



## **Style Guide 2021**

*Originally created by Gavin J. Wiens, managing editor of Past Tense 2014-2016, from the "Past Tense Style Guide," which was compiled by Kaitlin Heller, managing editor of Past Tense in the 2012-2013 academic year, and from the style guide for The Varsity, the University of Toronto's student newspaper.*

## 1. General Submission Guidelines

Articles submitted to the journal must include:

- the complete title of the article;
- the name under which the author would like to publish;
- an abstract of 150-200 words;
- the author's university affiliation;
- the address of the university;
- a university-affiliated email address; and
- an academic biography of no more than 100 words.

Book reviews submitted to the journal must include:

- the complete citation for the monograph under review;
- the name under which the author would like to publish; and
- the author's university affiliation.

Critical commentaries submitted to the journal must include:

- the complete title of the article;
- the name under which the author would like to publish;
- the author's university affiliation;
- a university-affiliated email address; and
- an academic biography of no more than 50 words.

**Spelling:** Except in the case of direct quotations, all submissions may correspond to any English spelling convention (British, Canadian, American) as long as it is consistent throughout the piece.

**Images:** All images must be accompanied by a signed letter of permission from the copyright holder. Any images which are not accompanied by permissions will not be published in *Past Tense*.

## 2. Page and Reference Format

### 2.1 Titles and Section Breaks

- The title of the article should appear in bold and aligned left. The name of the author and his or her university affiliation should appear immediately underneath in italics.
- The abstract immediately follows the title and name of the author. The word “abstract” and all subsequent subheadings appear in the same font as the main text, aligned left and in bold. Two blank lines should appear above each subheading and one blank line below.
- Where there is a break in the main text without a subheading, two blank lines should be inserted between the two sections of text.
- The first paragraph of text following a section break or subheading should have its first line indented with a single tab in the same way as each normal paragraph.

### 2.2 Citations

- In articles, citations and notes should conform to the [Chicago Manual of Style](#). For book reviews, page references should appear in parentheses in the body of the text.
- *Past Tense* does not use endnotes. Endnotes should be converted to footnotes.
- The cypher corresponding to each footnote should be superscript. For, example, this is a correctly formatted footnote.<sup>1</sup>
- If cyphers are numerical, footnotes should be enumerated continuously throughout the article. For example, this is a correctly formatted footnote.<sup>2</sup> If this sentence appeared after it in the same article, it would have the next number in sequence.<sup>3</sup>
- The cypher corresponding to a footnote never appears within a sentence. Cyphers may appear only after a full stop or bang, outside of any parentheses, brackets, or quotation marks. For example, this footnote is *not* correctly<sup>4</sup> formatted. This one is.<sup>5</sup> (This one, too!)<sup>6</sup>

### 3. Punctuation

#### 3.1 Apostrophes

- Apostrophes are used to denote the contraction of two words. For example, “don’t try to stop me.”
- Authors should avoid using contracted words, except if the contraction appears in a quotation. Apostrophes are also used to denote possession. For example, “Sue’s house or Alex’s house.”
- Apostrophes should be used for plural and singular possessive terms ending in “s.” For example, “the Jones’ cat or Erasmus’ ideas.”
- Apostrophes should not be used where numbers or capital letters are pluralized unless it is necessary to avoid ambiguity. For example:
  - He learned his ABCs, not He learned his ABC’s.
  - She minded her Ps and Qs, not She minded her P’s and Q’s.
  - I bought him a few CDs, not I bought him a few CD’s.

#### 3.2 Commas

- Use the serial comma (colloquially known as the “Oxford comma”). For example:
  - This sentence *incorrectly* uses commas to list sugar, flour and butter. This sentence correctly uses commas to list milk, eggs, and salt.
- Use the Oxford comma (also called the serial comma) in a list. For example:
  - She ate strawberries, apples, and oranges.
- Input a comma between two independent clauses conjoined by *but*, *and*, *or*, etc. For example:
  - I told him to go to the store, but he went home instead.
  - I told him to go to the store, but learned that he went home instead.
- Input a comma when introducing a relative clause and to set off non-restrictive or non-essential elements of the sentence. For example:
  - The car, which was covered in decals, was on fire, or students, who get into the library free of charge, need to show identification.

#### 3.3 Semicolons

- The semicolon helps to convey a close connection between two related ideas. Use the semicolon to join together two independent clauses that are closely related in meaning. For example:
  - Abdominal exercises help prevent back pain; proper posture is also important.
  - She has been falling asleep in class lately; she needs to get more rest.
- Also use the semicolon to separate list items that are long and complex. For example:
  - Thomas Mulcair, leader of the NDP
  - Bob Rae, leader of the Liberals
  - Stephen Harper, leader of the Conservatives and prime minister of Canada

- Lists of clauses are separated with semicolons rather than commas. For example:  
In this case, you might be listing hypotheticals; you might be offering alternatives; or you might have other reasons to generate a list of independent clauses.

### 3.4 Colons

- Using the colon in a sentence is like using an equal sign (=) in math. The colon is placed after an independent clause to introduce a list, a quotation, or an explanation. Use it only in cases when it can be replaced by the phrases *for example*, *namely*, and *that is*. Make sure that the first part of the sentence can stand alone as a complete sentence (rather than a fragmented one).
- Do not capitalize the first letter of a sentence following a colon, unless the word is a proper noun or the beginning of a quotation. For example:  
Visitors to foreign countries require the following items: a foreign language phrase book, money, health insurance, and a desire to experience different cultures.  
The coach urged his struggling team to reflect on the immortal words of Buddha:  
“There is suffering in life.”

### 3.5 EM Dashes

- Appositives set off with hyphens use the em dash. For example:  
If you have an appositive—as you well might—use the em dash.
- Hyphens separating clauses use the em dash. For example:  
You should also use the em dash in this instance—even though Emily Dickinson didn’t.
- The em dash is the width of the letter M. Use the em dash when a comma or parentheses would create confusion for the reader. The em dash always appears with a space on either side of it. For example:  
The tea — infused with lavender and chamomile — was fragrant and soothing.
- Use the em dash to indicate an abrupt change of thought, an interruption, or added emphasis within a sentence. For example:  
Never have I met such a lovely person — before you, or my agreement with her was clear — she teaches me math and I teach her English.

### 3.6 EN Dashes

- The en dash is roughly the width of the letter N. Use the en dash to express a range of values. For example:  
It will take me 5–6 hours to drive to Detroit.
- En dashes are also used in place of a hyphen in compound terms where one element of the compound itself is a compound of two or more words. For example:  
Post–World War II (not post-World-War-II)

### 3.7 Hyphens

- Hyphens are used in hyphenated compound phrases. Use a dictionary to determine whether a word is commonly hyphenated. There are no spaces before or after a hyphen. For example:  
Three-year degree programs

### 3.8 Ellipses

- An ellipsis in the middle of a sentence consists of three stops followed by a single space. An ellipsis between sentences consists of four stops followed by a single space. For example:  
This ellipsis... is correct. Sometimes you have more than one sentence.... In that case, use the four-stop ellipsis.
- The ellipsis is its own glyph; it is not three adjacent periods. It is used to indicate any omission from the text or a quotation. For an intrasentential omission, make sure that the ellipsis is preceded and succeeded by a space. For example:  
**Original:** Brevity is the soul of wit.  
**Abbreviated:** Brevity is ... wit.
- Where there is an elision between sentences, do not place a space before the ellipsis, and only place a space after it. Make sure the first letter of the second sentence is capitalized. For example:  
**Original:** He said, "Hamlet is one of my favourite plays, and I always enjoy reading it. It has endless subtleties to be noticed."  
**Abbreviated:** He said, "Hamlet is one of my favourite plays.... It has endless subtleties to be noticed."
- Elision at the end of the sentence and quotation, an ellipsis should not be preceded by a space and should be immediately followed by the closing quotation mark. For example:  
He said, "Hamlet is one of my favourite plays, and I always enjoy reading it..."

### 3.9 Parentheses

- Parentheses should be used sparingly.
- It is better to create separate sentences, use commas, or use em dashes in the place of a parenthetical remark. Parenthetical remarks generally don't contain information that is vital to the entire sentence.
- Punctuation is to be placed outside of parentheses. For example:  
(Like this), okay?

### 3.10 Quotation Marks

- When quotation marks are nested, the outer marks are double quotation marks and the inner are single quotation marks. However, within block quotes, the double quotation mark is used. For example:  
"I told him to say, 'I'm American,' but he didn't listen."

This is a block quote. It is demarcated from the main body of text by a carriage return, and it is indented by a single tab. You might say to yourself, “When will I ever use a block quote?” Rest assured that someday you, too, will find a use for one.

- If a term appears in scare quotes to indicate ambiguity in its denotation, these quotes should appear only at the first usage of the term. For example:  
Current reports indicate that young people like to “get down.” How often they get down is currently unknown.
- Capitalize the first word in every quote. For example:  
The woman said, “He sneered and said nothing,” or the woman said, “No, thank you.”
- Single quotes are to be placed around quoted phrases embedded in quoted statements. For example:  
Jane explained, “Bruno didn’t say whether he would be attending the meeting, but he said, ‘I’ll be there if I don’t have any dinner plans.’”
- Place punctuation inside quotation marks. For example:  
She belted out the lyrics “Thunder only happens when it rains.”

## 4. Numbers, Dates, and Titles

### 4.1 Numbers

- Spell out numbers below 10 and use numerical figures for numbers 10 and above. For example, during the first three periods five of the eight games goals were scored on powerplays, or the game stayed tied for almost 12 minutes, but the Blues scored within the final two minutes, a deadly disease, six to 11 per cent of individuals who suffer from anorexia die.
- Exceptions to the above rule include the first word of a sentence (“Twenty-four people die in the avalanche”), official names and organizations (*The 6th Day*, the film), addresses (2 Albertus Ave.), dates and years (September 4, 2010), monetary units when using a symbol (“a \$5 lunch”), and the ordinal ranking of numbers (“they were the twenty-second team to register for the competition”).
- Use commas to set off numbers of four or more digits. For example:  
1,000, or \$14,000

### 4.2 Dates, Times, and Percentages

- The ordinal ranking of centuries should be spelled out. For example:  
The nineteenth century text by Marx  
The music of mid-twentieth and twenty-first centuries
- Decades are plurals and, as such, do not need an apostrophe before the letter s. For example:  
The 1980s British band The Cure
- When abbreviating a decade, be sure to place an apostrophe before the first digit and be sure that the apostrophe appears as a close single quotation mark. For example:  
The ‘80s British band The Cure  
They met in the ‘90s.
- Never place a “th” after the numeral of a date. For example:  
The election is scheduled for March 11, 2012.  
They were scheduled to meet on May 8.
- Always write “am” or “pm” in lowercase and without periods between the letters. For example:  
Breakfast was served at 7:30 am.  
Dinner was served at 8 pm.
- The word “per cent” is spelled out and do not use the per cent symbol (%). For example:  
An eight per cent raise  
A 54 per cent decrease

### 4.3 Personal Titles

- Formal titles that appear directly before a name should be capitalized. For example:  
President Obama  
Prime Minister Stephen Harper  
Queen Elizabeth II

- All other uses of these formal titles should be written in lowercase. For example:  
The president will arrive at Camp David in the morning.  
Michelle Obama, the president's wife, supports the veterans.
- Occupational titles are never capitalized, unless, of course, the title is the first word in the sentence. For example:  
That was when professor Smith lost his marbles.  
The UTSU's president Munib Sajjad gave an interview to *The Varsity*.

#### 4.4 Italics

- Foreign language phrases and words are italicized. For example:  
*habeas corpus* (may you have the body)  
*caveat emptor* (let the buyer beware)  
*burek* (an Eastern European cheese pie)  
*gurdwara* (a Sikh temple)
- When using a foreign language phrase or word in a sentence, the definition of the phrase or word should appear in round brackets or, if the phrase or word appears in the middle of a quotation, in square brackets for the benefit of the reader. For example:  
The PhD candidate studies land rights and the *parsi panachayat* (community government).  
I do *navjotes* (a religious initiation ceremony) of kids.
- The titles of governmental legislation are italicized. For example:  
*The Stop Online Piracy Act*  
*The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act*
- The titles of creative works, such as books, journals, novels, films, or newspapers, are italicized, though individual songs, chapter titles, and newspaper article titles should be placed inside quotation marks.