also use a hyphen after “non” when the “non” modifies a modifier that is itself hyphenated (e.g., doctorate-granting):

*Example:* non-doctorate-granting institution

One way to make sense of and remember this rule is to realize that “non-doctorate-granting institution” means “not a doctorate-granting institution”; in contrast, “nondoctorate-granting institution” implies “an institution that grants nondoctorates.”

### **When the suffix “wide” takes a hyphen**

Close up (make one word) compounds ending in the suffix “wide” (schoolwide, citywide), with the following exceptions: hyphenate a compound ending in “wide” when it joins a proper noun (Houston-wide) or a noun of three or more syllables (government-wide).

### **Double vowels often separated by hyphen**

Except after the short prefixes *co*, *de*, *pre*, *pro*, and *re*, which are generally printed solid (closed up), use a hyphen to avoid doubling a vowel (e.g., semi-independent) or tripling a consonant (e.g.,

shell-like). You may always hyphenate when necessary to avoid misunderstanding (e.g., cooperative, *but* co-op, *not* coop).

### No hyphen used with the unit modifier “Title IV eligible”

Do not use a hyphen in “Title IV eligible institutions” or in similar “Title IV eligible” constructions.

### List of compound words

n = noun

u.m. = unit modifier (a compound that precedes the word it modifies, e.g., “school-level” in “school-level statistics” and “afterschool” in “afterschool programs”)

v = verb

If the part of speech is not specified below, the form listed is to be used in all cases.

achievement-level (u.m.)	in-depth (u.m.)
afterschool (u.m.)	in depth (studied it in depth)
at-risk students	in-field (u.m.)
base-year (u.m.)	in field (teaching in field)
child care	in-service (u.m.)
codebook	limited-English-proficient (u.m.)
coursetaking	low-income (u.m.)
cutoff (n, u.m.)	mid-level (u.m.)
database	mid-1990s
dataset	midpoint
day care	midsize (u.m.)
day-to-day (u.m.)	multistep
decisionmaker	nonfederal
decisionmaking	nongovernment
elementary-level (u.m.)	nonresponse
extracurricular	ongoing
field test (n, v)	online
field-test, field-tested (u.m.)	on-site (u.m., adverb)
first-generation students	out-of-school (u.m.)
first-grader	part-time (u.m.)
first-time (u.m.)	per pupil
follow up (v)	pilot test (n, v)
follow-up (n, u.m.)	pilot-test, pilot-tested (u.m.)
full-time (u.m.)	policymaker
government-wide	policymaking
grade point average	postsecondary
home page	preschool
homework	printout (n)
homeschooling	problem solving (n)
homeschooled (u.m.)	problem-solving (u.m.)
inactive	public school student
inbound	record keeping (n)

school-age children  
school-based (u.m.)  
school-level (u.m.)  
schoolwide  
socioeconomic  
state-of-the-art (u.m.)  
subject-matter (u.m.)  
teenage

textbook  
time frame  
web page  
website  
white-collar  
workforce  
workplace

*Note:* “Level” is preceded by a hyphen when it is part of a two-word modifier (for example, state-, district-, and school-level data), except when the first word is a comparative or superlative (higher level class, highest level class).

For guidance not covered in this section, see the rules and examples in chapters 6 and 7 of the [\*United States Government Printing Office Style Manual\*](#) (2000 edition). (In the electronic version of this style guide, click on the underlined resource to access it.) If your question is not answered there, use an up-to-date dictionary to identify compound words that are now printed solid.

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## Copyright, Brand Names and Trademarks, Permission

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For specific advice about any of the subjects treated very generally in this section, contact the Office of the General Counsel (OGC), U.S. Department of Education.

### Copyright

Material originally created or produced by the U.S. Department of Education is in the public domain and is not subject to copyright. However, the U.S. government is not precluded from receiving and holding copyrights transferred to it by assignment, bequest, or other means. When appropriate to protect information (e.g., certain photographs) that is in fact protected by copyright, use the copyright symbol and year, and the copyright holder’s name. *Also, always include the following “public domain” statement on the back of your title page: Unless specifically noted, all information contained herein is in the public domain.*

In some circumstances contractors supported by U.S. government funds can copyright material related to certain academic articles, journals, etc., without prior approval of the contracting officer (see 48 CFR 52.227-14); in other circumstances the contractor must obtain written permission from the contracting officer before establishing any claim to copyright (see 48 CFR 52.227-17). In general in these circumstances, the government retains the right to use the work and to authorize others to use it (in relatively rare instances, disputes may arise—e.g., after periods of nonuse).

Grantees may copyright any work developed under a government award that is subject to copyright, but the government retains the right to use the material for federal purposes and to authorize others to do so.



### **Brand names and trademarks**

Use a generic term (photocopier) rather than a brand name that is a registered trademark name (Xerox) whenever possible. If a trademark name is used in the body of text as a proper name and not as a trademark (e.g., “The effects of the No Child Left Behind Act . . .”), it does not have to be accompanied by a symbol such as ® or ™. However, if a trademark name is to be used as a trademark, permission must be obtained first, and the appropriate symbol must be used with the first or most prominent mention of the trademark. If in doubt, consult OGC. Always avoid any impression of endorsement.

### **Permission**

Permission must be obtained before using material copyrighted by third parties. In these cases, be sure to identify correctly who has the authority to grant such permission (the copyright holder, who may be the publisher or the author). If the use you contemplate falls under the *doctrine of fair use*, permission may not be necessary. “Fair use” may apply if the content is used for personal, education, or noncommercial purposes; if the author, source, and copyright information are cited; if the content is not altered; and if the user complies with any other terms or restrictions applicable to the document, image, or text. If in doubt, consult OGC.

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## **Cross-References (within section you are in and to other parts of document)**

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Cross-references in text direct the reader to (1) related information in the section you are in (e.g., figures, tables, and footnotes), or (2) other parts of the document (e.g., appendixes, chapters or sections, or sources in the reference list). Cross-references should not be used unless they are clear and useful.

### **Cite in order (items within the section; appendixes)**

When referring to figures, tables, and footnotes for the first time in the section you are in, always cite them consecutively (e.g., the second-mentioned figure is figure 2). If they have gotten out of order during rewriting, renumber or reletter them to keep the text references consecutive for each category. (For information on numbering or lettering tables and figures to indicate their order, see the Figures section of this style guide, under “Figure identifiers are different in different parts of report,” and refer to (or click on, in the electronic version of this style guide) [appendix C](#) of the *NCES Statistical Standards*.) Also, appendixes should be lettered (e.g., appendix A, appendix B) in the order in which they are first cited in the document.

### **Verify agreement**

Verify that referenced tables, figures, footnotes, and appendixes show what the text says they show.

Verify that text references to sources in the reference list agree with the information (authors and date) in the list. (For information on formatting and referring to a reference list, see the References section of this style guide.)

### **Lowercase references (if full title not given)**

Lowercase “table,” “figure,” “chapter,” and “appendix” when referring to them in the text, even when they include a number or letter indicating sequence. Capitalize them, however, if they begin a sentence or include the complete title of the item (e.g., “see Table 1. Public elementary and secondary schools in the United States: 1999-2000”).

### **Place appropriately in sentence**

Enclose a reference to a table or figure in parentheses at the end of the sentence in which its data are first mentioned, if the reference applies to all data in the sentence.

*Example:* The greatest percentage increases were reported for 15- to 19-year-olds (table B).

Refer to a table or figure after the first mention of its data when it does not apply to the rest of the sentence.

*Example:* About 34 percent of women were able to get jobs in their fields of study in the first year after graduation (table 1), while 66 percent of male graduates got such jobs (table 2).

### **Refer to other parts of your document by title, not page number**

When referring the reader to another part of your report, avoid giving a page number. Instead, give the chapter/section number (if there is one), the title, or both. Page numbers inserted in text are a frequent cause of errors in published documents. It is easy to overlook changes in page numbers that occur during report development, and adequate checking is very time-consuming.

*Examples:* See chapter 4; see Appendix B. Methodology; see the Data Sources section, later in this chapter; see “Titles have special capitalization rules” in the Figures section

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## **Definitions**

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Make sure all technical terms that are not defined fully in text are clearly defined in an appendix, technical notes section, glossary, or footnote. If there are numerous definitions, consolidate them in a glossary of definitions. In the glossary, alphabetize the terms. Do not capitalize the initial letter of a listing unless it would be capitalized in text. Lowercase or uppercase the listings as appropriate (as they would appear midsentence in text), to indicate correct style to the reader.

In tables, define terms in table notes. Tables should stand alone, without reference to other parts of the report.

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## Errata Sheets

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For guidance on preparing errata sheets, refer to (or click on, in the electronic version of this style guide) [standard 7-3-3](#) (under “Release and Dissemination of Reports and Data Products”) of the *NCES Statistical Standards*.

Arrange for the errata sheet to be distributed to recipients of the publication/product—that is, those who received it through the Department’s publication distribution center (ED Pubs) or through the Government Printing Office (GPO) sales program. Notify GPO to discontinue sales temporarily until the center sends them enough copies of the errata sheet to be inserted in their current sales stock.

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## Figures

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For more detailed guidance on figures than this overview contains, see [standard 5-4](#) of the *NCES Statistical Standards*. Also, for details on figure notes, see the Tables section of this style guide and [appendix C](#) of the *NCES Statistical Standards*. (In the electronic version of this style guide, click on the underlined resources to access them.) For guidance on producing figures in Excel that meet the NCES standards, see appendix G of this style guide.

*Note re nonprint media (e.g., web-only materials):* In preparing and displaying figures, nonprint media should follow the recommendations of this style guide as far as is practicable. For additional guidance regarding web standards, contact the IES center. Ensure that nonprint media comply with Section 508 accessibility requirements for people with disabilities. (Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was reauthorized by the Workforce Investment Act of August 1998; standards for accessible technology were issued in December 2000 by the U.S. Access Board, an independent federal agency.)

### **Figures should have an identifier and title**

Figures in IES reports should have an identifier (e.g., figure A, figure 1, or figure A-1) and a title. Note the punctuation that follows the identifier: Use a period and a reasonable space between the number/letter of the figure identifier and the first word of the title. A tab may be used for this purpose. If the figure title following the identifier runs more than one line, each additional line must align with the first letter of the title in the first line (see sample figures in this Figures section). Appendix E of this style guide explains an efficient way to align runover lines of figure titles in Word documents, using the hanging indent feature, and also to ensure (even if the title does not have a runover line) that the list of tables can be easily generated automatically.

### **Figure identifiers are different in different parts of report**

In executive summaries, use letters for figure identifiers, and letter the figures in alphabetical order (e.g., figure A, figure B). In the main body of reports, number figures consecutively (e.g., figure 1, figure 2). In appendixes, figure identifiers include both the letter of the appendix and a consecutive number (e.g., in appendix A: figure A-1, figure A-2).

### **Titles have special capitalization rules**

In figure titles, capitalize only the first word, proper names, and the word following a colon.

*Example:* Figure 1. Percentage of public elementary and secondary staff, by type:  
School year 2001-02

All of the rules for figure titles are the same as those for table titles; for more information, refer to (or click on, in the electronic version of this style guide) [appendix C](#) of the *NCES Statistical Standards*.

### **Titles not footnoted**

Do not footnote figure titles. Instead, put the information in a general note (i.e., the “NOTE”).

### **Scales must match**

Display entire scale increments, so that the highest value falls within the range of the highest increment. For example, if the highest value is 146 and the scale is in increments of 10, the upper limit should be at least 150.

*NCES standard 5-4-4, #4:* Use consistent scales with consistent spacing when presenting similar units of measurement.

For all figures with comparable units, use the same scale throughout a report (e.g., 0-10 percent should be the same size in all comparable figures; \$0-\$5,000 should be the same size in all comparable figures). Further, all scales showing comparable units should use the same scale increments (e.g., 10 percent increments in all rather than 10 percent in some and 5 percent in others; \$500 increments in all rather than \$500 in some and \$400 in others).

### **Scale breaks should be clearly visible**

*NCES standard 5-4-4, #5:* With the exception of time series, continuous scales should start with 0 or the minimum value of the scale. If used, scale breaks should be clearly visible.

### **Labels and legends text should be horizontal**

*Definitions: Labels*—which are usually located under the *x* axis, atop the *y* axis, or alongside lines in a line graph or segments of a pie chart—describe the category being measured, unit of measure, or

value of what is being measured in a figure. (Note that in Excel, the words that define what the  $x$  axis and  $y$  axis measure are referred to as “axis titles” rather than “labels.”) *Legends*, which may or may not be boxed, are keyed to parts of the figure (e.g., the colors of bars or of segments of a pie chart) and provide additional information (e.g., year of the data; category being measured). Legends are often placed in the blank space of a figure or under the  $x$  axis label.

Make text horizontal in labels and legends (see sample figures in this section). The parts of legends geared to the figure (e.g., shaded boxes geared to shades of bars in a bar chart) may be placed vertically or horizontally in the legend, but shades must be in the same order as in the figure (see bar chart example below). Capitalize the same way as in the figure title (see above). Box the legends if boxing will help the reader.

On the horizontal ( $x$ ) axis, if labels abut or overlap, remove every other one (when possible) and lengthen the tick marks for the remaining labels. When it is not possible to remove every other label (as in the case of categorical labels), put the alternate labels at a lower level than the others, to retain all labels while keeping them horizontal. (See the following subsection regarding year labels.)

### **Tick marks should be outside the axis**

Place tick marks outside the axis. Center scale numbers on the tick marks they identify. (See sample line graph below.)

If your data points are not at equal intervals of time (e.g., you have data for 1992, 1994, and 1998), place your axis labels at proportional intervals (i.e., show twice as much space between 1994 and 1998 as between 1992 and 1994). On the year axis, include a tick mark for every point for which you have data; omit tick marks where you do not have data. Label only the years with data points; but if there are too many to keep the labels horizontal, use tick marks without labels for intervening data points. (See the previous subsection regarding other types of data labels.)

### **Gridlines, if used, must be lighter than other elements**

Gridlines may be used (but are not required) when they help the reader, as in line graphs. If used, they should always appear to be in the background, clearly lighter than other elements of the figure, and should not create a “busy” visual image (see sample graph below). Be consistent throughout your document in either using or not using gridlines in similar types of figures.

### **Line graphs should use distinctive lines and avoid geometric figures and legends**

On line graphs, avoid placing geometric figures (squares, diamonds, etc.) on lines as a means of distinguishing them from one another. Instead, use lines that are dotted, dashed, or of various thicknesses. Geometric figures may be used on lines, however, (1) to indicate data points used as selectable targets in online interactive displays; and (2) in the rare instances when they are essential to communicating your meaning, as when the data points *differ* on multiple lines.

Even if lines are printed in multiple colors or shades, the line styles or patterns must be distinctive when photocopied in black and white. If possible, label the lines instead of using a legend.

Figure 2. Cumulative percentage married each month among 1992-93 bachelor's degree recipients who at the time of graduation had never been married, by gender: 1993-97



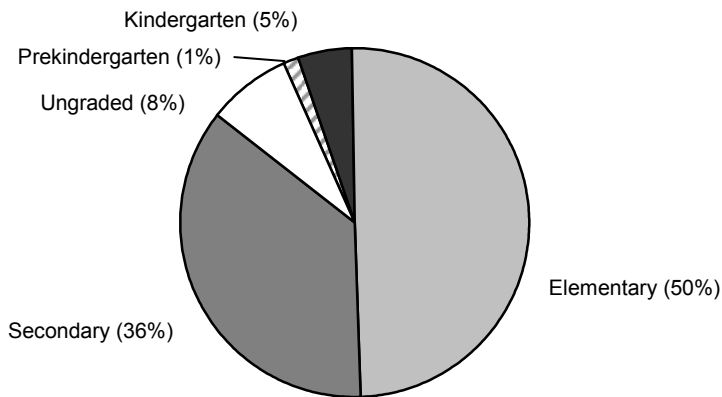
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1993 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study, "Second Follow-up" (B&B:93/97), Data Analysis System.

**Pie charts have labels outside the wedges**

Place labels outside wedges. Do not draw a line from label to wedge unless the wedge arc is smaller than the type height. Wedges should be easily differentiated and legible when photocopied or printed in black and white (see sample pie chart below).

Orient pie charts so that one of the dividing lines between wedges is at 12 o'clock (see sample pie chart below).

Figure 3. Percentage of public elementary and secondary teachers, by level of instruction: School year 2001-02



NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education," 2001-02.

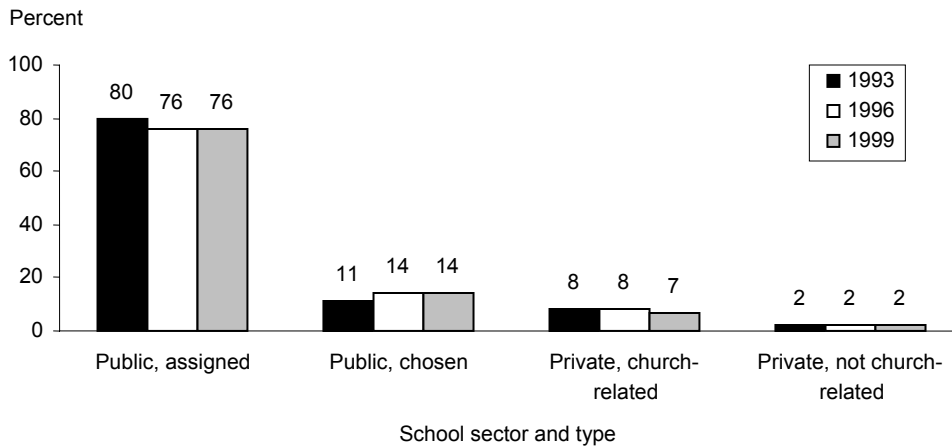
**Bar charts have data labels, may have legends**

If a bar chart includes a legend or other reference, the items identified in the legend (e.g., bar colors or patterns) should be in the same order as they are in the bars.

Bars should be easily differentiated when photocopied or printed in black and white (see sample bar chart below).

Label each bar to show the data represented.

Figure 4. Percentage of students enrolled in grades 1-12, by public and private school type: 1993, 1996, and 1999



NOTE: Includes homeschooled students enrolled in public or private schools for 9 or more hours per week. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, School Readiness Survey of the 1993 National Household Education Surveys Program (SR-NHES:1993); School Safety and Discipline Survey of the 1993 National Household Education Surveys Program (SS&D-NHES:1993); Parent and Family Involvement in Education/Civic Involvement Survey of the 1996 National Household Education Surveys Program (PFI/CI-NHES:1996); and Parent Survey of the 1999 National Household Education Surveys Program (Parent-NHES:1999).

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**Footnotes**

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Notes provide comments on and additional information relevant to the main text. When the information appears at the bottom of the page, the notes are called *footnotes*. When the notes appear all together at the end of chapters or at the end of the complete report, they are called *endnotes*. In IES reports, use footnotes (see exception below under “Place on same page where referenced”).

*Note:* IES style calls for providing full documentation of bibliographic sources in a reference list, rather than in footnotes. To document your sources, include parenthetical references (author and date) in the text and full documentation in the reference list. For more information, see the References section of this style guide.

For guidance on table notes, see the Tables section of this style guide and the following two parts of the *NCES Statistical Standards*: [standard 5-4](#) and [appendix C](#). (In the electronic version of this style guide, click on the underlined resources to access them.)

### **Limit the number and length**

Use footnotes sparingly. Use them only for material relevant to the discussion (for example, a definition or an explanation of some anomaly in the data collection).

Keep footnotes short.

### **Integrate**

Check closely to see if all the footnotes are necessary. Integrate them into the text when appropriate.

### **Consolidate**

If there are numerous footnotes containing definitions, consolidate those footnotes in a separate glossary of definitions.

### **Place on same page where referenced**

Place each note at the bottom of the same page (and same column, if possible, in a two-column layout) on which it is referenced (i.e., use footnotes rather than endnotes). Use endnotes only as a last resort, when the number or size of notes makes footnote placement difficult. (*But* to avoid this necessity, follow the advice given above, under “Limit the number and length,” “Integrate,” and “Consolidate.”)

### **Place superscripts after adjacent punctuation**

Place superscript numerals that refer to notes after any adjacent punctuation in a sentence (except a dash).

*Example:* The second net tuition measure takes into account all grants—federal, state, institutional, and other.<sup>1</sup>

Place the superscript numeral earlier in a sentence if it does not apply to the entire sentence.

*Example:* About half (53 percent)<sup>4</sup> of the 10 percent of schools lending laptop computers reported that students could borrow them for 1 week or more.

### **Use Arabic numerals and number consecutively**

In text, use Arabic numeral superscripts to refer to footnotes.



Number footnotes consecutively throughout the main body of a report (instead of numbering separately in each chapter or section). However, footnotes in the executive summary and in each appendix should be numbered separately from those in the main body of the report (so these parts of the report can stand alone); footnote numbering for the executive summary, the main body of the report, and each appendix starts with the numeral 1. Although renumbering footnotes (starting with 1) in each chapter is discouraged, it is acceptable in a long work with many notes.

Endnotes are discouraged; if they are used, however, begin numbering them with the numeral 1 in each new chapter.

### **Use asterisk for single footnote in text (see different rules for tables)**

If there is only one footnote in the main body of the entire report (or in the entire executive summary or appendix), use an asterisk (\*) instead of a number. This rule does *not* apply to tables or figures, where the asterisk has a special meaning. For symbols used in table notes and for the prescribed order of various types of table notes, see the Tables section of this style guide. For more about table notes, refer to (or click on, in the electronic version of this style guide) [appendix C](#) of the *NCES Statistical Standards*.

### **Separate adjacent superscripts**

At times, more than one superscript may be attached to a word. Separate two or more superscripts attached to the same word with a hyphen (e.g.,<sup>4-6</sup>) or, if not consecutive, with a comma (e.g.,<sup>2,6</sup>).

For guidance on footnotes not specified in this section, see the rules and extensive examples in chapter 15 of the [United States Government Printing Office Style Manual](#) (2000 edition). (In the electronic version of this style guide, click on the underlined resource to access it.)

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## **Heading Styles and Levels**

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### **Titles and heading levels**

The titles and headings referred to in this section are as follows:

- Title – title of report or other publication; title of chapter or equivalent main division
- H1 heading – main heading level under title
- H2 heading – heading level under H1
- H3 heading – heading level under H2 (usually run in at the beginning of a paragraph)
- Lower level(s) if needed

### **Capitalize per guidelines**

See the Capitalization section of this style guide and the two sample heading schemes below for guidance on capitalizing titles and headings.

### **Make sure each level is consistent and easily distinguishable**

Make sure to use a consistent style to identify each level of heading. Ensure that the titles and the H1, H2, and H3 headings (and any lower level headings used) differ enough so that the reader readily sees the differences and the hierarchy. Differences can be indicated by

- placement of headings (e.g., centered, left-justified, run-in);
- size and type of font (e.g., large to small; boldface or italic; same type of font as text or different font);
- capitalization style (higher levels of headings capitalize all important words, while H3s—and in some designs, H2s—capitalize only the first word and proper nouns); or
- a combination of these differences.

By using the Styles feature of Microsoft Word when entering your headings, you can ensure the all-important consistency of each heading level. That is, all H1 headings are the same size, style, and font, and all H2 headings are the same size, style, and font. Consistency of heading levels, and correct assignment of levels to your headings, helps maintain the logic of your report organization and flow.

For how to use the Styles feature of Microsoft Word to ensure consistency in headings at different levels, see appendix E (Microsoft Word Shortcuts and Tips) of this style guide.

Below are two examples of acceptable heading schemes.

*Sample scheme 1*

In this sample NAEP scheme, center and boldface titles and H1 headings; flush left and boldface H2 headings; and, for H3 headings, italicize and run in at the beginning of a paragraph. A run-in head should end with a period. An example of sample scheme 1 follows:

**[Title] 2. Arts Education in Public Elementary Schools**

**[H1] Availability and Characteristics of Arts Education Programs in Public Elementary Schools**

**[H2] Characteristics of Music Instruction**

*[H3] Time devoted to instruction.* Among the 94 percent of regular public schools that offered music instruction, students in 6 percent of schools had music classes every day (table 2). Students had music classes three or four times a week in . . .

*Sample scheme 2*

In this sample scheme, set flush left and boldface titles, H1 headings, and H2 headings, differentiating them by type size. Italicize H3 headings and, in this scheme, place them on a separate line (like the other headings), rather than running them in at the beginning of paragraphs. An example of this scheme follows:

**[Title] Executive Summary**

**[H1] Results for Student Subgroups**

**[H2] Use of Computers**

*[H3] Results by socioeconomic status*

Students at different levels of socioeconomic status (SES) who used the Internet or CD-ROM materials . . .

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## Internet and Other Technical Terminology

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The purpose of these guidelines is to maintain consistency in usage of the developing and ever-changing language of internet terminology. Because current style manuals lack established rules in this area, IES authors should refer to these guidelines when using internet terminology.

### Internet and other technical terminology usage

In text, use the following forms (note cap or lowercase; one word or more; hyphen or no hyphen) for internet-related and other technical terms (*but* cap the first letter of all of the terms shown lowercase when they begin a sentence). For additional guidance regarding web standards, contact the IES center. (Note that capitalized abbreviations shown below are not capped when or if they are part of path names or file names.)

CD-ROM	intranet
database, dataset, <i>but</i> data file	LISTSERV (see note at end of list)
disk (for compact disk)	online
e-mail	PDF (portable document format)
FTP (file transfer protocol)	printout (noun); print out (verb)
home page	URL (uniform resource locator)
HTML (hypertext markup language)	the Web (cap as proper noun following “the”)
HTTP (hypertext transfer protocol)	web address, web browser, web page, <i>but</i> website, webmaster (lowercase as adjective or compound)
the Internet (cap as proper noun following “the”)	World Wide Web
internet application (lowercase as adjective)	

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*Note:* LISYSERV is a trademarked, proprietary term; unless you know that is what is being used, you should say “electronic mailing list” rather than the more commonly used “listserv.”

### Internet and e-mail addresses (see Punctuation section)

See “Addresses (internet and e-mail)”—in the Punctuation section of this style guide—for the style to use for these addresses.

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## Lists

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In general, displayed (i.e., set out) lists are used for emphasis when discussing key points in a publication. For the most part, displayed lists, whether bulleted or numbered, follow the same rules of punctuation that would apply in a sentence, except that semicolons rather than commas often are used to separate items. (Outline styles may also be used when appropriate for your material.)

### Numbers are used in displayed lists only if needed

Do not number items in lists unless those numbers are referred to later in the text or are present to establish a sequence. If used, however, numbers in lists should be followed by a period and a space (click on the numbered list in the formatting toolbar of Microsoft Word for a standardized, acceptable style).



*Example:* To develop a bulleted list, do the following in order:

1. Write the information as one or more sentences; then divide the material into a series of list items.
2. Determine the type of punctuation needed for fragments or complete sentences.
3. Place a medium-size bullet in front of each item (click on the bullet list in the formatting toolbar of Microsoft Word for a standardized, acceptable style); avoid the use of stars, asterisks, or other distracting symbols.
4. Review the list, making sure that the items are parallel in construction.

### Bullets are used in most cases

In most cases, use bullets in lists, following the rules of punctuation for a sentence, except that semicolons rather than commas are often used to separate items.

*Example:* Bulleted lists are used

- to organize thoughts;
- to give the eye a break; and
- to highlight salient points.

**General rules apply to both bulleted and numbered lists**

Note that certain other rules apply to displayed lists, as follows:

- Use a colon only when a complete sentence (often containing “the following” or “as follows”) introduces the list, as in this example.
- Do not use a colon or other punctuation to introduce a list when the listed items complete the introductory phrase, as in the example above, under “Bullets are used in most cases.”
- If the items form a list of fragments, as in the example under “Bullets are used in most cases,” they begin with a lowercase letter; they are punctuated with semicolons; the next to the last item ends with “and” or “or”; and the final item ends with a period, just as a sentence would.
- If, on the other hand, each item forms a complete sentence, as in this example, each begins with a capital letter and ends with a period.

**Parentheses are used only with list numbers integrated into text**

When a numbered list is integrated into the text (not set out, or displayed, as in the above examples), parentheses surround the numbers.

*Example:* The goals are (1) to communicate clearly and logically, and (2) to comply with specified style.

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**Numbers and Rounding**

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Use the following as a general guide.

**Numbers: Using words or numerals*****Units of time and measurement, including percentages***

Use Arabic numerals for units of time and measurement, including distance, percentages, proportions, decimals, degrees (of temperature), area, weight, age, scores, score levels, and mathematical expressions.

*Examples:* 10:00 a.m.; 5 miles; 12 months; 9 days; 8 percent; 6-year study, 18- to 25-year-olds

***General use***

Use Arabic numerals for numbers 10 or greater. Spell out numbers under 10 unless they are units of time or measurement, including distance, percentages, proportions, decimals, degrees, area,

weight, age, and mathematical expressions, or are part of a series in which one of the numbers is 10 or greater. The same rules apply to ordinals. (Note, however, that if cardinal and ordinal numbers appear in the same sentence, they are not considered part of the same series in terms of deciding whether to spell them out or use Arabic numerals. *Cardinal numbers* are numbers used in simple counting, such as 1, 2, and 12; *ordinal numbers* are numbers designating the place of an item in an ordered sequence, e.g., 1st, 2nd, and 12th.)

*Examples:* Of the books selected, two were fiction and five were nonfiction.

Of the books selected, 2 were fiction and 13 were nonfiction.

History was taught in the second, fourth, and sixth periods.

The groups included 2, 8, and 12 students, respectively.

The 2nd, 6th, 8th, 12th, and 14th students were accepted.

The report was the fifth in a series of 12.

In 1996, some 300 teachers left the profession. [See note below.]

*Note:* Avoid using only a comma to separate two numbers that are not part of a series (e.g., insert a word before the second number in “In 1996, 300 teachers ...” so that it says, for example, “In 1996, some 300 teachers . . .”). If the second number is an exact rather than approximate number, however, either recast the sentence to separate the numbers or spell out one of the numbers.

*Exceptions to the general-use rules:*

Each school had eleven 10th grades.

[The purpose of the above exception is to aid clarity and readability, by not juxtaposing the two numerals (11 10th). Also spell out numbers of less than 100 that precede a compound modifier containing a figure (e.g., twenty 12-inch rulers).]

An exception may also be made to the general rule when there is a strong rationale for doing so. For example, if a report discusses the 6th, 8th, and 10th grades throughout, the general rule would call for “sixth” and “eighth” to be spelled out except when they appear in conjunction with “10th.” However, it might distract the reader to continually switch back and forth between the numeric and spelled-out forms from sentence to sentence or paragraph to paragraph. In such a case, the authors would be justified in picking one form to follow throughout. Be consistent in your use of the selected style.

*Ordinals with numerals—style:* You may either use superscripts (e.g., 1<sup>st</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>) or not use superscripts (e.g., 1st, 9th) in ordinals with numerals, but be consistent in your document.

*To change the default style from one to the other in Microsoft Word, do the following:* Click on the “Insert” drop-down menu, then click on “AutoText,” and again on “AutoText.” Select the “AutoFormat As You Type” tab. In the “Replace” list, click to insert a check mark by the “Ordinals (1st) with superscript” listing if you want superscripts thereafter; click to deselect the check mark if you do not want superscripts thereafter. Click “OK.”



***Sentence/heading beginnings***

Write out years and numbers, including percentages, that begin a sentence or heading—or recast the sentence or heading.

- Examples:* Twelve people attended the meeting.  
Two sophomores, 3 juniors, and 12 seniors responded to the survey.  
Eight percent did not complete the questionnaire.  
The year 1997 was a watershed in Europe.  
Three-Year Limit for Grants [heading]  
There were 20 fourth-graders in each grade 4 classroom.

***Millions and billions***

Write out *million* and *billion* but keep the accompanying numerals.

- Examples:* The population of the United States is more than 280 million.  
The project cost \$4.5 billion.

***Numbers that cannot have a value greater than 1***

For numbers that cannot have a value greater than 1, such as *p* values, do not insert a zero before a decimal (e.g.,  $p < .05$ ).

***Decades***

Do not use an apostrophe in *1990s*. Write out abbreviated decade references, such as *the eighties* (not the '80s or the 80's).

- Examples:* The 1950s were a time of great economic expansion.  
During the nineties, boom times made everyone forget the cyclical nature of the economy.

***Other examples***

- |                                  |                  |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| 1st- through 12th-grade students | two groups       |
| 2 feet                           | three pages      |
| 3 credit hours                   | first grade      |
| 4 semester hours                 | K-12             |
| 1 month, 9 days                  | grade 4          |
| 17-year-olds                     | 14 ninth-graders |
| nine students                    | chapter 1        |



***Number spans***

Hyphens or en dashes may be used in number ranges, such as spans of multiple dates, ages, years, percentages, and time periods. Use one or the other consistently throughout your document.

*Examples:* My high school years, 1994-97, were interesting times. (*or* My high school years, from 1994 through 1997, were interesting times.)

Twelve percent of students ages 12-18 reported . . . (*or* Twelve percent of students ages 12 through 18 reported . . .)

*Note:* In this context, “through” implies that the range includes the ending date/item; “to” implies that it does not. If you use “from,” you must use “through” or “to.” If you use “between,” you must use “and.” Never substitute a hyphen in these cases.

*Examples:* Between 1994 and 1997, . . . (*not* Between 1994-97, . . .)

From June to September 2003, . . . (*not* From June-September 2003, . . .)

Use a hyphen or an en dash to indicate a time period (such as a school year) that includes parts of two successive calendar years.

*Examples:* This report presents data for school year 1996-97.

This report presents data for academic years 1996-97 through 2000-01.

For more about academic, fiscal, and school years, see the Year Spans section of this style guide.

**Rounding: Different types of data, different contexts*****In general***

A rounded value must be obtained from the original figure available, *not* from a series of roundings (e.g., 7.1748 can be 7.175 or 7.17 or 7.2 or 7 but *not* 7.18).

If the first digit to be dropped is less than 5, the last retained digit is not changed. If the first digit to be dropped is greater than or equal to 5, the last retained digit is increased by 1.

*Examples:* Rounded to three decimals, 6.1273 is 6.127

Rounded to two decimals, 6.6888 is 6.69

Rounded to one decimal, 5.4518 is 5.5

Rounded to a whole number, 5.49 or lower is 5; but 5.50 or higher is 6

***All tables***

Sums of column or row totals must be derived using unrounded numbers, with appropriate rounding of the total after its derivation.

Include the following note in all tables that include sets of cells that should logically sum to either 100 percent or a numeric total:

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

***Number of decimal places to be reported (excerpt from standard 5-3-5)***

*Standard 5-3-5, #1–6:* Before rounding numbers for publication, a decision must be made about the appropriate number of decimal places to be reported using the following rules:

1. Percentages appearing in text must be rounded to whole numbers unless small differences require finer breakdowns. Summary tables must be rounded to no more than one decimal place.
2. Percentages appearing in reference and methodological tables must be rounded to no more than two decimal places except in certain methodological tables where finer breakdowns may be necessary.
3. Standard errors must be rounded to one decimal place more than the estimates for which they are computed.
4. Universe data may be reported unrounded. Sample survey data must be rounded.
5. A measured zero in a universe survey (i.e., none of something) must always appear in a table or a figure as 0. If rounding is used in a universe survey, numbers that round to zero must be represented in tables and figures by the symbol #.

[Interpret the above NCES standard 5-3-5 directive about a measured zero in a universe survey as follows: In tables of universe data, the number of decimal places associated with a zero should equal the number of decimal places reported for other related estimates in the table.]

6. When dealing with small values in sample surveys, zero and numbers that round to zero must be represented in tables and figures by the symbol #. [Note: Their corresponding cells in an accompanying standard error table must be represented by the symbol †.]

For additional information on rounding, refer to (or click on, in the electronic version of this style guide) [standard 5-3](#) of the *NCES Statistical Standards*. For more detailed guidance on the presentation of numbers in tables, see [appendix C](#) of the *NCES Statistical Standards*. For guidance on numbers that is not specified in this section or in the referenced sections of the *Standards*, see the rules and examples on the treatment of numbers in text in chapter 12 of the *United States Government Printing Office Style Manual* (2000 edition).

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## Pagination

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### Front matter: Use lowercase Roman numerals

Use lowercase Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, . . .) to number the front matter pages of a report (title page, boilerplate on the back of the title page, executive summary or highlights, foreword, acknowledgments, contents page(s), and lists of tables and figures). Page numbers for the title page (i) and the back of the title page (ii) do not appear on the printed page. (For more about front matter and other parts of a document, see the next section of this style guide, Parts of the Document.)

### Suppression of page numbers

In Microsoft Word, to start numbering front matter pages with the title page—but suppress (not show) the number on that page—do the following: While on the title page, click on the “Insert” drop-down menu, then on “Page Numbers”; in the dialog box, select the “Position” and “Alignment” you want for your page numbers from those two drop-down menus; deselect (uncheck) “Show number on first page”; finally, click on “Format” and select the “Number format” you want (i, ii, iii). Click OK in both boxes.



To suppress page number ii on the boilerplate page on the back of the title page, do the following: First (while still on the title page), click on the “Insert” drop-down menu, select “Break,” and then select “Next page” break. This takes you to page ii; on page ii, select the “View” drop-down menu and then “Header and Footer.” On the “Header and Footer” toolbar that appears, click on “Switch Between Header and Footer” to get into the footer. On that same toolbar, deselect “Link to previous” (if you have Microsoft Office 2003) or deselect “Same as Previous” (if you have Microsoft Office 2000) and close the toolbar.

To start visible page numbering on page iii (and use alternating odd/even page numbers thereafter), first (while still on page ii) add a section break (“Next page” type). That takes you to page iii; then, again click on “View” and “Header and Footer” and switch to the footer. Right align your cursor in the footer (you can use your regular toolbar to right align). Next, click on the “Page Setup” icon on the “Header and Footer” toolbar. In the “Page Setup” box, select “Layout.” Then, select “Different Odd/Even”; deselect “Different first page”; select “Apply to: This section”; and click OK. Deselect “Link to previous” (if you have Microsoft Office 2003) or deselect “Same as previous” (if you have Microsoft Office 2000) and close the “Header and Footer” toolbar.

Thereafter, whenever you end one section on an odd-numbered page and want to leave a blank page before starting a new section on the next odd-numbered page, simply do the following: At the end of the completed section, insert a break (“Odd page” type). That will take you to the next odd-numbered page; and the page number will be suppressed on the skipped (blank) page.

**Main body of report: Use Arabic numerals**

Use consecutive Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, . . .) to number the pages in the main body of reports. To change the page numbering style (as when going from style i, ii, iii to style 1, 2, 3), enter a section break at the end of the old section. (Do this by clicking on the “Insert” drop-down menu, selecting “Break,” and then selecting a “Next Page” break if you are on an even-numbered page, or an “Odd Page” break if you are on an odd-numbered page and want to start the new section and numbering on the next odd-numbered page.)



Then, while on the first page of the new section, click on the “Insert” drop-down menu, then on “Page Numbers”; in the dialog box, make sure the “Position” and “Alignment” remain as you want them to be. Select (check) “Show number on first page”; and finally, click on “Format” and do two things: select the “Number format” you want (1, 2, 3), and deselect (uncheck) “Continue from previous section.”

**Appendixes: In long reports, use alphanumeric page numbering**

If a report is relatively short (say, 100 pages or shorter), you may wish to use consecutive page numbering with Arabic numerals throughout the report, including appendixes. For longer reports, however, separate alphanumeric numbering of each appendix helps orient the reader and is encouraged. Appendix A pages would be numbered A-1, A-2, A-3, etc.; appendix B pages would be numbered B-1, B-2, B-3, etc.

**Positioning of page numbers**

Be consistent in the positioning of page numbers in your document. Regardless of the orientation of material on individual pages (e.g., landscape tables as well as portrait), all page numbers should be either (1) on the outside of pages (i.e., on the right side of the page on odd-numbered pages and on the left side on even-numbered pages) or (2) at the bottom center (center is best for web-only materials).

Generally place page numbers at the bottom of pages (in the footer); however, if it better suits your document, you may place outside numbers (i.e., those that alternate between the left and right side) at the top of pages (in the header).

Positioning at the outside of pages is helpful when a document’s purpose makes it likely that readers will be frequently looking for specific page numbers.

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**Parts of the Document**

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**Front matter**

Front matter refers to all of the material in your document that follows the cover and precedes the main body of the report. Pages of front matter generally are numbered with lowercase roman numerals (for more on numbering pages in the front matter, see the Pagination section of this style guide).

### ***Sections and order of front matter***

Your document may not include all of the front matter sections mentioned here. Use the following order for the sections that you do include: the title page, boilerplate on the back of the title page, executive summary or highlights, foreword, acknowledgments, contents page(s), list of tables, and list of figures. (Not all reports include an executive summary, highlights, or foreword.)

### ***Title page and templates***

The title page is the first page after the cover. Title pages of NCES reports follow a standard format. To access Microsoft Word templates for the standard NCES title page format and boilerplate format for print or web-only publications, click on either [title page/boilerplate templates—print](#) or [title page/boilerplate templates—web](#) in the electronic version of this style guide. On the title page of NCES reports, the publication type, when relevant, is generally singular (e.g., Statistical Analysis Report, Issue Brief, E.D. TAB). To access Microsoft Word templates for the standard NCES front cover and back cover formats, click on [front cover/back cover templates](#) in the electronic version of this style guide.

The title page and the boilerplate on the back of the title page are numbered as pages i and ii, but these numbers are suppressed so that they do not show on the pages. (See the Pagination section of this style guide for how to suppress page numbers.)

### ***Boilerplate on back of title page***

For NCES reports, material on the back of the title page follows a standard format. See the subsection above about accessing templates for the print version or the web version.

The back of the title page includes the Suggested Citation. (For the style to be used for the Suggested Citation, refer to the References section of this style guide, under the subsections “IES publications” and “For Suggested Citation, use the style outlined in this References section.”)

### ***Executive summary or highlights***

For NCES reports, a brief executive summary or highlights section is required for E.D. TAB reports, statistical analysis reports, and technical reports when the body of the report exceeds 15 pages. However, NCES report types that are shorter, such as issue briefs, statistics in briefs, some E.D. TAB reports, and highlights brochures, typically do not include an executive summary or highlights.

The highlights are most often in a bullet-list format. When bullet items are introduced by a paragraph that summarizes many of the elements of an executive summary, the highlights section is comparable to a short executive summary.

For what should be included in executive summaries, refer to (or click on, in the electronic version of this style guide) [checklist 7-2-A](#) in standard 7-2 of the *NCES Statistical Standards*.

### ***Foreword***

A foreword is optional in IES reports. In some NCES reports, a foreword is a statement by a center person other than the author. In other NCES reports, the foreword is used by the authors as a brief (one- to four-paragraph) overview of the issues addressed by the report, source of the data, and how the data were produced. When the foreword is by the authors, it is unnecessary for them to add their names at the bottom of the message.

### ***Acknowledgments***

Acknowledgments for contributions other than authorship by both Department of Education staff and outside contributors should be placed on the acknowledgments page. If a contributor has changed affiliation since the time of contribution, both affiliations may be included. Keep this page brief, but be sure to identify major contributors to the content—e.g., internal and external reviewers, including IES and centers' staff and contractor staff, and the contracting officer—and to the artistic design of the publication.

Omit formal titles such as Mr., Mrs., and Dr.

### ***Contents page(s) and automatic generation***

Use *Contents* rather than *Table of Contents* as the heading for the list of the document's contents. Generally, use only two or three levels of heading in your contents page(s).

Include in the contents list all material that precedes the contents page, starting with the executive summary, if any; and use lowercase roman numerals to show front matter page numbers. Do not list the contents page itself, but do include the list of tables and list of figures. Finally, list sections in the main body of the report as well as all back matter, which includes appendixes (see back matter below).

*To create the contents section automatically in Microsoft Word, do the following:*

*First, assign styles to headings:* Use the Styles feature of Word to assign specific heading levels and styles to your document's headings. To do this, select the heading level of interest from the drop-down window that appears at the top and to the left on your screen (in addition to heading styles, the drop-down window lists other styles, such as "Normal" and "Default Paragraph Font"). Note that each heading level has an already assigned style (e.g., 16 pt, left-aligned for Heading 1). After selecting the level in the list, type your heading in your document; or, if you already have typed your heading, highlight it or put your cursor in it and then select the desired heading level. (If you want to modify a heading style before applying it to your headings, select "Format" on your toolbar and then click on "Style." In the "Style" box, select the heading level that you want to modify—e.g., "Heading 2"—and then click "Modify." In the "Modify Style" box that appears, click "Format" at the bottom of the box, and then click the attribute [e.g., font] you want to change. Click "OK" after changing each attribute you wish to modify. *Note:* Modifications made to a style apply automatically to all instances of that style throughout the document.)



*Second, to generate the contents page(s), follow these steps:*

1. Click where you want to insert the Contents section in your document. (It should follow the front matter sections, including executive summary or highlights, foreword, and acknowledgments, but should precede the lists of tables and figures.)
2. Select the “Insert” drop-down menu from your toolbar, click “Index and Tables,” and then select the “Table of Contents” tab.
3. Before you click “OK,” while still in the “Index and Tables” box, do two things:
  - a. Use the “Formats” drop-down window at bottom left to view style options for the contents page(s) and select the one you want.
  - b. If you want a different number of heading levels in your Contents section from that shown in the “Print Preview” window, click the “Show levels” up or down arrow to select the number of heading levels that you want to display.
4. Finally, click “OK” in the “Index and Tables” dialog box. Your Contents list will be inserted where you indicated in the first step above.

To learn more, or to resolve any problems you encounter, consult the Help feature on your toolbar.

### ***List of Tables and List of Figures***

The List of Tables and List of Figures in the front matter are separate lists. If helpful, you may include, within one or both of these lists, subheads indicating the general subject of groups of tables or figures. These subheads do not affect the numbering of tables/figures.

These two lists do not have to start on odd-numbered pages. They should, however, start on a new page—with the list of tables following the contents page(s) and the list of figures following the list of tables. If both fit on one page, they may be placed on the same page.

Under the “List of . . .” section title, and directly above the list, insert the word “Table” or “Figure” at the top left of the list of titles, and do not repeat that word in each listing. Insert the word “Page” at top right over the page numbers that locate the tables/figures for the reader.

### **Body of the report**

The body of the report (the material following the front matter and preceding the back matter) usually begins with an introduction. To see what should be included in a report, refer to (or click on, in the electronic version of this style guide) [list 7-2-A](#) in standard 7-2 of the *NCES Statistical Standards*.

Ensure that tables and figures included in the body of the report are numbered in the order in which they are described in the body of the report. Also ensure that table/figure numbers and

titles are accurately reflected in the list of tables and list of figures in the front matter. (For guidance on preparing tables and figures, as well as references to appropriate parts of the *NCES Statistical Standards*, see the Tables and the Figures sections of this style guide, as well as appendixes G and H.)

The report's list of references follows the body of the report. If a group of tables is included in the body of the report (rather than dispersed through the text), however, the reference list precedes these tables. (For guidance on preparing the reference list, see the References section of this style guide.)

### **Back matter**

The back matter includes appendixes and, if any, the glossary and index; in IES reports, a glossary most often is included in the form of an appendix. In addition to the glossary, the following—if appropriate for the particular report—are included as appendixes: technical notes, methodology, supplemental tables, and standard error tables. Other appendixes may be included, as appropriate for the document. (For guidance on numbering tables in appendixes, see the Tables section of this style guide; for guidance on numbering footnotes in appendixes, see the Footnotes section; and for guidance on numbering appendix pages, see the Pagination section.) Ensure that appendixes are lettered and included in the back matter in the order in which they are described in the body of the report.

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## **Plurals**

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Below are words that have alternative plural forms. To ensure consistency in IES publications, the list shows the singular form first, followed by the preferred plural form:

addendum, addenda

agenda, agendas

appendix, appendixes [parts of document]

compendium, compendia

consortium, consortia

criterion, criteria

curriculum, curricula

datum, data [always use plural verb with data]

formula, formulas

index, indexes [indices for scientific material or mathematical expressions]

matrix, matrices

memorandum, memoranda



referendum, referendums

schema, schemas

symposium, symposia

Do not use an apostrophe in plurals for dates (1990s) or for abbreviations (ABCs), except when an abbreviation has two or more periods or includes both capital and lowercase letters (Ph.D.'s). Use an apostrophe in plurals of single letters when it adds clarity (e.g., x's and y's instead of xs and ys). Write out abbreviated decade references, such as *the eighties*; do not use *the 80's* or *the 80s*.

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## Printing and Binding Regulations

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Congress essentially reaffirmed, in appropriations law for fiscal year 2004, the law as stated in title 44 of the United States Code that “All printing, binding, and blank-book work for . . . every executive department . . . shall be done at the Government Printing Office [GPO].” Certain classes of work are excepted, including items of less than \$1,000 in value and items not of a continuing or repetitive nature.

GPO provides a means, called a Small Purchase Agreement (SPA), by which agencies can place printing orders directly rather than through GPO by using contracts written by GPO. The SPA program requires agencies to develop their own specifications, call certified contractors, and make their own award. One contractor may be called for jobs of less than \$1,000 in value; three contractors must be called for jobs over \$1,000 and up to \$2,500 in value. On all SPA orders, any problems that arise related to specifications, quality, or delivery must be resolved by the agency itself. On all GPO orders, such problems are handled by GPO. GPO orders carry a percentage charge to cover the contracting/procurement services provided by GPO, including development of specifications, the bidding process, award and contract administration, and problems of quality and delivery.

Printing through GPO puts the material in the public domain and ensures that the material is distributed through the Federal Depository Libraries. These libraries—many of which are college, university, and academic law libraries—serve as the public’s primary source of free access to the published information of the federal government.

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## Punctuation

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Punctuation is used to provide clarity and smooth transitions.

### Addresses (internet and e-mail)

In electronic addresses designating websites on the Internet (uniform resource locators, or URLs), list the entire address on a single line, if possible. Break after slashes and punctuation, if necessary

to break; *but* never break addresses at hyphens, and never introduce hyphens into addresses. You may omit a slash found at the end of an address.

URLs begin with an abbreviation of the protocol used to deliver the electronic material to readers. The most common are hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP) and file transfer protocol (FTP). Lowercase protocol abbreviations when part of URLs. The protocol is followed by a colon, double forward slash, and then the publisher's domain name. Components following the domain name represent the path to the resource. These components are separated from the domain name and from each other by single forward slashes.

Include “www” in a URL only if the subject organization includes it in its published or distributed web address. For example, do not include “www” in the following URLs, even though they would work either with it or without it: nces.ed.gov; cnn.com; msnbc.com.

Highlight addresses by underlining them. This happens automatically in Microsoft Word, the standard for the Education Department. IES style is to lowercase all parts of URLs and e-mail addresses unless case-sensitive applications require uppercase.

*Examples:* internet—http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch  
e-mail—john.doe@ed.gov

If an address comes at the end of a sentence, include a period to end the sentence (do not underline the period if it is not part of the address).

### **Addresses (postal) and telephone numbers**

In postal addresses, do not use a comma before NW and its counterparts. Use hyphens in zip codes and telephone numbers.

*Examples:* 555 New Jersey Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20208  
(202) 502-7300 *or* 202-502-7300 (be consistent in your document)  
P.O. Box 1398  
Jessup, MD 20794-1398  
1 (877) 433-7827 *or* 1-877-433-7827 (be consistent in your document)

### **Apostrophe**

To form the possessive of singular nouns, including those that end in *s* (boss), add an apostrophe and an *s*. To form the possessive of plural nouns ending in *s* (bosses), add an apostrophe only. Some irregular plurals (women) form the possessive by adding both an apostrophe and an *s*.

*Examples:* boss's, bosses'  
 citizen's, citizens'  
 datum's, data's  
 IES's; NCES's (but note that when you use an abbreviation as a modifier, it is not necessarily a possessive form and generally does not require an apostrophe and *s*, e.g., "IES grants" and "NCES surveys")  
 woman's, women's  
 one parent's education, both parents' education, one student's nationality

## Comma

Use a final (serial) comma preceding "and" at the end of a series.

*Example:* The survey included responses from students, teachers, and administrators.

For placement of commas with quotation marks, see "Quotation marks," later in this section.

## Dashes

### *Em dash*

In printed publications, use an em dash (—) in place of two hyphens (--) to indicate a break in thought in the copy, or for emphasis. Do not leave a space between an em dash and the words that precede and follow it. Do not use em dashes where commas will suffice.

*Example:* Instructional faculty were asked about their use of various methods—lecture, seminar, lab, and fieldwork—as primary teaching methods in their classes.

To get an em dash (—) in Microsoft Word, do one of the following:



- Leaving no space after a word, insert two hyphens and continue typing; the hyphens convert to an em dash.
- While holding down the Ctrl and Alt keys, press the minus key at top right of the numbers pad.
- Select Insert, then Symbol, then Special Characters; select the em dash and Insert.

### *En dash*

To support efficient use of Microsoft Word, hyphens are used in lieu of en dashes. Authors may use en dashes for number spans if they prefer. Priority should be given to consistency within a document. (To create an en dash in Microsoft Word, hold down the Ctrl key and press the minus key at top right of the numbers pad.)

## Hyphen

### *Miscellaneous (e.g., zip codes)*

For efficiency in Microsoft Word, use hyphens to separate the numbers in telephone numbers, zip codes, and publication numbers.

### *Compound words*

Hyphens are frequently used to connect elements of compound words, particularly if those words are used as unit modifiers.

*Examples:* 12-year-old students

12-year-olds (*but* 12 years old)

12- through 24-year-old students (*not* 12–24-year old students)

2- and 4-year institutions

less-than-4-year institutions

4-year-and-above institutions (but may use “4-year and above” when used without “institutions” in stub columns or as column head)

post-master’s certificate

eighth-grader

evidence-based intervention

multiple-choice questions

two-thirds

For more about the use of hyphens in compounds, see the Compound Words section of this style guide.

### *Number spans (general)*

Hyphens or en dashes may be used in number spans such as year spans and percentage spans. Use one or the other consistently throughout a report. For more about the style to be followed in presenting such ranges, see “Number spans” in the Numbers and Rounding section of this style guide, as well as the Year Spans section of this guide.

### *Preventing misunderstanding*

Hyphens may always be used to prevent misunderstanding (e.g., co-op, *not* coop, for a shortened version of cooperative; re-sort, *not* resort, for “to sort again”).

## Quotation marks

### *Placement with other punctuation*

Put commas and final periods inside quotation marks; put other punctuation marks outside quotation marks, unless they are part of the quotation.

*Examples:* This practice, often referred to as “tuition discounting,” has grown rapidly in recent years.

Answers to this question were scored on three levels: evidence of “Full Comprehension,” evidence of “Partial or Surface Comprehension,” or evidence of “Little or No Comprehension.”

Why call it a “gentleman’s agreement”?

Be consistent in your use of quotation marks. Use double quotation marks (“ . . .”) for quotes and to report direct speech. Use single quotation marks (‘ . . .’) for a quote within a quote or a quote within direct speech.

### *Use when citing titles in text*

Put in quotation marks, when citing in text, the titles of articles or features from periodicals and newspapers, as well as the titles of chapters, essays, and other selections from books.

### *General style issues*

Always use curly quotation marks (“ . . .”), called smart quotes, rather than straight marks (‘ and ’), which are used to denote feet and inches. In Microsoft Word, if you are not getting smart quotation marks, go to your toolbar and select the “Format” drop-down menu, then “Autoformat,” then “Options,” and check to replace straight quotes with smart quotes. Do not use quotation marks to emphasize words. If special emphasis is needed and cannot be achieved by rewording, it can be accomplished by using—sparingly—italicized words or em dashes.



Similarly, words in text and headings should not be underlined or made all caps for emphasis (except for underlined web addresses). Using boldface in text for emphasis is discouraged; but in rare instances when italics or em dashes do not achieve the necessary emphasis, boldface may be used sparingly.

## Slash

Use the slash (or solidus) to indicate alternatives, in fractions, and as a substitute for “per.”

*Examples:* race/ethnicity  
pupil/teacher ratio

Generally avoid the use of “and/or.” Choose either “and” or “or,” or else recast the sentence; a construction that uses “, or both” is often appropriate.

*Example:* Such organizations offer services designed to meet the needs of children, their parents, or both.

*Exception:* In densely technical sentences, when your meaning with “and/or” is clear—and use of the longer construction might result in ambiguity—you may use “and/or.”

For guidance not covered in this section, see the rules and examples on the treatment of punctuation in text in chapter 8 of the [United States Government Printing Office Style Manual](#) (2000 edition). (In the electronic version of this style guide, click on the underlined resource to access it.)

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## Race and Ethnicity

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Refer to (or click on, in the electronic version of this style guide) [standard 1-5](#) of the *NCES Statistical Standards* for guidance on reporting on race and ethnicity.

### Order of race/ethnicity categories in tables

Any one of the following three approaches is acceptable for ordering race/ethnicity categories in tables. Follow one of these approaches consistently within a document:

- *customary order*—White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, More than one race, and Other (with a footnote explaining the abbreviated categories);

Footnote example: Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, Asian includes Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and American Indian includes Alaska Native. (If reporting the category Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander separately, add Pacific Islander to the primary list; in the footnote, delete the Asian explanation and add the following Pacific Islander explanation: Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian.)

- *by size* (i.e., largest to smallest or smallest to largest, as appropriate for the subject); or
- *alphabetical* (this might be appropriate, for example, in a report focused on American Indians/Alaska Natives).

### Race aggregations

In cases where the standard minimal reporting categories are considered inappropriate for particular programs or regions—and you need collective descriptions to make summary distinctions—you may use “White,” “Black,” and “All other races”; or “White” and either “Black

and other races” or “All other races.” (References to “Black” in this paragraph assume that you have defined the term as including “African American.”)

The term “non-White” is not acceptable as a racial/ethnic designation when reporting data. As an alternative in general discussion, you may use “races other than White” or similar phrases when appropriate.

## References

### Cite appropriate sources when supporting statements of fact

All statements of fact in reports must be supported directly either by data presented in the report or by a citation to the research literature. Such citations must be to refereed, peer-reviewed journals; to books published by companies known for their academic rigor; or to acceptable government reports. A list called “Refereed Journals in Education: A Nearly Complete (English-language) List” can be found at <http://marauder.millersville.edu/~curricul/Refereed.htm>. If the journal you are citing is not on the list and you are not sure it is peer-reviewed, please use the Internet to find that journal’s instructions to authors, to verify its refereed status. Another website lists journals in the EBSCO database and indicates which are refereed. This list can be found at <http://www.epnet.com/academic/acasearchprem.asp>.

*Exception:* When you judge it appropriate and useful to cite one or more other types of sources (e.g., a newspaper, news magazine, or other general-audience periodical), in order to establish the relevance of a topic or issue, consult and gain the approval of your project officer for such use as early as possible in the report development process.

### Within your text, use brief, parenthetical references

When you refer to other publications within your text, place authors’ names and the publication date in parentheses, with no punctuation between the last author’s name and the date, as shown below. Key them to a reference list at the end of your publication. The style to use for legal citations, which are also included in the reference list, is shown near the end of this References section.

*examples:*

<i>One work by one author:</i>	<i>Principles illustrated</i>
(Duncan 1997) <i>or</i> In contrast, Duncan (1997) found that . . .	If possible, cite the name of individual author(s) instead of just an organization name.
(National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS] 1994) <i>or</i> Curriculum standards developed by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS 1994) provide examples of . . .	Cite an organization only if the work cannot be ascribed to individual authors. For the first mention of an organization that will be referred to again, define the acronym.

(NCSS 1996)		If you previously defined the acronym, no need to write out the entire name.
(Myers in press)	← <b>non-IES pub, accepted for publication, but not yet printed</b>	If a publication has not yet been printed or released, do not include the year. <i>Exception:</i> If an IES pub has already gone to the printer or is available on the Web, include the year of release.
(Phyfe forthcoming)	← <b>IES pub, not yet released</b>	
(Duncan 1997, p. 82)		When referencing a quotation or other <i>very specific</i> piece of information within a publication, include the page number.
(K.W. Schaie—personal communication, September 28, 1993) <i>or</i> Bill Joyner verified the information about his school in a telephone interview (March 20, 1993).		For personal communications—letters, memos, e-mail, phone conversations, etc.—include the initials or first name of the communicator and as exact a date as possible. Personal communications are <i>not</i> included in the reference list.

**One work by multiple authors:**

two authors	(Celebuski and Farris 1998)
with page reference	(Celebuski and Farris 1998, p. 71)
three authors	(Haney, Madaus, and Kreitzer 1987)
with page reference	(Haney, Madaus, and Kreitzer 1987, p. 80)
four or more authors	(Choy et al. 1993)
with page reference	(Choy et al. 1993, p. 48)

**Multiple works within the same parentheses:**

none of the works have page references	(Kolstad 1990, 1992) ← <b>multiple works by single author</b>
	(Choy et al. 1993; Henke et al. 1997)
one or more works have page references	(Berkner and Chavez 1997; U.S. Department of Education 1997)
	(Herman, Aschbacher, and Winters 1992; Koretz et al. 1994; Wiggins 1993) ← <b>works by different authors are ordered alphabetically by name of first author</b>
one or more works have page references	(Celebuski and Farris 1998; Wirt et al. 1998, p. 45)
	(Burstein et al. 1995, p. 36; Marshal, Fuhr, and Day 1994, p. 12)

**Works that have identical author(s) and year of publication:**

within the same parentheses	(Smith 1995a, 1995b, 1995c)
in separate references	(Pepperburg and Funk in press–a)
	(Pepperburg and Funk in press–b)

**Works that have same principal author, multiple other authors, and same year:**

Without page numbers	(Smith, Jones et al. 1992)
	(Smith, Harrow et al. 1992)



## At the end of your publication, provide a detailed reference list

The reference list documents all sources that you referred to in the text, including print and electronic sources and legal citations, and allows readers to locate these sources. (See the end of this References section for the style to be used for legal citations.) *Prepare each entry carefully, making sure that it is accurate and complete.* Arrange the entries in alphabetical order by author name and, in the case of legal citations, name of legal citation. If more than one entry have the same author(s), arrange the entries by year of publication, with the earliest year first. *For details on arranging the list, see the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (fifth edition).*

### General notes:

- For a multiple-author work, **list all authors**; do *not* use “et al.” in a reference list.
- **Do not include a project officer** who is not an author; always **include the publication number** (in parentheses after the title, before the period).
- For works that have **identical author(s) and year of publication**, add lowercase letters immediately after the date and alphabetize by title:

Ingersoll, R. (1995a). *An Agenda* . . .

Ingersoll, R. (1995b). *Teacher Supply* . . .

- Per IES style, capitalize most words in the title, including prepositions with four or more letters.

### Basic elements of individual entries:

#### Periodical:

Author, A.A., Author, B.B., Author, C.C., and Author, D.D. (1994). Title of Article. *Title of Periodical*, *nn(n)*: nnn-*nnn*. ← pages

#### Nonperiodical:

Author, A.A., Author, B.B., Author, C.C., and Author, D.D. (1994). *Title of Publication*. Location: Publisher or printer (e.g., GPO).

#### Part of nonperiodical (e.g., chapter of book):

Author, A.A., and Author, B.B. (1994). Title of Chapter. In A. Editor and B. Editor (Eds.), *Title of Book* (pp. nnn-*nnn*). Location: Publisher or printer (e.g., GPO).

### IES publications:

### Notes

#### Pubs published and available through GPO:

Henke, R.R., Choy, S.P., Chen, X., Geis, S., Alt, M.N., and Broughman, S.P. (1997). *America's Teachers: Profile of a Profession: 1993-94* (NCES 97-460). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

In the publication number, use a hyphen to separate the year from the specific number. For NCES pubs released in 1998 or earlier, use a two-digit year; for NCES pubs released in 1999 or later, include all four digits of the year.

**Sample publication numbers:** 93-152 and 98-306; but 1999-104, 2000-585, and 2004-013

<p>Myers, D., and Dynarski, M. (2003). <i>Random Assignment in Program Evaluation and Intervention Research: Questions and Answers</i> (NCEE 2003-5000). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.</p>	
<p><u>IES pub available on the Web only:</u> See “Works on the Internet,” below.</p>	
<p><u>IES pub that is not available through GPO:</u> Bare, J., and Meek, A. (1998). <i>Internet Access in Public Schools</i> (NCES 98-031). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.</p>	<p>For the following types of NCES pubs, cite National Center for Education Statistics as the publisher, as shown in the example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Issue Brief</li> <li>▪ Statistics in Brief</li> <li>▪ E.D. TAB</li> <li>▪ Highlights brochure</li> </ul> <p>These types of publications cannot be purchased through GPO.</p>
<p><u>NCES working paper (also not available through GPO):</u> Ingersoll, R. (1996). <i>National Assessments of Teacher Quality</i> (NCES 96-24). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics Working Paper.</p>	<p>You can easily identify a working paper, because the NCES number has only two digits after the year (e.g., 1999-16). Working papers are not available through GPO.</p>
<p><u>Individual article within edited IES pub:</u> Goldhaber, D., and Brewer, D. (1997). Evaluating the Effect of Teacher Degree Level on Educational Performance. In W. Fowler (Ed.), <i>Developments in School Finance, 1996</i> (NCES 97-535) (pp. 199-208). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.</p>	<p>If a work forms part of another publication—i.e., is not separately published—its title is neither italicized nor in quotation marks.</p>
<p><u>IES pub not yet released or sent to printer:</u> Allen, N.L., Carlson, J.E., and Zelenak, C.A. (forthcoming). <i>The NAEP 1996 Technical Report</i> (NCES 1999-452). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.</p>	<p>If an IES publication has neither been released nor sent to the printer, use the word “forthcoming” instead of a date.</p> <p>If a pub has been released on the Web but not yet sent to the printer, include the year of release. If a pub has been sent to the printer but not yet released in any medium, use the projected year of release.</p>
<p><u>IES pub with a center as author:</u> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2004). <i>The Condition of Education 2004</i> (NCES 2004-077). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.</p>	<p>If the title page of an IES pub does not list individual authors or editors, or lists only the project officer and supporting/ production staff, cite the agency as author, as shown at left. For more guidance on title page listings, see the Suggested Citation information later in this References section. For parenthetical text references to the example at left, use “(U.S. Department of Education 2004).”</p>
<p><u>IES pub with a center as both author and publisher:</u> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Research. (xxxx). xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx (NCER xxxx-xxx). Washington, DC: Author.</p>	<p>When an IES pub is not available from GPO—or you cannot be sure that it will be—cite the center as the publisher; but do not repeat the center name if it is also the author. Instead, cite “Author” as the publisher.</p>
<p><u>IES pub with commission as author:</u> National Forum on Education Statistics, Technology in Schools Task Force. (2002). <i>Technology in Schools: Suggestions, Tools, and Guidelines for Assessing</i></p>	<p>IES sometimes publishes reports authored by commissions or forums that include large numbers of individuals from many different organizations. If a work is the product of a group and individual authors cannot be identified, cite the group as author.</p>

<p><i>Technology in Elementary and Secondary Education</i> (NCES 2003-313). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.</p>	
<p><u>Joint product with another government agency:</u> Chandler, K.A., Chapman, C.D., Rand, M.R., and Taylor, B.M. (1998). <i>Students' Reports of School Crime: 1989 and 1995</i> (NCES 98-241/NCJ-169607). U.S. Departments of Education and Justice. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics and Bureau of Justice Statistics.</p>	<p>Individual authors are usually listed. The pub numbers of both agencies are included, if available. In this case, NCES and BJS are listed as the publishers because the publication was not available from GPO. If the publication were available through GPO, then GPO would be listed as the publisher.</p>

**U.S. government publications (non-IES)****Notes**

<p><u>Individuals identified as authors:</u> Kindermann, C., Lynch, J., and Cantor, D. (1997). <i>Effects of the Redesign on Victimization Estimates</i> (NCJ 164381). U.S. Department of Justice. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.</p>	<p>Cite individual authors if possible. Cite the agency's pub number if available. Cite GPO as publisher if available from GPO. If you're not sure about GPO availability and GPO is not cited anywhere on the publication's inside front cover, then cite the agency as publisher.</p>
<p><u>Commission as author (or as author and publisher):</u> The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills. (1991). <i>What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000</i>. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor. National Commission on the Cost of Higher Education. (1998). <i>Straight Talk on the Cost of Higher Education</i>. Washington, DC: Author.</p>	<p>Whenever the author and publisher are identical, use the word "Author" as the publisher.</p>
<p><u>Department as author:</u> U.S. Department of Education. (1998). <i>Goals 2000: Reforming Education to Improve Student Achievement</i>. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.</p>	

**Nongovernment publications****Notes**

<p><u>Standard book or published report:</u> Lewis, A. (1989). <i>Wolves at the Schoolhouse Door: An Investigation of the Condition of Public School Buildings</i>. Washington, DC: Education Writers Association.</p>	
<p><u>Journal article:</u> Shavelson, R.J., Baxter, G.P., and Gao, X. (1993). Sampling Variability of Performance Assessments. <i>Journal of Educational Measurement</i>, 30(3): 215-232.</p>	<p>Always include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the volume number (italicized), and</li> <li>▪ the issue number (in parens, no italics).</li> </ul>
<p><u>Pub with editor(s) instead of author(s):</u> Wilson, H. (Ed.). (1997). <i>Punishment as an Educational Tool</i>. Montreal, Canada: Albemarle Leafnotes.</p>	<p>Use the same format as for a pub with author(s), but insert "(Ed.)" after a single editor's name or "(Eds.)" after multiple editors' names.</p>

<p><u>Article within edited pub:</u></p> <p>Haertel, E. (1991). New Forms of Teacher Assessment. In G. Grant and S. Smith (Eds.), <i>Review of Research in Education</i> (pp. 329-347). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.</p>	
<p><u>Newspaper article:</u></p> <p>Ravitch, D. (1998, August 10). Lesson Plan for Teachers. <i>The Washington Post</i>, p. A17.</p>	<p>Include the day of publication to identify the issue.</p>
<p><u>Magazine article:</u></p> <p>Connor, B.E. (1988, July/August). The Box in the Barn. <i>Highlights for Children</i>, pp. 18-22.</p>	
<p><i>Works on the Internet</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Notes</i></span></p>	
<p><u>IES pub available on the Web only:</u></p> <p>Knapp, L.G., Kelly, J.E., Whitmore, R.W., Wu, S., and Gallego, L.M. (2003). <i>Postsecondary Institutions in the United States: Fall 2001 and Degrees and Other Awards Conferred: 2000-01</i> (NCES 2003-158). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved March 23, 2005, from <a href="http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003158">http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003158</a>.</p>	<p>In the Suggested Citation for a web-only pub, include the following last line: "Retrieved [date] from <a href="http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch">http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch</a>." The citation user supplies the appropriate date. Include as much URL detail as you can.</p>
<p><u>NCES data file available on the Web:</u></p> <p>U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Local Education Agency Universe Survey," 2001-02, Version 1a. Retrieved [date] from [URL].</p>	
<p><u>Report available on the Web:</u></p> <p>United States Sentencing Commission. (n.d.) <i>1997 Sourcebook of Federal Sentencing Statistics</i>. Retrieved April 30, 2003, from <a href="http://www.ussc.gov/annrpt/1997/sbtoc97.htm">http://www.ussc.gov/annrpt/1997/sbtoc97.htm</a>.</p>	<p>If no report date is available, put "(n.d.)" (for "no date") after the author/agency name.</p>
<p><u>Speech available on the Web:</u></p> <p>Spellings, M. (2005, March 14). <i>A Quality Education for All Students</i>. Remarks prepared for delivery to the Governor's Commission on Quality Education at Annapolis, Maryland, by the U.S. Secretary of Education. Retrieved March 23, 2005, from <a href="http://ed.gov/news/speeches/2005/03/03142005.html">http://ed.gov/news/speeches/2005/03/03142005.html</a>.</p>	<p>If you must break the internet address (URL), do so after a slash or before a period. Be sure your word-processing program does not insert a hyphen.</p>
<p><u>Journal article available on the Web:</u></p> <p>[All of the usual journal citation information.] Retrieved April XX, 200X, from <a href="http://www.xxx.xxx/xxx/xxxx">http://www.xxx.xxx/xxx/xxxx</a>.</p>	
<p><i>Some special types of reference-list entries</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Notes</i></span></p>	
<p><u>Accepted for publication but not yet published (non-IES):</u></p> <p>Ingersoll, R. (in press). Teacher Assessment and Evaluation. In D. Levinson, P. Cookson, and A. Sadovnik (Eds.), <i>Education and Sociology: An Encyclopedia</i>. Washington, DC: Garland Press.</p>	<p>If a non-IES work has not yet been published, use the phrase "in press" instead of a date. Do not include page numbers for part of a larger work. For a journal article that has not yet been published, do not include the date, volume, or issue number.</p>

	<b>Note:</b> For an <i>IES publication</i> that has not yet been released, use the word “forthcoming” instead of a date. However, if the pub has been sent to the printer before being released, you may use the projected year of release.
<u>Unpublished paper presented at a meeting:</u> Truegrin, R.P. (1997, April). <i>Why Kids Stay in School</i> . Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Los Angeles.	If the location of the meeting is not one of the cities listed below, include the two-letter postal abbreviation of the state after the city (e.g., “Charlotte, NC”).
<u>Specific edition of book:</u> Cohen, E. (1994). <i>Designing Groupwork: Strategies for the Heterogeneous Classroom</i> (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.	
<u>Publication available from Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC):</u> Bailey, T., and Merritt, D. (1995). <i>Making Sense of Industry-Based Skill Standards</i> . Berkeley, CA: National Center for Research in Vocational Education. (ERIC ED389897)	Put the ERIC document number in parentheses at the end of the entry, as shown.

***In publisher location, omit state or country name for internationally known cities***

Follow the traditional practice of omitting a state abbreviation or country name for the following publisher locations, which are well known internationally as publishing centers:

Baltimore	New York	Amsterdam	Paris
Boston	Philadelphia	Jerusalem	Rome
Chicago	San Francisco	London	Stockholm
Los Angeles		Milan	Tokyo
		Moscow	Vienna

**For Suggested Citation, use the style outlined in this References section**

The Suggested Citation, which appears on the boilerplate page on the back of a report’s title page, should comply with the standard style outlined above. *Exception:* For most reports it is safest to cite the IES center as the source, since you usually can’t be sure, at this point, whether the report will be available through GPO. For a web-only publication, add the following sentence at the end of a standard Suggested Citation: “Retrieved [date] from <http://insert the pub’s URL>.” The citation users supply the date they retrieved the document.

If authors are listed on the title page, they should be listed first in the Suggested Citation. The project officer is not included unless he or she is also an author of the report.

*Example: Suggested Citation*

Adelman, C., Daniel, B., and Berkovits, I. (2003). *Postsecondary Attainment, Attendance, Curriculum, and Performance: Selected Results From the NELLS:88/2000 Postsecondary Education Transcript Study (PETS), 2000* (NCES 2003-394). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

- The authors and project officer of the report shown in the Suggested Citation above are listed on the title page of the report as follows:

Clifford Adelman  
Institute of Education Sciences

Bruce Daniel  
Pinkerton

Ilona Berkovits  
National Center for Education Statistics

Jeffrey Owings  
Project Officer  
National Center for Education Statistics

- *If the project officer of the above report had also been an author and had been listed in two places on the report title page—with the authors and as the project officer—his name would have been included as one of the authors in the Suggested Citation. In this case, the report title page would look as follows:*

Clifford Adelman  
Institute of Education Sciences

Bruce Daniel  
Pinkerton

Ilona Berkovits  
Jeffrey Owings  
National Center for Education Statistics

Jeffrey Owings  
Project Officer  
National Center for Education Statistics

## Include legal citations in the reference list

Following is guidance on citing federal statutes, regulations, and administrative notices. Either a short version or the full citation may be given in text. Include the full citation in the reference list along with other references.

### *Federal statute*

In a text citation for a federal statute, give the popular or official name of the act and the year of the act. To provide a print or electronic source, so the reader may access the statute cited, include the additional information in the reference list and also, if you wish, in the text.

A citation to the *U.S. Code* (U.S.C.), the *U.S. Code Annotated* (U.S.C.A.), or the *U.S. Code Service* (U.S.C.S.) is preferred for federal legislation, because it is easier to retrieve the law with such information than with a Public Law citation. When citing these code volumes, generally give the number and section of the volume and, in parentheses, the year the volume was published. (This publication year may be different from the year of the act.)

*Example of citation to the U.S. Code (U.S.C.):*

Text citation: National Education Statistics Act of 1994 *or* National Education Statistics Act (1994) [or you may use the full citation in text]

Full citation: National Education Statistics Act of 1994, 20 U.S.C. § 9001 et seq. (2002)  
(You may use either a section symbol [§] or the abbreviation “sec.” in citations, but be consistent in your document. To create a section symbol in Microsoft Word, press Alt plus 0167 [on the numbers pad at far right].)



Note that the *U.S. Code* is published every 6 years; the last year of publication was 2002. Thus, for example, the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, which established the Institute of Education Sciences, has not yet been codified. However, it is scheduled to appear at 20 U.S.C. § 9511. (See the Public Law and web citations to this Act below.)

If a law has not yet been codified (published in one of the code sources named above), it can be cited as a session law by giving its Public Law (P.L.) number and section, plus the “Stat.” volume number and page number (“Stat.” is the abbreviation for *United States Statutes at Large*, which is the official compilation of uncodified session laws). Finally, give the year (in parentheses) the volume was published.

*Examples of citation to a Public Law:*

Text citation: No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 *or* No Child Left Behind Act (2001) [or you may use the full citation in text]

Full citation: No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, P.L. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425 (2002)

Text citation: Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 *or* Education Sciences Reform Act (2002) [or you may use the full citation in text]

Full citation: Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, P.L. 107-279, 116 Stat. 1940 (2002)

You may include a web source after any print source information by adding a comma and “retrieved [date] from [web address, or URL].” If the print source information is unknown, you may give a web source only.

*Example of a citation to the Web:*

Text citation: Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 *or* Education Sciences Reform Act (2002) [or you may use the full citation in text]

Full citation: Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, retrieved February 25, 2004, from [www.ed.gov/policy/rschstat/leg/PL107-279.pdf](http://www.ed.gov/policy/rschstat/leg/PL107-279.pdf)

### ***Federal regulation***

If a final regulation has already been codified in the *Code of Federal Regulations* (C.F.R.), that is the preferred citation.

*Example of citation to the C.F.R.:*

Text citation: Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants Program [or you may use the full citation in text]

Full citation: Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants Program, 34 C.F.R. § 611 (2003)

If a final regulation has not yet been codified in the C.F.R., cite to the *Federal Register*. (In a *Federal Register* citation, the number after “Fed. Reg.” is the page number.)

*Example of citation to the Federal Register:*

Text citation: Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants Program [or you may use the full citation in text]

Full citation: Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants Program, 65 Fed. Reg. 1780 (Jan. 12, 2000)

### ***Administrative notice***

Administrative notices are not codified in the C.F.R. Cite them to the *Federal Register*. The citation will look like the one above.



The following example is a citation for a National Assessment Governing Board notice of request for comments.

*Example:*

Text citation: National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) Notice of Request for Comments (May 20, 1999) [or you may use the full citation in text]

Full citation: NAGB Notice of Request for Comments, 64 Fed. Reg. 27,520 (May 20, 1999)

For style guidance on references—including legal citations—that is not found in this section, refer to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (fifth edition). Also, regarding legal citations, you may find it helpful to search the legislation, statutes, or regulations themselves for additional information or quotations. To do so from the electronic version of this style guide, click on the GPO gateway site, <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/index.html>, and browse the “GPO Access Resources by Branch” section. Search engines and extensive search tips are provided overall and within each subsection.

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## Statistical Symbols and Mathematical Operators: Style

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Italicize letters used as statistical symbols, whether in text or tables. Examples include the following. Leave a space before and after mathematical operators such as =, +, and <.

*t* test

*r*

*z* test

$M = 8.19, SD = 7.12$

*F* test

$N = 3,270$

$F(1,53) = 10.03$

$n = 520$

$a/b = c/d$

$t = 2.39$

$p < .05$

$RR^x = F/I - V^x$

*se*

For guidance not covered in this section, see the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (fifth edition), pp. 101 and 138-144. (Appendix D of this style guide lists a web address for an APA website, which provides style tips and other information but does not allow you to browse the *Publication Manual*.)

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## Survey Titles

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In the titles of major surveys and their subsurveys, capitalize the important words. For more details, see “Titles and headings” in the Capitalization section of this style guide.

Do not enclose major survey titles in quotation marks. When citing a major survey and one of its subsurveys, put quotation marks around the subsurvey title only. In source notes for tables and figures, the name of the major survey always precedes the name of the subsurvey.

Following are some representative survey citations for source notes. Note, however, that there is variability across surveys in the precise style preferred. To comply with preferred style for the names, acronyms, and years of specific NCES surveys, refer to (or click on, in the electronic version of this style guide) [appendix D](#) of the *NCES Statistical Standards*, which lists all surveys, their waves and components (or subsurveys), and the preferred style for each. Also, for your convenience, the abbreviations and titles of surveys—but not of subsurveys—are included (and asterisked) in the abbreviations list in appendix A of this style guide.

*Examples:*

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2001.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88/92), “Second Follow-up, Parent Survey, 1992.”

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003-04 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:04).

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), “Local Education Agency Universe Survey,” 2001-02, Version 1a.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 1990, 1992, 1996, and 2000 Mathematics Assessments, NAEP Data Tool.

*Order of source note information when data are from a report:* (1) name of report, (2) survey information, and (3) agency (e.g., U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics).

SOURCE: *Revenues and Expenditures for National Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 1997-98*, Common Core of Data (CCD), “National Public Education Financial Survey” (NPEFS), 1997-98, Version 1, U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

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## Tables

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For more detailed guidance on producing tables than is summarized here, refer to (or click on, in the electronic version of this style guide) [appendix C](#) of the *NCES Statistical Standards*. For guidance on producing tables in Excel that meet the NCES standards, see appendix H of this style guide.

*Note re nonprint media (e.g., web-only materials):* In preparing and displaying tables, nonprint media should follow the recommendations of this style guide as far as is practicable. For additional guidance regarding web standards, contact the IES center. Ensure that nonprint media comply with Section 508 accessibility requirements for people with disabilities. (Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was reauthorized by the Workforce Investment Act of August 1998; standards for accessible technology were issued in December 2000 by the U.S. Access Board, an independent federal agency.)

### **Tables should have an identifier and title**

Tables in IES reports should have an identifier (e.g., table A in an executive summary, table 1 in the body of the report, or table A-1 in appendix A) and a title. Note the punctuation that follows the identifier: Use a period and a reasonable space between the number/letter of the table identifier and the first word of the title. A tab may be used for this purpose. If the table title following the identifier runs more than one line, each additional line must align with the first letter of the title in the first line (see sample table below). Appendix E of this style guide explains an efficient way to align runover lines in table titles in Word documents, using the hanging indent feature, and also to ensure (even if the title does not have a runover line) that the list of tables can be easily generated automatically.

### **Do not footnote titles**

In table titles, as in figure titles, do not use a superscript number referring to a footnote. Instead, put the information in a general note (i.e., the “NOTE”).

### **Title information follows a specified order**

For guidance on the order in which information should be presented in table titles, refer to (or click on, in the electronic version of this style guide) [appendix C](#) of the *NCES Statistical Standards* and look under “Wording of Table Titles” in the Table Titles section.

### **Table identifiers are different in different parts of report**

In the main body of a report, use consecutive Arabic numerals for table identifiers (table 1, table 2, etc.). In executive summaries, use letters for table identifiers, and letter the tables in alphabetical order (table A, table B, etc.). In appendixes, table identifiers include both the letter of the appendix and a consecutive number (e.g., in appendix A: table A-1, table A-2, etc.).

### Sample table illustrates many NCES guidelines

The following is a sample table illustrating many of the NCES guidelines for tables.

Table 6. Number of public high school completers, by state: School year 1999–2000

State	High school completers			
	Total	Diploma recipients	Other high school completers	High school equivalency recipients <sup>1</sup>
United States	—	2,546,102	41,638 <sup>2</sup>	—
Alabama	43,459	37,819	2,535	3,105
Alaska	7,968	6,615	53	1,300
Arizona	—	38,304	375	†
.				
.				
.				
Wyoming	—	6,462	27	—

— Not available.

† Not applicable; no equivalency program.

<sup>1</sup> Includes recipients age 19 or younger, except in Minnesota, where they are age 20 or younger.

<sup>2</sup> Total other high school completers does not include New Hampshire, New Jersey, Washington, and Wisconsin.

NOTE: High school completer categories may include students not included in 12th-grade membership.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education," 2000-01.

**Title**

**Boxhead:**  
**Spanner head**

**Column heads**

**Table body**

**Special notes**

**Reference notes**

**General note**

**Source note**

### Align column heads at bottom of cells; right justify in columns (except stub head)

Align each column head at the bottom of the cell it is in (see the sample table above for correct alignment). This is a change from an earlier practice of vertically centering some column heads. Left justify the stub column head; right justify other column heads in columns.

### In the body of tables, place footnote symbols/numbers to the right of column numbers—and flush right in empty cells

*With columns of numbers:* Keep all numbers aligned on the decimal. Symbols or superscript numbers referring to footnotes that are attached to numbers appear to the right of numbers (i.e., out to the right of the right-aligned numbers).

*In empty cells:* Align footnote symbols/numbers on the right in otherwise empty cells. They should align on the right, vertically, with all other symbols/numbers in the column (but not with superscripts attached to the numbers, which are out to the right of everything else in the column). Use parentheses *only* around superscript *numbers* in empty cells; superscript the parentheses as well as the number). *Do not* use parentheses with symbols.

### **Table notes follow prescribed order; symbols have special meanings**

Use the following order in presenting table notes:

1. *Special (symbol) notes* are always listed first. The specific order to be used in listing the different symbols in table notes is shown below, under “*Special (symbol) notes and use of zero.*”
2. *Reference (numbered) notes* come after the special notes.
3. *The general “NOTE”* comes next.
4. *The “SOURCE” note* comes last.

Start each note on a separate line. Do not leave extra space between notes.

### ***Spacing in notes after symbols/superscript numbers***

In table notes, a thin space between the symbol or superscript number and the note it introduces usually looks best. Based on your judgment about what spacing to use—given your font and software—you may either (1) leave a thin space after each introductory symbol or superscript number, or (2) close up the symbol or number to the text that follows. Whichever style you choose, be consistent throughout your document.

The remainder of this subsection provides more information about using these types of table notes, including the specific order of special (symbol) notes, the associated labels to be used, and their meanings. The source of these guidelines is [appendix C](#) of the *NCES Statistical Standards*.

### ***Special (symbol) notes and use of zero***

Special notes are listed first, in the specific order shown below (include only those that are relevant to your table). In table notes, include the relevant symbols followed by their associated labels. (The symbols and labels always have the meanings shown on the right below.) If necessary or advisable, additional explanatory notes may be added to the end of relevant notes, after the standard label.

Symbols are used in appropriate cells in the body of tables and do not require parentheses. In tables, an asterisk is used *only* to represent statistical significance ( $p < .05$ ), as shown in the following list:

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Label</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
—	Not available.	Data were not collected or not reported
†	Not applicable.	Category does not exist
#	Rounds to zero.	The estimate rounds to zero
!	Interpret data with caution.	Estimates are unstable
‡	Reporting standards not met.	Did not meet reporting standard
*	$p < .05$ .	Significance level

To obtain a dagger and a double dagger in Microsoft Word, do the following:

Dagger (†): Alt 0134 (Hold down the Alt key while typing 0134 on the numeric key pad at the right of your keyboard.)

Double dagger (‡): Alt 0135 (Hold down the Alt key while typing 0135 on the numeric key pad at the right of your keyboard.)



Note that there should be no zero before the decimal in the significance level label,  $p < .05$ , as shown in standard 5-1-5 of the *NCES Statistical Standards*. A zero was inadvertently included before the decimal in the list of symbols and labels in appendix C of the *Standards*.

Observe these special rules in the use of zero:

- A zero should not be used when a value rounds to zero; the # symbol should be used instead.
- A measured zero in a *universe survey* (i.e., none of something) must always appear in a table or a figure as 0. If rounding is used in a universe survey, numbers that round to zero must be represented in tables and figures by the symbol #.

[Interpret the above NCES standard 5-3-5 directive about a measured zero in a universe survey as follows: In tables of universe data, the number of decimal places associated with a zero should equal the number of decimal places reported for other related estimates in the table.]

- Zeros should never appear in tables of *sample survey* data. When dealing with small values in sample surveys, zero and numbers that round to zero must be represented in tables and figures by the symbol #. *Note:* Their corresponding cells in an accompanying standard error table must be represented by the symbol †.

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### ***Reference (numbered) notes/superscripts***

Reference notes, or numbered notes that refer to specific parts of the table, come after the special notes. The superscript numbers keyed to parts of the table are placed to the right of the word, heading, or data for which the note provides more information. If a superscript number referring to a reference note stands alone in a cell, enclose it in parentheses.

The order to follow in numbering reference superscripts in a table is generally line by line from left to right and down. Start numbering in the table boxhead. (The term *boxhead*, in this context, refers to the area above the body of a table that includes the stub column head, the other column heads, and the spanner heads, if any, above those column heads.)

First number the highest level heads in the boxhead (i.e., the spanner heads, if any); number from left to right across that level of heads. Then move down to the next level of heads and, again, number from left to right across that level of heads. For example, if all heads had superscripts attached in the sample table earlier in this section, #1 would be on the spanner head (“High school completers”), #2 would be on “State,” #3 on “Total,” and so on to the right. (If there are three different levels of heads in the boxhead—e.g., major spanner heads across the top of the boxhead, secondary spanner heads under those, and third, all column heads aligned along the bottom of the boxhead—and there are superscripts at each level, you will number from left to right three different times: first all top-level heads, then all middle-level heads, and finally all heads aligned at the bottom of the boxhead.)

Continue the numbering in the body of the table, line by line from left to right and down. For an example of the order of numbering superscripts in both the boxhead and the body of a table, see the sample table in appendix H of this style guide, under “Table Body,” at the bottom of the page.

### ***General note***

The general “NOTE” comes after any special notes and reference notes. The general note qualifies, describes, or explains the whole table or easily identified parts of it. This note can include several types of information in different sentences. It can define abbreviations. When relevant, it is used to provide the statement, “Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.”

### ***Source note***

The “SOURCE” note comes last. For examples of source notes, see the Survey Titles section of this style guide. For additional guidance on the correct format for source notes, refer to (or click on, in the electronic version of this style guide) [standard 5-4-5](#) in the *NCES Statistical Standards*, as well as [appendix C](#) of the *Standards*.

**Detailed guidance is available on several additional topics**

[Appendix C](#) of the *NCES Statistical Standards* provides detailed guidance on

- the three basic types of tables (summary, reference, methodological) and their placement;
- format types for tables (single-page tables with portrait orientation are preferred);
- table titles (identifiers, wording, placement, continuations);
- boxheads (parts of the boxhead, wording and punctuation, sequence of columns, spacing in column heads, units of measurement in column heads, column numbers or letters, breaking and hyphenating words);
- the table stub (organization, indentation, vertical spacing, wording and punctuation, leaders, line numbers, continuations);
- the body (units of measurement; spanners; decimals, zeros, and dollar and percent signs; placement of figures in column; arrangement of figures for ease of comparison);
- notes to tables (headnotes; special, reference, general, and source notes; the placement and style of referent symbols or numbers in cells, and the order of table notes); and
- sizing a table (pruning, internal revision, spacing reduction, font reduction).

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## **Titles**

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For sample figure/table titles, see the Figures and the Tables sections of this style guide. For more detailed guidance on figure/table titles, refer to (or click on, in the electronic version of this style guide) [appendix C](#) of the *NCES Statistical Standards*.

For guidance on the styles and levels of report titles and headings, see the Heading Styles and Levels section of this style guide. For specific guidance on survey titles, see the *NCES Statistical Standards*, [appendix D](#), as well as the Survey Titles section of this style guide.

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## **Word Usage**

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Correct usage enhances readability, credibility, and clarity. This section includes words and phrases that are often used incorrectly. Some guidelines follow:

### **Affect/Effect**

To *affect* something is to influence it or cause a change in it. To *effect* something is to produce it or accomplish it. An *effect* (n) is a result, accomplishment, or product.



*Examples:* His infectious laugh affected the mood in the room.  
The program positively affected students' test scores.  
The effect of the program was higher test scores.

### “And/or”

Try to avoid the use of “and/or.” This usually can be accomplished by simple rewording.

*Example:* Grant aid was available for programs offering before-school activities or after-school activities, or both.

*not*

Grant aid was available for programs offering before-school activities and/or after-school activities.

*Exception:* In densely technical sentences, when your meaning with *and/or* is clear—and use of the longer construction might result in ambiguity—you may use *and/or*.

### Between/Among

In general, when two persons or things are involved, what happens is *between* them. When more than two are involved, it happens *among* them. An exception is when the action in a group is clearly *between* two persons at a time, or *between* subgroups of two.

*Examples:* The interactions between the two systems were well documented.  
The cash award was distributed among the class.

Discussions between the United States, Britain, and France continued after the conference. [bilateral discussions]

### Bi-, Semi-

As detailed below, the words *biveekly* and *bimonthly* both have conflicting dictionary definitions and are subject to misunderstanding. Therefore, it is recommended that you use, instead, terms such as “every 2 weeks” or “every 2 months.” (If you nevertheless choose to use the terms *biveekly* and *bimonthly*, clearly define them at first use.) In contrast to these terms, *semi-* has a consistent meaning (see the last paragraph of this subsection).

*Biveekly*, as a noun, usually means a publication issued every 2 weeks but can also mean a publication issued semiweekly (twice a week). As an adjective, biweekly also has two conflicting meanings: (1) occurring every 2 weeks, and (2) occurring twice a week.

*Bimonthly* is commonly used to mean occurring every 2 months; however, it also has a conflicting meaning: occurring twice a month.

*Biannual* means occurring twice a year. *Biennial*, however, means occurring every 2 years or lasting for 2 years.

*Semi-*, in relation to time periods, means occurring halfway through the period. For example, *semimonthly* means occurring twice a month; *seminweekly* means occurring twice a week; and *semiannual* means occurring twice a year.

### Compared to/Than

In a sentence comparing two values, if the word *than* communicates your meaning as well as, or better than, the phrase *compared to*, use the more concise *than*.

*Example:* More girls than boys joined the choir.  
*not*  
More girls compared to boys joined the choir.

### Complement/Compliment

The common usage of *to complement* is to complete or add to in a positive or constructive way.

*Example:* The second article complements the first, giving a balanced overview of the survey.

The usual meaning of *to compliment* is to pay a compliment to, that is, to express esteem, respect, or admiration.

*Example:* The agency complimented the authors for their definitive overview of the literature as of January 2003.

### Composed of, *not* Comprised of

“Comprised of” is always incorrect. Comprise means encompass, include, or contain. Since “comprise” is frequently misused and can be misinterpreted, you are encouraged to avoid using it. Use the following types of alternatives:

*Examples:* The United States is composed of 50 states  
The United States is made up of 50 states.  
The school choice category consists primarily of programs that . . .

### Consistent terminology

The goal of using consistent terminology when referring to the same entity is clarity for the reader. Alternating between, for example, “school,” “college,” and “institution” when referring to the same entity may confuse your audience. Keep the reader in mind as you decide what terminology to use—and how consistent you need to be.

## Contractions

Do not use contractions in reports.

*Examples:* Use “is not” instead of “isn’t”  
Use “do not” instead of “don’t”

## Data

The word *data* always takes a plural verb (e.g., “the data are from three sources”).

## Degrees, academic

When referring to academic degrees in tables, figures, and text heads, use these forms: doctor’s, master’s, bachelor’s, and associate’s. To allow for variety of expression in text, however, the following may also be used there: doctoral (adjective), doctorate (noun), and baccalaureate (noun).

## Different from, *not* Different than

Always use “different from” when what follows is a noun or pronoun (e.g., “girls are different from boys,” *not* “girls are different than boys”; “my opinion is different from his,” *not* “my opinion is different than his”).

## Education/Educational

The word *education*, generally used as a noun (e.g., a college education), may also be used as an adjective. In general, use *education* when you mean “about education,” “having to do with education,” or “governing education.”

*Examples:* This education workshop is held twice a year.  
The commentary was of particular interest to education researchers and policymakers.  
Accurate data are critical to the formulation of education policy.  
This report compares the American education system with education systems in other countries.  
The presentation focuses on recent education reform efforts.  
These indicators explore education equity for girls and women—that is, the extent to which males and females have access to the same educational opportunities.

The word *educational* (an adjective) is often used when referring to something that provides education or is instructive.

*Examples:*     Add this to the packet of educational materials.  
                  The workshop was a highly educational experience.

The word *educational* also is often used when referring to something that results from education.

*Examples:*     This report examines the educational gains made by Black students in recent years.  
                  A number of indicators shed light on the educational status of Hispanics in the United States.  
                  The study examined the educational attainment of 25- to 29-year-olds.  
                  The goal of the program is to track the educational achievement of students in selected schools.

A final note: Use the word *education* rather than *educational* when your meaning might be misconstrued if you did not. For example, “education statistics” clearly means “statistics about education,” whereas “educational statistics” could mean “statistics that are educational”—that is, virtually all accurate statistics.

### **Fewer/Less than**

Use *fewer* when referring to a number of different items. Use *less than* when referring to a quantity.

*Examples:*    There were fewer students in the class than a decade earlier.  
                  There are three fewer floors in the building than originally planned; as a result, there is less floor space overall.  
                  Only one state had expenditures of less than \$4,500 per pupil. [The \$4,500 is considered an amount of money, rather than a number of discrete items.]  
                  Less than 25 percent of the students entered the contest.

### **First person**

Avoid using *I*. Avoid using *we* when referring to IES centers, offices, or authors, except in acknowledgments and forewords.

**Grade, -Grader (hyphen? numeral?)**

When an ordinal grade number (e.g., fourth) precedes the word “grade,” spell out numbers under 10 (*but* use numerals for all in a sentence that contains both numbers under 10 and numbers 10 or greater); use a hyphen only when the words are used as a unit modifier.

*Examples:* fourth grade, sixth-grade teacher, 10th grade

When the grade number follows the word “grade,” preferred style is to use a numeral and not to use a hyphen.

*Examples:* grade 4, grade 6 schedule, grade 10

When the word “grader” follows the grade number, preferred style is to hyphenate the term.

*Examples:* fourth-grader, sixth-grader, 11th-grader

*Exception to rule about numerals versus spelled-out ordinal numbers:* In reports that discuss, for example, the 6th, 8th, and 10th grades throughout, an author may decide to consistently either spell out or use numerals for these ordinal numbers rather than switching back and forth frequently from one form to the other.

**“His or her”**

Avoid using “his or her” when possible. Instead, use plural nouns and then plural pronouns for reference.

*Example:* Teachers and their students . . . *instead of*

The teacher and his or her students . . .

**i.e./e.g.**

In text, preferred style is to place *i.e.* and *e.g.* and the accompanying phrase in parentheses. Always use a comma after *i.e.* and *e.g.*

Use *i.e.* when you mean “that is.” Use *e.g.* when you mean “for example.”

*Examples:* Put these abbreviations in parentheses (*i.e.*, like this).

Use a noun (*e.g.*, book) in that example.

**Limited English proficient (LEP)/English language learner (ELL)**

The term *English language learner* appears to be gaining favor over the term *limited English proficient* in describing those with limited English language skills. In IES publications, however, be true to the language of the survey being reported (*i.e.*, if the survey asked about LEP students or programs, use LEP; if it asked about ELL students or programs, use ELL).

**Number of (singular or plural verb?)**

As the subject of a sentence, “number of” can take either a singular or plural verb, depending on the context. As a general rule, “a number of” takes a plural verb and “the number of” takes a singular verb.

*Examples:* A number of arrests were reported near the school over the weekend.

The number of arrests near the school has risen steadily over the past 5 years.

You may also focus on which noun governs the verb, given the sense of the sentence. In the first example, the arrests are what were reported; in the second example, the number is what has risen.

**Percentage/Percent/Percentage distribution/Share**

Preferred usage is as follows: use *percentage* when no specific number is mentioned; use *percent* when a number is given.

*Examples:* A small percentage of the class participated.

They found that 12 percent of the class participated.

Figure 2. Percentage of public elementary and secondary teachers, by level of instruction: School year 2001-02

In a bar chart or line graph, use *Percent* rather than *Percentage* above a scale axis marked with specific percentages. Also use *Percent*, as appropriate, in the heading of a column showing specific percentages. Do not use such labels as *Percentage distribution* or *Percent enrolled* above an axis marked with the percent scale, since the axis does not itself show the distribution or the percent enrolled, but rather the scale by which those are measured.

When a figure or table shows a percentage distribution (i.e., allocation among categories that sum to 100 percent), you may include in the title (or headnote, if necessary) either “Percentage distribution” or “Percentage”; but be consistent in your choice of terminology for similar types of figures/tables throughout your document.

Always use *percentage* in the phrases *percentage distribution* and *percentage point*. Avoid use of the word *share* when you mean percent or percentage.

Spell out percent in text, headings, tables, and all figures except pie charts, unless space limits you to using “%.”

**Quartile/Quarter**

Do not use the word *quartile* when you mean *quarter*. For example, use *upper quarter*, not *upper quartile*. In statistical usage, *quartile* refers to any of the three values that divide a frequency distribution into four parts.

## Sex/Gender

IES centers and NCES divisions differ on which term they prefer to use in their reports. Each center or NCES division should select the preferred term and use it consistently.

## “Technical/vocational education” or “Career/technical education”

Terminology is changing in this field. IES now prefers, but does not require, the use of “career/technical education (CTE)” when referring to vocational, technical, or career education programs and schools. Use a slash rather than a hyphen in this context, and use consistent terminology throughout your report.

## Through/To (meaning in ranges)

When reporting ranges, such as percentage, number, and year ranges, use of the word *through* implies that the range includes the ending percentage, number, or year; use of the word *to* implies that it does not include the last item. Be precise and consistent in your usage.

## Voice (active or passive)

In general, the active voice is preferable to the passive voice. The active voice sounds stronger, crisper, and more direct.

*Example:* IES implemented the program [active]  
*is usually preferable to*  
 The program was implemented by IES [passive]

## Which/That

In general, use *which* to introduce a nondefining or parenthetical clause (one that is not essential to the meaning of the sentence); use *that* to introduce a limiting or defining clause (one that is a necessary part of the sentence). As shown below, always use a comma before the *which* in such a clause.

*Examples:* The course, which is required for graduation, is a favorite among sophomores.

Of the listed courses, the course that is required for graduation is the most popular among sophomores.

**Who/Whom; Who/That**

Use *who* when the person is the subject of the sentence or clause; use *whom* when the person is the object of the sentence or clause.

*Examples:* The percentages of children ages 5-17 who spoke English and no other language ranged from 13 percent to 97 percent in the 100 largest school districts in 2000.  
Whom does she suspect?

Also, use *who* when referring to persons; use *that* when referring to things or organizations.

*Examples:* The curriculum is designed primarily for students who are beyond the compulsory age for high school.  
It was the student-teacher committee that drafted the text.

**Word forms/Spelling**

Use shortened forms for words with variant spelling:

*Examples:* totaled, *not* totalled                      judgment, *not* judgement  
leveled, *not* levelled                      acknowledgments, *not* acknowledgements  
catalog, *not* catalogue

If unsure, check the spelling list and rules in chapter 5 of the [\*United States Government Printing Office Style Manual\*](#) (2000 edition). (In the electronic version of this style guide, click on the underlined resource to access it.) For words not in the GPO manual, refer to *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (used by the Government Printing Office as a guide). *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* is also a useful guide; the examples given above, which are in the GPO manual, all reflect the first, or preferred, spelling listed in *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*.

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**Year Spans**

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A hyphen or an en dash may be used between years in year spans. Use one or the other consistently throughout a report. Express years in text or titles in the following ways:

1997 [calendar year]

1996-97 *or* 1996 through 1997    [span of calendar years]

1999-2000 *or* 1999 through 2000 [span of calendar years]

2000-01 *or* 2000 through 2001    [span of calendar years]



1996 and 1997 [two distinct calendar years]

fall 1997 *or* fall of 1997 [specific point in year]

fiscal year (FY) 1997 [at first use in text; use FY abbreviation after defining it, as discussed below]

FY 96 through FY 97 [for use in text after defining, as discussed below]

academic year 1996-97 [same for school year]

academic years 1990-91 through 1996-97 [same for school years]

In tables, if you use “School year ending” rather than “School year” as a stub or column head, you can then use single years (i.e., not a hyphenated span) under that head.

In text, lowercase and spell out “fiscal year” at first use and add the abbreviation in parentheses (FY). Do the same with “academic year” and “school year,” if you choose to use the abbreviations AY and SY. Thereafter, use the abbreviation followed by a space and the appropriate year. With FY, two digits are used for all years except 2000. With AY and SY, use six digits (except for 1999-2000) with a hyphen. Examples follow:

<u>First use</u>	<u>Subsequent use</u>
fiscal year (FY) 1997	FY 97
fiscal year (FY) 2000	FY 2000
fiscal year (FY) 1997 through FY 2001	FY 97 through FY 01
academic year (AY) 1997-98 [if you decide to use this optional abbreviation]	AY 1997-98
school year (SY) 1994-95 through SY 1998-99 [if you decide to use this optional abbreviation]	SY 1994-95 through SY 1998-99



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## Appendixes

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- Appendix A. Abbreviations List: Organizations, Agencies, Surveys, and Terms
- Appendix B. Abbreviations List: States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Outlying Areas, and Freely Associated States
- Appendix C. Abbreviations List: Countries (Partial List) and Canadian Provinces and Territories
- Appendix D. Web Links to Standards, Style Manuals and Guidelines, and Dictionary
- Appendix E. Microsoft Word Shortcuts and Tips
- Appendix F. Selected Proofreading Marks
- Appendix G. Guidance for Producing Figures in Excel That Meet NCES Standards
- Appendix H. Guidance for Producing Tables in Excel That Meet NCES Standards
- Appendix I. NCES Graphic Standards for Publication and Other Product Covers, Title Page, and Back of Title Page



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# Index

---

- abbreviations and acronyms
  - articles with, 3–4
  - Canadian provinces and territories, C-3
  - countries, C-1 – C-3
  - Department of Defense schools, 6–7
  - Department of Education, 6
  - fiscal year, usage with, 4, 71
  - freely associated states, 4–5
  - organizations and agencies, A-1 – A-5
  - outlying areas, 4–5
  - plural of, 4
  - spell out, when to, 3
  - states, DC, and PR, 5, B-1
  - surveys (asterisked items), A-1 – A-5
  - tables, usage in, 7
  - when to repeat definitions of, 3
- academic degrees, 65
- academic year (AY), 4, 71
- achievement-level (as modifier), 13
- acknowledgments
  - contents of section, 36
  - preferred spelling, 70
- active voice, 69
- addenda (preferred plural), 38
- addresses
  - internet, e-mail, 39–40
  - postal, abbreviations in
    - Canadian provinces and territories, C-3
    - freely associated states, 5
    - outlying areas, 5
    - states, DC, and PR, B-1
  - postal, punctuation in, 40
- adjectives as compound predicate, 11
- administrative notice, reference style, 54–55
- adverbs ending with “ly,” 11
- affect/effect, 62
- afterschool (as modifier), 13
- agendas (preferred plural), 38
- alphanumeric page numbering, 34
- American Samoa, abbreviation for, 5
- among/between, 63
- “and/or,” use of and alternative to, 63
- apostrophes
  - abbreviations, when used with, 4
  - decades (e.g., eighties)/years, 30
  - with possessive of singular/plural nouns, 40–41
- appendixes
  - capitalization of word, 9
  - numbering footnotes in, 22–23
  - numbering tables in, 57
  - order in which lettered, 15
  - pagination of, 34
  - types (under “Back matter”), 38
- Arabic numerals for page numbering, 34
- articles of speech
  - with abbreviations, 3–4
  - capitalization of in titles, 8
- artwork (for NCES pubs), I-8 – I-9
- associate’s degrees, 65
- asterisk
  - in table notes, 59–60
  - in text notes, 23
- at-risk (as modifier), 13
- (author date), style of references in text
  - multiple works in the same parentheses, 46
  - one work by multiple authors, 46
  - one work by one author, 45

- (author date), style of references in text—  
continued  
works with identical author(s) *and* year, 46  
works with same principal author, multiple  
other authors, and same year, 46
- axes in figures  
formatting in Excel, G-7, G-9  
labeling, 18–19  
scaling in Excel, G-2
- bachelor's degree/baccalaureate, 65
- backgrounds (figures in Excel), G-7, G-9
- bar charts  
data labels with, 21  
legend with, 21  
sample bar chart, 21
- base-year (as modifier), 13
- between/among, 63
- bi-, semi-, 63–64
- billions (numerals with), 30
- binding regulations, 39
- boilerplate on back of title page  
graphic standards for, I-14  
MS Word template for (click to), 35  
use of in reports, 35
- boldface (under “General style issues”), 43
- books (reference example), 49
- borders (in Excel), G-7, G-9
- brand names and trademarks, 15
- bulleted/numbered lists, 27–28
- Canadian provinces and territories  
abbreviations of, C-3  
treatment of in text, 5
- capitalization  
appendix (e.g., *appendix A* without title), 9  
Black, White (as racial designations), 9  
chapter (e.g., *chapter 4* without title), 9  
capitalization—continued  
English as a Second Language (ESL), 9  
figure (e.g., *figure 3* without title), 9  
following colon (when to cap), 9  
in headings, 8  
Individualized Education Program (IEP), 9  
list of terms, capitalization in, 9–10  
National School Lunch Program, 9  
seasons (e.g., fall), 9–10  
survey titles, 56, A1 – A-5 (asterisked items)  
table (e.g., *table 2* without title), 9  
in titles, 8
- cardinal numbers, 29
- “career/technical education” or  
“technical/vocational education,” 69
- catalog (preferred spelling), 70
- CD covers, design of, I-15
- chapter, capitalization of, 9
- chart types, G-3. *See also* figures
- child care (preferred compound), 13
- citations. *See also* references  
legal, 53–55  
Suggested Citation, 51–52
- cities in reference lists (special category), 51
- codebook (preferred compound), 13
- Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), 54
- colons  
when to capitalize following, 9  
with lists, 28
- color palette (NCES covers), I-5
- colors in figures (in Excel), G-4
- column heads, alignment of, 58
- commas  
serial comma, use of, 41  
superscripts, use with, 22, 23
- compact disk, 26

- comparatives (in compound words), 10–11
- compared to/than, 64
- compendia (preferred plural), 38
- complement/compliment, 64
- composed of, *not* comprised of, 64
- compound words
  - comparatives, when hyphen used, 10–11
  - double vowels and hyphen in, 12–13
  - examples list, 13–14
  - hyphens in, 10–14, 42
  - “level” in, 13–14
  - “ly” words in, 11
  - “non” in, 12
  - prefixes/suffixes in, 11–12
  - Title IV eligible (no hyphen with), 13
  - “wide” in, as suffix, 12
- comprised, misuse of and alternatives to, 64
- conference papers, reference style of, 51
- consistent terminology, use of, 64
- consortia (preferred plural), 38
- contents page(s)
  - automatic generation of, 36–37
  - what to include in, 36
- contractions (do not use), 65
- copyright and permission, 14–15
- countries
  - abbreviations of, C-1 – C-3
  - treatment of in text, 5
- coursetaking (preferred compound), 13
- cover/back cover
  - graphic standards for, I-1 – I-12, I-15
  - MS Word templates for (click to), 35
- criteria (preferred plural), 38
- cross-references (within section and to other parts of document)
  - cite in order (items within the section), 15
  - to figures and tables, 15–16
  - to footnotes, 15, 22–23
  - to other parts of document, 15–16
  - placement of in sentence, 16
  - to reference list, 16, 45–46
  - verification of, 15–16
- curly (“smart”) quotation marks, 43
- curricula (preferred plural), 38
- cutoff (as noun or modifier), 13
- daggers, 60
- dashes
  - em dash, 41
  - en dash, 41
- data, use of plural verb with, 38, 65
- database (preferred compound), 13
- dataset (preferred compound), 13
- day care (preferred compound), 13
- day-to-day (as modifier), 13
- decades, abbreviated (e.g., eighties), 30
- decimal places, number of to be reported, 32
- decisionmaker, decisionmaking (preferred compounds), 13
- definitions
  - of special symbols in tables, 59–60
  - in tables, 17
  - of technical terms (where to put), 16
- degrees, academic (preferred words), 65
- Department of Defense schools, abbreviations and usage, 6–7

- Department of Education, abbreviation of, 6
- different from, *not* different than, 65
- disk (compact disk), 26
- District of Columbia, 5
- doctor's degrees, 65
- double daggers, 60
- double vowels, 12–13
- EBSCO database, 45
- ED, abbreviation for U.S. Department of Education, 6
- E.D. TAB, 35, A-2
- Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), reference style for, 51
- education/educational, preferred use of as adjective, 65–66
- effect/affect, 62–63
- e.g./i.e., use of, 67
- electronic mailing list/LISTSERV, when to use which, 26
- elementary-level (as modifier), 13
- ELL/LEP (English language learner/limited English proficient), 67
- e-mail  
addresses, preferred style of, 40  
spelling of, 26
- em dash, use of and how to create, 41
- en dash, use of and how to create, 41
- endnotes (discouraged), 21–22
- English as a Second Language (ESL), capitalization of, 9
- English language learner, use of, 67
- ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center), reference style for, 51
- errata sheets, 17
- ethnicity, 44
- Excel software  
use of to create figures and tables that meet NCES standards, G-1 – G-21, H-1 – H-13
- ex (prefix), 11
- executive summary/highlights, 35
- extracurricular (preferred compound), 13
- federal agencies, printing regulations for, 39
- Federal Register citations, 54
- federal regulations, citations for, 54
- federal statutes, citations for, 53–54
- Federated States of Micronesia, abbreviation for, 5
- fewer/less than, 66
- field test (as noun), 13
- field-tested (as modifier), 13
- figure, when to capitalize, 9
- figures, 17–21, G-1 – G-21  
bar charts  
data labels with, 21  
legends with, 21  
sample bar chart, 22  
basic elements of, G-1 – G-3  
Excel default compared to manual formatting, G-6 – G-21  
Excel, use of to create, G-1 – G-21  
identifiers of, in different parts of report (e.g., figure 1, figure C), 17–18  
labels/legends in (horizontal text), 18–19  
line graphs  
distinctive lines in, 19  
geometric figures on, avoidance of, 19  
sample line graph, 20



- figures—continued
- list of in front matter, 37
  - pie charts
    - break at 12 o'clock, 20
    - label placement with, 20
    - sample pie chart, 20
  - scales in
    - breaks in, 18
    - matching of, 18
  - tick marks in, 19
  - titles of
    - alignment of, 17
    - capitalization in, 18
    - no footnotes in, 18
- file transfer protocol (FTP), 26, 40
- first-grader (preferred compound), 13, 67
- first person pronouns (when acceptable), 66
- first-time (as modifier), 13
- fiscal year (FY), use of abbreviation, 4, 71
- follow up (as verb), 13
- follow-up (as noun or modifier), 13
- fonts
- boldface (discouraged for emphasis), 43
  - italics
    - for emphasis, 43
    - in headings, 24–25
    - for statistical symbols, 55
  - publication covers, I-5
- footnotes
- asterisk in, when to use, 23
  - definitions in, 16
  - limiting the number and length of, 22
  - numbering of, 22–23
  - overview of/introduction to, 21–22
  - placement of, 22
  - superscripts and adjacent punctuation in text, 22
  - superscripts (more than one, adjacent in text), punctuation with, 23
  - table notes, 58–60
- foreword, use of in IES reports, 36
- formulas (preferred plural), 38
- freely associated states, 4–5
- front cover/back cover
  - graphic standards for, I-1 – I-12, I-15
  - MS Word templates for (click to), 35
- front matter (in IES reports), 34–36
- FTP/ftp (file transfer protocol), 26
- full-time (as modifier), 13
- gender/sex, 69
- glossaries, 16, 38
- government-wide (when hyphen used with “wide”), 12
- grade, -grader (preferred style with number), 67
- grade point average (no hyphen), 13
- graphic standards for front cover/title page/back of title page/back cover, I-1 – I-15
- grid (for design of covers), I-6 – I-7
- gridlines, 19, G-7, G-9
- Guam, abbreviation for, 5
- guidelines, horizontal (in line graphs), 19
- heading styles and levels
  - capitalization, 24–25
  - consistency, 24
  - levels, 23
  - sample schemes, 25
- highlights/executive summary, 35
- “his or her,” use of “they” instead of, 67
- home page (preferred compound), 26
- homeschooled (as modifier), 13
- homeschooling (preferred compound), 13
- homework (preferred compound), 13

- HTML/html (hypertext markup language), 26
- HTTP/http (hypertext transfer protocol), 26
- hyphens
- as alternative to en dash, 1
  - comparatives, not used with, 10–11
  - compound words, lists of, 13–14, 42
  - compound words, use in, 10–14, 42
  - end-of-line break, how to prevent, E-1
  - “ly” words, not used following, 11
  - “non,” when used with, 12
  - in number spans, 31
  - prefixes/suffixes, use with, 11–13
  - Title IV eligible, not used with, 13
  - unit modifiers vs. predicate adjectives, 11
- identifiers
- for figures, 17–18
  - for tables, 57
- i.e./e.g., use of, 67
- in-depth (as modifier), 13
- in depth (studied it in depth), 13
- indexes (preferred plural; see exceptions), 38
- Individualized Education Program (IEP),  
capitalization of, 9
- in-field (as modifier), 13
- in field (teaching in field), 13
- infinitives, no capitalization of “to” in titles, 8
- in-service (as modifier), 13
- International Organization for Standardization  
(ISO), C-1
- internet
- addresses, 39–40
  - citations to as sources, 50, 54
  - GPO gateway site, 55
  - terminology, 26
- intranet, 26
- italics
- emphasis, usage for, 43
  - headings, usage in, 24–25
  - statistical symbols, italic letters for, 55
- I/we pronouns, where allowed, 66
- journals
- citation style, 49
  - refereed, 45
- judgment (preferred spelling), 70
- labels
- in bar charts, 21
  - in figures, 18–19, G-1 – G-2
  - in pie charts, 20
- legal citations
- administrative notice, 54–55
  - federal regulation
    - C.F.R. example, 54
    - Federal Register example, 54
  - federal statute
    - Public Law examples, 53–54
    - U.S. Code example, 53
  - web citation, 54
  - where to put (reference list), 53
- legends
- in bar charts, 21
  - in figures, 18–19, G-2
- LEP/ELL (limited English proficient/English  
language learner), 67
- less than/fewer, 66
- “level,” use of hyphen with as modifier, 13–14
- limited-English-proficient (as modifier), 13
- use of, 67
  - lowercase of, 10
- line graphs, 19–20, G-8 – G-9
- line style/guide (in Excel), G-4 – G-5
- list of figures, list of tables (in front matter), 37
- lists of abbreviations. *Also see* lists, style of
- Canadian provinces and territories, C-3
  - countries, C-1 – C-3

- lists of abbreviations—continued  
 freely associated states, B-2  
 organizations, agencies, surveys, and terms,  
 A-1 – A-5  
 outlying areas, B-2  
 states, DC, and PR, B-1
- lists, style of  
 bullets/numbers in, 27  
 general rules for, 28  
 parentheses, when used in, 28
- LISTSERV/electronic mailing list, appropriate  
 use of each, 26
- logos, I-3 – I-4
- low-income (as modifier), 13
- Marshall Islands, abbreviation for, 5
- masthead, NCES, I-2
- mathematical operators, spacing with, 55
- matrices (preferred plural), 38
- measured zero in universe survey, 32
- memoranda (preferred plural), 38
- Merriam-Webster Dictionary and Thesaurus  
 (web address), D-1
- Microsoft Excel  
 figures produced in, G-1 – G-21  
 tables produced in, H-1 – H-13
- Microsoft Word tips, 1, E-1 – E-4  
 daggers and double daggers, E-2  
 dashes (em and en), E-2  
 numbered lists, 27–28  
 preventing end-of-line break after  
 abbreviated title, 3  
 preventing end-of-line break at hyphen, E-1  
 section symbol, 53  
 “smart” quotation marks, 43  
 Styles feature, how to use, E-3  
 superscript/no superscript in ordinal  
 numbers, switching, 29  
 table of contents, generating, 36–37  
 tool bar, how to customize, E-2
- mid-level (as modifier), 13
- mid-1990s (preferred compound), 13
- midpoint (preferred compound), 13
- midsized (as modifier), 13
- millions, numerals with, 30
- multiple authors, citing in text, 46
- multistep (preferred compound), 13
- National School Lunch Program, capitalization  
 of, 9
- NCES Statistical Standards* (references/links to)  
 body of report: contents, 37  
 executive summary: contents, 35  
 figures, 17  
 figure/table titles, 18  
 numbers in tables, 32  
 race/ethnicity, 44  
 relation to *IES Style Guide*, 1  
 rounding, 32  
 scales for figures, 18  
 source notes, 61  
 survey titles, 56  
 table notes, 22  
 tables, 57  
 web address/link, D-1
- newspaper/periodical article title, style for in  
 text, 43
- “non” as prefix, 12
- nonfederal (preferred compound), 13
- nongovernment (preferred compound), 13
- nonprint media, applicability of style guide to, 57
- nonresponse (preferred compound), 13
- “non-White,” alternatives to, 45
- Northern Mariana Islands, abbreviation for, 5
- notes in tables, 59–61

- number of, singular or plural verb with, 68
- numbers/numbering
  - decades, 30
  - for footnotes, 22–23
  - general-use rules
    - words or numerals, 28–29
    - examples list, 30
  - for lists, 27
  - millions and billions, 30
  - page numbers, 33–34
  - rounding, 31–32
  - units of time and measurement, 28
  - spans (ranges), style of, 31
- numerals, 28. *Also see* numbers/numbering
- OERI Publications Guide, 1
- ongoing (preferred compound), 13
- online (preferred compound), 26
- on-site (as modifier or adverb), 13
- ordinal numbers, 29
- orientation of figures
  - pie chart, 20
  - axes (in Excel), G-7, G-9
- outlying areas, 4–5
- out-of-school (as modifier), 13
- pagination
  - of appendixes, 34
  - of front matter, 33
  - of main body of report, 34
  - positioning of page numbers, 34
  - suppression of page numbers, 33
- Palau, abbreviation for, 5
- parentheses
  - i.e./e.g., use with, 67
  - with numbers in lists (integrated in text), 28
  - references enclosed in, in text, 45–46
- parts of document
  - acknowledgments, 36
  - back matter, 38
  - parts of document—continued
    - body of report, 37–38
    - boilerplate on back of title page, 35
    - contents page(s) and automatic generation, 36–37
    - executive summary/highlights, 35
    - foreword, 36
    - front matter, order of, 34–35
    - list of tables/list of figures, 37
    - title page, 35
- part-time (as modifier), 13
- PDF (portable document format), 26
- percentage/percent/percentage distribution/  
share, preferred usage, 68
- percentages, rounding of, 32
- periodical, style for, 47, 49
- per pupil (no hyphen), 13
- pie charts
  - break at 12 o'clock, 20
  - label placement in, 20
  - sample pie chart, 20
- pilot test (as noun), 13
- pilot-tested (as modifier), 13
- plurals
  - of abbreviated form of decades (e.g.,  
eighties)/years, 30
  - of abbreviations, 4
  - list (preferred plural forms for words), 38–39
  - “number of,” when plural used with, 68
- policymaker, policymaking (preferred  
compounds), 13
- poorly defined task (no hyphen with “ly”), 11
- portable document format (PDF), 26
- possessive of singular/plural nouns (under  
“Apostrophe”), 40–41
- postal addresses, 40

- Postal Service abbreviations  
usage of, 5  
states/other jurisdictions, B-1 – B-2
- postsecondary (preferred compound), 13
- prefixes/suffixes, 11–14  
when “non” takes a hyphen, 12  
when suffix “wide” takes a hyphen, 12
- prepositions, capitalization of in titles, 8
- preschool (preferred compound), 13
- printing and binding regulations, 39
- problem-solving (as modifier), 13
- problem solving (as noun), 13
- project officer, when included in citation, 51–52
- proofreading marks, F-1 – F-4
- proper names, capitalization of, 8–9
- Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 1, D-1
- publications accepted but not yet published  
parenthetical text references to, 46  
IES example, 48
- “public domain” statement, 14
- Public Law citations, 53–54
- public school student (no hyphen), 13
- publisher location in reference list (special rule for internationally known cities), 51
- Puerto Rico, B-1, B-2
- punctuation  
in addresses  
internet/e-mail, 39–40  
postal, 40  
apostrophes  
with abbreviations, 4  
with decades, 30  
with possessives, 40–41  
colons introducing lists, when to use, 28
- punctuation—continued  
dashes, 41  
hyphens  
overview of uses, 42  
use in compound words, 10–14  
in lists, 27–28  
for adjacent numbers, 29  
parentheses  
references enclosed in, 45–46  
use with i.e./e.g., 67  
quotation marks  
general usage, 43  
with survey components, 56  
semicolons in displayed lists, 27–28  
slashes, 43–44
- quartile/quarter, 68
- quasi as prefix, 11
- quotation marks  
commas with, 43  
curly (“smart”) quotes, use of and how to get in MS Word, 43  
double quotes, use of, 43  
periods with, 43  
single quotes, use of, 43  
use of for emphasis (avoid), 43  
use of with titles, 43
- race and ethnicity  
“non-White,” alternatives to, 45  
order of categories in tables, 44  
race aggregations, terms for, 44–45
- ranges (spans) of numbers/years, 31
- record keeping (as noun), 14
- refereed journals, 45
- references  
general rules, 45–47  
reference lists  
general notes and basic elements, 47  
legal citations, 53–55  
IES publications, 47–49  
nongovernment publications, 49–50  
publisher location, special rule for internationally known cities, 51  
special types of reference-list entries, 50–51

- references—continued
  - reference lists—continued
    - U.S. government publications (non-IES), 49
    - works on the Internet, 50
  - references (author date) in text
    - multiple works in the same parentheses, 46
    - one work by multiple authors, 46
    - one work by one author, 45
    - works with identical author(s) *and* year, 46
    - works with same principal author, multiple other authors, and same year, 46
  - references to tables/figures, placement of in sentence, 16
  - sources, appropriate ones to cite, 45
  - Suggested Citation (on back of title page), 51–52
- referendums (preferred plural), 39
- repeating definitions of abbreviations, 3
- Roman numerals as page numbers, 33
- rounding of numbers, 31–32, 60
- run-in headings, 23–25
- scales in figures (matching of; breaks in), 18
- schemas (preferred plural), 39
- school-age (as modifier), 14
- school-based (as modifier), 14
- school-level (as modifier), 14
- schools, Department of Defense, abbreviations/terms for, 6–7
- schoolwide (preferred compound), 14
- school year (SY), use of abbreviation for, 4, 71
- seasons (e.g., winter), capitalization of, 9-10
- sections of document, how to cross-reference, 16
- section symbol, how to create, 53
- “self” as prefix, 11
- semi-, bi-, 63–64
- semicolons in lists, 27–28
- serial comma, use of, 41
- sex/gender, 69
- share, 68
- single quotation marks, 43
- slash (solidus), 43–44
- “smart” quotes, 43
- socioeconomic (preferred compound), 14
- solidus, 43–44
- source notes (in tables and figures), 56, 61
- sources, appropriate ones to cite, 45
- spans (ranges) of numbers/years, 31
- spelling (preferred), 70
- spine of pub, design of, I-10
- standard errors
  - rounding, 32
  - use of symbols for small values in sample surveys, 32
- state-of-the-art (as modifier), 14
- states
  - abbreviations for, B-1
  - omitting in reference list for internationally known cities, 51
  - treatment of in text, 5
- statistical symbols, use of italics for, 55
- Styles feature of MS Word, E-3
- subject-matter (as modifier), 14
- suffixes/prefixes, 11–14

- Suggested Citation (on back of title page), 51–52
- superscripts  
 order of numbering in table heads/body, 61  
 placement of/spacing with in tables, 58–59  
 punctuation with in text, 22  
 use of in ordinals, 29
- suppression of page numbers, 33
- survey titles  
 abbreviations (asterisked items), A-1 – A-5  
 in source notes, 56
- symbols  
 how to create in Microsoft Word (section, dagger, double dagger), E-2  
 in tables  
 order and meaning of, 59–60  
 placement of, 58–59  
 statistical, indicated by italics, 55
- symposia (preferred plural), 39
- table of contents  
 automatic generation of, 36–37  
 “Contents” preferred as title of, 36  
 what to include in, 36
- tables  
 abbreviations defined in, 7  
 capitalization in titles (see example), 58  
 column heads, alignment of, 58  
 Excel, use of to create, H-1 – H-13  
 identifiers of (e.g., table 1, table B-1),  
 different in different parts of report, 57  
 list of in front matter, 37  
 notes in  
 dagger/double dagger, how to create, 60  
 general note, 61  
 order of, 59  
 reference (numbered) notes, 61  
 source notes, 56, 61  
 special (symbol) notes, definitions of, 60  
 rounding of numbers in, 32  
 sample table, 58  
 superscripts in  
 placement of in cells, 58–59  
 order of numbering reference  
 superscripts in tables, 61  
 spacing after, in notes, 59  
 titles of (order of information), 57  
 zero, use of in, 60
- “technical/vocational education” or  
 “career/technical education,” 69
- technology, terminology for, 26
- teenage (preferred compound), 14
- telephone numbers, style of, 40
- templates (MS Word) for title page/boilerplate;  
 front/back covers, 35
- terminology  
 consistent use of in text, 64  
 technical terms, 26  
 word usage, 62–70
- territories, 5
- textbook (preferred compound), 14
- that/which, 69
- through/to, use of with number ranges, 69
- tick marks in figures, 19, G-7
- time (chronology) in figures, 19
- time frame (preferred compound), 14
- Title IV eligible (no hyphen), 13
- title page  
 graphic standards for, I-13  
 MS Word templates for (click to), 35  
 use of, 35
- titles  
 capitalization in, 7–8, 10  
 of figures, 17–18  
 order of information in table titles, 57  
 references to, 16  
 of surveys, 56, A-1 – A-5 (asterisked items)  
 of tables, 57
- tool bar (MS Word), how to customize, E-2
- to/through, use of with number ranges, 69
- trademarks and brand names, 15
- typefaces/fonts (for covers), I-5

- uniform resource locators (URLs)
  - order of information, 39–40
  - preferred style, 26
- United States Code citation, 53
- United States Government Printing Office
  - errata sheets, 17
  - printing and binding regulations, 39
- United States, when to spell out/abbreviate, 6
- unit modifiers, 11, 13–14
- universe data, 32, 60
- URLs. *See* uniform resource locators
- U.S. Code. *See* United States Code citation
- U.S. Government publications (non-IES), reference style, 49
- U.S. Virgin Islands, abbreviation for, 5
- variant spellings (preferred style), 70
- verification of cross-references, 15–16
- Virgin Islands, abbreviation for, 5
- voice, active or passive, 69
- web address (preferred compound), 26
- web address of online *IES Style Guide*, 1
- web browser (preferred compound), 26
- web links (to standards, style manuals and guidelines, and dictionary), D-1
- webmaster (preferred compound), 26
- web page (preferred compound), 26
- website (preferred compound), 26
- web sources
  - citations for, 50, 54
  - Excel formatting guide for figures, G-3
  - GPO gateway site, 55
  - web sources—continued
    - International Organization for Standardization (ISO) site, C-1
    - refereed journals sites, 45
- the Web (as noun, for World Wide Web), 26
- Web/web (when to use which), 26
- which/that, 69
- white-collar, 14
- White, Black (capitalization of as racial designations), 9
- who/whom; who/that, 70
- “wide” as suffix (when hyphen used with), 12
- word forms/spelling (preferred), 70
- Word (Microsoft) tips, E-1 – E-4
- word usage, 62–70
  - affect/effect, 62–63
  - “and/or,” use of and alternative to, 63
  - between/among, 63
  - bi-, semi-, 63–64
  - compared to/than, 64
  - complement/compliment, 64
  - composed of, *not* comprised of, 64
  - consistent terminology, 64
  - contractions, 65
  - data, 65
  - degrees, academic, 65
  - different from, *not* different than, 65
  - education/educational, as adjective, 65–66
  - fewer/less than, 66
  - first person (when acceptable), 66
  - grade, -grader (hyphen? numeral?), 67
  - “his or her,” use of “they” instead of, 67
  - i.e./e.g., use of, 67
  - limited English proficient (LEP)/English language learner (ELL), 67
  - number of, singular or plural verb with, 68
  - percentage/percent/percentage distribution/share, preferred use of, 68
  - quartile/quarter, 68
  - sex/gender, 69
  - “technical/vocational education” or “career/technical education,” 69
  - through, to (meaning in ranges), 69



- 
- word usage—continued
    - voice, active or passive, 69
    - which/that, 69
    - who/whom; who/that, 70
    - word forms/spelling (preferred), 70
  - we/I pronouns, use of, 66
  - workforce (preferred compound), 14
  - workplace (preferred compound), 14
  - World Wide Web, capitalization of, 26
  - year of publication
    - in parenthetical text reference, 45
    - in reference list, 47
  - year spans, 70–71
    - academic year, 71
    - calendar year, 70–71
    - school year, 71
  - zeros
    - measured zero in universe survey, number of decimal places to be used in tables, 32
    - use/prohibitions of in tables, rounding, universe survey data, and sample survey data, 32
    - when not used before a decimal point, 30
  - zip codes, use of hyphen in, 40