EIA Writing Style Guide

April 2015

U.S. Energy Information Administration
Office of Communications

This publication is available on the EIA employee intranet and at:
www.eia.gov/eiawritingstyleguide.pdf

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Introduction to the EIA Writing Style Guide

This style guide is an update of the edition released in November 2012.

Did you know?

This version of the *EIA Writing Style Guide* reflects the latest thinking of writers and editors at EIA. The fundamental principles are the same, but a few rules have changed.

Why a writing style guide?

We wrote this *Writing Style Guide* to help EIA writers produce consistent, correct, and readable content. It provides guidance on those style issues—including capitalization, punctuation, word usage, tone—most relevant to EIA writing.

This edition includes new content:

- An index to help you find major topics
- Information on using and sourcing nonoriginal work and third-party data
- Direction to use CO2, b (rather than bbl for barrel), and the % sign in all EIA content
- An update on classic writing guidance
- An alphabetized list of hyphenated and nonhyphenated words
- Advice on copyediting and using spellcheck to find mistakes
- Guidance on using endnotes as a sourcing option
- Description of different uses of the letter M in energy units
- Format for writing mathematical equations
- Information about writing in plain language

This new edition also includes more examples, explanations, advice, and notes.

We included this additional material to answer the hundreds of questions asked by EIA staff, to address writing mistakes caught while editing EIA content, and to cover a few new writing style preferences.

The *2015 EIA Writing Style Guide* is provided in html on the EIA employee intranet (InsideEIA) and at www.eia.gov/eiawritingstyleguide.pdf, which allows you to search or link to related sections of the document.

Two rules were changed since the *2012 Writing Style Guide* was published and have already been incorporated into EIA writing:

- Use the % sign in all EIA writing
- Write *online* as one word in all uses (on the computer, when a pipeline or electricity generator opens or is operating)

Because the content was written to help you and has been improved by your questions and comments, the Office of Communications welcomes feedback, suggestions, corrections, and general comments.

The *Writing Style Guide* is designed to save you time. Have you ever wondered or worried about which was correct:

- Periods or no punctuation for bullets?
- Which or that?
- % sign or percent?

You can quickly find answers to these questions—and most of your style-related questions—in this *Writing Style Guide*.

Do these guidelines apply to print and web content?

This *Writing Style Guide* will help you produce uniform documents, regardless of office, function, or publication form. The purpose of the *Writing Style Guide* is to provide style consistency in all EIA content. It addresses some issues that are particular to web writing, such as writing effective hypertext links. But most of the advice applies to all the writing you do including reports, website content, and PowerPoint presentations.

Are these hard-and-fast rules?

This is a *Writing Style Guide*—not a rule book. Unlike grammar, which has specific rules that should not be broken, many style issues are preferences, such as how and when to write out numbers, whether to use the serial comma, or when to use ending punctuation for bullets. Writers and editors may differ. Famous style guides differ. Areas of the world differ. Our goal is to provide guidance on style issues, so EIA content has uniformity that conveys professionalism. Examples labeled preferred mean preferred by EIA.

Style consistency enhances our credibility. Inconsistencies in style or misused words cause users of our information to question the accuracy of our data. A uniform style tells users that EIA has high quality standards for our words as well as for our numbers.

Where can I get more guidance on editorial style?

We've addressed the most common style issues that EIA writers face. If you have a question that isn't covered in this guide, or if there is a topic you'd like to know more about, consult these online references:

- The Chicago Manual of Style, the most widely used style manual. EIA has a subscription to The Chicago Manual of Style
- U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) Style Manual, an authoritative source of information about issues that are specific to writing for the federal government
- Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, EIA's preferred dictionary

Other sources consulted in the preparation of EIA's *Writing Style Guide*:

- *Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing*, Mignon Fogarty, 2008
- *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage, 1994*
- *The Elements of Style*, William Strunk and E. B. White, 1999
- *OECD Style Guide*, Second edition, 2007
- *The Subversive Copy Editor: Advice from Chicago*, Carol Fisher Saller, 2009
- EERE Communication Standards and Guidelines: Style Guide, from the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
- *Woe Is I*, Patricia T. O'Connor, 2003

Please contact Colleen Blessing or Dale Sweetnam in the Office of Communications with any questions, comments, or suggestions about writing or about the *Writing Style Guide*.

Writing well at EIA

Use short sentences

Short sentences are easier to read, so aim for a maximum of 20 to 30 words. Consider breaking a long sentence into two shorter sentences or eliminating unnecessary words.

Use short paragraphs

Avoid long paragraphs or large blocks of text. Long paragraphs are daunting and difficult for readers to scan. Try to write paragraphs of four or five sentences, or approximately 100–125 words. Paragraphs as short as one sentence are fine. Use bullets to list points.

Avoid jargon

Jargon may be appropriate when writing exclusively for experts. But EIA's web content is accessible to a wide range of readers, from experts on your topic to novices. As much as possible, choose nontechnical terms so all your intended readers can understand what you've written. If you must use jargon or technical language, be sure to explain the term in simple language. You might also link to an EIA glossary definition or to other source material. To make the concept clear to the layperson, you can provide an example or an analogy.

Be consistent

Good writing is built on patterns, so be consistent within your content.

- Consistent terminology: Don't call it *gasoline* in some instances and *motor gasoline* in others.
- Consistent abbreviations: If you use Bcf/d for billion cubic feet per day, don't use any other abbreviation for that reference.
- Consistent punctuation: For example, always use the serial comma. (The flag is red, white, and blue.)

Consider your audience

The best writers anticipate, and answer, their readers' questions. Identify your intended readers before you begin writing. Think about what they may already know and what they will want to know about your topic. While planning and drafting your content, consider their level of technical expertise, their depth of interest, and the tasks they will be performing with the information you provide.

The 2014 EIA website customer survey showed that 16% of our customers are first-time visitors, 26% do not live in the United States, and only about 20% identify themselves as being in the energy industry.

Did you know?

Plain language is the law, not just something nice to do every so often or something EIA invented. The Plain Writing Act signed by President Obama in October 2010 is a federal law that requires federal executive agencies to use plain writing and to train employees in plain writing. The law says federal agencies should write all publications, forms, and publicly distributed documents in a "clear, concise, well-organized" manner.

See the PlainLanguage.gov website for background, examples, and help.

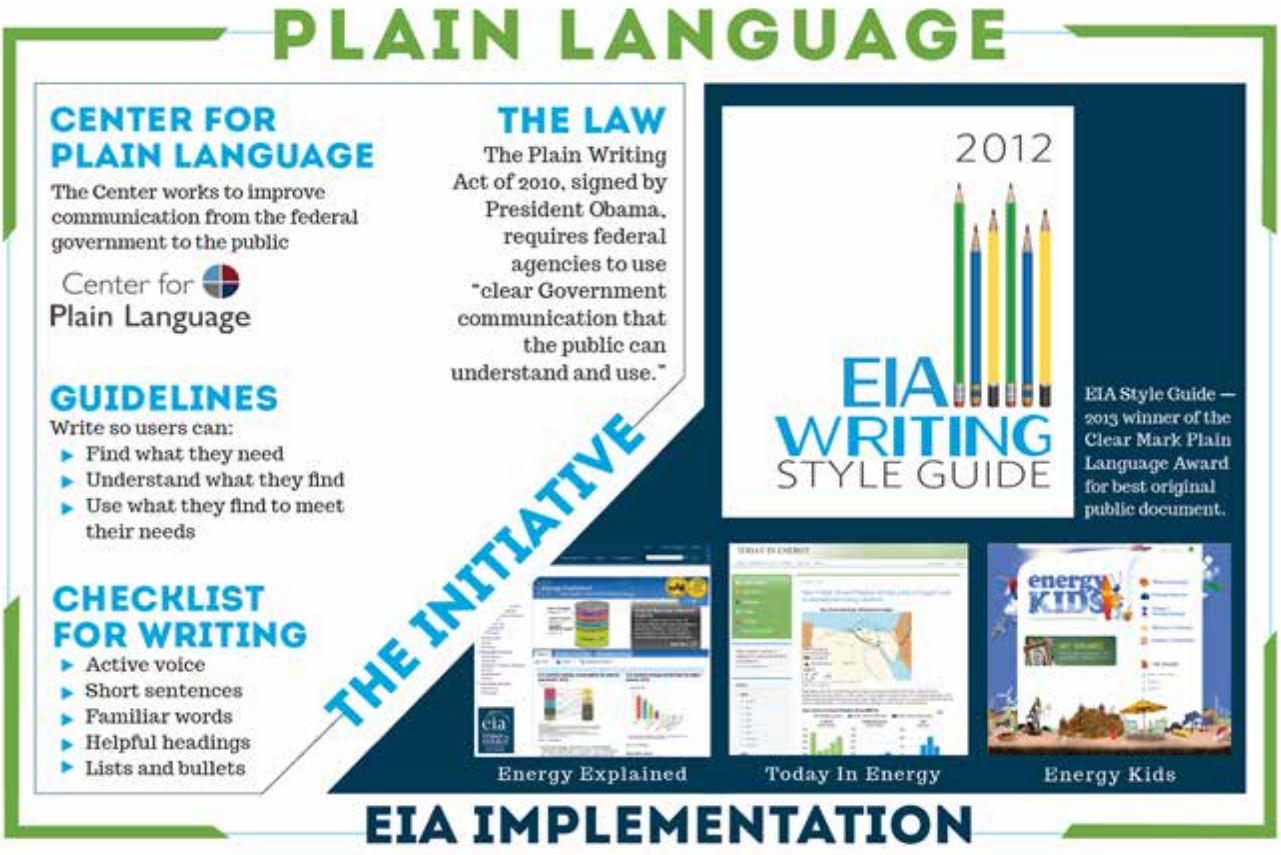
Very few customers are just browsing. Most customers have a specific goal or task to accomplish including the following (in order of the responses from the 2014 customer survey):

- Researching a topic
- Accessing specific EIA data
- Educating themselves about energy
- Writing a report
- Making an energy forecast
- Making a business decision

Remembering that 80% of our web customers are not in the energy industry reinforces the need for plain language, clear writing, and minimal jargon and acronyms.

Does the *Writing Style Guide* answer every writing question?

Writing style choices change, new situations arise, and different content requires new decisions. This guide attempts to cover most problems, situations, rules, and styles faced by EIA writers. Because of the dynamic and complex nature of EIA's content and reports, there will always be room for additions and changes. For example, after the 2012 edition of the *Style Guide* was published, EIA decided to switch to using % rather than the word *percent* in all content. We also decided that *online* should be one word. Covering every possible writing question and establishing rules for every hyphen and comma is a daunting task.



Quick Tips—Style, Writing, and Grammar

EIA style

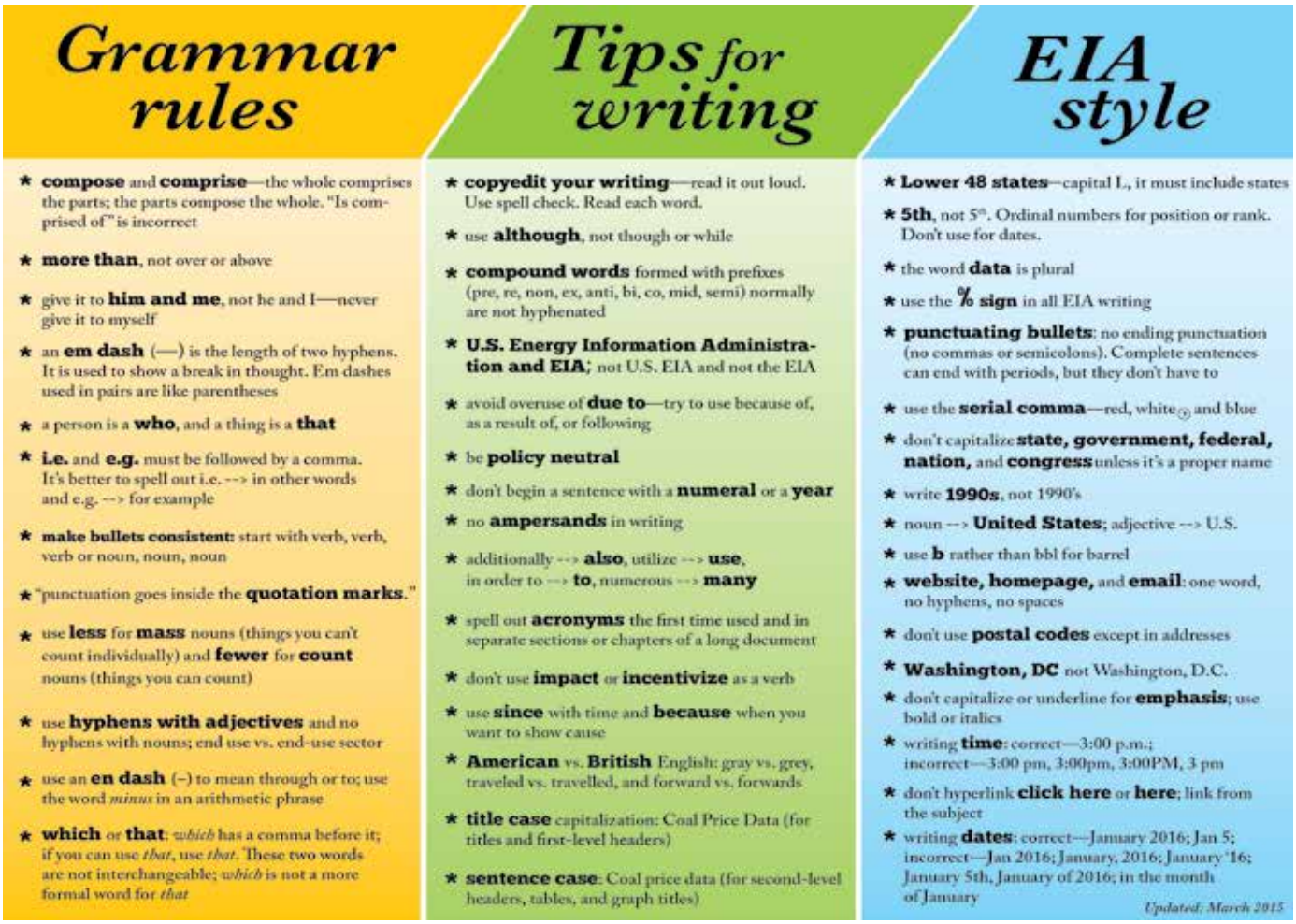
- Use b to abbreviate barrels; barrels per day is b/d.
- Use the serial comma: red, white, and blue.
- Website, homepage, and email: one word, no hyphens.
- Spell out United States as a noun: U.S. oil is produced in the United States.
- Do not capitalize state, federal, or nation unless it's a proper name (*Federal Register*).
- U.S. Energy Information Administration and EIA; not U.S. EIA and not the EIA.
- Write Washington, DC, not Washington, D.C.
- Don't use postal codes except in addresses and bibliographies: Cushing, Oklahoma, not Cushing, OK (except for Washington, DC, where the postal code is part of the city name).
- Writing time: Correct—3:00 p.m.; Incorrect—3:00 pm; 3:00pm; 3:00 PM.
- Writing dates: Correct—January 2012; Jan 5. Incorrect—Jan 2012; January, 2012; January '12; January 5th; January of 2012; the month of January.
- Write 1990s, not 1990's.
- Don't CAPITALIZE or underline for emphasis. Use **bold** or *italics*.
- American vs. British English: gray (A) vs. grey (B); traveled (A) vs. travelled (B); forward (A) vs. forwards (B). EIA style uses American spelling and usage.
- Punctuating bullets: No ending punctuation (no commas or semicolons) unless they are all complete sentences (then end each sentence with a period).
- Don't link click here or here. Link to the subject: See the full report; Register now.
- Write the *past* 10 years, not the *last* 10 years.

Writing

- Always use %, not percent.
- Title case capitalization: Natural Gas Consumption Increasing (for titles and first-level headers). Sentence case: Natural gas consumption increasing (for second-level headers and graph and table titles). Be consistent for headers and titles within a document.
- Spell out (or define or link to a full spelling) acronyms the first time used and repeatedly in separate sections and chapters of a long document.
- Avoid overuse of due to—try because, as a result of, or following.
- Use *since* with time (Since 2014, natural gas use has grown.) and *because* when you want to show cause (Because it was raining, we got wet.).
- Be policy neutral. Avoid words like plummeted, skyrocketed, slashed, spiked, huge.
- Use simple words: additionally → also; utilize → use; in order to → to; numerous → many.
- Don't use *impact* as a verb: The weather affected (not impacted) electricity demand.
- Don't begin a sentence with a numeral or a year. Incorrect: 2016 stocks are increasing. Correct: Stocks in 2016 are increasing. Also correct: The year 2016 shows increasing stocks.

Grammar

- Which or that? *Which* nearly always has a comma before it. If you can use *that*, use *that*. These two words are not interchangeable. *Which* is not a more formal word for *that*.
- Make bullets consistent: start with verb, verb, verb; noun, noun, noun; adjective, adjective, adjective.
- A person is a *who*, and a thing (including a company) is a *that*. Correct: He is the person who said yes. Incorrect: He is the person that said yes.
- The whole comprises the parts, and the parts compose the whole. *Is comprised of* is not correct.
- Use an en dash to mean through or to: the temperature was 70–80 degrees. Use the word *minus* in an arithmetic phrase. Correct: Net imports = imports minus exports. Incorrect: Net imports = imports-exports.
- An em dash is the length of two hyphens. It's used to show emphasis or a break in thought and is almost always used in pairs. Correct: My sister Amy—who is two years younger than I am—graduated from college before I did.
- Hyphens with adjectives: short-term forecast, end-use technology. No hyphens with nouns: in the short term, three end uses.
- i.e. and e.g. must be followed by a comma. It is better to write out i.e.→ in other words and e.g. → for example.
- "Punctuation goes inside the quote marks."



1

Editorial Voice and Words and Phrases To Avoid

Your writing speaks to your readers; it has a voice. At EIA, we want our writing voice to be professional, clear, and concise. This chapter covers some of the ways to create EIA's voice.

1. Using an inverted pyramid format to structure your writing

Put your main message first, so your readers can quickly get the most important information and then decide if they want to read more.

Organize your content, so the information appears in order of importance, from the highest level to supporting details.

2. Choosing active or passive voice

- Use active voice most of the time.
- In active-voice sentences, the subject is doing the action of the verb.
- In passive-voice sentences, the target of the action is moved to the subject position. Passive-voice sentences often leave out the person or group responsible for the action.

  ✓ **Active voice:** The agency proposed new regulations.

  Active voice: EIA projects that oil production will increase.

  Passive voice: New regulations were proposed.

  Passive voice: It is projected that oil production will increase.

- Active voice allows readers to scan and comprehend information quickly.
- Use active voice to write concisely, as active-voice sentences are normally shorter than passive-voice sentences.

  ✓ **Active voice**: The Clean Air Amendments of 1990 set the course for reducing pollution. (12 words)

  Passive voice: The course for reducing pollution was set by the Clear Air Amendments of 1990. (14 words)

- Use passive voice sparingly. Passive voice can be used occasionally for these purposes:
  - To emphasize the object of the action, not the doer.

    ✓ Stringent emissions guidelines were issued by the California Air Resources Board in 1990.

  - When the subject of the sentence (the doer) is unimportant or unknown. In passive-voice sentences the doer may be left out.

    ✓ Stringent emissions guidelines were issued in 1990.

  - To structure a headline, blurb, or lead sentence, place key words at the beginning.

    ✓ New Conservation Guidelines Are Adopted by Legislature

    - The writer of the above headline chose to use passive voice to feature the words *New Conservation Guidelines.* If the writer had chosen active voice, *Legislature Adopts New Conservation Guidelines*, the emphasis would be on *Legislature*, not on the *New Conservation Guidelines*.

3. Words and phrases to avoid

Use simple and specific words—not bureaucratic or clichéd expressions.

Bureaucratic or clichéd	Simple and specific
accordingly	so
afford an opportunity	allow, let
aforementioned	as mentioned earlier
a great number of	many
all-time record high	record, record level
a number of	many, several, a few
additionally	also, in addition
approximately	about
as to whether	whether
at the lowest levels	lowest
at the present time, at this point in time	now
at the time that	when
burgeoning	growing, increasing
by means of	with, in, by
capability	ability, can
close proximity	nearby, near
come to an agreement on	agree
commence	start, begin
completely destroyed	destroyed
consequently	so
currently	now
demonstrate a preference for	prefer
due to the fact that	because
during the course of	during
endeavor to	try to
equally as	equally
equivalent	equal
facilitate	help
finalize	finish
for the most part	mostly
for the purpose of	for, to
furthermore	also, in addition
give approval for	approve
identical	same
impacted by	affected by
in accordance with	by, following, under
incentivizing	promoting, encouraging

Bureaucratic or clichéd	Simple and specific
including, but not limited to	including
indices	indexes
initial	first
in order to	to
in order to eliminate	to eliminate
in spite of the fact that	although, despite
in the event that	if
in the month of January	in January
in the near future	soon
in the spring of 2013	spring 2013
in the vicinity of	near
in violation of	violates
is able to	can
it is felt that	(omit)
kind of	rather
leverage	make use of, take advantage of
like	such as
limited number	few, some
magnitude	size
majority of	most
make a choice	choose
make a decision	decide
multiple	many
myriad	many
new record	record
no later than	by, for
not strong	weak
not well suited	unfit, poorly suited
numerous	many
of the opinion that	think
on a monthly basis	monthly
on or before December 2	by December 2
on the basis of	based on
on the part of	by
optimum	best
originally began	began
preeminent	primary, major
presents a summary of	summarizes
prior to	before
prior estimate	previous estimate
record high level	record level, highest level

Bureaucratic or clichéd	Simple and specific
regarding	about, of, on
relative to	compared to, compared with
retain	keep
since the time when	since
subsequent	next
subsequent to	after
sufficient	enough
sunset	end
terminate	end, stop
the question as to whether	whether
therefore	so
the reason why is that	because
the table is a list of	the table shows
time frame	time or period
time period	time or period
to perform an analysis	to analyze
underutilized	underused
until such time as	until
usage of	use of
used for fuel purposes	used for fuel
utilize	use
whether or not	whether
with regard to	about
with the exception of	except
would appear that	appears

4. Using parallel structure

- Use the same grammatical structure to present two or more ideas of equal value in a sentence.
- Present the same type of information in a similar format to make the information easier to read.
- Use parallel structure for items in a numbered or bulleted list and in a list of items in a sentence. Every item or bullet must start with the same kind of word (noun, verb, adjective, etc.), and all must be either phrases or complete sentences, whenever possible.

  ✓ **Parallel structure:** The project director is a strong leader, a skillful politician, and an effective manager.

  Not parallel structure: The project director is a strong leader, a skillful politician, and he manages effectively.

- Good examples of parallel structure

  ✓
  - Educat***ing*** the public
  - Inform***ing*** the media
  - Updat***ing*** decision makers
  - Conduct***ed*** a survey
  - Comput***ed*** the results
  - Prepar***ed*** a report

For more information on using parallel structure in bulleted lists, see page 109.

5. Maintaining consistent verb tenses

- Maintain consistent verb tenses to clearly establish the timing of the action.

  ✓ **Consistent verb tense**: Natural gas is created by the underground decomposition of organic matter. Much of the carbon and hydrogen is converted to methane, the major component of natural gas.

  Using the present tense consistently conveys that the action (both the decomposition of organic matter and the conversion to methane) is happening at the same time and is an ongoing process.

  Inconsistent verb tense: Natural gas was created by the underground decomposition of organic matter. Much of the carbon and hydrogen is converted to methane, the major component of natural gas.

  The shift in verb tense from past (was created) to present (is converted) is confusing to the reader. It implies that the decomposition of organic matter happened in the past, but that the conversion to methane is occurring only now (present tense).

- Do not change verb tenses unless you want to indicate a clear shift in time.

  ✓ **Appropriate shift in verb tense:** The regulations were adopted in 2000. The regulations will be reviewed in 2015.

  The first sentence uses the past tense (were adopted) to indicate action that happened in the past. The second sentence uses the future tense (will be reviewed) to indicate future action.

6. Tailoring the formality of your writing to the audience

How formal should your writing be? At EIA, we tend to favor formal language over informal language. But the formality of your writing depends on both content and audience. Authors, supervisors, and the Office of Communications decide the level of formality for each report or product.

For example, if you are writing a report for Congress, your language should be formal. But if you are writing a *Today in Energy* story or content for Energy Explained, your language can be more informal.

What makes writing formal or informal?

- Avoiding colloquial words or expressions makes your writing more formal.

  ✓ **Formal language:** However, the formality of your writing depends on the audience.
  Informal language: But the formality of your writing depends on the audience.

  Formal language: Why are gasoline prices so high?
  Informal language: What's behind high gas prices?

  Formal language: Is there enough oil to meet future needs?
  Informal language: Are we running out of oil?

- Using the pronoun *we* instead of the noun *EIA* is more informal.
  Using a noun rather than a pronoun makes your writing more formal.

  ✓ **Formal language:** EIA projects oil production will increase.
  Informal language: We project oil production will increase.

- Spelling out whole words rather than using contractions makes your writing more formal.

  ✓ **Formal language:** EIA will not comment on the legislation.
  Informal language: EIA won't comment on the legislation.

7. Using a consistent point of view

In your writing, you can choose to use one of three different points of view: first person, second person, or third person. Each point of view expresses a different relationship to the reader. Generally, third person is most appropriate for EIA writing.

Three points of view for writing

First person is when the person or object is speaking: We can produce steam several ways.

Second person is when the person is spoken to: You can produce steam several ways.

Third person is when the object is spoken about: It can produce steam several ways.

- Do not shift point of view within an article or report. The point of view you choose will depend on your audience and the product you are writing.

  Shifting point of view: Most commercially available electricity is generated by turbines that convert steam into electricity. You can produce steam in several ways.

  This paragraph shifts from third person to second person (you).

  ✓ **Consistent point of view:** Most electricity is generated by turbines that convert steam into electricity. Steam can be produced in several ways.

  This paragraph maintains the third person throughout.

8. Emphasizing content

- EIA prefers bold text for emphasis. Italics can be used to emphasize a word or phrase, rarely a whole sentence or paragraph. If used too frequently, italics or bold for emphasis lose their power.
- Never underline for emphasis.
- Underlining isn't necessary for links. Most links in EIA writing are now shown in blue type with no underline. *The Annual Energy Outlook* has forecasts through 2040.
- Never use capital letters for emphasis.

  ✓ **Correct emphasis**: Your comments must be sent by **mail**—not email.

  Incorrect emphasis: Your comment must be sent by MAIL—NOT EMAIL.
  Incorrect emphasis: Your comments must be sent by mail—not email.

- Use bold sparingly to emphasize subheads or bullet introductions in text. Do not bold words within a sentence as a substitute for subheads.

  ✓ **Correct**: **Spring**. Prices increased from winter lows.
  Summer. Prices remained constant.
  Fall. Prices decreased after summer heat.

  Incorrect: Prices went up **in the summer.** Then **in the winter** prices went down.

Never use all capital letters or underlining for emphasis.

Use italics or bold for emphasis.

9. Using italics

- Use italics for report and product names in report content and footnotes.

  ✓ EIA projects that renewable-generated electricity will account for 12.6% of total electricity generation in 2020.[1]

  For EIA documents: [1] U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Annual Energy Outlook 2014,* Table 8.

  Citing EIA in non-EIA documents: [1] U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Annual Energy Outlook 2014*, Table 8, accessed March 11, 2015.

- Do not use italics for the report acronym.

  ✓ **Correct**: The projections are in the *Annual Energy Outlook 2015* (AEO2015).
  Incorrect: *Annual Energy Outlook 2014 (AEO2015)*

- Use italics rather than quotation marks to call attention to specific words or phrases.

  ✓ **Correct:** Use the phrase *use of foreign oil* rather than *oil dependence*.
  Incorrect: Use the phrase "use of foreign oil" rather than "oil dependence."

- Use italics to set off a non-English word or phrase that might be unfamiliar to the reader. If the foreign phrase is used frequently in the document, use italics only for the first use. If the phrase is used infrequently in the document, use italics for each use.

  ✓ A *laissez-faire* approach to the market can have serious repercussions.

- Do not use italics if the foreign phrase is commonly used in English. (If the word is listed in Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, you do not normally use italics.)

  ✓ The used car had no warranty. Caveat emptor.

- Do not use italics for these items:
  - et al. (and all other items)
  - ibid (in the same place)
  - etc. (and other items)
  - i.e., (in other words)
  - e.g., (for example)

  ✓ **Correct:** Greenhouse gases (e.g., carbon dioxide) may contribute to global warming.

- Key terms may be italicized on their first use. Do not use italics for subsequent uses.

  ✓ **Correct:** Some cities are participating in the *Clean Cities* program. Other cities may participate in the Clean Cities program in the future.

Did you know?

Roman type means not in italics. The word roman is not capitalized. Don't confuse roman type with Roman numerals.

10. Formatting paragraphs

Separate paragraphs with a blank line. The first line of a paragraph should be flush left, not indented.

✓ **Correct:**
In 2004 and 2005, increased global demand for oil stretched capacity along the entire oil market system and caused a surge in crude oil prices.

Incorrect:
In 2004 and 2005, increased global demand for oil stretched capacity along the entire oil market system and caused a surge in crude oil prices.

2

Policy-Neutral Writing

The glass is never half empty or half full. It's just an eight-ounce glass with four ounces of liquid.

Bureau of Labor Statistics spokesperson

Did you know?

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics doesn't actually have an official list of approved verbs, but it often seems like they do. There are verbs they are trained to use (rose/fell, increased/decreased), and verbs and words they are trained never to use (skyrocketed, phenomenal, dramatic). They don't use many adjectives or adverbs either, but when they do, the words are objective.

EIA isn't that strict, but writers should not use verbs or adverbs that have connotations, feelings, or tones for official and public-facing content. Rising gasoline prices aren't positive or negative, they are just prices that are increasing.

EIA's responsibility is to provide independent, policy-neutral information. We don't advocate or support policies, industries, fuels, or trends.

Sometimes our writing may seem repetitive, always saying increased or decreased, rose or fell. Using different words to vary the text may seem like a good idea, but often the new verbs or adverbs have subtle or not so subtle connotations, either positive or negative.

1. Use policy-neutral words

Neutral: Prices fell
Not neutral: Prices plummeted

Neutral: Production decreased, production dropped
Not neutral: Production was slashed

Neutral: Hydraulic fracturing requires large amounts of water
Not neutral: Hydraulic fracturing requires huge amounts of water

Neutral: Natural gas production reversed its downward trend
Not neutral: Natural gas production finally reversed its downward trend

2. Phrases to avoid

Quantify statements where possible, but avoid these words and phrases. A 50% increase may seem to be *surging* or *skyrocketing*, but let the reader make the quantifying judgment.

- Appropriate action
- Burgeoning
- Effective policy
- Enormous
- Gale
- Jumped
- Huge
- Massive
- Obvious solution
- Rebound
- Skyrocketed
- Slashed
- Soared
- Spiked
- Surging
- Tiny

3. Policy-neutral situations to watch for

- Rising or falling prices—To a consumer, rising prices are usually negative, and falling prices are usually positive. An energy producer may have the opposite perspective. EIA reports the trends with neutral words to avoid seeming like we are on one side or the other.
- Instead of saying *oil dependence*, say *use of foreign oil*—The term oil dependence inevitably leads to discussions about energy independence, which in a global economy will never happen. Instead of dependence, use terms such as *use of foreign oil* or *imported oil as a share of U.S. oil consumption*.
- Environmental impacts of energy production and consumption—EIA can discuss that there are impacts and list what they are, but we should not use judgmental or advocacy words.
- Policies that support or do not support a specific fuel technology—Avoid appearing like a cheering section for a specific tool or technology. Just state the facts.

3

Advice for Good Writing

Clarity does not come from simple ideas, but from presenting ideas in the simplest form possible.

OECD Style Guide, Second Edition, 2007

EIA style includes advice from several different style guides that disagree on some points. The style used by the U.S. Government Printing Office is sometimes too formal. *AP Style* (Associated Press) is sometimes too informal. *The Chicago Manual of Style* is close to EIA style, but not in all cases.

Remember, style is a preference; it is not right or wrong (unlike grammar, which does have rules). The *EIA Writing Style Guide* reflects what works best for EIA.

1. Updates on classic writing guidance

The way many people were taught to write in school is not necessarily the best way to convey key points in EIA writing, especially for *Today in Energy* stories and short reports.

Writing advice to avoid:

- The old advice "Tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em, tell 'em, then tell 'em what you told 'em" leads to excessive repetition.
- The five-paragraph format—introduction, three supporting paragraphs, and conclusion—also leads to wordiness and repetition.
- The thesis format of background, literature review, assumptions, research, discussion, analysis, finally ending with the conclusion or findings completely buries the main points.

Writing advice to follow:

- Start with your main point. Avoid what some people call the *voyage of discovery*.
- Give details and numbers as needed.
- Use short sentences and short paragraphs.
- Don't state the calculation in a confusing number of different ways: for example, consumption was up by 2 million barrels per day, or 6% from last year and 21% over the five-year average, rising to 8 million barrels per day, which is 12% higher than the peak in 1998, when it was 7.7 million barrels per day.
- Include supporting information and details in later paragraphs.
- Don't write a conclusion that repeats points already stated. If your writing is clear, you won't need a conclusion.

Start with your main points. Ending with the findings or trends in a conclusion buries the main points.

Word choice advice to avoid:

- Always vary your word choice—don't repeat the same term. Using different words can confuse the reader.

Word choice advice to follow:

- Don't feel compelled to vary your word usage (something English teachers encouraged), especially for words with specific meanings. If you say consumption first, stick with consumption. Avoid saying *consumption* was up during 2015, but *demand* declined in 2016, when *usage* increased with higher economic growth. If you say *oil* first, don't switch back and forth with *petroleum* and *liquids*. Even though you know certain terms are interchangeable, if you use different words, readers might think you've changed concepts. Adding modifiers can also be confusing because readers don't know the terms mean the same thing. Don't switch from electricity consumption to utility-scale consumption, for example.

2. Important guidance on sourcing nonoriginal work

All nonoriginal work must be sourced and attributed. Sourcing can be shown as footnotes, endnotes, notes, or inline text references. The source must follow EIA format. See chapter 16 for footnote format and more guidance. In general, the source should include the author's name(s), the publication name, the publication date, and page number.

- You must provide footnotes listing sources for all nonoriginal work.
- You cannot reuse information you found on the Internet, in EIA reports, or from any other source without attribution.
- If you are uncertain about EIA's sourcing policy or are not sure if you need to include footnotes or endnotes in your work, talk to your supervisor.
- Be aware of any reuse restrictions on third-party data. Send questions to thirdpartydata@eia.gov.
- Reuse of graphs, images, or photos is allowed only with documented permission from the content owner. For example, a note under a non-EIA photo could say "Reprinted with permission from XYZ Company." Call or email the author, company, or source for permission.
- See Using Third-Party Data and page 114 for more information on EIA's third-party data policy.

Read your work out loud when proofreading.

Use spell check to find common mistakes in spelling and usage.

3. Tips for proofreading your writing

- **Read your work slowly out loud**—This method forces you to read every word individually and increases the odds you will find a typo, missing word, or writing mistake. This proofreading method almost guarantees you will find common errors like missing words, repeated words, and subject-verb disagreement. Remember: read out loud, not just out loud in your head.
- **Use spell check**—Microsoft Word and Microsoft Outlook include spell check, which catches much more than misspelled words. Review each squiggly underlined spot to determine what the mistake might be. (See tips in section 4 below.)
- **Force yourself to read each word**—Consider each word. Read small sections.
- **Proof a printed version**—Many people find it easier to proofread on paper rather than on a computer screen.
- **Ask a colleague to help**—Four eyes are better than two.

4. Spell check in Microsoft Word is a great copyeditor

Spell check looks at more than spelling. Spell check gives you three colors of squiggly underlines in your content:

Spell check squiggly line color codes

Red = spelling error
Green = possible grammatical error
Blue = possible contextual error such as homonyms or similar words

These squiggles indicate possible mistakes. Don't ignore them.

I bought a pare of pantss when I went too the shopping maul yesterda.

But remember: spell check doesn't catch every mistake, and some possible errors flagged by spell check may actually be correct. You still need to proof your writing carefully.

Sometimes the autocorrect feature in Microsoft Word can introduce errors such as capitalizing words you meant to be lower case. Again, your eyes are critical in reviewing your work.

Did you know?

The period-space-space reflex is a relic of the era of manual typewriters, when all letters (fat m, thin i) took up equal amounts of horizontal space. The extra space after a sentence helped with clarity. Now that letters take up proportional space, typing two spaces between sentences is no longer necessary.

5. Follow basic style rules

- Use short sentences.
- Use short paragraphs. They are easier to read, especially online. Even if a long paragraph is all one thought or topic, consider breaking it into two smaller sections, or use bullets if there are related points in the paragraph.
- Begin with the fact or main point. Don't start with attribution or history or assumptions.
- Avoid using too many introductory clauses.

  ✓ **Preferred:** Oil production rose during the last half of 2015.
  Less preferred: During the last half of 2015, oil production rose.

- Use bold text or italics rather than underline for emphasis.
- Use % in all EIA writing.
- Avoid using a string of adjectives to modify a noun. Adding too many qualifying words before the noun requires the reader to deconstruct the meaning.

  Stacked noun—difficult to read

  1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
  Annual natural gas-fired electric power generation totals

  ✓ **Unstacked noun**—easier to read
  Annual totals for electric power generated from natural gas

- Use one space between a period and the start of the next sentence. The use of one space is accepted by many style guides and is the default in html.

✓ **Modern preferred style**: one space	I like chocolate. You like fruit.
Old-fashioned style: two spaces	I like chocolate. You like fruit.

6. Avoid run-on sentences

A run-on sentence isn't just a long sentence (a common misconception); it is two sentences squished together without proper punctuation.

✓ **Correct sentences:** He ran home. She stayed behind.
Incorrect, run-on sentence: He ran home she stayed behind.

7. Avoid excessive use of *due to; because* is better

The use of *due to* is rampant in EIA writing. Grammar advice says that if you are having trouble figuring out whether to use *due to* or *because*, *because* is almost always the better choice. Also consider using *as a result of*.

✓ **Correct:** It gets light in the morning because the sun comes up.
Incorrect: It gets light in the morning due to the sun coming up.

Correct: Oil demand is down as a result of (or in response to) higher prices.
Incorrect: Oil demand is down due to higher prices.

8. Use parallel writing styles

- Bullets should begin with the same part of speech (noun, verb, adjective, etc.).
- Sentences should be parallel.

  ✓ **Parallel:** Natural gas was transported by pipelines and tankers.
  Not parallel: Natural gas was transported by pipelines and tanker deliveries.

- Phrases and terms should be parallel.

  ✓ **Parallel:** Natural gas imports and crude oil imports
  Not parallel: Natural gas imports and imports of crude oil

- Tense should be parallel.

  Correct: Oil production *was* steady from 2001 to 2005, then it *was* down from 2005 to 2011, but recently it *was* up.

  Incorrect: Oil production *was up* from 2001 through 2005, then it *had been decreasing* from 2005 through 2014, but now it *is up* since 2014.

- References to charts and graphs should be parallel.

  ✓ **Parallel:** (see chart above)
  (see chart below)

  Not parallel: (see chart above)
  (see chart)

  Note: EIA preference is *see chart above (or see graph above)*, not *see above chart*. In longer reports with numbered charts, write *see Figure 3*. You don't have to indicate above or below if the figures are numbered.

9. It's OK to split infinitives

This rule was concocted by 19th century grammarians of English who tried to force the consistency of Latin grammar onto English. In Latin, you can't split the infinitive of a verb because it is all one word. English isn't Latin. It's OK to split infinitives.

✓ **Correct split infinitive:** To boldly go where no man has gone before.

10. Use first, second, third

- Use first, second, third for connected points in text, not firstly, secondly, thirdly.
- If you have more than three points, consider numbering the items or using bullets. Saying *seventh* is cumbersome and confusing.

11. Ending a sentence with a preposition is OK

- Sometimes it is relatively easy to rewrite the sentence so it doesn't end in a preposition and sounds fine, but don't convolute the words or meaning to follow this antiquated rule.
- Avoid awkward-sounding syntax as you try to keep the preposition out of the sentence-ending spot.
- One grammar expert says *not* ending a sentence with a preposition is one of the biggest grammar myths of all time.

✓ **Clear:** This is where oil comes from.
Awkward: This is from where oil comes.

✓ **Clear:** What did you step on?
Awkward: On what did you step?

12. This or that?

A common but somewhat confusing style choice in some EIA writing is the use of sentences beginning with *this* or *that* or *they* where the subject is not stated. (You have to look for the subject in the previous sentence.)

✓ **Clear:** Oil prices are rising because demand is up and supplies are low. This **rise in oil prices** is the result of…

Unclear: Oil prices are rising because demand is up and supplies are low. This is the result of… (This what? Prices rising? Demand up? Supplies low? Don't make the reader guess.)

Clear: Electricity demand is affected by price and weather. These **two factors** are...

Unclear: Electricity demand is affected by price and weather. These are…(These what?)

13. This is because or that is the result of… what?

Do not write sentences that begin with *This is because, That is because, Those are because,* or *It is due to.* Repeat the subject from the previous sentence.

✓ **Correct:** This change is because of the new law.
Incorrect: This is because of the new law.

Correct: The increase in demand is a result of the weather.
Incorrect: It is due to the weather.

14. Writing the possessive form

✓ **Correct and preferred EIA style:** Colombia's oil production (sounds like the country)
Correct but not preferred: Columbian oil production (sounds like the people)

Correct and preferred EIA style: Kansas's legislature
Correct but not preferred: Kansas' legislature

✓ **Correct:** OPEC's production
Correct: FDR's policies

15. To use that or not to use that

Using the extra word *that* is not necessary in many sentences.

Preferred: The sandwich I ate yesterday was good.
OK: The sandwich that I ate yesterday was good.

Preferred: The cars sold in 2015 have more airbags.
OK: The cars that were sold in 2015 have more airbags.

16. And, as well as, in addition

The words you write after *as well as* or *in addition to* are not as important as the words you write after *and*.

Equal: Prices went up because of weather and generator outages. (Both factors are equally important.)

Unequal: Prices went up because of weather as well as generator outages. (Outages are a less important factor.)

17. Small words are often better than big words

Try to avoid:

- Additionally (use *also* or *in addition*)
- Furthermore (use *also* or *in addition*)
- Numerous (use *many*)
- Utilize (use *use*)
- Incentivize (use *encourage* or *promote*)

For a longer list of words to avoid, see page 11.

18. Repeat the full noun

Don't omit words in a proper noun to make the list shorter. Include all the words in a noun to be clear.

Correct: Central America and South America
Incorrect: Central and South America

Correct: North Dakota and South Dakota
Incorrect: North and South Dakota

19. Headline writing

- Be short and concise.
- Some headlines have character limits. *Today in Energy* titles are limited to 90 characters.
- Include the time period if it's important to the story.
- Use the present tense for headlines and leaders; use past tense for the text, if appropriate.

Correct: Headline: Natural gas consumption **increases**
Text: Natural gas consumption **rose** by 3% in 2016 over 2015 levels.

20. When in doubt, use a write-around

Sometimes you just can't figure out how to write something clearly or correctly, you can't find it in the style guide, or you don't know where to look it up. Try this advice: write around it. A write-around using slightly different words is a rephrasing that avoids what's confusing you.

Not sure?: Can a sentence begin with 4%?
Write-around: A total of 4% was included.

Not sure?: On-line or online? (EIA writes online as one word.)
Write-around: began service or began operating

Not sure?: Is data singular or plural? (It's plural at EIA.)
Write-around: The information is, the data series is, the dataset is—if you want to use a singular verb.

Did you know?

There are two types of dictionaries—prescriptive and descriptive.

Historically, most dictionaries were prescriptive. The 20th century saw a move toward descriptive dictionaries. Today, most dictionaries, including *Merriam-Webster*, are descriptive.

21. But it's in the dictionary

Just because it's in the dictionary doesn't mean a word or phrase is correct. A dictionary reflects how speakers use the language. As words such as *irregardless* creep into our language, they are added to the dictionary. Inclusion in a dictionary does not automatically make these words correct.

A style guide establishes standards of good usage. The *EIA Writing Style Guide* reflects choices made by EIA to establish consistency and correctness in our writing.

- A **prescriptive dictionary** is more concerned about correct and standard English. It would include only standard usage, spelling, and rules.
- **A descriptive dictionary** describes the language as it is spoken, so it includes commonly used words, even if they are nonstandard (like *ain't* and *irregardless*). A descriptive dictionary might also include nonstandard spellings and guidance about which words are nonstandard or offensive.

4

Grammar

An entirely adequate description of English grammar is still a distant target and at present seemingly an unreachable one, the complications being what they are.

Robert Burchfield,
Unlocking the English Language, 1991

1. Which and that

- *Which* and *that* are not interchangeable. *Which* is not a more elegant or formal or clever way to say *that*. Your choice is not a matter of style—this rule is a right-or-wrong choice.
- *Which*: a pronoun that introduces nonessential information. Use a comma before a *which* clause. If a comma won't work, then you should be using *that*. If you crossed out the words in the *which* clause, the remaining words should still be a complete sentence.
- *That*: a pronoun used to introduce essential information. Don't use a comma before *that*.

  ✓ **Correct:** Power plants that burn fossil fuels emit pollutants.
  Incorrect: Power plants which burn fossil fuels emit pollutants.

  Correct: Power plants**,** which are one source of electric power**,** may emit pollutants.
  Incorrect: Power plants that are one source of electric power may emit pollutants.

2. He and I, you and me, myself

Each of these examples says send the information to me, which is correct.

✓ **Correct:** Send the information to Mike and me.
Correct: Send the information to me and Mike.
Correct: Send the information to me.

Incorrect: Send the information to Mike and I.
(What you are really saying here is send the information to I.)

Incorrect: Send the information to Mike and myself.
(You are saying send the information to myself.)

Correct: I did the work myself.
Incorrect: The work was done by Christine and myself.

Correct: The work was done by Christine and me.
(The work was done by me, not by I and not by myself.)
Correct: Christine and I did the work.

Which and *that* are not interchangeable.

Here's the bottom line on which and that: If you can use the word that, use that. If you don't have a comma before which, use that.

3. None is or none are, either...or, and neither...nor

- Deciding whether an indefinite pronoun such as *neither, none, everyone, no one*, and *some* takes a singular or plural verb can be tricky.
- When an indefinite pronoun is the subject of a verb, it is usually singular.

  ✓ **Correct:** None of the proposals was accepted. *(Not one was accepted.)*
  Correct: Neither answer was sufficient.

- When comparing two items, you must say "either...or" or "neither...nor."

  ✓ **Correct:** Neither my officemate nor I was planning to attend the conference.
  Correct: Either my officemate or my boss was the last person to leave.

4. Showing possession for singular nouns ending in *s*

Both styles below are correct.

✓ **Preferred:** Kansas's legislature
Correct: Kansas' legislature

Preferred: James's
Correct: James'

More correct examples: Dickens's novels, the Williams's new house.

5. Using compound subjects

All examples below are correct.

✓ Colleen's and Melinda's recipes (different recipes, some from Colleen and some from Melinda)
Colleen and Melinda's recipes (recipes both Colleen and Melinda use)

My aunt's and uncle's houses (each person has a house)
My aunt and uncle's house (only one house)

The guest speaker and new author, Mr. Smith, will be at our meeting.
Ham and swiss is the only sandwich left on the plate.

6. A person is a who, not a that

Use *who* with he, she, people, etc. Use *that* with objects.

✓ **Correct:** He is the person who came to the meeting.
Incorrect: He is the person that came to the meeting. (Many writers make this mistake.)

Correct: This is the couch that I just bought.
Incorrect: This is the couch who I just bought. (No one makes this mistake.)

7. Fewer, less, lower, and under

Fewer and *less* mean the same thing, but you use them in different circumstances. Use *less* for mass nouns (things you can't count individually) and *fewer* for count nouns (things you can count). Use *lower* for levels or percentages. Use *under* to describe location or spatial position (under the table).

- Mass nouns—less salt, less tired, less money, less time (note: you can't make mass nouns plural)
- Count nouns—fewer apples, fewer refiners, fewer dollars, fewer hours
- Describing levels or amounts—lower imports, higher prices, lower production

✓ **Correct:** Lower imports
Incorrect: Fewer imports

Correct: Gasoline costs less than $4 per gallon.
Incorrect: Gasoline costs under $4 per gallon.

8. More than and over

The words *more than* and *over* have similar meanings. EIA style prefers *more than* to *over* in these types of sentences.

✓ **Correct**: Production increased by more than 5%.
Incorrect: Production increased by over 5%.

Correct: More than 15 students came to class.
Incorrect: Over 15 students came to class.

9. A and An

- Usually you use an *a* in front of nouns that start with consonants: a chair, a piano, a barrel. You use *an* in front of nouns that start with vowels: an apple, an electric power plant, an import level.
- But sometimes it's not the beginning letter but the pronounced sound of the beginning letter that determines the correct article.

Subject-verb disagreement is a common mistake in EIA writing. Proofreading your writing out loud will help you catch this mistake.

✓ **Correct:** a united front
Incorrect: an united front

Correct: an MA degree
Incorrect: a MA degree

Correct: an hour, an honor, an heir, a historic day, a utopian society, an unfair law, an MBA

10. Subject-verb agreement

Singular nouns take singular verbs, and plural nouns take plural verbs. This advice sounds easy, but it's confusing with collective nouns (staff, family) and when plural words are added between the subject and verb.

✓ **Correct: The author** of the reports and analyses **is…**
Incorrect: The author of the reports and analyses **are…**

Correct: The import level of petroleum products and crude oil **is…**
Incorrect: The import level of petroleum products and crude oil **are…**

Correct: Our forecast, together with the appendix tables, **shows** that…
Incorrect: Our forecast, together with the appendix tables, **show** that…

Correct: One key factor, high oil prices, **is** the reason…
Incorrect: One key factor, high oil prices, **are** the reason…

Correct: Our experience in dealing with complex models **makes** us…
Incorrect: Our experience in dealing with complex models **make** us…

Correct: EIA staff includes economists and statisticians. (Staff is singular.)
Not preferred: EIA staff include economists and statisticians.

5

Commonly Misused Words

Proper words in proper places
make the true definition of a style.

Jonathan Swift

Commonly misused words	Definition and example	Definition and example
about/around (used with numbers)	**about:** approximately **preferred**: about 4%; about 3 tons. Don't use either word with precise number such as *about 3.21 million barrels.*	**around:** near to, close to **not preferred:** around 4%; around 3 tons
accept/except	**accept:** to receive; to agree I accept your suggestions.	**except:** apart from; but; excluding We approve all your suggestions except the last one.
additionally, in addition to, also, besides	Same meaning. EIA prefers *in addition* and *also*. Avoid *additionally*. **Just OK:** Additionally, the price of gasoline went up. **Better:** The price of gasoline also went up.	
advice/advise	**advice:** recommendation; guidance (noun) EIA seeks advice from the American Statistical Association.	**advise:** to recommend; to suggest (verb) We must advise you that email is an insecure means of transmission.
affect/effect	**affect:** to influence Policy decisions affect energy markets.	**effect:** a result (as a noun); to bring about, to accomplish (as a verb) What was the effect of the committee's work? The committee's work effected major changes to the system.
aid/aide	**aid:** the act of helping (verb) Accepted students must apply for financial aid prior to enrollment.	**aide:** person acting as an assistant (noun) The political candidates brought campaign aides to the meeting.
a lot/alot/many/allot	**a lot:** a considerable quantity or extent; a lot is always two words. **allot:** to parcel out; to assign a share **alot**: not a word. **Correct:** It takes a lot of coal to generate electricity. **Incorrect:** It takes alot of coal to generate electricity.	**many:** consisting of or amounting to a large but indefinite number **Correct:** It takes a lot of coal to generate electricity. **Better:** It takes many tons of coal to generate electricity. **Best:** It takes more than 100 tons of coal to generate that much electricity.
all ready/already	**all ready:** everything is ready Once the papers are all ready, we can send them.	**already:** before a specified time The meeting is already finished.
all right/alright	**all right:** a statement of affirmation, satisfaction, agreement. EIA preferred style The calculations in the report were all right.	**alright**: a statement of affirmation, but this spelling is less preferred and not standard. Not EIA style

Commonly misused words	Definition and example	Definition and example
although/though	**although:** in spite of the fact that, even though EIA prefers the use of although, but both are correct.	**though:** in spite of the fact that, even though. Not EIA style The dress, though expensive, was just what I wanted for the party. (although expensive is preferred)
although/while	**although:** in spite of the fact that, even though Although I was full, I still ordered dessert.	**while:** at the same time* *Not a hard-and-fast rule. Often, while can be used in place of although. Be careful. While we were sleeping, an inch of rain fell.
all together/altogether	**all together:** in a group, always two words We sat all together on the lawn at the concert.	**altogether:** completely, in all, on the whole Altogether, the songs on this album present vivid imagery.
alternate/alternative	**alternate:** to change back and forth; every other one in a series When I cross-train, I alternate between running and cycling. I am the alternate member of that group.	**alternative:** a choice between two things or possibilities An alternative to driving your car is taking public transportation. Because the weather is cold, the alternative to freezing is wearing a heavy coat.
allude to/refer to	**allude to:** to mention indirectly The report alluded to problems with the system.	**refer to:** to mention directly The report referred to other references on the subject.
amid/amidst	**amid:** American English. EIA prefers amid.	**amidst:** British English
among/amongst	**among:** American English. EIA prefers among. He chose among the many options.	**amongst:** British English He chose amongst the many options. (not preferred)
any more/anymore	**any more:** additional, any longer I don't want any more pizza. The difference between the two meanings is shown in this sentence: I don't buy books anymore because I don't need any more books.	**anymore:** an adverb meaning nowadays or any longer I don't jog anymore.
anyone/any one	**anyone:** any single person or thing Does anyone have a stamp?	**any one:** any person or thing Any one of the sandwiches on the menu would be fine.
backward/backwards	**backward:** American English. EIA prefers backward. Count backward from 10 to 1.	**backwards:** British English Count backwards from ten to one. (not preferred)
because/since	**because:** cause and effect; for that reason Because prices went up, demand went down.	**since:** from a certain time. Not a synonym for because Since 1980, demand has gone up.

Commonly misused words	Definition and example	Definition and example
because (of)/due to	**because (of)**: for that reason **Note**: Because is almost always the right choice.	**due to**: as a result of **Not correct**: Production went up due to more exploration. **OK**: The production increase was due to more exploration. **Better**: Production went up because of more exploration.
between/among	**between**: connecting or comparing two objects The driving distance between Baltimore and Philadelphia is surprisingly short. I had to choose between chocolate and vanilla.	**among**: in or into the midst of; connecting or comparing more than two objects Please speak freely. You're among friends. I had to choose among the four ice cream flavors.
biannual/biennial/semi-annual	**biannual/semiannual**: occurring every half year, meaning twice a year. **Note**: EIA preference is to say twice a year, which removes any possible confusion. We have a lease agreement requiring that payments be paid on a biannual basis in January and July. This poetry anthology is updated on a semiannual basis in June and December.	**biennial**: occurring every two years **Note**: EIA preference is to say every two years. Our group's next biennial conference will be in two years. This insect has a biennial lifecycle.
big/large	**big**: often countable (more colloquial/common) **Not preferred**: big price increase, biggest nuclear reactor	**large**: related to objects that are quantifiable **Note**: In general, EIA prefers *large*. Large price increase, largest nuclear reactor, largest decrease
brake/break	**brake**: a device for stopping or slowing motion The system captures excess energy when the driver uses the brake.	**break**: to separate into parts; to smash; a disruption The water in these tubes must be very pure or the tubes might break. New commercial building practices caused a break in the trend.
breakout/break-out	**breakout**: shown in parts or categories, as statistical data The breakout of petroleum imports showed levels by country. (not preferred)	**break-out**: adjective modifying table or meeting; smaller or separate item The break-out session discussed the issues.
canceled/cancelled	**canceled**: American spelling, preferred	**cancelled**: British spelling, not preferred

Commonly misused words	Definition and example	Definition and example
carrot/carat/caret/karat	**carrot**: a vegetable **carat**: unit of mass used to measure gemstones **caret**: ^ a wedge-shape editing mark **karat**: a unit of purity for gold	
compare to/compare with	**compare to**: to note similarities between things.	**compare with**: to discern both similarities and differences between things. EIA writing more often **compares with** something. Most definitions say that **with** can be used for both similarities and differences, so EIA writers cannot go wrong using **compared with**.
	Correct: Life can be **compared to** a roller coaster ride.	**Correct**: The U.S. Congress can be **compared with** the British Parliament.
complement/compliment	**complement**: to complete; something that completes	**compliment**: to praise; an expression of praise
	Pipelines complement tankers at key locations by relieving bottlenecks.	My boss complimented me for my good work.
	This Climate Wise Primer is a complement to EIA's Form 1605.	We take it as a compliment that journalists reuse *Today in Energy* graphs.
comprise/compose	**comprise**: to be made up of or consist of; the whole comprises the sum of its parts. Something is never comprised of something else. **Note**: These two words are not synonyms. *Is comprised of* is generally incorrect. Comprise does not mean include.	**composed of**: to make up; to form the substance of
	Correct: OPEC's membership comprises 12 countries. **Correct**: The United States comprises 50 states.	**Correct**: OPEC's membership is composed of 12 countries.
continental U.S./ contiguous U.S.	**continental**: on the continent, which includes the Lower 48 states and Alaska.	**contiguous**: sharing a common border; touching. This group would only include the Lower 48 states.
continuously/continually	**continuously**: uninterrupted or constant	**continually**: continued occurrence; one reoccurrence
	The video plays continuously.	We continually review and update our policies.
data/datum	**data**: a collection of pieces of factual information including statistics; the plural form of datum	**datum**: a single piece of factual information
	For written EIA products, the word data is plural.	Datum is technically correct, but not commonly used.
	Correct: The data are correct. **Incorrect**: The data is correct.	If you want to use a singular verb, say information or data series or dataset rather than data.

Comprise does not mean include. Something is never comprised of something else.

Commonly misused words	Definition and example	Definition and example
different from/different than	Similar meaning. EIA prefers different from. **Different from** is almost always the correct choice. **Correct**: My ideas are different from yours. **Less correct**: My ideas are different than yours.	
due to/because (of)	**due to:** something that is owed or expected; caused by **Note**: Wider use of **due to** is becoming more acceptable, although many uses are technically not correct. Use because of, as a result of, or caused by in most EIA writing. In general, use **due to** when you can replace it with **caused by**. **Correct:** The plant failure was due to unexpected fuel shortages. **Incorrect:** The plant failed due to unexpected fuel shortages. **Correct:** The increase in oil prices is due to the recent crisis. **Incorrect:** Oil prices have increased due to the recent crisis.	**because (of):** for that reason; caused by; as a result of **Note: Because of** is almost always the right choice. In general, use **because of** when you can replace it with **on account of** in your sentence. **Correct:** Oil prices increased because of the recent crisis. **Incorrect:** The increase in oil prices is due to the recent crisis.
email/e-mail	EIA uses email—one word, no hyphen. This form is a style decision. **Correct:** email **Incorrect:** e-mail, Email, E-mail	
ensure/insure/assure	**ensure**: to make certain We monitor network traffic to ensure site security. **assure**: to state with confidence; to declare earnestly The director assured the staff that the project budget was adequate.	**insure**: to protect against financial loss Indemnity clubs insure the tankers that transport petroleum imported into the United States.
everyday/every day	**everyday**: commonplace; normal These are my everyday shoes.	every day: each day; regularly; daily I go for a walk every day.
everyone/every one	**everyone**: every person, everybody, all the people Everyone is welcome to attend the meeting.	**every one**: each one of a number of people or things Every one of the chairs must be stacked in the corner.

Commonly misused words	Definition and example	Definition and example
expected/forecast/projected	**expected or forecast (to be)**: Estimates of what is expected or forecast to happen, given historical trends, recent data, and specific assumptions.	**projected (to be)**: Generally, projections by EIA are not statements of what will happen but of what might happen, given the assumptions and methodologies used for any particular scenario.
farther/further	**farther**: at or to a greater distance An average vehicle traveled farther in 2010 than in 2015.	**further**: moreover; to a greater extent In the United Kingdom, deregulation is further along than it is in other countries.
fewer/less	**fewer**: for items you can count **Correct**: There are fewer people at the meeting this week. **Incorrect**: There are less people at the meeting this week.	**less**: for items you can't count This recipe calls for less salt.
flammable/inflammable	These words are synonyms. Both mean 'easy to burn.' Best to avoid the word *inflammable*.	
forward/forwards/foreword	**forward**: American English (preferred) to go toward The child walked forward. **forwards**: British English (not preferred)	**foreword**: introduction to a book. Foreword is only a noun. I enjoyed reading the foreword to that book.
forecast/projected/expected	**forecast or expected (to be)**: Estimates of what is expected or forecast to happen, given historical trends, recent data, and specific assumptions.	**projected (to be)**: Generally, projections by EIA are not statements of what will happen but of what might happen, given the assumptions and methodologies used for any particular scenario.
forth/fourth	**forth**: forward in time, place, and order Despite setbacks, we are moving forth. (not preferred EIA style)	**fourth**: next after the third. A fourth, one fourth, and a quarter are all correct. The Surry nuclear plant is the fourth-largest facility in the region. I ate a fourth of the cake.
half/one half/a half/half of/half a	**half**: preferred **Preferred**: The glass was half full. I ate half an apple.	**one-half**: not preferred **a half**: not preferred
historic/historical	**historic**: famous; important in history George Washington is a historic figure.	**historical**: of, belonging to, or referring to history *Gone with the Wind* is a historical novel.
hone/home in	**hone**: to sharpen, make more effective The candidate wants to hone her argument. *Hone in* is used colloquially, but in writing the correct usage is *home in*.	**home in**: direct onto a point or target The IRS is homing in on tax fraud.

Commonly misused words	Definition and example	Definition and example
impact/effect	**impact**: an effect, used only as a noun Don't use impact as a verb. Use affected or influenced by. **Incorrect**: Prices impacted demand for gasoline. **Correct**: The weather affected (not impacted) the price of natural gas.	**effect**: a result; to bring about **Correct**: What was the effect of that legislation?
impacted/affected	**impacted**: packed or wedged in (like wisdom teeth); colloquially, affected or influenced. Don't use impacted as a verb. **Correct:** Britney's wisdom teeth were impacted. **Incorrect**: Oil production was impacted by the new technology.	**affected**: to influence or to change **Correct**: Oil production was affected by the new technology.
Internet/intranet	**Internet**: a global system of interconnected public and private computer networks The World Wide Web is just one service that uses the Internet. Note that *Internet* is capitalized.	**intranet**: a private computer network; an internal organizational website Use the intranet to find employee phone numbers. Note that *intranet* is not capitalized.
its/it's	**its**: belonging to it; *its* is the possessive form of *it*. EIA has consolidated its analysis of world oil markets into its latest report.	**it's**: it is; *it's* is a contraction **Correct**: It's cold outside today. (which means) It is cold outside today.
last/past	**last**: final **Incorrect**: Prices increased the last two months.	**past**: previous **Correct**: Prices increased the past two months.
later/latter	**later**: at some time after a given time I can meet with you later.	**latter**: of, relating to, or being the second of two groups or things or the last of several groups or things referred to I prefer the latter proposal.
lead/led	**lead**: (verb) to guide; to show the way Our country continues to lead the world in wind power growth. **lead**: (noun) a bluish-white, soft, heavy metal Lead was added to gasoline to improve engine performance.	**led**: past tense of the verb *lead* Improved technology led to deeper reservoir drilling and access to more resources.
loose/lose	**loose**: not tight The loose standards extend throughout the industry and allow for abuse.	**lose**: to give up; to misplace; to not win Both oil and coal lose market share to natural gas.

The past tense of lead is led. The noun *lead* (pronounced led) is a metal.

Commonly misused words	Definition and example	Definition and example
majority of/most of	**majority of**: only refers to a (countable) number of things or people. **Correct**: The majority of the people were Americans.	**most of**: when writing about a noncountable amount **Correct**: Most of (not the majority of) the harvest was saved.
maybe/may be	**maybe**: perhaps; possible Maybe I will be able to come to the meeting tomorrow.	**may be**: might be; could be I may be able to come to the meeting tomorrow.
more than/over/above	**more than**: of a greater quantity The price increased by more than (not over) 5%. There are more than (not over) 1,000 applicants for the position.	**over**: above (preferred) or in excess of The price of gasoline went above (not over) $4 per gallon.
none is/none are	**none** can be singular or plural. **none singular**: None can mean *not one* and be followed by a singular verb. It can also take a singular verb when followed by a mass noun. **singular**: None of the water is polluted.	**none plural**: sometimes none means *not any*, in which case the sentence can take a plural verb. **none plural**: None of those people are coming to the meeting.
online/on line/on-line	**online**: Become operational; ready for use; related to the Internet **Note**: EIA uses online as one word in all cases. **Correct**: When you're on the Internet, you're online. **Correct**: The nuclear power plant came online last year.	**on-line**: old usage, not EIA preferred style **on line**: not EIA preferred style
oral/verbal	**oral**: spoken words The lawyer presented oral arguments in the trial.	**verbal**: written and spoken words **ambiguous**: My partner and I had a verbal business agreement. **clear**: My partner and I had a written business agreement.
overtime/over time	**overtime**: extra work Bob had to work overtime this weekend.	**over time**: over some length of time The stockpile was built over time.
pair/pare	**pair**: two of a kind Each module has a pair of small turbines.	**pare**: to reduce; to peel We should pare down this extensive set of instructions to three simple steps.
palette/palate/pallet	**palette**: an array of colors **palate**: roof of the mouth	**pallet**: a wooden platform

Use online in all cases—one word, no hyphen.

Commonly misused words	Definition and example	Definition and example
personal/personnel	**personal**: private We do not collect personal information for any purpose.	**personnel**: employees The UN Secretary-General announced the withdrawal of all humanitarian personnel from Iraq.
precede/proceed	**precede**: to go before The 2012 *Style Guide* preceded the current one.	**proceed**: to continue Proceed down the hallway to the exit.
previous/prior	**previous**: coming before in time **EIA preferred:** our previous estimate; our previous report	**prior**: coming before in time **not preferred:** our prior estimate; our prior report
principal/principle	**principal**: foremost The principal use for this wax is in candles. **principal**: head of a school Mr. Jones was named principal of Maywood Elementary School. **principal**: a sum of money You paid back the principal of your loan.	**principle**: a rule; standard of good behavior The final decision was based on principle, not profit.
projected/ forecast/ expected	**projected (to be)**: Generally, projections by EIA are not statements of what will happen but of what might happen, given the assumptions and methodologies used for any particular scenario.	**forecast or expected (to be)**: Estimates of what is expected or forecast to happen, given historical trends, recent data, and specific assumptions.
proved/proven (reserves)	**proved reserves**: Term used in EIA reports referring to reserves of energy sources.	**proven reserves**: Not preferred EIA style. Same meaning as proved reserves. Term referring to reserves of energy sources.
quarter/fourth	**quarter**: one-fourth; one of four equal parts **Note**: both quarter and one-fourth are OK. **Correct**: I ate a quarter of the pie. **Not preferred:** I ate one-fourth of the pie.	**fourths**: one of four equal parts **Correct**: I ate a fourth of the pie.
regardless/irregardless	**regardless**: despite everything Regardless of the dangers, the hikers went on.	**irregardless**: not a word
seams/seems	**seams**: lines formed by sewing together fabric, or a fissure or crack across a surface Coal comes from deep seams in the earth.	**seems**: appears Gasoline demand in the Midwest seems to be growing faster.

Commonly misused words	Definition and example	Definition and example
sight/cite/site	**sight**: the act of seeing Customers were excited by the sight of the new model. **cite**: to quote Please cite all of your sources of information.	**site**: a location We don't know how much radium-bearing material is processed at the site.
stationary/stationery	**stationary**: not movable The monitor is stationary, so you'll have to move your chair if you cannot see it.	**stationery**: writing paper Our office will need to order more stationery with our logo on it. **Remember:** The last vowel in both paper and stationery is an *e*.
than/then	**than:** compared with Developed economies use oil much more intensively than the developing economies.	**then:** at that time; next in time The maps were developed using GIS software and then converted to PDF format.
that/which	**that:** a pronoun used to introduce essential information. *That* phrases have no preceding comma. *That* and *which* are not interchangeable. **Correct:** I like books that have good stories. **Incorrect:** I like books which have good stories.	**which:** a pronoun used to introduce nonessential information. Nearly always has a comma before it. **Correct:** This book has a good story, which is one reason I liked it. **Note:** Which and that are not interchangeable. *Which* is not a more elegant way to say *that*. If you can use the word *that*, use *that*.
their/there/they're	**their:** belonging to them We used their research in our book. **they're:** contraction of *they are* The refineries undergo maintenance when they're switching from heating oil to gasoline.	**there:** in that place Place your signed application over there.
thorough/through/threw/though	**thorough**: complete; painstaking Before hiring a new person, the company conducts a thorough background check of the applicant. **through**: from side to side or from end to end; completed The DOE list includes resources for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. **Preferred**: I am finished with this assignment. **Not preferred**: I am through with this assignment.	**threw**: tossed Because your son threw the ball, your insurance will not pay to replace the window. **though**: in spite of the fact that. Informal version of although. Not EIA preferred style. Use *although* in formal writing. **Preferred**: Although prices increased, demand remained flat. **Not preferred**: Though prices increased, demand remained flat.

Commonly misused words	Definition and example	Definition and example
toward/towards	**toward**: American spelling: EIA prefers toward She walked toward the exit.	**towards**: British spelling She walked towards the exit. (not preferred)
traveled/travelled	**traveled:** American spelling, EIA prefers traveled	**travelled:** British spelling
upon/on	**upon:** more formal term for on **Correct:** (less preferred): Based upon these assumptions.	**on:** less formal than upon **Correct:** (preferred): Based on these assumptions. **Note:** If the word *on* works in the sentence, use *on*. No need to use the more formal word *upon*.
upward/upwards	**upward:** American spelling. EIA prefers upward We revised the forecast upward.	**upwards:** British spelling We revised the forecast upwards. (not preferred)
variable/volatile	**variable:** likely to change; subject to variation. The weather in October is variable.	**volatile:** tendency to vary often or widely; likely to change suddenly; unpredictable **Note:** remember to note if it's high or low volatility. The stock market can be volatile.
verbal/oral	**verbal:** technically, both written and spoken	**oral:** spoken
weather/whether	**weather:** state of atmospheric conditions The city's website has a link to the local weather forecast.	**whether:** used to introduce alternative possibilities This figure indicates whether markets are shifting.
web/the web	**web:** an adjective meaning related to the World Wide Web; when used as an adjective, the word *web* is lowercased. I did web research to write my term paper.	**the web:** short for the World Wide Web, when used as a noun. I used the web to research my vacation.
website/web page	**website:** a collection of web pages. EIA uses *website* as a compound word. EIA's website contains lots of information. The word *webcast* is also a compound word.	**web page:** a single web page (with a single url). EIA uses *web page* as two words, where *web* is an adjective. I researched electricity information on EIA's web pages.

Commonly misused words	Definition and example	Definition and example
which/that	**which:** a pronoun used to introduce nonessential information. Nearly always has a comma before it This book, which is one of my favorites, is a historical novel. **Note:** *Which* and *that* are not interchangeable. *Which* is not a more elegant way to say *that*. If you can use the word *that*, use *that*.	**that:** a pronoun used to introduce essential information. Phrases with no preceding comma I like books that have good stories. **Incorrect:** This is the book which I bought yesterday. **Correct:** This is the book that I bought yesterday.
while/although	**while:** at the same time; sometimes used to mean although **Not preferred:** While production increased, prices stayed the same.	**although:** despite **Preferred:** Although production increased, prices stayed the same.
while/whilst	**while:** American spelling. EIA preferred spelling. While we were taking a test, the teacher left the room.	**whilst:** British spelling Whilst we were taking a test, the teacher left the room. (not preferred)

Him and me, he and I

The use of the words *me* and *I* is tricky and often confusing. One way to figure out if you're using them correctly is to break the original sentence into two shorter sentences. If your wording sounds correct when it's separated, you've gotten it right. If the wording sounds off or incorrect, you're using *me* and/or *I* incorrectly.

✓ **Correct:** Give it to him and me.
Separated into two shorter sentences: Give it to him. Give it to me.

Incorrect: Give it to he and I.
Separated into two shorter sentences: Give it to he. Give it to I.

This grammar question becomes more confusing when *he and I* are the subject of the sentence rather than the direct object.

✓ **Correct:** He and I went to the party.
Separated into two shorter sentences: He went to the party. I went to the party.
Incorrect: Him and me went to the party.
Separated into two shorter sentences: Him went to the party. Me went to the party.

Correct: The party was fun for Sam and me.
Separated into two shorter sentences: The party was fun for Sam. The party was fun for me.
Incorrect: The party was fun for Sam and I.
Separated into two shorter sentences: The party was fun for Sam. The party was fun for I.

Give it to I is not correct, so give it to he and I also is not correct.

Give it to him.
Give it to me.

So, give it to him and me is correct.

6

Capitalization

A certain amount of copy editing has very little to do with how great a writer you are.

Chicago Manual of Style
16th Edition, 2010

1. Capitalization (or not) for words and terms frequently used by EIA

A

the administration (the Obama administration)

the Arctic (when referring to the region; but arctic blast and arctic fox)

autumn

B

British thermal unit(s)—Btu is singular and plural. Not BTU (all caps is not correct)

C

Central time zone

Central America

central Asia

crude oil (but capitalize specific types or blends, for example, Brent, West Texas Intermediate)

Colorado state—or the state of Colorado

Census region, Census division

Congress

congressional committee or report

the continental United States

D

U.S. Department of Energy

DOE

E

earth (except uses like Earth Day, or in lists with other planets: Earth and Mars)

east (compass directions north, south, east, and west are not capitalized)

the East Coast

the East

Eastern Hemisphere

Eastern time zone

eastern part of the country

eastern United States—power comes from the northeastern part of the state. The weather is hotter in the southern half of the country.

EIA (not *the EIA* and not U.S. EIA)

email (not Email, E-mail, or e-mail) The terms email and website have evolved over the past decade and have become distinct words or terms that do not require hyphens or capitals.

email list (not Listserv, which is a protected trademark that EIA may not use)

ENERGY STAR®—all caps, with the register mark ® on first use

the equator

EU (European Union)—no periods

euro

ExxonMobil (one word; camel-case M)

F

fall

federal—lower case for general uses

federal government

federal law

federal report

Federal Register Notice

Federal Reserve Board

Federal Trade Commission

Forrestal Building

G

gigawatt (GW)

governor of a state

gross domestic product (GDP)

Gulf Coast (unless there is confusion, do not specify U.S. Gulf Coast)

Gulf of Mexico (GOM)

H

homepage (one word, lower case)

Hoover Dam; a dam

HR 2454 (for House of Representatives: no periods)

I

Imported Refiner Acquisition Cost

Internet (capital I)

Internet service provider (ISP)

investment tax credit (ITC)—lower case, spelled out

intranet (lower-case i)

K

kilowatthour (kWh)

L

Lower 48 states (capital L and no hyphen)
Make sure you include the word *states*, not just Lower 48

M

megabyte

megawatt (MW)

megawatthour (MWh)

Middle Atlantic

Middle East

the Midwest (Census region)

midwestern states

moon

Mountain time zone

N

the nation (lower case)

New England

New York Harbor; the harbor

the North

north

northeastern states

the Northeast (Census region)

the North Pole

North Sea

North Sea Brent

Northern California

Northern Hemisphere

northern New Mexico

Nymex futures

The word *web* is lower case in all uses.

O

- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
- Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (don't forget the *the*) (OPEC)

P

- the Pacific Northwest
- Pacific time zone
- PAD Districts (PADD)
- the Persian Gulf
- polar regions
- production tax credit (PTC) lower case when spelled out

R

- Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) upper case when spelled out. It's fuel (not fuels) standard.
- renewable portfolio standard (RPS) lower case when spelled out
- Rocky Mountain PADD
- Rocky Mountains

S

- seasons are lower case (spring, summer, winter, fall)—except when the seasons are part of a proper noun such as Summer Olympics or Spring Semester
- the South
- the Southeast
- the Southwest
- spring
- south (compass directions north, east, south and west are not capitalized)
- the South Pole
- Southern California
- southern France
- South Africa, but southern Africa
- South Korea
- Southern Hemisphere
- Silicon Valley
- states (lower case)
- state energy policy
- the South (Census region)
- the Southeast region
- southern states
- the South Pole
- the state of Colorado
- summer
- sun

T

- the territories
- the union (not preferred; use the nation or the United States)
- the West (Census region)
- the U.S. Energy Information Administration (but just EIA, not *the EIA*)

U

- U.S. (with periods, never US; spell out United States when used as a noun)
- U.K. (UK is not incorrect, just not EIA preferred style)
- url

Washington state—Washington State is a university

Washington, DC

the web (short for World Wide Web) (Chicago Manual of Style prefers web)

web page

webcast

webinar

website

Western Hemisphere time zones (Eastern standard time, Eastern time zone, Mountain time)

western United States

west

the West Coast

the West (but western part of the state)

winter

World Wide Web (if spelled out)

For more information on capitalizing names of regions, localities, and geographic features, see *The Chicago Manual of Style*: Popular Names and Terms or *GPO Style Manual*: Capitalization Rules.

2. Capitalizing and punctuating bulleted or numbered lists

- Capitalize the first word of each item in a bulleted or numbered list, whether the bullets are complete sentences, phrases, or words.
- Don't use any punctuation at the ends of the bulleted items unless they are complete sentences.

✓ **Correct punctuation (none):**

There are four energy-consuming sectors:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Transportation

Incorrect punctuation (don't end with semicolons):

There are four energy-consuming sectors:

- Residential;
- Commercial;
- Industrial;
- Transportation;

Incorrect punctuation (don't end with commas):

There are four energy-consuming sectors:

- Residential,
- Commercial,
- Industrial, and
- Transportation,

Incorrect punctuation (don't end with periods):

There are four energy-consuming sectors:

- Residential.
- Commercial.
- Industrial.
- Transportation.

In most cases, don't use any punctuation at the end of bullets. Never end bullets with commas or semicolons.

Capitalize the first letter of each bulleted item.

Capitalize the first word of each bullet item, whether or not the bullets are complete sentences, phrases, or words.

- Sometimes it is tempting to not capitalize the first word of every bullet. This style is not wrong; it's just not EIA style.

EIA capitalization style:
I have three pets:

- Bird
- Dog
- Cat

Alternative lower-case style (not wrong, but not EIA style):
I have three pets:

- bird
- dog
- cat

- Note: Use numbers only for items that have a sequence (step by step) or an intended order (top 10 oil-producing states). Otherwise, use bullets.

Correct: Steps to apply:

- Fill out the form
- Sign the form
- Turn in the form

Also correct (adding numbers indicates order)
Steps to apply:

1. Fill out the form
2. Sign the form
3. Turn in the form

Correct: There are three top coal-producing states:

- Wyoming
- West Virginia
- Kentucky

Also correct (adding numbers indicates rank)
The top three coal-producing states are as follows:

1. Wyoming
2. West Virginia
3. Kentucky

3. Capitalizing report titles and headings: title or sentence case

There are two types of capitalization for titles and headings:

Title case: Capitalize the first letter of each major word in the title and first-level headings. Do not capitalize but, for, or, to, as, a, etc. Second-level headings and below are sentence case.

Example of title case capitalization: Natural Gas Production Increased in 2015

Sentence case: Just like the capitalization in a sentence—only the first word of the title or heading is capitalized (and, of course, any names and proper nouns). Use sentence case for second-level headings and below. Also use sentence case for the titles of graphs and tables.

Example of sentence case capitalization: Natural gas production increased in 2015

All titles except the report title and first-level headings should be sentence case in EIA style. The EIA report template uses this rule for capitalization.

4. Using title case

- Capitalize the main words of table titles and most headings and subheadings, including the second word in a hyphenated term (e.g., PV Program Five-Year Plan, *Short-Term Energy Outlook*).

- Do not capitalize articles (i.e., *a, an,* and *the*) unless they begin the title or heading; conjunctions (e.g., *and, or, nor,* and *but*); or prepositions (e.g., *for, of,* and *to*) unless they contain four or more letters. When *to* is used in a title or heading, it is capitalized as an infinitive and lowercase as a preposition. Verbs are always capitalized, including *is* and *are*.

  ✓ **Correct title case:**
  Projected Summer Gasoline Prices Are Near Last Summer's Level
  Chavez's Opponents Accuse Him of Squandering Venezuela's Resources
  North American Electric Reliability Regions Map
  U.S. Petroleum Administration for Defense Districts (PADD) Map
  International Energy Data and Analysis

- Capitalize all first and last words in title-case titles and headings even if the last word is a preposition.

  ✓ **Correct**: The Signal Scientists Wait For

- Capitalize hyphenated words that would be capitalized if standing alone.

  ✓ **Correct**: *Short-Term Energy Outlook*
  Correct: Long-Term Forecast Shows Growth

- Always capitalize the word *to* when it precedes a verb, if using title case.

  ✓ **Correct**: Researchers To Discuss Recent Findings
  Correct: How To Subscribe to the Newsletter

- Do not capitalize the word *to* in other uses.

  ✓ **Correct**: Add International Data to Your Sample Set

Use sentence case capitalization for titles of graphs and tables.

5. Capitalizing governmental references

- Do not capitalize the words federal, state, nation, and government or the name of any government entities below the state level, unless it is part of a proper noun.

  ✓ **Correct**: Which state uses the most electricity?
  Correct: The renewable initiative is a federal program.
  Correct: How much oil does our nation import?

- Do not capitalize government entities below the state level, unless the entity name is part of the proper name.

  ✓ **Correct:** Both county and city governments levy gasoline taxes.
  Correct: I was born in Carson City, Nevada.
  Correct: Los Angeles County is in California.

- United States: Spell out United States when it's used as a noun. Use terms such as United States, country, or nation. Avoid using the term American, which can sometimes refer to more than just the United States.

  ✓ **Correct**: Grand Coulee Dam is the largest electric power facility in the country.
  Incorrect: Grand Coulee Dam is the largest electric power facility in America.

- Congress: Capitalize the full names and shortened names of governmental organizations. Congress is capitalized, but congressional is not capitalized.

  ✓ **Correct**: The U.S. Congress is considering amendments to energy legislation. The Congress did not pass the amendments.

  Correct: The congressional session resulted in no action.

- Remember to be consistent in capitalization of governmental references within each document.

6. Capitalizing acts, treaties, and government programs

- Capitalize formal or accepted titles of rules, pacts, plans, policies, treaties, acts, programs, and similar documents or agreements.

  ✓ **Correct**: The Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR) was promulgated by EPA in March 2005. This rule was published in the Federal Register.

- Do not capitalize incomplete or generic references to acts, treaties, and government programs.

  ✓ **Correct**: The treaty set international standards.

Spell out United States when it's used as a noun.

For more information on capitalizing governmental entities, see GPO Style Manual Chapter 3: Capitalization rules and Chapter 4: Capitalization examples.

7. Using capitals in EIA organization names and titles

Capitalize names of specific offices and teams. Do not capitalize organization names in generic, nonspecific references.

✓ **Correct**: Office of Communications
Correct: Petroleum Marketing Statistics Team

Correct: John Krohn, Content Operations Team Leader
Correct: Gina Pearson, Assistant Administrator, Office of Communications

Correct: Meet with your office director.
Correct: EIA has many team leaders.

8. Using bold for emphasis instead of capitals

Do not write in all capital letters for emphasis, which is interpreted as shouting at the reader. Use bold or italics instead of uppercase or underlining when you want to emphasize a word or phrase.

✓ **Correct: Important note:** We review databases annually.
Incorrect: IMPORTANT NOTE: We review databases annually.

Correct: That is why these technologies must **never** be abandoned.
Incorrect: That is why these technologies must NEVER be abandoned.

9. Capitalizing Internet-related words

Capitalization of Internet-related words is a style decision that has evolved over time. Use these capitalization styles for EIA writing.

homepage	web page (*web* is lowercased all the time)
Internet	
Internet service provider (ISP)	webcast
intranet	webinar
url	website
the web (short for World Wide Web)	World Wide Web

10. Capitalizing embedded hypertext links

- When the text in the embedded link is the title of a publication or other proper name, match the link capitalization to the capitalization of the publication's title.

  ✓ **Examples**:
  Electric Power Monthly is released each month.
  See What's New in the *Petroleum Supply Monthly* for details.

- When the text in the embedded link is not a title, use lower case.

  ✓ **Example**: Information on pipeline capacity covers all four regions of the United States.

- Do not capitalize embedded links that are not proper nouns or titles.

  ✓ **Example**: The updated information was released today.

11. Using capitals in company names

- Capitalize the same way the company does.

  ✓ **Example:** Use Twitter and Tweet

- Use camelcase (capital letters inside the name or word) only if it is the formal company name.

  ✓ **Examples:**
  iPod
  PayPal
  PowerPoint
  TiVo
  ExxonMobil (one word) but Exxon Mobil Corporation

- Avoid using all caps for company names and other names.

  ✓ **Examples:**
  Bentek, not BENTEK
  Nymex, not NYMEX
  Pepco, not PEPCO
  Energy Star (don't use the ® symbol)

Use bold or italics instead of uppercase or underlining when you want to emphasize a word or phrase.

7

Numbers

If a page number in the table of contents is wrong, the data in Table 4 is just as likely to be wrong.

Carol Fisher Saller,
The Subversive Copy Editor: Advice from Chicago, 2009

1. Writing out numbers or numerals

- Write out numbers from one through nine. Exceptions: When the numbers refer to percentages (2%), time of day (4:00 p.m.), or measurement (3 inches, 9 miles). Guidance on using numbers or words for measurements is tricky. EIA writes out numbers for the calendar (four weeks, eight days).

  ✓ **Correct**: The five renewable energy sources used most often are biomass, hydropower, geothermal, wind, and solar.

  Correct: We did eight experiments with two barrels of oil.

  Correct: The report is due in four months.

- Use numerals for numbers 10 and above.

  ✓ **Correct**: In this report, the U.S. Energy Information Administration presents 10 major energy trends.

  Correct: Nearly 30 million tons of trash were processed last year in waste-to-energy facilities.

- Use numerals for each number when two or more numbers appear in a sentence and one of them is 10 or larger.

  ✓ **Correct**: Last month, 8 of the 16 geothermal sites were evaluated.

  Incorrect: Last month, eight of the 16 geothermal sites were evaluated.

  Correct: At the meeting of 12 offices and 3 divisions, they all had the same ideas.

  Incorrect: At the meeting of the 12 offices and three divisions, they all had the same ideas.

- Write out any number that begins a sentence. Do not begin a sentence with a number or a year.

  ✓ **Examples**:

  Twenty-two people came to the meeting.

  Thirty-one municipalities have proposed commercial nuclear power plants.

  Fifteen years later, production at the mine had increased.

Write out numbers from one through nine.

Use numerals for numbers 10 and above.

- Write out ordinal numbers (a number that indicates rank) under 10; use numerals for ordinal numbers 10 and above.

  ✓ **Example**: China is the fifth-largest producer of oil.

  Example: As of January 2015, Louisiana ranked 15th in nuclear capacity.

  Example: China ranked 5th and India ranked 12th in global coal production. (Use numbers for both ordinal ranks if one number in the sentence is greater than 9.)

- The letters in ordinal numbers should not be superscripts. Write 20th, not 20th. This format is not the default in Microsoft Word—you have to undo the automatic superscript. This lowered *th* format is the default in html, so it will be formatted correctly in the final version posted on the website.
- Use numerals (not words) usually until 1 million.

✓ Preferred	Not preferred
3,000	3 thousand
680,000	680 thousand
3 million	3,000,000
15,500	15.5 thousand
$1.13	113 cents

- Consider a write-around if you have a sentence ending in a decimal number.

  ✓ **Correct, but confusing**: Average cupcake consumption was 1.1.
  Better: Guests ate an average of 1.1 cupcakes.

2. Writing out or using numerals for fractions

- Write out simple fractions and use hyphens.

  ✓ **Examples**:
  Coal typically fuels about nine-tenths of net electricity generation in Ohio.
  Three-fourths of the congressional members voted for the bill. (Three-fourths and three-quarters are both correct.)
  The law passed by a two-thirds majority.

- Use numerals for mixed fractions.

  ✓ **Example**: The 7½-inch pipeline crosses two states.

- Don't use th for fractions or dates.

  ✓ **Correct**: The tear was 1/64 of an inch.
  Incorrect: The tear was 1/64th of an inch.

  Correct: May 7
  Incorrect: May 7th

- Write out fractions that are followed by *a, of,* or *an*.

  ✓ **Example**: The cake recipe called for a quarter cup of milk.

- Use numerals in fractions that are followed by a unit of measure.

  ✓ **Correct**: The coal beds are at least 3¼ miles apart.
  Correct: The outage lasted for 1½ days.

3. Always use the % sign for percent

- Use the % sign in all EIA content.
- If you are updating a document that uses the word *percent*, be careful when using global search and replace, because the word percentage will become %age.
- No spaces between the numeral and the % sign.

  ✓ **Correct**: 5%
  Incorrect: 5 %

- No hyphen between the numeral and the % sign when the phrase is a modifier.

  ✓ **Correct**: The price shock resulted in a 75% increase at the pump.
  Incorrect: The price shock resulted in a 75%-increase at the pump.

- Express percentages in numerals.

  ✓ **Correct**: In 2015, the inflation rate rose by 3%.
  Correct: The oil price shocks result in a 25% rise in gas prices.

  Incorrect: During 2015, the inflation rate rose by three percent.

Use the % sign in all EIA writing.

4. Writing ranges of numbers and adjacent numbers

- When writing a range, state the units or % with both values. If a budget increase is written as $3-$4 million dollars, that might mean $3 to $4 million, or $3 million to $4 million. State the units with each number to eliminate ambiguity.

  ✓ **Correct**: Consumption rose 2%–4% across four regions. (repeat %. The en dash means *to*)

  Correct: Consumption rose 2% to 4% across four regions.

  Incorrect: Consumption rose 2–4% across four regions. (% sign isn't by both numbers)

  Incorrect: Consumption rose 2 to 4% across four regions. (% sign isn't by both numbers)

  Correct: The temperature ranged between 32°C–40°C.

- Adjacent numbers—using numbers for two different things in the same sentence.

  ✓ **Correct**: I drank four 2-liter bottles of Coke Zero.

  Correct: The utility built ten 5-kW reactors.

  Correct: The pipeline was built in fifteen 10-mile stretches.

  Correct: The total consists of 67 turbines each with a capacity of 1.5 MW. (not 67 1.5 MW turbines)

5. Writing negative numbers or minus signs

- When writing negative numbers, always use a hyphen (not an en dash) for the negative sign.

  ✓ **Correct**: The temperature was minus 4°F. (preferred)

  Correct: The temperature was -4°F.

  Incorrect: The temperature was negative 4°F.

- When writing about monetary decreases, put the minus sign before the $ sign.

  ✓ **Correct**: -$0.07

  Incorrect: $- 0.07

- When writing a calculation, spell out the word *minus* rather than using the minus sign.

  ✓ **Correct**: The total was 30 minus 27.

  Incorrect: The total was 30-27. (This style makes the total look like a range rather than a subtracted value.)

6. Using numerals with units of measure

✓ **Correct**: I drove 8 miles.

Correct: The bottle contained 4 liters.

- Calendar references are not units of measure, so spell out the numbers.

  ✓ **Correct**: The meeting is in three days.

  Correct: I will go on vacation in six months.

7. Using numbers with currency

- Write out the word *cents* or use the ¢ symbol when writing about cents only (when not writing about dollars). Both options are OK. Be consistent within your document.

  ✓ **Examples**: The price of gasoline went up 15 cents per gallon last week.
  The price of gasoline went up 15¢ per gallon last week.

- Sometimes when writing about prices (especially gasoline prices), it makes sense to state the actual prices in dollars per gallon and the price changes in cents per gallon. Again, be consistent in usage and style within a document. Check with your supervisor if you are uncertain about units.

  ✓ **Correct**: The U.S. retail price of gasoline decreased $0.15 per gallon last week to $3.82 per gallon, $0.34 per gallon higher than last year at this time.

  Correct: The U.S. retail price of gasoline decreased 15 cents (or 15¢) per gallon last week to $3.82 per gallon, 34 cents (or 34¢) per gallon higher than last year at this time.

- If numerals are used for dollars, use the dollar sign ($).

  ✓ **Correct**: The average coal-fired power plant costs $850 million to build.

  Incorrect: The average coal-fired power plant costs 850 million dollars to build.
  Incorrect: The average coal-fired power plant costs $850 million dollars to build.

- If adjusting for inflation, use 2012 dollars or 2012$, not $2012.

  ✓ **Correct**: The price of gasoline was adjusted for inflation using 2012$.
  Correct: The price of gasoline was adjusted for inflation using 2012 dollars.

- Numbers or prices in the same sentence should be shown to the same significance.

  ✓ **Correct**: The cost of electricity rose from 6.7 cents per kWh to 7.0 cents per kWh.

  Incorrect: The cost of electricity rose from 6.7 cents per kWh to 7 cents per kWh.

- When writing about international topics, note whether the dollar values are in U.S. dollars. Spell out the unit the first time used; then use the abbreviation.

  ✓ **Correct**: US $5 million

  Incorrect: USD $5 million
  Incorrect: $US 5 million
  Incorrect: $U.S. 5 million

  ✓ **Correct**: Euro (EUR) 5 million
  Correct: Australian Dollar (AUD) 5 million
  Correct: Canadian Dollar (CAD) 5 million
  Correct: Japanese Yen (JPY) 5 million

8. Mixing numerals and written-out numbers for large numbers

- To make large numbers (beginning with million) easier to read, mix numerals and written-out units.

  ✓ **Correct**: In December 2007, two countries exported more than 1.5 million barrels per day to the United States.

  Correct: Libya has eight oil fields with reserves of 10 billion barrels or more each, and four others with reserves of 500 million to 10 billion barrels.

  Correct: The population is 3 billion people.

9. Writing out or using numerals for dates and years

- Use numerals to refer to a span of years. Omit the first two digits of the second number, if the two years are in the same century. This guidance applies to text, headings, graph titles, and labels.

  ✓ **Correct:**
  The model year 2005-07 standards
  2000-2040 (2000 is the end of the 20th century, so all four digits are used.)
  FY 2000–FY 2016
  1998–2016
  January 2010–December 2015

Write 1980s, not 1980's.

Write March 12, not March 12th.

Write 2015–17, not 2015–2017

- Use all four digits when referencing a specific year; don't omit the first two digits.

  ✓ **Correct**: New investment in clean energy sources increased in 2008.
  Incorrect: New investment in clean energy sources increased in '08.

- Write out the number associated with a century if the number is below 10. Use lower case.

  ✓ **Correct**: Wood fueled the country from its earliest years through the middle of the 19th century.
  Correct: Chinese merchants and traders arrived and settled in the ninth century.

- Write out decades in lowercase, or use numerals. If you use numerals, do not use the apostrophe between the numerals and the s.

  ✓ **Correct**: 1990s
  Incorrect: 1990's

- Don't use superscript for dates.

  ✓ **Correct**: January 3
  Incorrect: January 3rd

- Don't begin a sentence with a year in numerals.

  ✓ **Correct**: Nineteen ninety eight was a good year for business.
  Correct: The year 1998 was a good year for business.
  Incorrect: 1998 was a good year for business.

10. Writing out or using numerals for time

- Use numerals for exact times that are followed by a.m. or p.m.

  ✓ **Correct**: Several thousand customers were affected by yesterday's 5:15 a.m. power outage.

- Write out the words *noon* and *midnight* and combine with numerals. Don't use 12:00 p.m. or 12:00 a.m. or 12:00.

  ✓ **Correct**: The market will run from 9:00 a.m. through 12:00 noon.
  Correct: Ending stocks are held in storage as of 12:00 midnight.

- Write out the numbers when combined with the word *o'clock*.

  ✓ **Correct**: Every day, Marie Curie read until three o'clock in the morning.

11. Using commas in numerals of four digits or more

Use commas between groups of three digits, starting from the right, to show thousands, millions, etc., in writing and on graphs.

✓ **Correct**: A short ton is a unit of weight equal to 2,000 pounds.
Correct: PV cells and module shipments increased from 181,116 kilowatthours to 226,916 kilowatthours.

12. Using decimals and significant digits

- Use a zero before a decimal point if there is no value in the first place to the left of the decimal.

  ✓ **Correct**: The price fell by 0.2%.
  Incorrect: The price fell by .2%.

- Use the same level of significant digits in a comparison or section.

  ✓ **Consistent**: Consumption rose by 2.0% in February and by 3.2% in March.
  Inconsistent: Consumption rose by 2% in February and by 3.2% in March.

- Round to a whole number unless it is important to show the exact number.

  ✓ **Rounded**: Crude oil imports in February 2015 were about 15 million barrels per day.
  More significance: Crude oil imports in February 2015 were 15.013 million barrels per day.

- Omit zeros after a decimal point unless they indicate exact measurement and the audience needs to know the level of significance. Use whole numbers to show percent change if possible. Remember that 3% means something different than 3.0%.

  ✓ **Correct**: OPEC crude oil production will average about 32.2 million b/d during the first quarter of 2015, down from 33.0 million b/d last year.
  Correct: Prices rose about 3% between March and April.

- The number of significant digits might vary within a document. You don't have to show the same number of digits for each figure you write within a document. Try to be consistent within sentences and paragraphs when you refer to the same units.

For more information on numbers, see *The Chicago Manual of Style*, Chapter 9: Numbers and *GPO Style Manual*, Chapter 12: Numerals.

13. Formatting phone numbers

Show the area code, and use hyphens between number groups. Do not use parentheses or periods around or between numbers.

✓ **Technical inquiries**
Phone: 202-586-8959

14. Writing about changes in values

- Be careful when writing that a value increased four-fold. If something goes from 1 to 4, that's a four-fold increase but only a 300% increase. These calculations are not easy for readers to understand.

  ✓ **Correct, more clear**: Consumption increased from 1 unit to 4 units, or 300%, between 2015 and 2016.

  Correct, possibly confusing: Consumption increased four-fold between 2015 and 2016.

- Distinguish between percent change and percentage point change.

  ✓ **Correct**: Oil share dropped from 50% to 48%, a decline of 2 percentage points.

- Restating a change: If you state a change in physical units and then restate the same change as a percentage, you must use a comma or commas to show you are restating the same change.

  ✓ **Correct**: Production fell by 6 million b/d, or 10%, in 2014.

  Incorrect: Production fell by 6 million b/d or 10%. (Omitting the comma means it fell by one value **or** the other. The commas signal that it fell by both values.)

  Correct: Oil prices rose from $80 per barrel to $100 per barrel, or 25%, between 2007 and 2008.

  Correct: Oil prices rose from $80 per barrel to $100 per barrel (25%) between 2007 and 2008.

  Incorrect: Oil prices rose from $80 per barrel to $100 per barrel or 25% between 2007 and 2008.

Writers make this mistake when they state the change in units and then restate the change as a percentage. It's not that the item changed by this amount **or** this other amount. Rather, it's that the item changed by this amount, and restated, it changed by this other amount.

If you state a change in physical units and then restate the same change as a percentage, you must use a comma or commas to show you are restating the same change. Production increased by 1.2 million barrels per day, or 5%, in 2015.

15. Using the correct verb when writing about numbers

A number is singular, but what about *a number of*? *A number* takes a plural verb, and *the number* takes a singular verb.

✓ **Correct**: A huge number of people are going to the show.
Correct: A small number of children are waiting for the bus.

Incorrect: A number of them is going.

Correct: The number 15 is what we are aiming for.
Correct: I thought the number 50 was close to the right answer.

16. Writing about numbers (also applies to writing in general)

Be careful with more than/less than, over/under, and fewer/less. *More than* and *less than* refer to a number or an amount. *Over* and *under* refer to positions or places. *Fewer* is used with countable objects (e.g., apples, seats), while *less* is used for noncountable objects (e.g., sand, salt).

Preferred	Not preferred
U.S. **reliance on** imports	U.S. **dependence on** imports
natural gas	**gas** (ambiguous–could be gasoline)
net imports of gasoline	gasoline net imports
electricity demand, electricity generation	**electric** demand, electric generation
transportation **fuel use**	transportation **energy demand**
about 7 million barrels	**around** or **approximately 7** million barrels
were **the lowest** since…	were **at the lowest levels** since…
use of coal	**usage** of coal
5 million tons	**a total of** 5 million tons
set a record	**set a new record, all-time record high**
more than $5 per gallon	**over** $5 per gallon
The class has **more than** 50 students.	The class has **over** 50 students.
Fewer than 10 kids came to the party.	**Under** 10 kids came to the party.
for **more than** two decades	for **over** two decades
more than 22%	**over** 22%
difference between	**differential** between
There are **fewer** rigs operating now.	There are **less** rigs operating now.

17. Typing scientific notations and footnotes

EIA publications often contain footnotes and scientific notations that normally appear as superscript numbers. Use the following steps to make numbered characters appear as subscript or superscript where necessary.

In Microsoft Word:

1. Type out the text that includes the character that you want to be in subscript (or superscript).
2. Highlight the character (or number) to be subscripted.
3. Click on the Home tab.
4. Locate the Font box and look for this icon. 
5. Check the Subscript icon.
6. The shortcut is *ctrl+*. Hold both keys together while the character you want to be in subscript is highlighted.

EIA style prefers no subscripts when possible (CO2, for example, with an inline 2) so the html spacing of the lines remains consistent. CO_2 is OK for technical reports. Be consistent within your document.

18. Writing mathematical equations

A mathematical equation is either a sentence or a clause within a sentence. Mathematical symbols, however, are not plain English. Because sentences containing equations often include mathematical details, they may be longer and more complex than plain English sentences, and they may be formatted differently. Sentences with equations follow the same grammar, punctuation, and capitalization rules as sentences and clauses written in words.

Variable definitions may appear either before or after an equation. Each variable definition is itself an equation and should be punctuated either as a sentence or as an independent clause. Ending commas or semicolons are both correct.

✓ **Correct**: Let $w_{j,t,l}$ be the weight of component model j, based on historical data up to and including year t, in the calculation of l-step-ahead projections, where $j = 1, \ldots, k$ and $l \geq 2$. For $j = 1,2, \ldots, k-1$, let

$$\eta_{j,l,t} = \log\left(\frac{w_{j,t,l}}{w_{k,t,l}}\right).$$

The inverse transforms are defined by

$$w_{j,t,l} = \frac{e^{\eta_{j,t,l}}}{1 + \sum_{j'=1}^{k-1} e^{\eta_{j',t,l}}}.$$

✓ **Correct**: The static regression model for the Mont Belvieu ethane price is

$$y_t = \beta_1 x_{1,t} + \beta_2 x_{2,t} + \beta_3 x_{3,t} + \varepsilon_t,$$

where

y_t = annual average Mont Belvieu ethane price (cents per gallon in 2011 dollars) in year t;

$x_{1,t}$ = ethane production (million barrels per day) in year t;

$x_{2,t}$ = total chemical demand (value of domestic shipments, in billions of 2005 dollars) in year t;

$x_{3,t}$ = annual average West Texas Intermediate crude oil price (2011 dollars per barrel) in year t; and

ε_t = a normally distributed random error term.

Incorrect: The static regression model for the Mont Belvieu ethane price is:

$$y_t = \beta_1 x_{1,t} + \beta_2 x_{2,t} + \beta_3 x_{3,t} + \varepsilon_t$$

Where:

y_t = annual average Mont Belvieu ethane price (cents per gallon in 2011 dollars) in year t

$x_{1,t}$ = ethane production (million barrels per day) in year t

$x_{2,t}$ = total chemical demand (value of domestic shipments, in billions of 2005 dollars) in year t

$x_{3,t}$ = annual average West Texas Intermediate crude oil price (2011 dollars per barrel) in year t

ε_t = a normally distributed random error term

Sometimes a large number of variable definitions (e.g., definitions for all variable names used in a document) are compiled into a data dictionary, which is formatted as a list or a table. In these cases, the style rules for lists or tables apply.

When typing mathematical expressions, use a font in which every character is unique. Readers often cannot use the context to distinguish between characters.

Using fonts in which letters or numbers are indistinguishable (e.g., l and I) can lead to ambiguities. Use the Microsoft Word equation editor (Insert Tab, Equation Dropdown Menu) to guarantee clarity.

Commas

Let's eat Grandma.
Let's eat, Grandma.

I like cooking my family and my pets.
I like cooking, my family, and my pets.

Commas save lives.

1. Using commas with items listed in sentences—EIA always uses the serial comma

- Use commas to separate three or more items in a list. Don't forget the comma between the last two items. This comma is often called the serial comma (or the Oxford comma) and is an EIA style choice.

  ✓ **Correct**: The pump price reflects the costs of refiners, marketers, distributors, and retail gas station owners.

  Correct: The American flag is red, white, and blue.

- Sometimes the serial comma is imperative for clarity. Adding one comma in the second sentence below adds two people to the meaning.

  ✓ **Example**: Two girls, Christine and Michelle, went home. (two people)

  Example: Two girls, Christine, and Michelle went home. (four people)

- If the last item in the list has more than one part, use this punctuation. The serial comma is after *french fries*, not after *chocolate*.

  ✓ **Correct**: For lunch I ate steak, french fries, and a chocolate and vanilla cake.

- Here's a classic example of the reason to use a serial comma.

  Ambiguous meaning: I would like to thank my parents, Albert Einstein and Mother Theresa. (Who *are* my parents? Without the serial comma after Einstein, my parents appear to be those two famous people.)

EIA always uses the serial comma.

2. Using commas with introductory phrases

- Use a comma after introductory words, phrases, or clauses.

  ✓ **Example**: After drafting the regulations, the agency called for comments.

- Using a comma after a short introductory phrase is often optional, but an introductory phrase of four words or more should be followed by a comma to make the sentence easier to read.

  ✓ **Correct (but optional) commas**

  Example: In addition, federal taxes are added to the price of gasoline.

  Example: In 2015, EIA published an updated *Writing Style Guide*.

  Example: Of course, we approved the report.

- Long introductory phrases require an introductory comma.

  ✓ **Example**: When the Navy destroyers engaged North Vietnamese torpedo boats in August 1964, the United States officially entered the Vietnam War.

- One way to avoid this comma-use dilemma is to change the order of the components of the sentence, so no comma is needed. It depends on what you are trying to emphasize in the sentence.

  ✓ **Example**: The United States officially entered the Vietnam War when the Navy destroyers engaged North Vietnamese torpedo boats in battle in August 1964.

- Don't use a comma after an introductory phrase that is followed by a verb.

  ✓ **Example**: Issuing the regulations begins the review process.

3. Using commas with which and that phrases

The words *which* and *that* are not interchangeable. You use the word *which* in cases where the text that follows elaborates on the first part of the sentence. You use the word *that* in cases where the sentence doesn't need a comma to break up the two thoughts in the sentence.

- Use a comma before a clause that begins with *which*.
- Do not use a comma before *that*.

  ✓ **Example**: EIA's conference chairs, which are old, will be replaced.
  (All of EIA's conference chairs will be replaced because they all happen to be old.)

  Example: EIA's conference chairs that are old will be replaced.
  (Only EIA's old conference chairs will be replaced, but the new ones will not be replaced.)

Use a comma before a clause that begins with the word *which*.

For more information on using *which* and *that*, see: Chapter 5 Commonly Misused Words

- Use commas to set off supplemental or parenthetical information.
- Do not use commas if the phrase or clause restricts the meaning such that, if you deleted the phrase or clause, the sentence would be unclear.

  ✓ **Correct**: The amendments, adopted in 1960, changed enforcement procedures.

  The commas setting off *adopted in 1960* signify that the date of adoption informs, but does not restrict, which amendments are being discussed.

  ✓ **Example**: The amendments adopted in 1960 changed enforcement procedures.

  Without commas, the sentence above indicates that the amendments that were adopted in 1960 set forth the procedures. The phrase restricts which amendments are being discussed.

4. Using a comma to separate a name from a title

Don't forget the second comma. The title or other additional information could also be written in parentheses or with em dashes.

✓ **Correct**: John Smith, human resources director, issued the regulations.
Correct: John Smith (human resource director) issued the regulations.
Correct: John Smith—human resource director—issued the regulations.

5. Using commas with conjunctions and with two complete sentences

Use a comma when two complete sentences (also called independent clauses) are separated by a conjunction, such as *and, but,* and *or*.

Complete sentence, *but* complete sentence.
Complete sentence, *while* complete sentence.
Complete sentence, *and* complete sentence.

✓ **Two sentences separated by a comma**

Correct: I would like to attend the conference, but I can't find registration information.
Correct: Paul pumped the gas, and Mary got a soda.
Correct: I was hungry, so I went to the store.

One sentence with no comma

Correct: Paul pumped the gas and got a soda.
Incorrect: Paul pumped the gas, and got a soda.

Correct: I was hungry and went for dinner.
Incorrect: I was hungry, and went for dinner.

Either put the thoughts in two separate sentences, or, if you put them together, use a comma between the two complete sentences.

6. Using commas in dates

- Do not use a comma to separate the month from the year.

  Incorrect: October, 2012
  Incorrect: Oct. 2012
  Incorrect: October of 2012

- Use a comma to separate the date from the year but not the month from the year.

  ✓ **Correct**: October 4, 2012
  Correct: October 2012

Use a comma when two complete sentences are separated by a conjunction.

7. Commas after e.g. and i.e.

Always put a comma after e.g. and i.e. Do not italicize e.g. or i.e. EIA preferred style is to say *for example* or *that is* rather than to use these abbreviations.

✓ **Preferred**: I like ethnic food (for example, Thai, Mexican, and Indian).
Correct: I like ethnic food (e.g., Thai, Mexican, and Indian).

Preferred: The year has four seasons, that is, winter, spring, summer, and fall.
Preferred: The year has four seasons—winter, spring, summer, and fall.
Correct: The year has four seasons, i.e., winter, spring, summer, and fall.

8. Using commas with however

✓ **Correct**: However hard I tried, I couldn't stop eating chocolate. (no comma after however)

Correct: However, I didn't gain any weight. (comma) (beginning a sentence with *however* is not recommended)

9. Using commas with too

Either way is correct. Some style books say the comma puts a little more emphasis on the word too.

✓ **Correct**: I like it too.

Correct: I like it, too.

Always put a comma after e.g. and i.e.

10. Using commas when restating a numerical change

Writers make this mistake when they state the change in units and then restate the change as a percentage. It's not that the item changed by this amount or by this other amount. Rather, it's that the item changed by this amount, or restated, it changed by this other amount. The commas setting off the restatement are critical.

✓ **Correct**: Oil prices rose from $80 per barrel to $100 per barrel, or 25%, between 2007 and 2008.

Incorrect: Oil prices rose from $80 per barrel to $100 per barrel or 25% between 2007 and 2008.

11. Using commas with large numbers

Use commas to show thousands in writing and on graph axes. Some graphing packages drop the comma, just using 1000, 1200, 1400. This format is not EIA style.

✓ **Correct**: 1,200
Incorrect: 1200
International: 1 200

9

Hyphens and Dashes

Why we need hyphens: Because a small-state senator is not the same as a small state senator.

Grammar Monkeys blog and other online sources

1. Hyphen (-), En dash (–), and Em dash (—)

The two types of dashes and the hyphen have different uses and are *not* interchangeable. Simply put, hyphens bring words together, en dashes show a span or relationship, and em dashes set words apart.

✓ **Example with all three:** The three-year-old nuclear reactor—located at Crystal Lake—will be closed 3–5 weeks for a safety evaluation.

Em dash and en dash are strange names for dashes, but they come from the historical widths of the typeset capital letters M and N. You can remember an em dash is longer than an en dash because a capital M is wider than a capital N.

The rules for using hyphens in compound words are somewhat flexible. Compound words frequently have a *hyphen stage* when they are newly combined, then the hyphen disappears as the compound is commonly used and becomes one word. For example, *on line* became *on-line* and is now *online*.

- **Hyphen** (-) connects words for clarity. It is the shortest of the three dash lines.

  ✓ **Correct**: short-term forecasts, combined-cycle plant, shut-in capacity

- **En dash** (–) shows a range from (something) to (something else), usually numbers or dates. You should be able to substitute the word *to* for an en dash. An en dash is longer than a hyphen but shorter than an em dash.

  ✓ **Correct**: The party is from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
  Correct: The party runs 3:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.
  Correct: Consumption rose 2%–4%
  Correct: Consumption rose between 2% and 4%.

  Incorrect: The party is 3:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m.
  Incorrect: Production decreased from 1997-2007.
  Incorrect: Electricity demand ranged between 1-3 MWh.

The two types of dashes and the hyphen have different uses and are not interchangeable.

- **Em dash** (—) is twice as wide as a hyphen and serves the same purpose as commas or parentheses, with a phrase set between them. Em dashes are often used in pairs. Use an em dash to indicate a sudden break or abrupt change in thought, or to emphasize an idea. Also consider using em dashes rather than parentheses to set off examples or specific items.

  ✓ **Correct**: Consumption of liquid fuels is projected to decline in 2016—a sharp reversal from previous projections.

  Correct: Most—but not all—of the attendees were from EIA.
  Incorrect spacing: Most — but not all — of the attendees were from EIA.

  Correct: Three states (California, Texas, and New York) have high electricity prices.
  Correct: Three states—California, Texas, and New York—have high electricity prices.

- EIA style does not use spaces between hyphens and dashes and the surrounding text.

  ✓ **Correct spacing**: I like cookies and—dare I say—cake.
  Incorrect spacing: I like cookies and — dare I say — cake.

Typing an en dash: There is no computer key for typing an en dash. You can insert it as a symbol, or, in Microsoft Word you can press Ctrl-Minus (the minus key is above and to the right of the 9 key on the number pad of a standard keyboard). Don't use spaces between words and an en dash.

Typing an em dash: There is no computer key for typing an em dash. You can insert it as a symbol, or, in Microsoft Word you can press Ctrl-Alt-Minus (the minus key is above and to the right of the 9 key on the number pad of a standard keyboard). In Microsoft Word you also can type two hyphens after a word, and then leave no space between the second hyphen and the next word. Microsoft Word will automatically convert the two hyphens to an em dash when you continue typing. Don't use spaces between words and an em dash.

Never use a hyphen in place of a dash. When people say *use a dash*, they almost always mean an em dash.

2. Hyphenating compound words

- Use a hyphen between words when they are combined to modify the word that follows.

  ✓ **Examples**:

  near-term contract
  agreed-upon standards
  long-term forecast
  combined-cycle plant
  five-year period
  high-level discussion
  high-volume wells
  second-largest producer
  fifth-largest region

- Don't use a hyphen in compound words when the meaning is clear without the hyphen and the hyphen will not aid readability.

  ✓ **Examples**:

  bituminous coal industry
  child welfare plan
  civil rights case
  per capita

- Proper noun compounds: with hyphens.

  ✓ **Examples**:

  Spanish-American pride
  Winston-Salem festival
  African-American program
  Franco-Prussian War

- Dangling hyphens: when two or more hyphenated compounds have a common element and this element is omitted in all but the last term.

  ✓ **Examples**:

  coal- and natural gas-fired generation (not natural-gas-fired generation)
  highly service- and technology-oriented business
  pro- and anti-competitive practices
  long- and short-term forecasts
  mid- and late-2000s

- Two modifiers before a noun with an adverb that ends in "-ly.": no hyphen, because ambiguity is unlikely.

  ✓ **Examples**:
  rapidly growing economy
  frequently missed deadlines
  heavily skewed results
  competitively priced fuel

- Compound that includes a non-English phrase: no hyphen.

  ✓ **Examples**:
  bona fide transaction
  ex officio member
  per capita consumption

- Different hyphenation using the same words.

  ✓ I walked the much-loved dog.
  The dog was much loved.

  We use a low-cost fuel.
  That fuel is low cost.

  It's a day-to-day task.
  I take life day to day.

  I bought a new air-conditioning unit.
  I am chilled by the air conditioning.

- The terms *end use* and *end-use* are often used in EIA writing. A hyphen is required when end-use is used as an adjective but not when it's used as a noun.

  ✓ **Correct**: Residential is one of the end-use sectors.
  Incorrect: Residential is one of the end use sectors.

  ✓ **Correct**: The end uses of electricity include powering lights and providing air conditioning.
  Incorrect: The end-uses of electricity include powering lights and providing air conditioning.

3. Using a hyphen to avoid mispronunciation or ambiguity in context

In some cases, you should use a hyphen to prevent mispronunciation or to avoid ambiguity of a word.

Write:	To avoid confusion with:
pre-position	preposition
re-creation	recreation
re-sorting	resorting
un-ionized	unionized
re-press	repress
re-treat	retreat
trans-shipment	transshipment

- Sometimes a hyphen is needed to prevent ambiguity in a sentence.

  Clear: The scientist tested a new defect-causing gas.
  Not clear: The scientist tested a new defect causing gas.
  The hyphen makes it clear the gas is causing defects.

  Clear: The silver-jewelry cart has nice gifts.
  Not clear: The silver jewelry cart has nice gifts.
  The hyphen makes it clear the jewelry is silver, not the cart.

4. Using hyphens with numbers

- Use a hyphen when the number is a descriptor and a modifier.

  Examples:
  24-inch ruler
  10-minute delay
  275-page book
  3-to-1 ratio
  18-year-old power plant
  over a 12-month period
  five-year plan
  three-week period

- Use a hyphen between the elements of a fraction.

  Correct: one-thousandth
  Correct: two-thirds
  Correct: three-fourths of an inch

- Do not use a hyphen to indicate a range. Use an en dash.

  ✓ **Correct**: between 25 inches and 30 inches
  Correct: 25–30 inches
  Incorrect: 25-30 inches (hyphen isn't correct)

- Do not use a hyphen to mean *minus* in text. The hyphen below looks like a dash, not a subtraction sign.

  ✓ **Correct**: Imports minus exports.
  Incorrect: Imports-exports.

5. Using hyphens with civil and military titles

- Do not use a hyphen with a civil or military title denoting a single office, but do use a hyphen for a double title.

  ✓ **Examples of single title: no hyphen**
  major general
  former president Clinton

  Examples of double title:
  secretary-treasurer
  treasurer-manager

- Use a hyphen with the adjectives elect and designate.

  ✓ **Example**:
  President-elect
  Secretary of Housing and Urban Development-designate
  ambassador-designate

6. Big list of commonly hyphenated and nonhyphenated words and phrases

The Chicago Manual of Style says probably the most common spelling questions for writers and editors concern compound terms. Often it's difficult to decide which form to use: spell the term as two words (in the long term, where long term is a noun); hyphenate it (long-term forecast, where long-term is an adjective); or close up the two words to make one word (no hyphen and no space, as in online and website).

Prefixes can be troublesome, *The Chicago Manual of Style* says. Some observations:

- Compounds formed with prefixes (pre, re, non, ex, anti, bi, co, mid, semi) are normally closed, with some exceptions.
- A hyphen is used with the prefixes listed above if the second part of the word begins with a capital letter: non-American, non-OPEC, sub-Saharan, pro-United States, ex-Marine.
- With frequent use, open or hyphenated compounds tend to become closed (e-mail to email, on-line to online).

For more information on hyphens, see *The GPO Style Manual*, Chapter 6: Compounding Rules and Chapter 7: Compounding Examples.

7. Hyphen guidelines

A
- aboveground utility
- above-target supply
- agencywide
- agreed-upon standards
- air conditioning
  air-conditioning unit
- around-the-clock basis

B
- baseload
- belowground lines
- bidirectional
- breakout (not break-out)
- Brent-like crude

C
- cap-and-trade legislation
- coalbed (methane)
- coal-exporting infrastructure
- coal-fired generation
- combined-cycle unit
- combined-heat-and-power facility
- cooling degree days
- coproducer
- copyeditor
- cost-of-living increase
- coworker

D
- database
- datasets
- day-ahead prices
- day-ahead schedule
- day-to-day tasks
- debottlenecking
- decision makers
- decommission
- deepwater play
- degree days
- drawdown of inventory
  draw down stocks
- drought-stricken area
- dual-fired plant

E
- electrically powered furnace
- email (not e-mail)
- end use
  end-use consumption
  end-use sector
- energy-consuming state
- energy-related legislation
- English-speaking nation

F
- feedstocks
- first-half 2015
  first half of 2015
- flat-tax shortfall
- freeze-offs
- full-power days

G
- government-owned stocks

H
- heating degree days
- higher-cost mines
- high-octane fuel
- high-speed line
- high-value asset
- homepage

I
- in depth
  in-depth analysis
- in-state
- inter-island travel
- intraregional

K
- kilowatthour

L
- land-use restrictions
- large scale
  large-scale project
- late-winter weather
- lead-free paint
- lifecycle
- lightbulb
- light-year
- line-item veto
- long term
  long-term contract
  long-term forecast
- low-cost housing
- low-demand hours
- Lower 48 states
- lower-cost coal
- lower-than-usual demand
- low-sulfur diesel
- lump-sum payment
- market-based pricing

M

megabytes
mid-1990s
midday
mid summer
mid-summer weather
mid-June
midcentury
midcontinent
midterm
midweek
multiple-purpose uses
multistage
multiyear

N

nationwide
natural gas-fired generation
near term
near-term contract
newly discovered resources
nonassociated
nonattainment
noncovered sectors
nonenergy
nonessential
nonfederal
nonhighway
nonhydrocarbon
nonhydroelectric power
nonliquid
non-OECD
non-OPEC
nonproducing regions
nonprofit corporation
nonrenewable
nonsalt
nonscientific
nonshale oil
nonspecific
nonstatistical
nonutility

O

off-highway use
offline
offshore
one-on-one situation
one-stop shop
online
onshore
onsite

P

part time
part-time employees
passenger-mile
per capita
per household
per-household consumption
policymaker
power plant
preexisting
prerecession
preregister
presalt
pretax

R

re-export
regasification
reinjection
reopen
run-up

S

second half
second-half 2015
second-largest increase
self-contained units
short term
short-term outlook
shut down
shut-down mode
shut in (e.g., the capacity is shut in)
shut-in capacity
smaller-volume producers
stakeholders
state-of-the-art technology
statewide
subbituminous
subhourly
subsalt
systemwide

T

third-quarter prices
third-largest producer
third-party data
T-shaped
t-test
U.S.-owned property

U
ultra-low sulfur diesel

up front
up-front money

up-or-down vote

V
vertically integrated utilities

W
web page

website

wellhead

winter-grade gasoline

world-class agency

worldwide

Y
year-on-year increase

10

Colons and Semicolons

Grammar is a piano I play by ear. All I know about grammar is its power. Many people know about camera angles now, but not so many know about sentences. The arrangement of words matters.

Joan Didion

The purpose of the colon is to introduce, list, or define something. A colon transforms the sentence into a word equation. It signals that what comes next is directly related to the previous sentence. The word following the colon is normally lowercase.

The purpose of the semicolon is to signal that two clauses are related, but each clause could stand on its own as a sentence if you wanted it to. The word following the semicolon is normally lowercase.

A semicolon is stronger than a comma but weaker than a period.

1. Using colons with bulleted or numbered lists

- Use a colon to introduce a bulleted or numbered list if it's introduced by a complete sentence. Never use a colon after a sentence fragment.

  ✓ **Correct**: The price consumers pay for heating oil can change for a variety of reasons: (complete sentence, so the colon is used correctly)

  - Seasonal demand
  - Fluctuations in crude oil prices
  - Competition in local markets

  ✓ **Correct**: I have three pets: (complete sentence)

  - Cat
  - Dog
  - Bird

  Incorrect: My pets include: (not complete sentence)

  - Cat
  - Dog
  - Bird

- But omit the colon if a word or phrase introduces a list.

  ✓ **Correct**: Forecasts (phrase, so no colon)

  - *Annual Energy Outlook*
  - *Short-Term Energy Outlook*
  - *International Energy Outlook*

Use a colon to introduce a bulleted or numbered list if it's introduced by a complete sentence.

For more information on punctuating lists, see Chapter 15: Itemized Lists and Bullets.

2. Using colons with examples

Use a colon to introduce an example or explanation of the idea to the left of the colon. The word following the colon is normally lowercase, unless it is a proper name or more than one sentence.

✓ **Example**: The requirement for claiming a tax credit is clear: you must have purchased the product in 2014.

3. Using colons with quotations

When you have a quotation that is at least one complete sentence, you can choose to introduce it with a colon. This option is stronger and more formal than using a comma.

✓ **Example**: The Administrator said: "The forecast shows rising natural gas production."

4. Using semicolons to join independent clauses

- Use a semicolon instead of a period to join two independent clauses to emphasize a close relationship between the two clauses. Do not capitalize the word after the semicolon.

  ✓ **Example**: The report is on our website; you can download it.

- Use a semicolon between two independent clauses (sentences) joined by a transition word such as *therefore* and *however*.

  ✓ **Example**: The price of the car is high; however, it includes taxes.

5. Using semicolons in a series

Use a semicolon to separate the items in a series when the items already include commas.

✓ **Example**: Our regional offices are in Miami, Florida; Chicago, Illinois; and Phoenix, Arizona.

6. Using a colon to introduce a list

- Use a colon if the introductory phrase is a complete sentence.

  ✓ **Example**: Data are available in three reports: STEO, AEO, and IEO.

- Don't use a colon if the introductory phrase is not a complete sentence.

  ✓ **Example**: Write sentences using commas, hyphens, and dashes. (no colon after the word *using*.)

11

Periods

The full stop is surely the simplest mark to understand—so long as everyone continues to have some idea what a sentence is.

Lynne Truss
Eats, Shoots & Leaves, 2003

- Use periods for U.S.

  ✓ **Correct**: U.S. imports
  Incorrect: US imports

  Correct: U.S. Energy Information Administration
  Incorrect: US E.I.A.
  Incorrect: U.S. EIA
  Incorrect: the U.S. EIA

- Use periods for time a.m. and p.m.

  ✓ **Correct:** 7:00 a.m.
  Incorrect: 7:00 am
  Incorrect: 7:00 AM

- Periods inside or outside parentheses.

  ✓ **Period outside:** …(phrase). If the content inside the parentheses is a phrase, the period goes **outside** the close paren.

  Period inside: (Complete sentence.) If the content inside the parentheses is a complete sentence, the period goes **inside** the close paren.

  Period outside and inside: Sentence…(Complete sentence.).

- Use a period at the end of notes and footnotes. Do not use a period at the end of sources.

  ✓ **Correct source:** the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

  Correct: Note: PADD means Petroleum Administration for Defense Districts.

Write time as 7:00 a.m. and 8:30 p.m.

Not am/AM or pm/PM.

- Use only one period at the end of a sentence, if the last word also includes a period.

  ✓ **Correct:** The greatest gains were at Apple, Inc.
  Incorrect: The greatest gains were at Apple, Inc..

- No periods in abbreviations.

  ✓ USSR (EIA prefers Former Soviet Union)
  BC
  HR (House of Representatives)
  PhD
  MA, MS
  BA, BS
  Washington, DC
  Dec 2012 (in tables)

- Periods at the ends of some bullets.

  ✓ **Correct bullet punctuation:**

  - Full sentence (optional period)
  - Full sentence (optional period)
  - Full sentence (optional period)

  ✓ **Correct bullet punctuation:**

  - Phrase (no period)
  - Phrase (no period)
  - Phrase (no period)

- Periods using i.e. and e.g.

  ✓ **Preferred:** namely California, Texas, and Alaska (avoid using i.e. if possible)
  Preferred: that is (or specifically) California, Texas, and Alaska
  Correct, not preferred: i.e., California, Texas, and Alaska (always use a comma with i.e.)

  Preferred: for example, bridge and gin rummy (avoid using e.g. if possible)
  Preferred: including (or such as) bridge and gin rummy
  Correct, not preferred: e.g., bridge and gin rummy (always use a comma with e.g.)

- Use only one space after the period between sentences.

  ✓ **Preferred:** I like chocolate. You like vanilla.
  Not preferred (old fashioned): I like chocolate. You like vanilla.

12

Symbols

Our language is funny—a fat chance and a slim chance are the same thing.

J. Gustav White

& Ampersand

Almost never use the ampersand sign; use it only in very informal writing. You can use & if it is part of a proper name (H&M Department Store or *Oil & Gas Journal*) or phrase (R&D).

✓ **Correct**: cap and trade
Incorrect: cap & trade

Correct: imports and exports
Incorrect: imports & exports

[ ] Bracket sequence

Avoid using nested parentheses or brackets except in mathematical equations. In text, rewrite the sentence or break it into two sentences to eliminate the need for the nested parentheses. Pairs of em dashes can also be used to set off information that might be put in parentheses.

✓ **First level:** [...(...)...]
Second level: {...[...(...)...]...}

... Ellipses

The most common and formal use of ellipses is to indicate an omission—to show that you've dropped words or sentences from a quotation. The most common reason for doing this is to focus attention on just part of what someone said or wrote.

A more informal use is in email messages, where the ellipses is used to indicate a pause or break in thought. It can show a list is incomplete or the speaker has left something unsaid. Do not use this form of ellipses in formal EIA writing. Do not use ellipses to mean etc. or to indicate an unfinished sentence.

An ellipses is three dots, never two dots, and never four dots.

To form the ellipses, type three periods in a row, and the AutoCorrect feature in Microsoft Word changes three periods in a row to a single special ellipses character. If your AutoCorrect feature is disabled, you can insert the ellipses by holding down *alt + ctrl +* the period (.) key.

Almost never use the ampersand sign.

An ellipses is three dots, never two dots, and never four dots.

* Asterisk

An asterisk is usually used as an informal footnote. In most cases for footnotes, EIA uses numbers (for text and graphs) or, in some cases, lower-case letters (in tables). It's not pronounced asterix or asterick.

! Exclamation point

Never use an exclamation point in formal EIA writing.

% Percent

Always use the % sign in EIA writing. There is no space between the number and the %.

13

Punctuating and Formatting Quoted Text

A writer is someone for whom writing is more difficult than it is for other people.

Thomas Mann
Essays of Three Decades, 1942

1. Using quotation marks with direct quotes

- Use quotation marks to set off direct quotes. Ending periods and commas go inside the close quote.

  ✓ **Example:** The Senator said, "We must pass the legislation during this session."

- Do not use quotation marks if the text is paraphrased or not exactly what the person said or wrote.

  ✓ **Example:** The Senator said that it is important to pass the legislation in this session.

- Periods and commas always go inside the quotation mark.

  ✓ **Example:** "Good morning, everyone," said Secretary Moniz.

  Example: Secretary Moniz began his presentation by saying, "Good morning, everyone."

- Semicolons and colons always go outside the quotation mark.

  ✓ **Example:** I always read *The New Yorker's* "Talk of the Town"; it keeps me up-to-date on many issues.

  Example: I enjoy reading "Talk of the Town": it's a great current events column.

- When the question or exclamation is part of the quotation, the punctuation goes inside.

  ✓ **Example:** "But you said the rate was $6.95 per pound!" he said to the cashier.

- When the question, exclamation, or interruption applies to the whole sentence, the punctuation goes outside.

  ✓ **Example:** What did the office director mean when he asked, "When will you be finished with the report"?

2. Using a comma to set off quoted text

- Use a comma to separate text from quoted material when the quoted material is a complete sentence or paragraph.

  ✓ **Example:** The president said, "All federal employees will have the Friday after Christmas off."

- Omit the comma to separate text from quoted material when the quoted material is a phrase or fragment integrated into the sentence.

  ✓ **Example:** The director said that energy consumption in transportation had "increased significantly."

3. Using punctuation marks with closed quotation marks

- Place a period or comma inside the closing quotation marks.

  ✓ **Example:** EIA is required to report "the number and type of alternative fuel vehicles in existence."

  Example: "Clean air standards are under review," said the director.

- Place colons, semicolons, question marks, and exclamation points outside of closing quotation marks, unless a question mark or exclamation point is part of the quoted material.

  ✓ **Example:** Which congressional staffer said, "You must complete the report by the end of the fiscal year"?

  Example: The director asked, "Do you have a deadline for the project?"

4. Using single quotation marks to set off quoted content within quotation marks

✓ **Example:** The director explained, "The HR handbook says 'employees have two weeks of annual leave,' not three weeks."

5. Using ellipses in quoted text

- Use ellipses—three dots or periods—to indicate the omission of text from a quoted passage. An ellipses consists of three periods (...).

  ✓ **Example:** "The regulations specify clean air standards...and compliance regulations."

- Ellipses may be combined with other punctuation, such as a comma, period, or question mark. There is no space between the final ellipsis point and the punctuation.

  ✓ **Example:** Will you come...?

6. Formatting long quoted text as a block quotation

Integrate short quotes into the text; but indent a block of long text. Block quotes are not enclosed by quotation marks. Remember to provide the appropriate attribution in source notes, footnotes, or endnotes.

✓ The press spokesman explained the purpose of the new publications:

> Energy education is a critical part of EIA's mission. At a time when consumers face many energy-related challenges, it is more important than ever to provide the public with reliable energy information in a format that is useful and accessible by the widest possible audience.

Place a period or comma inside the closing quotation marks.

7. Never rephrase or add words or additional content to a quote

Never add more information to a quote, even in parentheses. This restriction includes adding definitions or clarifications. Either put the new information in a footnote or in a separate sentence at the end of the quote.

8. Avoid using double quotes to emphasize words or phrases

- In most cases, avoid using quotation marks around specific words. Where possible, use italics for the word or phrase you want to emphasize.

  ✓ **Correct**: The new production process is called *fracking*.
  Incorrect: The new production process is called "fracking."

- Nicknamed "scare quotes," the double quotes signal to the reader that this is not how the term is usually used. The intent may be to emphasize the quoted words, but the quotes may actually mislead or confuse the reader.

  Incorrect examples:
  "Free" delivery
  "Down" elevator
  "Licensed" plumber

14

Abbreviations and Units

If I had more time, I would have written a shorter letter.

Variations attributed to Blaise Pascal, Mark Twain, Ben Franklin, Woodrow Wilson, John Locke, and others

1. Defining abbreviations, acronyms, and initialisms

In this guide, the word *abbreviation* will be used generically to refer to abbreviations, acronyms, and initialisms.

Abbreviation	Shortened form of a word or phrase. etc. for etcetera Dec for December Dr. for doctor
Acronym	A word formed from the initial letters of other words. It's pronounced as a word rather than read as separate letters. OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) NASA (National Aeronautic and Space Administration)
Initialism	A term read as a series of letters. Initialisms can't be pronounced as words. EIA MER FBI IRS

2. Spelling out a term the first time it is used

Spell out an abbreviation or acronym when it's first used. Follow it with the abbreviation in parentheses. If in doubt about the full name or correct spelling, check the primary source. Italicize report names but not the abbreviation (for example, STEO).

Italicize report names but not the report acronym: *Short-Term Energy Outlook* (STEO)

✓ **Correct**: This new *Short-Term Energy Outlook* (STEO) is now available. STEO provides short-term energy forecasts.

Correct: The U.S. Energy Information Administration's (EIA) projection shows the price of natural gas is decreasing.

If your content is presented on one long web page with links to separate sections of the content, and if that content has acronyms that you define at the top, you should spell them out again farther down the page (or deeper in the report), so people who don't read from the top won't have to hunt around for the definition.

This guidance also applies to long paper documents. If you haven't used the acronyms in several pages or when you start a new chapter, you should spell out the acronyms again. If the acronym is spelled out in a section header or chart, you still need to spell it out the first time it's used in the text. The graphs should be able to stand alone, independent of explanation in the text.

In general, avoid using too many abbreviations and acronyms. In a short document, try to avoid using them at all, especially if the term is only used once or twice. Often it's easier to spell out the term twice. Don't include the acronym if you aren't going to use it again later in the text.

For more information on abbreviations, see the following sources:

- EIA's current list of energy-related abbreviations
- GovSpeak: A Guide to Government Acronyms & Abbreviations
- *GPO Style Manual*, Chapter 9: Abbreviations and Letter Symbols
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*, Chapter 10: Abbreviations

3. Referencing EIA and DOE

Correct	Incorrect
EIA	the EIA
U.S. Energy Information Administration	the U.S. EIA
U.S. Department of Energy	U.S. DOE
DOE	the U.S. DOE

Always use periods in U.S. (do not write US).

4. Abbreviating and spelling out United States

- Spell out United States when it is used as a noun.

  ✓ **Correct as a noun:** Temperatures vary across the United States.
  Correct as an adjective: U.S. temperatures vary widely.
  Incorrect as a noun: Temperatures in the U.S. vary widely.

- Use the abbreviation U.S. when it's used as an adjective, such as when it precedes the name of a government organization or a domestic energy statistic.
- Always use periods in U.S. (do not write US).

  ✓ **Correct:** Each committee reports to the U.S. Congress regarding national energy needs and resources.
  Correct: U.S. oil production rose in 2015.

- Spell out United States, as a noun or an adjective, when it appears in a sentence or on a graph containing the name or names of other countries.

  ✓ **Correct:** Mexican oil, United States coal, and Canadian natural gas.
  Incorrect: Mexican oil, U.S. coal, and Canadian natural gas.

5. Abbreviating the names of states and foreign countries

- In running text, spell out the state name when it stands alone or when it follows the name of a city. Do not use postal codes (CA, MI)—except for Washington, DC where the postal code is part of the city's name—in text or tables or graphics. It's only OK to use state postal codes in addresses and bibliographies.

  ✓ **Correct:** Washington, DC (no periods)

  Correct: The earthquake happened near San Francisco, California.
  Incorrect: The earthquake happened near San Francisco, CA.

- In bibliographies, lists, and mailing addresses, use the U.S. Postal Service's two-letter no-period abbreviations.

  ✓ **In an address:** Los Angeles, CA
  In a bibliography: Richmond, VA

- Rarely abbreviate the names of foreign countries except U.K. and FSU for Former Soviet Union countries. Always spell out U.K. and FSU the first time you use it.

Do not use postal codes in text, in tables, or in graphics.

6. Using periods with abbreviations

- Most abbreviations are written without periods, especially the ones that are pronounced letter by letter, including units of measure.

  Examples:

  ATM
  BA, BS (bachelors' degrees)
  Btu
  CAFE (no accent on the E)
  DOE
  gal
  kg (kilogram)
  MA, MS (masters' degree)
  PADD (or PAD Districts)
  PhD

- Do not use periods or spaces with abbreviations that appear in capitals, whether two letters or more.

  Examples:

  OECD
  OPEC
  MER
  AER
  AEO
  ENERGY STAR® (include trademark symbol only for the first use)

- Do not use periods for the names of laws.

  Correct: HR 2454
  Incorrect: H.R. 2454

- If an abbreviation that takes a period is used at the end of a sentence, use a single period.

  Correct: The project team will meet at 10:30 a.m.

7. Using *a* or *an* before abbreviations

- If the abbreviation starts with a consonant **sound** (not a consonant letter), use *a*. If the abbreviation starts with a vowel **sound**, use *an*.

  Examples:

  a TVA project (T consonant sound)
  an EIA forecast (E vowel sound)
  a RECS survey (pronounced *wrecks*–begins with R consonant sound because RECS is pronounced)
  an RPS policy (begins with *are* vowel sound because each letter is pronounced)

8. Using abbreviations in lists

The Latin abbreviations e.g. and i.e. do not mean the same thing. Avoid confusion by just writing *for example, such as*, or *that is*.

- e.g. = for example, like, such as; provides examples for the content being discussed.
- i.e. = that is, in other words; provides a descriptive or definitive statement about the statement already made.

- ex. = for example. Very informal. EIA prefers writing out *for example* or *such as*.

  ✓ **Correct:** There are many fun things you can do on the Internet (e.g., read, plan travel, play games).

  Correct: The three people who attended the meeting (i.e., Maya, Zoë, and Carson) agree with the plan.

- Always put a comma after e.g. and i.e.
- Never italicize these abbreviations.

9. Using the abbreviation first

In a few cases, when the acronym is widely known, you can write the acronym first and then explain it in parentheses. Use this flexibility sparingly.

✓ **Correct:** OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting countries)
Correct: IRS (Internal Revenue Service)
Correct: LED (light-emitting diode)

10. Forming plural abbreviations

- Add an *s* to form a plural abbreviation.

  ✓ **Examples:** FAQs
  FTEs
  LDCs

  Exception: Btu—do not add an *s* to the end of Btu. Btu is both singular and plural. Also, remember abbreviations like LPG and GHG end in a plural word, so you don't need to write LPGs or GHGs.

- Add an apostrophe before the *s* if the abbreviation consists of lowercase letters or a single letter.

  ✓ **Examples:** She earned all A's on her report card.
  The class recited the abc's.

11. Forming possessive abbreviations

- To form a singular possessive, use an apostrophe before the s.

  ✓ **Examples:** DOE's policy
  OPEC's members
  This LDC's price hike

- To form a plural possessive, use an apostrophe after the s.

  ✓ **Example:** The RNs' strike
  The various LDCs' price hikes

12. Abbreviating months

- Names of months followed by the day, or day and year, may be abbreviated in footnotes, tables, and bibliographies where space is limited. Spell out the months in text.

Use lowercase a.m. and p.m. with periods.

- In tables, EIA uses the style where periods are omitted and all months are written as three-letter abbreviations.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

- In text or in a footnote, either spell out the full name of the month or, if you must use the abbreviation, put a period at the end.

Correct: February in Washington, DC can be brutally cold.
Correct: February 12, 2016
Correct: February 2016
Correct, less preferred: Feb. 12, 2016 (use only if space is limited)
Incorrect: February of 2016
Incorrect: February, 2016

13. Using abbreviations with time

- Time zones. Abbreviated time zones are written without periods.

Example: Release schedule: Monday between 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. ET

- EIA prefers the abbreviation ET (Eastern Time), which is the unchanging definition of the time zone of the far eastern United States. EST (Eastern Standard Time) and EDT (Eastern Daylight Time) are correct, but each applies to roughly half of the year, as daylight saving time is in effect in most of the United States from the second Sunday in March until the first Sunday in November.
- Time of day. Use lowercase a.m. and p.m. with periods. Put a space between the number and a.m. or p.m. The abbreviation for ante meridiem (before noon) is a.m. and the abbreviation for post meridiem (after noon) is p.m. If you note ET or PT, don't use a comma after a.m. or p.m.

Correct: 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.
Incorrect: 10:00 am and 2:30 pm
Incorrect: 10:00 AM and 2:30 PM
Incorrect: 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

- Time in history. Write 1,000 BC (no periods).

14. Abbreviating academic degrees

EIA style prefers no periods in abbreviations of academic degrees. Omit the periods unless they are required for tradition, consistency, or personal preference for your own degrees.

Correct: BA, BS, MA, MS, PhD
Incorrect: B.A., B.S., M.A., M.S., Ph.D.

15. Referencing legislation

The acronym for the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 is EISA2007. Adding the date to the acronym makes it clear this stands for legislation.

16. Abbreviating units of measure and common acronyms

A

AC: alternating current

AC/DC: alternating current/direct current

a.m.: ante meridiem (not AM or am)

B

b: barrel(s)

Bcf: billion cubic feet

b/d: barrels per day

BkWh: billion kilowatthours

Btu: British thermal units. Not BTU or Btus

BTL: biomass to liquids

Bcf/d: billion cubic feet per day

Bcf/y: billion cubic feet per year

BOE: barrels of oil equivalent

C

CAFE: corporate average fuel economy

CAIR: Clean Air Interstate Rule

CHP: combined heat and power

CFL: compact fluorescent lighting

CNG: compressed natural gas

CO2 preferred, or CO_2: carbon dioxide

cents/gal or ¢/gal: cents per gallon

cents/kWh: cents per kilowatthour

CO2e: carbon dioxide equivalent

°C: degrees Celsius

CDD: cooling degree day(s) (no hyphen)

cpg: cents per gallon (not preferred)

D

DC: direct current

$/gal: dollars per gallon

DWT: deadweight tons (vessel capacity)

E

EOR: enhanced oil recovery

EUR: enhanced ultimate recovery

F

°F: degrees Fahrenheit (75°F, no spaces)

FY: fiscal year ex. FY 2015

G

gal: gallon(s)

GHG: greenhouse gas(es)

GTL: gas to liquids

GW: gigawatt

GWe: gigawatt electric

GWh: gigawatthour(s) (capital G and capital W)

The EIA abbreviation for barrel(s) is now **b**, so barrels per day is written **b/d**.

H

HDD: heating degree day(s) (no hyphen)

Hg: mercury

HGL: hydrocarbon gas liquids, not HGLs

K

K: kelvin (temperature scale)

kV: kilovolt

kW: kilowatt

kWh: kilowatthour(s) (lowercase k and capital W)

L

LDV: light-duty vehicle, with a hyphen

LED: light-emitting diode

LPG: liquefied petroleum gas(es), not LPGs

LLS: Light Louisiana Sweet

LNG: liquefied natural gas

M

Mb: thousand barrels (not preferred usage)

Mb/d: thousand barrels per day (not preferred usage)

Mcf: thousand cubic feet (not preferred EIA unit)

MM: million (10^6). M is the Roman numeral for thousand, so MM equals a thousand times a thousand, which is a million. (For more information on using M, see page 105.)

MMcf: million cubic feet

million b/d (preferred) or MMb/d: million barrels per day

million Btu (preferred) or million British thermal units

MMBtu: million British thermal units

million kilowatthours (not MMkWh)

million MWh: million megawatthours

MMBtu: million Btu

MMcf/d: million cubic feet per day

MMgal/d: million gallons per day

MMmt: million metric tons

MMst: million short tons

mpg: mile(s) per gallon

mst: thousand short tons (not preferred usage)

mt: metric ton (not written metric *tonne*, which is international spelling) (not commonly used at EIA)

MW: megawatt

MWh: megawatthour(s)

MW_{AC}/MW_{DC}: megawatt AC/megawatt DC

MW_e MW of electricity capacity

MY: model year (used for vehicles) MY 2015

N

NGPL: natural gas plant liquids

NGL: natural gas liquids (not NGLs)

N2O: nitrous oxide

NOx: nitrogen oxides (plural)

North Sea Brent (first use): subsequent use can be Brent

O	OPEC: the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
P	Petroleum Administration for Defense Districts: PADD (preferred) or PAD District
	p.m.: post meridiem (after noon) (not PM or pm)
	PTC: production tax credit
	ppm: parts per million
	PV: solar photvoltaic
Q	quads: quadrillion British thermal units, or quadrillion Btu (which is plural)
R	rpm: revolutions per minute
	RFS: renewable fuel standard
	RPS: renewable portfolio standard
	RTO: regional transmission organization
S	SOx: sulfur oxides
	st: short ton
T	Tcf: trillion cubic feet
	tonne: international spelling of metric ton (not preferred usage)
	t-test: statistical test of the means of two samples (italicized t)
	TWh: terawatthour(s) (capital T and capital W)
U	USD: U.S. dollar, when comparing with foreign currencies. Writing specific amounts: US $5 million. Don't use the D with the $.
V	V: volt
	VMT: vehicle miles traveled
W	W: Watt
	Wh: Watthour

Notes: For metric or International System of Units (SI) not covered here, see standards and conventions on proper use and abbreviation of these units. All unit abbreviations are assumed to be both singular and plural (MWh = megawatthours) unless a plural form is provided.

17. What do all the M's and m's mean?

The letter M is used in a lot of EIA units: MMb/d, Mcf, MWh, mst. But the M's mean different things in different units. It's confusing.

In some units, M is the Roman numeral for 1,000. So a thousand is M, and a million, which is a thousand thousand, is MM.

Did you know?

The letter M is used in a lot of EIA units: MMb/d, Mcf, MWh, mst. But the M's mean different things in different units.

And, yes, MM in Roman numerals does equal 2,000. So sometimes the M's are added and sometimes they are multiplied. Technical usage seems to support MM = 1 million.

This use of M to mean thousand and MM to mean million is true in these cases:

MMb/d = million barrels per day
MMBtu = million Btu
MMcf = million cubic feet
MMst = million short tons

On the other hand, the abbreviation for million short tons of coal is sometimes mst, with a lower-case m. To complicate the issue, various sources also use MST and Mst as abbreviations for million short tons.

In a third variation, acronyms for cubic feet for natural gas volumes other than Mcf and MMcf do not use Roman numerals or lower-case letters. The B in Bcf stands for billion, and the T in Tcf stands for trillion.

To confuse matters further, the M in MWh (megawatthour) stands for mega, not a thousand or a million, even though a megawatthour happens to be equal to a million watthours, or a thousand kilowatthours.

Sometimes mWh can mean milliwatthour. This isn't a very common unit, but it's yet another use of the letter M.

So be careful when you use M. Spell out your units, and make sure you have the right M and the right number of M's.

15

Itemized Lists and Bullets

Synonym (n): The word you use
when you can't spell the other one.

Baltasar Gracián, 17th century author

Big paragraphs are difficult to read quickly. Bullets are a visual way to show a group of similar ideas. Bullets make it easier for readers to see your main points. To improve the scannability of content, use vertical lists rather than continuous text to present a series of related items.

Don't put semicolons or commas at the end of bullets. Only use ending periods for long bullets that are complete sentences. Capitalize the first word of every bullet.

1. Introducing lists within text

- Introduce the list with a statement that encompasses all of the items in the list.
- Use a colon at the end of the introductory statement if it is a complete sentence. Don't use a colon if the introduction is a phrase.

  ✓ **Example:**
  The price that consumers pay for heating oil can change for a variety of reasons:
  - Seasonal demand
  - Fluctuations in crude oil prices
  - Competition in local markets

  Example: The two reasons for increased demand are
  - Lower prices
  - Higher economic growth

- To enhance the scannability of your content, you can add a line of space between introductory text and the beginning of a bulleted or numbered list.

  ✓ **Example:** Carbon dioxide is emitted when burning three fossil fuels:

  - Petroleum
  - Coal
  - Natural gas

- Wrap lines of each bullet under each other, not under the bullet point itself.

  ✓ **Correct bullet wrap:**

  - There are 99 commercial nuclear reactors at 61 nuclear power plants in 31 states. Since 1990, the share of the nation's total electricity supply provided by nuclear power generation has averaged about 20%.

  Incorrect bullet wrap:
  - There are 99 commercial nuclear reactors at 61 nuclear power plants in 31 states. Since 1990, the share of the nation's total electricity supply provided by nuclear power generation has averaged about 20%.

Don't put semicolons or commas at the end of bullets.

Capitalize the first word of every bullet.

2. Introducing lists of links or items

Provide a descriptive heading at the top of each list, and don't use a colon.

✓ **Forecasts**
Annual Energy Outlook
Short-Term Energy Outlook
International Energy Outlook

Recent Country Analysis Brief Updates
China
Argentina
Iraq

3. Using parallel structure for each item in the list

- Begin each item with the same type of word (noun, verb, infinitive, etc.).

  ✓ **Correct (parallel beginning words):**

  To reduce natural gas bills, customers can do three things:

  - Check appliances for efficient operation
  - Obtain an energy audit
  - Reduce thermostat settings

  Incorrect (not parallel beginning words):

  How to create effective teams:

  - To find the best solution to our problems
  - Asking people to help us with the solution
  - Identify champions for solution teams
  - Strategic goals
  - And have regular meetings

- Use the same grammatical form for each item (word, phrase, or sentence).

  ✓ **Correct:** The working group should meet to perform the following functions: (three verbs)

  - Evaluate the department's progress
  - Provide suggestions for improving performance
  - Collaborate on systems analysis

  ✓ **Correct:** There are four types of coal prices: (four adjectives)

  - Spot
  - Captive
  - Open
  - Delivered

- Present the same type of information, in a similar format, to make the information easier for readers to understand.

  ✓ **Correct:** Relevant definitions include

  - Deepwater—water depth that is greater than 200 meters but less than 1,500 meters
  - Ultra-deepwater—water depth that is equal to or greater than 1,500 meters

  ✓ **Correct:** We emitted more CO2 from petroleum than other fuels:

  - Petroleum—2.6 billion metric tons (44%)
  - Coal—2.1 billion metric tons (36%)
  - Natural gas—1.2 billion metric tons (20%)

  ✓ **Correct:** Learn more

  - For projections of U.S. energy-related carbon dioxide emissions, see the *Annual Energy Outlook*.
  - For projections of foreign energy-related carbon dioxide emissions, see the *International Energy Outlook*.

Begin each bulleted item with the same type of word.

4. Punctuating itemized lists

- Listed items require no end punctuation unless they are complete sentences. Items that are sentences can but do not have to be followed by a period.
- Do not use a comma or a semicolon at the end of each list item.
- Do not use a period at the end of the last bullet. Bullets either all have optional periods (if they are complete sentences) or all have no ending punctuation (if they are phrases or words).

✓ **Correct:** Because the United States is the world's largest importer, it is easy to forget that it is

- The oldest major global oil producer
- Formerly the number one global oil producer
- Currently the number two global oil producer (no ending period)

✓ **Correct:** Several consumer trends have increased demand and offset these gains: (bullets are all complete sentences, so an ending period can—but does not have to—be used)

- Homes are larger and consume more energy.
- Appliances such as flat screen TVs are larger and consume more energy.
- Computers and other electronic devices increase the demand for energy.

5. Using a numbered list

- Use numbered lists to indicate steps, sequence, or ranking.

✓ **Correct:** Use these steps to sign up for email subscriptions:

1. Enter your email address
2. Check the names of the publications you'd like to receive
3. Click subscribe

This is a sequence. Ending periods are correct—but optional—because each item is a complete sentence.

- Use numbered lists to rank order or count the content.

✓ **Correct:** Five countries supply most U.S. petroleum imports (listed by rank):

1. Canada
2. Mexico
3. Saudi Arabia
4. Venezuela
5. Nigeria

- Use numbered lists if you want to emphasize the number of items.

✓ **Correct:** This report has two purposes:

1. To provide background information on alternative transportation fuels
2. To furnish preliminary estimates of the use of these fuels and of alternative fuel vehicles

6. Using a bulleted list

Use a bulleted list when the order of the items is not important and when the list is not about steps or procedures. Use a bulleted list rather than sentences in a paragraph when you want readers to clearly see the main points.

✓ **Correct:** Steam is produced in several ways:

- From water that is boiled by burning fossil fuels, nuclear fission, or biomass materials
- From geothermal resources where steam under pressure emerges from the ground and drives a turbine
- From a fluid heated by the sun (solar power)

7. Ordering a bulleted list

When determining the order of the listed information, consider what order is most logical from a user's point of view. For example, lists can be ordered chronologically, step-by-step, by ranking, by most requested, by most important, or alphabetically.

Avoid alphabetical order unless the listed items are commonplace proper names, such as states, or the list serves as an index. Use bullets rather than numbers if the order of the items doesn't matter.

✓ **Correct:** Most requested Information **(in order of the number of requests)**

- *On-Highway Retail Diesel Prices*
- *Gasoline and Diesel Fuel Update*
- *Natural Gas Storage Report*

✓ **Correct:** The mission covers four technology developments: **(in order of priority)**

- Extending scientific understanding
- Developing new technologies
- Enhancing existing technologies
- Pursuing challenges

✓ **Correct:** Four *State Energy Profiles* have been updated: **(alphabetical order)**

- Alabama
- Alaska
- Arizona
- Arkansas

✓ **Correct:** Four *State Energy Profiles* have been updated: **(chronological order)**

- Michigan (August 2015)
- California (September 2015)
- Tennessee (December 2015)
- Alabama (January 2016)

8. Capitalizing items in a list

Capitalize the first word of each bullet, even if the listed items are not sentences. This rule is an EIA style choice. Be consistent.

✓ **Correct:** Three factors compel the United States to reconsider how it produces, delivers, and uses energy:

- Energy security
- Environmental quality
- International competition

9. Presenting successive points in text—first, second, third

Bulleted lists are preferred for highlighting points and improving readability. If you must write your points in paragraph form, use first, second, third. Do not use firstly, secondly, thirdly.

If you have more than three points, consider listing numbered items or using bullets. Saying seventh, eighth, etc., is cumbersome.

16

Footnotes, Sources, and Notes

True, the writer's name is in the byline, but it's not the author's right to offend or confuse the reader, defy the rules of standard English, fail to identify sources, or lower the standards of your institution.

Carol Fisher Saller
The Subversive Copy Editor: Advice from Chicago

EIA writers must provide full source information when content from other sources is used or referenced in EIA reports.

1. Rights, permissions, copyright, and author's responsibilities

- EIA has a detailed policy on Using Third-Party Data in the Information Quality section of InsideEIA. The policy includes resources to help authors determine if information is protected by a copyright or license agreement, and, if so, how to obtain or confirm that EIA has appropriate permission to use the material.

- From *The Chicago Manual of Style*: "Publishing agreements place on the author the responsibility to request any permission needed for the use of material owned by others."[1] And, "With all reuse of others' materials, it is important to identify the original as the source. This not only bolsters the claim of fair use but also helps avoid any accusation of plagiarism."[2]

- Academic, journalistic, and government information generally is not subject to copyright protections. EIA authors only need to properly cite that information. But data from private vendors that EIA subscribes to and content found on the Internet are often protected by copyright and require permission for use in addition to citation in accordance with the stipulations of the data owner and the *EIA Writing Style Guide*.

- In a nutshell, don't copy other people's work, ideas, phrasing, content, images, artwork, or graphs without attribution and, in some cases, explicit permission. Just because it's on the Internet or EIA's website doesn't mean it's acceptable to portray the content as your original ideas or your original work.

- A simple Internet search of a text string can determine the original source and identify nonsourced content. Make sure to fully attribute content you use that is not original.

- Most websites have a *Copyright Notice* or *Terms of Service* link at the bottom of their home page that will clarify republication rights. Authors need to get permission to reuse content from this website. Always check the agency or company's copyright policy. EIA has a Copyright and Reuse Policy posted on its homepage.

- For internal documents, you should identify third-party sources in case the document or any portion of it is used by others in EIA for a publication or presentation outside of the agency. References in internal materials do not need to adhere to the *EIA Writing Style Guide*.

[1] University of Chicago Press, *The Chicago Manual of Style,* 16th edition, The University of Chicago Press (2010), p. 185.
[2] Ibid., p. 190.

- Different EIA products have different sourcing formats including endnotes, footnotes, or full inline attribution. EIA authors are responsible for citing information appropriately and using the appropriate format for their reports.
- You must cite the source for ideas, phrasing, facts, and similar content taken from other sources. Changing a few words does not exempt you from citing the source.
- Citing the organization or publication name without providing information about the source is not sufficient. Avoid writing "...according to..." without a source. Include a link to the source or make sure you have a full source citation elsewhere in the report.

Don't use italics or quotes when citing form names.

2. Using footnotes for explanation, comment, and citation

Use footnotes for explanations or comments about specific information within the body of documents, tables, or graphics.

✓ In 2006, about 7.1 billion metric tons carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e) of greenhouse gases were emitted by the United States.[1]

[1] Values expressed as carbon dioxide equivalents (CO2e) are calculated based on their global warning potential.

Citing an online document: the title of the document should be a hypertext link within the footnote.

✓ EIA projects that electricity generated from renewable sources will account for 13% of total electricity generation in 2016.[1]

For EIA documents: [1] U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Annual Energy Outlook 2012*, Table 8.

Citing EIA in external documents: [1] U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Annual Energy Outlook 2012,* Table 8, accessed March 11, 2008.

Citing a url: Company or publication name, "*article name*" (accessed June 8, 2015), full url.

Citing EIA forms: Form 1, Form Name. No italics or quotes for the form name.

✓ Form 914, Monthly Natural Gas Production Report

3. Using endnotes or footnotes

Endnotes have the same information as footnotes, but instead of being at the bottom of each page, they are all together in one list at the end of the report. In most cases, use endnotes for EIA documents like the *Annual Energy Outlook* and the *Country Analysis Briefs* that are mostly or entirely in html. Endnotes involve html coding on one page rather than on many pages, which is faster and easier.

Footnotes are more appropriate for technical reports (such as model documentation) and journal articles. These types of reports are predominately in PDF format.

Note that some EIA content—*Today in Energy* (TIE) is a good example—does not have footnotes or endnotes. Source/attribution information in the TIE stories is either a link directly to the source or in a note under the graph.

Ask the Office of Communications staff or your supervisor if you have questions about which type of sourcing to use.

4. Using ibid in footnotes and endnotes

The term *ibid* (which in Latin means *same as above*, or *in the same place*) is sometimes used in footnotes, endnotes, and biographic references to save space. The term refers to the source mentioned in the immediately preceding reference. *Ibid* is a fancy form of ditto marks. If the entire reference is the same, you can use the word *ibid.* If any information (like a page number) is different from the previous entry, that information must be included following ibid.

✓ **Example:**

1. *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th Edition, p. 669. (first footnote)
2. Ibid. (content being noted is on the same page of the previous source)
3. Ibid., p. 701. (content being noted is in the same source, but on a different page)

5. Deciding what terms to define and choosing the correct format

- Define terms you think a nonstatistical, nonscientific reader might not understand. Definitions can be provided six ways:
  - In the text, add explanatory words either in the sentence or in parentheses
  - In a note (Note: RAC means refiner acquisition cost.)
  - In a footnote or endnote
  - With a link to the EIA Glossary
  - With a link to additional EIA material
  - With a link to an outside source
- Remember to link the term, phrase, or report name itself rather than saying *click here.*

  ✓ **Correct**: See the latest *Short-Term Energy Outlook*

  Incorrect: For the latest *Short-Term Energy Outlook*, click here.

6. Using the most appropriate path to definitions

- Use an in-text definition when
  - The definition is critical to the audience's understanding
  - The definition is short and succinct
- Use a footnote or endnote when
  - The document is likely to be printed
  - The definition is not in the EIA glossary
  - The definition is too long or complicated to integrate into the text
- Use a link to the EIA glossary when
  - The document is likely to be read online
  - An understandable definition is in the EIA glossary
- Use a link to an outside source when
  - An understandable definition isn't in the EIA glossary
  - The concept definition is long or technical–not appropriate for a footnote.
  - The best definition is on someone else's site

7. Formatting footnotes correctly in text

- Footnotes are numbered consecutively beginning with 1.
- In short documents that don't have chapters or sections, footnotes should be sequential throughout the document.
- In longer documents that have chapters or sections, footnotes should be numbered sequentially by chapter or section.
- Footnotes in an appendix should begin with 1.
- Footnotes should appear at the bottom of the page where the term or fact is referenced. (Consider using endnotes as an alternative.)
- Footnotes should be identified by a superscript, both within text and in the corresponding note at the bottom of the page.
- All footnotes end with periods, even if they are not complete sentences.
- Avoid overly long footnotes, if possible.

Numbered footnote example: Renewable energy consumption increased 7% between 2005 and 2006, contributing about 9% of total U.S. electricity generation in 2006.[1] Electricity producers[2] consumed 63% of total U.S. renewable energy in 2015 for producing electricity.

---

[1] U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Renewable Energy Consumption and Electricity Preliminary Statistics,* 2014.

[2] Electrical utilities, independent power producers, and combined heat and power plants.

8. Formatting or displaying footnotes with tables, charts, and other graphics

- Footnotes should be embedded into the image file so they print out as part of the graphic.
- Footnotes should appear beneath the graphic in a smaller, but readable, font size.
- In data tables, letters are recommended for footnotes to avoid confusion with the numbers in the table.

Lettered footnote example:

Summary of oil prices 2014-15

	2014	2015
WTI crude [a] ($/barrel)	92.64	93.81
gasoline [b] ($/gal)	3.59	3.72

[a] West Texas Intermediate.

[b] Average pump price for regular gasoline.

9. Referencing graphs in text

- Always reference graphs in the order they appear. Don't discuss/reference Figure 3 before you have referenced Figure 2.
- Follow the established numbering format for the specific report or document. (For example, AEO uses MT-1, MT-2; MER uses 1.1, 1.2; *Today in Energy* doesn't number graphs.)
- Say *see graph or see graph above/below*, when graphs are not numbered in short articles.

Correct: see graph above
Incorrect: see above graph

- Say *see Figure 1* (not *see Figure 1 above*) when graphs are numbered.
- Make sure you recheck the sequential references to graphs if the text is rewritten or reordered.

10. Formatting source citations

Include the following information in source citations that appear as either notes or footnotes for online EIA articles, graphs, and images. The title of the report or product should be in italics.

Correct: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Petroleum Supply Monthly*, Table 3, December 2016.

Correct: U.S. Energy Information Administration, using data from Bentek and Reuters.

Correct: U.S. Energy Information Administration, based on Bentek data.

11. Format for sourcing online information

Include these elements in the order listed here:

1. Organization or publisher (for example, U.S. Energy Information Administration, or the U.S. Census Bureau)
2. Title of publication (if applicable); title of book or journal appears in italics
3. Publication number (if applicable)
4. Reference to specific web page, table, or graphic. This reference may be a publication title, a web page title, or a title of a chart or other graphic. The title should be hyperlinked to the referenced information. For example, if the data are from a table, the link should be to the table, not to the beginning of the document or section. All sources end with a period.
5. The date of publication of the information, or the date the information was accessed

Example: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Annual Energy Outlook 2014*, Table 1A, Total Energy Supply and Disposition Summary, accessed March 18, 2014.

Example: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *State Electricity Profiles*, DOE/EIA-0348(01)/2 (Washington, DC, November 2014), p. 145.

12. Format for sourcing print articles and newspapers

Include these elements in the order they are listed.

1. Author: last name, first name (if known) or initial
2. Title of article: title is shown in quotation marks
3. Title of publication: title of book or journal appears in italics
4. Volume or publication number (if applicable)
5. Date of publication (in parentheses)
6. Page number of specific information being cited, ending with a period.

Examples: Saraf, S. "India Set To Revise Hydroelectric Policy," *Power in Asia*, No. 471 (February 1, 2007), p. 8.

13. Format for sourcing printed books

Include these elements in the order they are listed.

1. Author: last name, first name (if known) or initial
2. Book title: title of book appears in italics
3. Publisher
4. Date of publication (in parentheses)
5. Page number

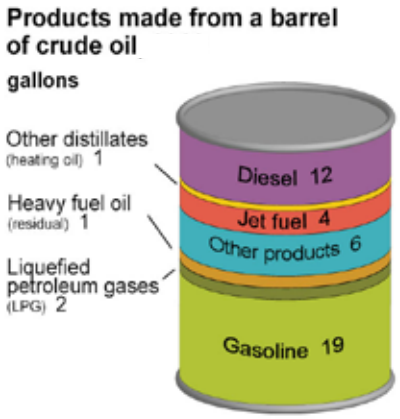
Example: Simon, A., *Energy Consumption in India*, World Bank (December 2006), p. 6.

Two or more two authors example: Falter, Laurie and Stefanie Palumbo (only the first name is inverted)

14. Using notes

Use notes for definitions, explanations, or comments that refer to the overall content of the document, table, or graphic, rather than for specific data.

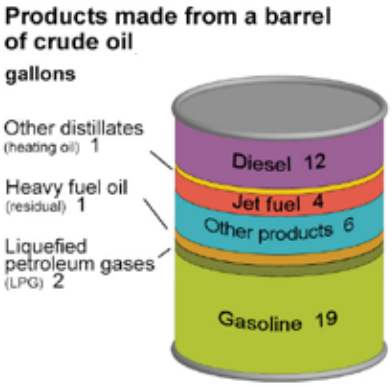
Example with one note:



Note: Gain from processing is about 5%.

If there is more than one note, use *Notes*. Put the content for both together, or write it in two separate sentences. If the combined note gets too long, consider numbering the notes.

Example with two notes:



Notes: Gain from processing is about 5%.
Data for 2013 are preliminary.

17

Hypertext Links

Say all you have to say in the fewest possible words, or your reader will be sure to skip them; and in the plainest possible words, or he will certainly misunderstand them.

John Ruskin

1. Using embedded and stand-alone hypertext links

- Hypertext links can be embedded, or they can stand alone.
- Embedded links are contained within text.

  Example: The Primer on Diesel Fuel Prices explains how diesel fuel is made.
  Example: Gasoline is refined from crude oil.

- Stand-alone links are menu links or links at the beginning or end of a section of text, such as the *Learn more* links added to *Energy in Brief* articles.

  Example: Forecasts
  Annual Energy Outlook
  Short-Term Energy Outlook
  International Energy Outlook

  Learn more: *Petroleum Supply Monthly*

- Try not to link to too many things within a block of text. Too many links makes the content difficult to read.
- Hyperlink enough of the text to be clear about what the link is going to.

  Good example: Diablo Canyon Unit 2 was taken offline on April 27.
  Less clear: Diablo Canyon Unit 2 was taken offline on April 27.

  Good example: The company presented the Integrated Performance Plan in response to the flooding.
  Less clear: The company presented the Integrated Performance Plan in response to the flooding.

- If possible, the hyperlink should not contain two phrases separated by a comma.

  Correct: Nuclear outages in 2011 were unusually high.
  Not preferred: In 2011, nuclear outages were unusually high.

Never use click here.

Don't underline links. Just link the words, which will automatically make them blue.

2. Writing clear hypertext links

- Never use click here or click here or see here as a link. Don't write text that mentions the link itself.
- Using click here forces sighted users to read the surrounding text to understand the context of the word *here*. It also prevents visually impaired users who rely on screen readers from fully understanding where the link is going.
- Don't underline links. When providing hyperlinks in text, just copy the link you want to lead readers to, highlight the word or phrase you want to hyperlink, right click on the highlighted word or phrase, select hyperlink, and insert the link. Once the text is hyperlinked, remove the automated underline.
- Write descriptive, concise links that tell users what they will get or can accomplish when they click the link.

  Correct: EIA's automated email system provides updates.
  Incorrect: Click here to receive updates via EIA's automated email system.
  Incorrect: Receive updates via EIA's email system on this link: http://www.eia.gov/

  Correct: Sign up for email updates.
  Correct: Learn more about how to save energy.

- Try not to create links that wrap to a second or third line. Wrapped links can be hard for users to read and cut-and-paste.

  ✓ **Correct:** Take advantage of lower heating fuel prices for winter 2016, and guard against future price spikes by investing in energy efficient technologies.

  Not preferred: Take advantage of lower heating fuel prices for winter 2016 and guard against future price spikes by investing in energy efficient technologies.

- Emphasize only the distinctive words in a list of links.

  ✓ **Correct:**

  Below is renewable energy information for

  - Homeowners
  - Small businesses

  Incorrect:

  Below is renewable information for

  - Renewable energy information for homeowners
  - Renewable energy information for small businesses

- The wording of the link and the title of the destination page should be the same. If the title of the page you are linking to is not clear, consider changing the page's title.

  ✓ **Correct link:** See *Short-Term Energy Outlook* March 2016
  Correct landing page: *Short-Term Energy Outlook* March 2016

  Correct link: See *Short-Term Energy Outlook* March 2016
  Incorrect (not matching) landing page: Spring Outlook

3. Using hypertext links to provide additional information

- Use links to provide related content such as glossaries, tables, reports, and graphics.

  ✓ **Examples:**

  In 2016, about 20% of the petroleum consumed in the United States is expected to be imported from foreign countries.

  Table 4: U.S. Energy Consumption provides usage data by state.

  See *Short-Term Energy Outlook* March 2016 for gasoline projections.

  The chart, U.S. Oil Imports, shows how much oil the United States imports from Mexico.

- Use links sparingly throughout a report. Putting in too many links makes the text hard to read.
- When linking to a file other than a web page, indicate the file format after the link. Links should inform what kind of page will open if it's not html, which is normally the default. Use icons including pdf, xls, and ppt as appropriate for file types.

  ✓ **Examples:** The Comparison Calculator (xls) will help you choose a fuel-efficient heating system.

- The linked words can identify EIA reports or analysis.

  ✓ **Examples:** Learn more: EIA Weekly Retail On-Highway Diesel Prices.

4. Using fully qualified links in content that is printed

- If the link is in a printed report (pdf), the link should be fully qualified (www.eia.gov/petroleum/ or http://www.eia.gov/petroleum/) so when the report is printed, the full url is available.
- If the link is in a web report (html), link from real words in the text—use intuitive names or phrases for the content you are linking to. Don't underline linked context. Examples: additional analysis or find emission data by state.
- Sources in footnotes and endnotes should be fully qualified.

18

British versus American English

A preposition is a terrible thing to end a sentence with.

Winston Churchill

There are differences between British and American English in spelling, usage, and punctuation. No wonder we get confused writing *travelled to London*. EIA prefers American spelling and usage.

1. Spelling differences

American	British
amid	amidst
among	amongst
while	whilst
afterward	afterwards
backward	backwards
cooperation	co-operation
downward	downwards
forward	forwards
toward	towards
upward	upwards
canceled	cancelled
traveled	travelled
gray	grey
license/license(noun/verb)	licence/license (noun/verb)
sulfur	sulphur
analyze	analyse
organization	organisation
recognized	recognised
U.K.	UK

2. Usage differences

American	British
presently = now, currently	presently = soon, in the future
loan and lend are synonyms	loan is a noun; lend is a verb
table an idea = postpone	table an idea = to present something, to bring it to the table
slated = scheduled	slated = severely criticized
scheme = devious or secret plan (negative connotation)	scheme = program, plan (no negative connotation)
which and that = two different words	which and that = no distinction

3. Punctuation differences

- British writers put closing punctuation outside the close quotation mark. American writers put the punctuation inside.

  American: She said, “Put it down.” (period inside)
  British: She said, “Put it down”. (period outside)

- Americans put commas in number to mark thousands. European writers use a space.

  American: 1,000
  British: 1 000

- Americans use a comma after i.e. and e.g., but the British don’t.

  American: Greenhouse gases (e.g., carbon dioxide) may contribute to global warming.
  British: Greenhouse gases (e.g. carbon dioxide) may contribute to global warming.

I travelled to London, where I was amongst friends on a grey, cloudy day. We walked towards the British Museum whilst analysing our holiday plans.

Can you find the British spellings?

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