

Style Guide



*Knowledge
for Life*



K-STATE

Research and Extension

Kansas State University
Agricultural Experiment Station
and Cooperative Extension Service

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What is a Style Guide?

A style guide is a set of standards intended to clarify written or electronic communication. A style guide helps ensure consistency within organizational communications by providing standards for capitalization, punctuation, spelling, terminology, and usage.

Why do we need a style guide?

Different units within K-State Research and Extension produce a variety of materials — some printed, some electronic. Whatever the medium used, organizational messages must be professional and consistent. The style guide provides answers to common questions that arise in writing, recording, editing, producing, or publishing information or educational materials. It is for the use of scientists, agents, specialists, office professionals, communicators, administrators, Web authors, and others who represent the organization.

How to use this style guide

The sections in this guide are arranged so style and usage guidelines come first, with writing help and copyright information in separate sections. Within the sections, entries are arranged alphabetically. Each entry typically covers one style issue. Some entries are extended and provide examples.

The guide highlights common questions and notes items of specific interest in written or electronic material from K-State Research and Extension, the College of Agriculture, and Kansas State University. Other suggested references include a current dictionary, subject-matter references, and other style or usage guides. Our goal is to add to or modify the online version as needed.

The online version can be found at
<http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/style>

The Kansas State University Style Guide can be found at
<http://www.k-state.edu/vpcm/styleguide/>

The following references were consulted in developing this style guide and are recommended companions to it:

The Associated Press Stylebook 2013 (especially for news writing)

Webster's New World College Dictionary, Fourth Edition

Working with Words: A Handbook for Media Writers and Editors, by Brian S. Brooks, James L. Pinson and Jean Gaddy Wilson (any recent edition)

The Chicago Manual of Style, 16th edition (for general writing)

The New Oxford American Dictionary

The Elements of Internet Style: The New Rules of Creating Valuable Content for Today's Readers, by the editors of EEI Press

Garner's Modern American Usage, by Bryan A. Garner, 2009 edition

See the end of this guide for complete bibliographic information and additional resources.

Style

4-H, 4-H'er — The correct name for the department is **4-H Youth Development**. Members are sometimes called **4-H'ers** (*not 4-H'er's* unless possessive). Agents are **4-H Youth Development agents**. Avoid using **4-H** (or any number) to start a sentence. If writing about what a 4-H'er owns, you can avoid using two apostrophes in one word by saying *4-H member's*.

a, an — Use **a** before consonant sounds; use **an** before vowel sounds: *a NASA shuttle, an NEA program* (sounds like it begins with the letter e).

a while, awhile — **A while** is a noun phrase meaning “a period of time,” and usually preceded by a preposition. *I'll be at your house in a while.* **Awhile** is an adverb meaning “for a short time.” *They paused awhile at the inn.*

abbreviations — (See state names entry.) Use periods after abbreviations in most instances. For example: *Dr., Ph.D., Mr.*

For tables or scientific notation, it is acceptable to omit the period unless lack of a period would cause confusion: *lb* not *lbs*, *mL* not *mLs*, but *in.*, *no.*, *a.m.* Some terms of measurement do not use periods after the abbreviation, such as *g* and *mg*. Abbreviations may need to be redefined in each table and figure. In lengthy or technical publications, a list of abbreviations may be useful.

For nonstandard abbreviations, write out a term the first time it's used (in abstract or summary and the main text) and put the abbreviation or acronym in parentheses. Use the abbreviation through the rest of the manuscript, except at the beginning of a sentence.

Latin abbreviations — Avoid using Latin terms such as *etc.*, *i.e.*, *e.g.* in text. Instead use the appropriate English phrase. The Latin abbreviations are acceptable in parenthetical text, footnotes, or endnotes. A Latin

Latin abbreviations

Latin	English
cf.	compare
e.g.	for example
et al.	and others
etc.	and so forth, and so on
i.e.	that is, in other words
N.B.	note well
P.S.	postscript

abbreviation preceded by only one item does not need to be separated from the item by a comma. *Danny Rogers et al.* The table above shows the Latin term (with correct punctuation) and its English equivalent.

adviser — **Adviser** or **advisor** is acceptable (conforms to Kansas State University Style Guide).

advisory — *Mr. Smith was asked to serve on the department's advisory committee.*

affect, effect — **Affect** (verb) To influence. *Rain affects crop growth.* **Effect** — (verb) To accomplish or bring about. *Those who wish to effect change must first make changes in themselves.* **Effect** — (noun) Result. *The effect of the medication was lower blood pressure.*

afterward — No “s” at the end.

agreement of pronoun and antecedent — A pronoun must agree with the noun or pronoun it refers to in person, number and gender. *I can't find my keys. Students must review their notes. Bill lost his phone.* Problems often arise when dealing with a singular noun that is not gender specific. Modern usage avoids using *he* as a generic pronoun but *he or she* is awkward. But do not use *they* or *their* when referring to a singular person. Instead, rewrite the sentence to avoid the problem.

Wrong: *Ask the 4-H member to turn in their entry at the fair.* **Correct:** *Ask 4-H members to turn in their entries at the fair.* See also **they or their**.

agriculture — Spell out instead of using **ag**.

Agricultural Experiment Station — The Hatch Act of 1887 provided federal support for agricultural research in states and territories, establishing an Agricultural Experiment Station at each land-grant institution. The Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station is the research arm of K-State Research and Extension.

AI — artificial insemination

ai — active ingredient

all right — The correct spelling is two words. *Alright is not all right.*

among, between — **Among** refers to three or more things. *He is among the top 10 students in the class.*

Between shows the relationship of two things. *The only difference between the twin sisters is the length of their hair.*

and/or — Avoid. Choose the more appropriate word or use *x or y or both*.

annual — An event that occurs every year. Never use *first annual*.

are, our — The verb **are** is the 2nd person singular present and 1st, 2nd, 3rd person plural present of *be*. *You are my sister. They are cowboys.* The adjective **our** is a 1st person plural possessive form. *Tim and I visited our parents. We returned and found our cars had been destroyed by the tornado.*

assure, ensure, insure — A person **assures** (promises, reassures) others about something. *He assured me the room was reserved in my name.* When a person **ensures** something, he is making certain something will happen or securing an outcome. *I made a deposit on the room to ensure it would be available when I arrived.* A person **insures** something against damage or loss. *The hotel insures its building and contents against damage from fire or other catastrophes.*

backward — No “s” at the end.

bacteria — The plural of bacterium. These organisms are usually referred to in the plural sense. The plural is not bacterias.

based on, on the basis of — Using **based on** at the beginning of a sentence can be problematic because the phrase is often a dangling modifier. For example, *Based on the results, we decided to . . .* means that “we” are “based on the results,” which is not correct. For simplicity, use **based on** as a verb. *On the basis of my experience . . . Our conclusions were based on . . .*

because of, due to — **Because of** means as a result of. *Because of our experiences in the workshop, we learned to develop a household budget.* **Due to** means attributable to. *The participants’ increased knowledge is due to their workshop experiences.*

bi — The prefix indicates “two” or intervals of two units. **Biweekly** could mean twice a week or every two weeks, and **bimonthly** could mean twice a month or every two months. To avoid confusion, avoid using **bi-** in this sense.

biannually, biennially — Note the difference in spelling and meaning: **biannually** (twice a year) and **biennially** (every two years).

bio- (prefix) — words are formed without hyphenation: **biofuel, bioenergy, biomaterial, bioethics, biomass, biobased**.

brand names, trade names — Use generic names when possible, but capitalize brand names or trademarks if they must be used. For example, use self-sealing plastic bags instead of Ziploc. In general, do not use TM or [®] symbols in publications, but they may be required in some types of communication, such as press releases or advertisements.

burndown — Plant reaction to chemical applied for weed control. One word.

byproduct — One word. (Changed from previous style.)

can, could — **Can** means am, is, or are able; it expresses ability and power. **Could** indicates possibility. (See **may, might**.)

capitalization — See guidelines below; also see the section **Titles and Capitalization** on page 9.

Capitalize brand or trade names and animal breeds: *Roundup Ready, Hereford*.

Do not capitalize common names of plants, animals, insects, or diseases unless they are proper names, *Russian wheat aphid, dandelion*.

Capitalize names of recognized geographical regions but not references to local areas. *Great Plains, Midwest* but *western Kansas*.

Capitalize proper names of departments and organizations but not shortened versions. *Department of Agronomy, Kansas State University*, but *agronomy, university*.

When referring to multiple units (counties or departments), don’t capitalize the plural. *Clay County and Riley County*, used separately, but *Clay and Riley counties*, as a plural.

chain saw — Two words.

child care — Two words when used as a noun; no hyphen in all instances *She is looking for affordable child care. My new child care provider lives nearby.*

choose, chose — **Choose** means to select. *Choose wisely.* **Chose** is the past tense of choose. *You chose unwisely.*

community supported agriculture (CSA) — do not hyphenate.

compare with, compare to — **Compare with** means to examine similarities and differences. *The corn-based diet was compared with the soybean-based diet.* **Compare to** means to focus on similarities. *The 4-H volunteer compared the excited campers to a herd of cats; it was impossible to keep the group together.*

compose — to create or put together. *Kansas is composed of 105 counties.*

comprise — to contain, include, or embrace. *Kansas comprises 105 counties.*

county office names — see **K-State Research and Extension**.

Cooperative Extension Service — The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 authorized federal support for the Cooperative Extension Service, which is the national, noncredit educational network of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) within the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Each state shares research-based information through land-grant universities, which in turn provide that information through local offices of the Cooperative Extension Service. Kansas State University is the land-grant university in Kansas.

coproduct — Do not hyphenate.

co-author — Hyphenate.

co-worker — Hyphenate.

dates — Spell out months written alone or with a year. *January 2010.* (Note: No comma when using month and year only.) Abbreviate months with more than five letters when used with the day and year. *Jan. 1, 2010.* Months may be abbreviated in tables to save space.

Correct abbreviations for use in tables: *Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr., May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.*

Dates may be written as *Jan. 1, 2010*, or *1 Jan. 2010*, depending on the publication and intended audience. Because many K-State Research and Extension publications are distributed to a varied audience, we recommend the month, day, year format.

Write dates of decades without an apostrophe before the “s.” The decade is written *1990s*, but use an apostrophe to designate missing numerals. *Class of '07; the '80s.*

diabetes — Two main forms: **Type 1 diabetes** (formerly called juvenile diabetes) and **Type 2 diabetes** (the most common kind; also called adult onset diabetes).

disability — Use people-first language that focuses on the person, not the disability. *He is an adult with a disability. She has a seizure disorder. Her son has a learning disability. My brother uses a wheelchair. My mother has a hearing impairment.*

disc, disk — Generally, CDs and DVDs are **discs**; other storage media are **disks** (hard disk, disk drive).

disinterested, uninterested — These words are not interchangeable. **Disinterested** means impartial. *The mediator served as a disinterested observer of the proceedings.* **Uninterested** means not interested. *She is uninterested in the fortunes of the football team.*

district office names — see **K-State Research and Extension**.

do's and don'ts — AP style uses an apostrophe in the plural word do's, which is an exception to general rules for using apostrophes.

dried distillers grains with solubles (DDGS) — A coproduct of the ethanol production process. Note word order and lack of apostrophe.

email — Short for electronic mail.

***Escherichia coli* O157:H7; E. coli O157:H7** — Italicize the name (but not the letter and numeral designation). Use O not zero. Because the term is common, some scientists use *E. coli* O157 without the :H7.

every day, everyday — **Every day** (two words) refers to something that occurs daily. *The convenience store is open every day.* **Everyday** (one word) means common or routine. *It's an everyday occurrence.*

eXtension — Online site of the Cooperative Extension Service; note “e” is lowercase, “X” is capitalized. Avoid starting a sentence with this word.

extension — Abbreviated reference to the Cooperative Extension Service. Use *K-State Research and Extension* or *Cooperative Extension Service*. Use capitals when it is part of a proper name. Avoid using *extension* alone when referring to the organization in Kansas because it does not encompass its organizational scope within the state. Don't capitalize the term when it is used generically. *She is an extension specialist.* Preferred: *She is a human nutrition specialist with K-State Research and Extension.*

farmers market — A noun phrase that describes a place where local growers can sell their wares. Note the lack of apostrophe.

farther, further — **Farther** is used to express physical distance. *He hiked farther into the wilderness.* **Further** applies to extent or degree. *I will conduct further research into the problem.*

fewer, less — Use **fewer** if you are counting items. *There are fewer marbles in this jar than in the other one.* Use **less** to indicate an amount. *He has less than \$100 in his account.*

FFA — The organization formerly known as Future Farmers of America is now known by its initials only. Use **FFA** for all occurrences.

first come, first served — Not hyphenated; indicates that something will be dealt with in the order in which it was received. *Tickets are available on a first come, first served basis.*

firsthand — One word.

five grand challenges — lowercase in text referring to the five grand challenges that are an emphasis for research and education by K-State Research and Extension. They are: global food systems, water, health, developing tomorrow's leaders, and community vitality. The order can vary, but global food systems should be listed first. The publication UNN28, January 2014, *Making a Difference for Kansans*, describes the five grand challenges in more detail.

flier — Standard spelling in American English, applies to both the person who flies and the handbill announcing an event or product.

foodborne — One word.

french fries — Lowercase — it refers to the style of cut, not the country.

full time, full-time — Hyphenate when used as a modifier. *She works full time. I'm looking for full-time work.*

fundraising, fundraiser — One word.

governmental entities — Capitalize "City" and "State" when referring to the government. *She works for the City of Manhattan. I'm a State of Kansas employee.* When referring to the place, lowercase words such as "city," "village," "township," and "state." *I live in the village of Industry. He visited his grandmother in the city. My uncle lives in the state of Nebraska.*

grand challenges — See **five grand challenges**.

groundwater — One word.

gpa — gallons per acre

gpm — gallons per minute

GPS — global positioning system

handwashing — One word.

health care — No hyphen when used as a noun. *She was concerned about the high cost of health care.* Hyphenate when used as an adjective. *He was looking for a new health-care provider.*

health insurance marketplace — A place to find affordable private insurance plans approved by the federal government. Lowercase unless part of a title.

impact — Avoid using **impact** as a verb, except to mean "strike forcefully." *Raindrops impacted the soil surface, causing runoff and erosion.* Do not use impact to mean "affect."

Internet — Capitalize.

intranet — A private network within an organization; lowercase.

its, it's — Spell the contraction of "it is" with an apostrophe (**it's**). Leave out the apostrophe for the possessive of "it" (**its**).

Kansas State University — **K-State** on second reference. Do not use K-State University. Avoid using KSU unless space limitations require it. Lowercase

university when used alone. The main campus is in Manhattan; the main administrative offices are in Anderson Hall. Additional campuses are in Salina and Olathe:

K-State Salina is at 2310 Centennial Road in Salina. It is home to the College of Technology and Aviation, which offers associate and bachelor's degrees in engineering technology, professional pilot, aviation maintenance, technology management, and family studies and human services.

The **K-State Olathe Innovation Campus** is on 38 acres in Johnson County, near Kansas Highway 7 and College Boulevard. Its academic focus is in animal health, food safety and security, and other relevant areas. The campus will offer graduate education, both master's and doctorate level, as well as certificates, credit courses, and professional development.

K-State Research and Extension — The abbreviated name for Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service. (See separate entries.) The short name is acceptable for general use in publications and other materials. However, the full name must appear *at minimum* as part of the disclaimer used on printed materials from all units of K-State Research and Extension. Avoid using *extension* alone because it does not encompass the scope of the organization in Kansas. Do not use the ampersand sign in place of the word *and*. Identify county and district offices by adding an en dash before the name of the local office: *K-State Research and Extension – Riley County*; *K-State Research and Extension – River Valley District*.

KSRE — Do not use the acronym for K-State Research and Extension in publications or documents except in informal, internal documents (such as email messages).

land-grant — K-State is a land-grant university, the first one in Kansas. The term derives from the Morrill Act, passed in 1862, in which the federal government granted land to each state. The states sold the land and used the proceeds to finance universities. Under the act, these universities are required to offer instruction in agriculture and the mechanical arts as well as to educate the children of workers. K-State was the first college in America to be officially

Numbers

numbers — Spell out one through nine and first through ninth when used alone, and spell out all numbers used as figures of speech: *five cars, first place, hundreds of people*.

Use numerals for all numbers 10 or greater and for numbers followed by a unit of measure: *five plants, 5 g, 3 ft, first place, 20th century, 150 acres*.

Write ages as numerals. *He is 8 years old. My father is 80.*

Write numbers less than 10 as numerals when they are in a series with other numbers greater than 10: *5, 10, and 15 pots*.

Spell out all numbers (cardinal and ordinal) and their associated units at the beginning of a sentence. *Ten grams of leaf tissue*.

Write numbers less than one with a preceding zero: *0.05*.

Use a comma in numbers greater than 999: *1,000*.

telephone numbers — Use dashes to separate parts of the phone number. Parentheses around the area code are also acceptable. Be consistent within a publication: *555-555-5555* or *(555) 555-5555*.

punctuation for units of measure — In tables and scientific writing, do not use periods after abbreviations for units except for those that can be confused with other words: *2 mL, 10 lb, 5 in., 10:00 a.m.* (See also **measurements, units** and the punctuation section.)

designated a land-grant school. The term is almost always used as a modifier: *land-grant university*.

Latin — Do not italicize Latin words and phrases in common usage, such as *in vitro* and *post hoc*.

lay, lie — **Lay** is an action verb and means to put something down. Its past tense is **laid**. *Lay the book on the table. I laid the baby in the crib*. The verb **lie** refers to a state of reclining or resting and its past tense is **lay**. *You should lie down if you feel ill. He lay on the beach all day*.

lead, led — **Lead** as a verb means to guide or direct. *You can lead a horse to water*. But as a noun, it is also the mineral. The past tense of the verb **lead** is **led**. *He led the horse to water but couldn't make it drink*.

LFTB — Abbreviation for lean, finely textured beef. (Sometimes referred to as pink slime. Avoid this usage.)

local office names — see **K-State Research and Extension**.

loose, lose — **Loose** means not tight. *These pants are too loose.* **Lose** is the present tense of lost. *Don't lose your keys.*

low fat, low-fat — Hyphenate when used as a modifier. *He prefers low-fat milk.*

marestail — Broadleaf weed. One word.

may, might — **May** expresses permission or possibility. Use **might** to express something contrary to fact. *If I had studied, I might (not may) have passed the test.* (See **can, could**.)

measurements — Use numerals for measurements and spell out units of measure (feet, inches, yards, miles, cups, teaspoons, tablespoons, and others). Also see **units** for abbreviations used in scientific or tabular material. *2 feet; 5 feet, 7 inches; 1 cup; 4 teaspoons; 7 miles.* Hyphenate modifiers: *5-foot, 7-inch man; 10-foot board.*

mid- (prefix) — Only hyphenate when used before a capital letter. *midsummer, mid-July*

mph — miles per hour. Always use the abbreviation. *The tractor was going 20 mph.*

multicounty — One word.

multipage — One word.

No. — Abbreviation of **number**. *The team is ranked No. 1 in the league standings.*

non — (prefix) Consult a reference, but usually not hyphenated when the meaning is *not*.

nondegree — One word.

nonfat — One word.

nonprofit — One word.

Nutrition Facts label — Appears on food packaging.

online — One word.

organizations — Spell out organizational names

on first reference. (See the list of abbreviations for organizations within or related to K-State Research and Extension.)

opm — ounces per minute

over, more than — **Over** is generally used to describe spatial relationships and passage of time. *Over the past 10 years, participation has increased.* Use **more than** for numerals, figures, and amounts. *More than half of the students passed the test.*

overfertilize — One word.

part time, part-time — See entry at full time.

PDF — The acronym for Portable Document Format, an open standard for document exchange. *I will send you a PDF of the document.*

percent — Spell out. *50 percent, 3 percent.* However, use of the % symbol with numbers (*5%*) is acceptable for many journal articles, Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station publications, and tabular material.

plurals — Most plurals are formed by adding the letter “s”: *dogs, horses, 4-Hers.*

For words ending in “s,” “ch,” “sh,” “ss,” “tch,” “x” or “zz,” add “es”: *buses, couches, axes, dishes, watches, buzzes.*

Many words that end in “y” form the plural by changing the “y” to “ies”: *Try* becomes *tries*, *kitty* becomes *kitties*.

When a vowel precedes the “y,” add “s”: *trays, days.*

This also applies to proper nouns when a consonant precedes the “y”: *Kelly* becomes *Kellys*.

Some words ending in “o” add “es”: *potatoes, tornadoes.* Others simply add an “s”: *pianos, radios.*

Form the plural of multiple letters or single- or multiple-digit numbers by adding “s” (and no apostrophe): *ABCs, PDFs, 1970s, 1s.* Form the plural of individual letters by adding “’s.” *A’s, B’s, C’s.* This is to avoid confusion with common words.

Consult a usage guide or dictionary if you’re uncertain.

possessives — Most possessives are formed by adding “’s”: *the cat’s pajamas, the boy’s cap.* For plural nouns ending in “s,” add only the apostrophe: *the girls’ dresses.* Show the possessive of Kansas by adding only the apostrophe: *Kansas’ citizens.* Consider whether use is possessive (*property tax collections from Kansas’ citizens ...*) or descriptive (*Kansas farmers produced*

a record wheat crop ...). Consult a usage guide or dictionary if you're uncertain.

postemergent — After plant emerges. One word.

preemergent — Before plant emerges. One word.

preplant — Before planting. One word.

psi — pounds per square inch

racial or ethnic identification — The Kansas State University Style Guide recommends no hyphenation of racial or ethnic identities. *African American, Asian American, Native American*. Check with the individual regarding how he or she would like to be identified. Do not use racial or ethnic identifiers unless relevant to the topic.

ranges — Use “to” in a range of values: *10 to 20 days*. Also see **hyphens and dashes** in the **Numbers** section.

right side out — Not hyphenated. *Turn the pants right side out before washing.*

riverbank — One word.

roll, role — **Roll** is a verb describing a way of moving an object by turning over and over. It's also a noun for a small piece of bread or a quantity of material wrapped around a tube or cylinder. *I will roll the tire to the back alley. She served homemade rolls with the dinner.*

Role is a noun describing the part one plays in a play or in an organization. *He played the role of Hamlet. His role at work is to keep everyone on schedule.*

runoff — One word in all instances (AP style, which is an exception to Webster's New World Dictionary).

scientific names — Italicize genus, species, and botanical variety in scientific names. Do not italicize cultivar names. Botanical varieties are preceded by *var.* and are not capitalized. Cultivar names are capitalized and enclosed in single quote marks unless preceded by the word cultivar or included in tables.

Varieties occur in nature. A cultivar is a “cultivated variety” developed by humans.

Examples:

Festuca arundinacea ‘Kentucky 31’

Zea mays L.

Cercis canadensis var. *alba*

Recipe Guidelines

Break out recipes in list and instruction format. Do not write as regular text. Use figures for all quantities in recipes. Do not use abbreviations. Spell out teaspoon, tablespoon, etc.

List number of servings, then ingredients in the order used, followed by instructions. Note the oven temperature (when baking is required) at the beginning of instructions. List nutrition facts at the end.

For nutrition information, leave a space between the number and the unit of measurement (*28 g*) and write it before the nutrient. Do not capitalize nutrients (*28 g fat*).

Example — Strawberry Pineapple Salsa:

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 Roma tomato, diced
- ½ pound strawberries, hulled and diced
- 1 cup diced pineapple
- ¼ cup diced red onion
- 1 tablespoon seeded and chopped jalapeno pepper
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 lime, juiced
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Combine ingredients.
2. Keep in refrigerator up to 3 days.

Nutrition Information per serving: 50 calories; 0 g fat; 13 g carbohydrates; 1 g protein; 3 g fiber; 0 mg sodium.

(*Walk Kansas 2014, week 4 newsletter*)

Common Culinary Conversions

- 1 tablespoon = 3 teaspoons
- 2 tablespoons = 1 fluid ounce
- 1 cup = 16 tablespoons = 8 fluid ounces
- 1 pint = 2 cups = 16 fluid ounces
- 1 quart = 4 cups = 32 fluid ounces
- 1 pound = 16 ounces
- 1 stick butter = ½ cup = 8 tablespoons = 4 ounces

See *Ingredient Substitutions*, L730, for common substitutions.

Gleditsia triacanthos var. *inermis* ‘Sunburst’
Escherichia coli O157:H7; *E. coli* O157:H7 — Use O not zero. Because the term is common, some scientists use *E. coli* O157 without the :H7 (see entry on p. 5). BUT . . . In the agricultural seed trade, named cultivars are usually referred to as varieties. For example, the term “variety” is used in the Kansas Crop Performance Tests (*Kansas Performance Tests with Winter Wheat Varieties*).

sign up, sign-up — You **sign up** for something (verb), but put your name on a **sign-up** sheet or pay a **sign-up** fee (modifier).

state names — Spell out state names in text. *I am from Kansas. Kansas State University is in Manhattan, Kansas.*

When a publication or article relates specifically to Kansas research or is for a mostly Kansas audience, it’s not necessary to use the state name with a Kansas town, but you should use the state name when mentioning places outside of Kansas. *Research results from the Hays field are different from those in fields near Minden, Nebraska.*

Abbreviation is permissible in lists, tabular material, and credit lines. In those cases follow the Associated Press style for state name abbreviations: Never abbreviate Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas, and Utah (unless part of an address). Use the following abbreviations for the other states:

Ala.	Ga.	Mich.	N.J.	R.I.	Wis.
Ariz.	Ill.	Minn.	N.M.	S.C.	Wyo.
Ark.	Ind.	Miss.	N.Y.	S.D.	
Calif.	Kan.	Mo.	N.C.	Tenn.	
Colo.	Ky.	Mont.	N. D.	Vt.	
Conn.	La.	Neb.	Okla.	Va.	
Del.	Md.	Nev.	Ore.	Wash.	
Fla.	Mass.	N.H.	Pa.	W.Va.	

Use the U.S. Postal Service two-letter abbreviations only in full addresses. *301 Umberger Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506.*

statewide — One word, no hyphen.

streambank — One word.

teenager — One word, no hyphen.

telephone numbers — See numbers section.

Titles and Capitalization

people — In text, identify K-State Research and Extension personnel in a way that clearly conveys position or expertise.

Identify administrative personnel by title. *John D. Floros, dean of the College of Agriculture and director of K-State Research and Extension; Daryl Buchholz, associate director for extension and applied research; J. Ernest Minton, associate director for research/associate dean for research and graduate programs.*

For bylines or lists of names in a program, academic degrees, credentials, and departments are relevant to establishing expertise. If space is a concern, use a short byline at the top of the publication with more information at the end. *Bradford Wiles, Ph.D., assistant professor, School of Family Studies and Human Services; Sandy Procter, Ph.D., R.D., Department of Human Nutrition.*

Identify agents, specialists, and researchers by area of expertise. Do not capitalize job names unless part of a byline or program listing. *Robert J. Bauernfeind, entomologist; Donna Krug, Barton County family and consumer sciences agent.*

Capitalize departments or organizations. *Department of Communications and Agricultural Education, Food Science Institute.*

Do not capitalize terms used in titles that are job descriptions. *entomologist, engineer, specialist, agent.*

In news releases, indicate the specialist, agent, or researcher is affiliated with K-State Research and Extension. *Elaine Johannes, K-State Research and Extension youth development specialist.*

Also see the **People, Organizations, Acronyms** section of this style guide for correct names and titles of the university president, deans, directors, department heads, and other campus leaders. Titles are capitalized there as they would appear in a program or similar listing.

To search for people by name, use the people search on the K-State home page or the Personnel Directory at <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/directory/>.

temperatures — Use numerals for temperatures except zero, and use words instead of a minus sign to indicate below zero. *The low last night was 10 degrees below zero.* If it’s necessary to indicate the

scale (Fahrenheit or Celsius), use one of these forms: *75 degrees Fahrenheit, 75 F* (note the space and no period after the F). Some scientific writing or tabular material may use the degree symbol. Use the degree symbol (°), not a superscript letter o.

than, then — Use **than** to introduce a second item for comparison. *Joel is taller than Bob.* Use **then** to express an element of time, often sequential. *Mary went to the grocery store and then went home.*

that, which — Use **that** for phrases that are essential to the meaning of the sentence and without commas. *The house that has red siding is ours.* Use **which** for a phrase that is not essential to the meaning of the sentence, and separate it with commas. *The corner house, which has red siding, is ours.* If you can leave the phrase out of a sentence without changing the meaning, use **which**. Otherwise, use **that**.

they, their — Do not use when referring to a singular person. When trying to avoid using *he* as a generic pronoun, rewrite the sentence to avoid the problem. **Wrong:** *A visitor should park their car in the north parking lot.* **Correct:** *Visitors should park their cars in the north parking lot.* See also **agreement of pronoun and antecedent** entry in the Style Guide section.

time — Report time in either the 12-hour (*2 p.m.*) or 24-hour (*1400 hours*) system as appropriate for the publication and audience. Use one system consistently throughout a publication.

For general audiences, use the 12-hour system with noon and midnight instead of 12 p.m. or 12 a.m. to avoid confusion. It is redundant to say 12 noon.

Wrong: *8 a.m. in the morning or 10:30 p.m. at night.* This is redundant; stop after a.m. or p.m.

When announcing an event, follow this order: time, date, place. *The ice cream social will be at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 15, in City Park.*

timeline — One word.

toe the line — The phrase meaning to accept the authority or policies of a particular group is not “tow the line.”

toward — No “s” at the end.

T-shirt — capitalize and hyphenate.

underway — One word is acceptable for all uses.

units — Use standard (*lb, in., oz.*) or SI units (*g, m, mL*) as appropriate for the topic and audience, but use the same system consistently throughout.

Present units after a range of values except for degrees and percentages. *3, 5, and 7 g* but *10 percent, 20 percent, and 30 percent.* (Some scientific styles use the % symbol.) See also the **numbers, ranges, and measurements** sections.

Include a space between numbers and units except for degrees and percentages when using the symbol: *5 g*, but *10%*. Spell out units not preceded by a number. *Yield was measured in bushels per acre.*

United States — Spell out when standing alone or in a list of countries. *I am from the United States. Countries represented included France, Canada, and the United States.* Abbreviate as **U.S.** (not US, unless part of a longer abbreviation such as USDA) when used as a modifier: *U.S. agriculture, U.S. citizens.*

upside down — Not hyphenated unless used as a modifier. *Turn the chairs upside down for storage. You can't sit in an upside-down chair.*

URL — Uniform Resource Locator, the means of identifying different Web addresses. Many addresses follow the form *http://www.organizationname.com* (or *.org* or *.edu*), so it is acceptable to start a written address with *www.*, omitting the *http://* at the beginning. Italicize Web addresses in written form: *www.ksre.ksu.edu, www.k-state.edu.*

use, utilize — **Use** is appropriate in most cases. **Utilize** suggests a new, profitable, or practical use.

various, varying — **Various** means different or unlike. *The three treatments had various results.* Use **varying** to mean changing. *The varying cloud cover throughout the day made the photo shoot difficult.*

webpage, website — One word (conforms with Kansas State University style).

where — Use to describe a physical place. Incorrect: *In months where rainfall was frequent, irrigation was not applied.* Correct: *In months when rainfall was frequent, irrigation was not applied.* Depending on the sentence, better choices might be **when, whereas, or which.**

while, since — Use to indicate passage of time. Depending on the sentence, better word choices might be **although, but, and, whereas,** or **because.**

while, since, although, whereas — **While** and **since** indicate time. *Since last year, my writing has improved.* **Although** and **whereas** indicate conditional relationships. *Although yield was higher in treatment one, the difference was not significant.*

who, whom — **Who** is used in the subject position of a sentence. *Who is it?* **Whom** is used in the object position of a sentence. *To whom were you speaking?* However, **whom** often sounds stilted in daily use, and many usage guides consider **who** to be standard English for both subject and object. *Who do you wish to speak to?* For formal writing (such as journal articles), follow the traditional rules for usage, but understand that informal language is sometimes acceptable.

whole wheat, whole-wheat — Hyphenate the modifier: *whole-wheat flour.*

x/x— Do not use the letter x where the multiplication symbol is required (e.g., in mathematical expressions, scientific names, interactions).

Punctuation

Consult a dictionary or usage guide for more detailed information about punctuation.

apostrophe — Use an apostrophe in possessive forms of nouns, contractions, omitted figures, or plurals of single letters. *It was the student's (one student) book. The students' (all the students) classes were canceled. We don't (do not) have class this week. It dates back to the '90s (1990s). She got all A's.* (It could be confused with the word "As.") Note: An apostrophe is never used to form a plural for multiple letters or numerals.

colon — Use to set off lists. Space once after a colon. Capitalize the first word after a colon if it is a proper noun or the beginning of a complete sentence. *He likes only three kinds of vegetables: corn, beans, and potatoes. The city council voted on one item: Should we approve the rezoning request?*

comma — Use a comma before the conjunction (*and, or*) in a list: *corn, wheat, and sorghum.* In newspaper columns, follow AP style and do not use a comma before *and* in a series.

Bullets

Bullet points or numbered vertical lists convey steps in a process or points to be highlighted. These guidelines follow general rules of the Chicago Manual of Style:

- If possible, introduce the list with a complete sentence (as above) — that is, one that doesn't need to be completed by the list.
- Be consistent within bulleted lists and between the bulleted lists in a document.
- Items in the list should be parallel in construction. (*• Stop walking, * Look both ways, • Cross carefully*)
- Items do not need to be complete sentences.
- In the case of a bulleted list that consists of incomplete sentences, each item starts with a lowercase letter and needs no terminal punctuation (*• dogs*).
- Periods are not required for items in a list, unless one item is a complete sentence. Then all items should be treated as complete sentences, beginning with capital letters and ending with periods.
- If a list completes the introductory sentence, items begin with lowercase letters and conclude with a comma or semicolon. The final item in the list concludes with a period.

• Items in numbered lists should begin with a number followed by a period, then a space, then a capital letter (1. Be consistent).

If one unit of a series contains commas, use semicolons between units. *Plots were planted on April 1, 15, and 30; May 1 and 15; and June 1.*

ellipsis — Use an **ellipsis** (. . .) to indicate where words have been deleted in quotes or other text. Leave one space on each side of an **ellipsis**. Be careful not to distort the meaning when condensing quotes or text. *Tom Jones . . . gave the presentation.* In informal usage, the **ellipsis** shows an incomplete thought. Avoid this usage in most professional and academic writing.

hyphens and dashes — Use a hyphen in preceding modifiers. *winter-hardy plant, 10-mL tube; 5-year-old child.* Do not hyphenate when the modifier

follows the noun. *The plant is winter hardy.* Do not hyphenate modifiers that end in “ly”: *carefully prepared experiment.*

Use a hyphen with numbers and measurements that modify a noun: *a 3-year-old child, an 8-foot board, a 1½-pound roast.* But don’t hyphenate numbers and measurements when they aren’t used as modifiers. *Sally is 3 years old. The roast weighs 1½ pounds. The board is 8 feet long.*

Suspensive hyphenation is used to show a range that modifies a noun. Note the space before and after the word **to**. *The class is for 9- to 13-year-olds.*

In general, do not use a hyphen with common prefixes (*pre, post, sub*). Check a dictionary if you are uncertain.

When using hyphenated forms in titles or headings, capitalize the parts of the hyphenated word after the hyphen unless it is a preposition, article, or coordinating conjunction: *No-Till Rotations, Multi-Year Research, Run-of-the-Mill Answers.*

Do not use a hyphen in place of a dash. The general rule for dashes is that an em dash (the longer dash) signals a change of thought in a sentence. *We plan to visit Paris this fall — if we can afford it.* An en dash denotes ranges: *May 2–4, 2009, see pages 81–110.* However, use the word “to” to denote range in most text: *6 to 10 miles, 12 to 18 inches.* Most K-State Research and Extension publications and news releases follow AP style for dashes, so a space precedes and follows an em dash.

latitude and longitude — Use the prime (′) and double prime symbols (″) for minutes rather than single and double quotation marks.

period — Use at the end of a sentence and in some abbreviations. Space once after a period.

quotation marks — Use to enclose quoted material. Quotes are always placed outside periods and commas. Other punctuation — question marks, exclamation points, dashes, and semicolons — is placed inside quotation marks when it applies only to the quoted material and outside when it applies to the whole sentence. *I enjoyed reading “Jane Eyre.” “Where did they go?” she asked.* For a quotation that continues for more than one paragraph, use the open quotation mark at the beginning of each paragraph, but use the close quotation mark only at the end of the last paragraph.

semicolon — Use to clarify a series or link independent clauses.

Use a semicolon when items in a series contain commas. *She is survived by a daughter, Mary Johnson, Clay Center; three sons, Bill Smith, of Manhattan, Tom Smith, of Denver, and Joe Smith, of Wichita; and a brother, Walter Jones, of Riley.*

Use a semicolon with independent clauses that show related or contrasting thoughts. *Recent rain has benefited the crops; more of the wheat is rated “good to excellent” now. This summer’s weather has seemed cooler than usual; however, there’s still time for it to get hot again.*

People, Organizations, Acronyms

Names and Titles

Follow this style for programs and similar listings.

Central Administration

Kirk Schulz, K-State President

Noel Schulz, K-State First Lady and Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Programs, College of Engineering

April Mason, Provost and Senior Vice President

Sue Peterson, Assistant to the President and Director of Governmental Relations

Jeffery Morris, Vice President for Communications and Marketing

Karen Burg, Vice President for Research

K-State Research and Extension

John D. Floros, Director, K-State Research and Extension, and Dean, College of Agriculture

Daryl Buchholz, Associate Director for Extension and Applied Research

J. Ernest “Ernie” Minton, Associate Director for Research

Nina Lilja, Associate Dean, International Programs

Steven Graham, Assistant to the Dean and Director

James Lindquist, Assistant Director, Extension Field Operations

Gregg Hadley, Assistant Director, Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Community Development

Barbara Stone, Assistant Director, 4-H Youth Development

Paula Peters, Assistant Director, Extension Family and Consumer Sciences

Zelia Wiley, Assistant Dean for Diversity Programs

Daniel Devlin, Director, Kansas Center for Agricultural Resources and the Environment

Curtis Kastner, Director, Food Science Institute

Area Directors

Chris Onstad, Northwest Area Extension Office (Colby)

J.D. McNutt, Southeast Area Extension Office (Chanute)

Dale Fjell, Northeast Area Extension Office (Manhattan)

Chris Onstad and **J.D. McNutt**, Southwest Area Extension Office (Garden City)

Research Center Directors

Robert Gillen, Western Kansas Agricultural Research Centers (Hays, Garden City, Tribune, Colby)

Lyle Lomas, Southeast Kansas Agricultural Research Center (Parsons, Columbus, Mound Valley)

College of Agriculture

Don Boggs, Associate Dean, Academic Programs

J. Ernest “Ernie” Minton, Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Programs

Nina Lilja, Associate Dean, International Programs

Sharon Thielen, Assistant Dean, Academic Programs

Christine Wilson, Assistant Dean, Academic Programs

Zelia Wiley, Assistant Dean for Diversity Programs

Gary Pierzynski, Department Head, Agronomy

Alan Featherstone, Department Head, Agricultural Economics

Ken Odde, Department Head, Animal Sciences and Industry

Kris Boone, Department Head, Communications and Agricultural Education

John Ruberson, Department Head, Entomology

Dirk Maier, Department Head, Grain Science and Industry

Candice Shoemaker, Department Head, Horticulture, Forestry and Recreation Resources

John Leslie, Department Head, Plant Pathology

Development Officers

Kim Schirer, Senior Director of Development, College of Agriculture

Emilie Fink, Development Officer, College of Agriculture

Gordon Dowell, Gift Planning Officer

Affiliated Colleges and Departments

Ralph Richardson, Dean of Veterinary Medicine

Darren Dawson, Dean of Engineering

Peter Dorhout, Dean of Arts and Sciences

John Buckwalter, Dean of Human Ecology

Joseph Harner, Department Head, Biological and Agricultural Engineering

Organizational Units

College of Agriculture

Agricultural Economics

Agronomy

Animal Sciences and Industry

Communications

Entomology

Grain Science and Industry

Horticulture, Forestry and Recreation Resources

Plant Pathology

College of Arts and Sciences

Biology (division not department)

Biochemistry

Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work

Statistics

College of Engineering

Biological and Agricultural Engineering

Chemical Engineering

Civil Engineering

Extension Energy Service

College of Human Ecology

Apparel, Textiles, and Interior Design

Family and Consumer Sciences

School of Family Studies and Human Services

Hospitality Management and Dietetics

Human Nutrition

College of Veterinary Medicine

Anatomy and Physiology

Clinical Sciences

Diagnostic Medicine/Pathobiology

Research Centers

K-State Research and Extension Center for Horticultural Crops (Olathe)

John C. Pair Horticultural Center (Haysville)

Southeast Agricultural Research Center (Parsons, Columbus, Mound Valley)

Western Kansas Agricultural Research Centers

Agricultural Research Center – Hays

Northwest Research-Extension Center (Colby)

Southwest Research-Extension Center (Garden City)

Southwest Research-Extension Center – Tribune

Department of Agronomy Experiment Fields

East Central (Ottawa)

Kansas River Valley (Topeka, Rossville)

Irrigation (Scandia)

North Central (Belleville)

South Central (Hutchinson)

Department of Horticulture, Forestry and Recreation Resources Experiment Field

Pecan (Chetopa)

Others

4-H Youth Development

Food Science Institute

IGP Institute (formerly International Grains Program)

Kansas Farm Management Association

Konza Prairie Biological Station

Beef Cattle Institute

Acronyms

Use the full name — not the acronym — in columns, documents, newsletters, presentations or other public

or external communications. Avoid using acronyms, but in some cases they may be used in repeated references.

Phrases not capitalized are not proper nouns but represent acronyms frequently used in the organization or the university. Some may be capitalized when used as part of a title.

4HYD — 4-H Youth Development

AACC International — formerly American Association of Cereal Chemists

ACE — Association for Communication Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Life and Human Sciences

ACJ — Agricultural Communications and Journalism

ACT — Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow

AES — Agricultural Experiment Station

AGR — Alpha Gamma Rho

AMSA — American Meat Association

ANR — agriculture and natural resources

APHIS — Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

APLU — Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (formerly NASULGC)

ARC-H — Agricultural Research Center – Hays

ASA — American Society of Agronomy

ASABE — American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers

ASI — Animal Sciences and Industry

BAE — Biological and Agricultural Engineering

BIVAP — Bioprocessing and Industrial Value-Added Program

BMP — best management practice

BRI — Biosecurity Research Institute

CARET — Council for Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching

CCOP — College Committee on Planning

CEA — county extension agent (internal use only)

CECD — Center for Engagement and Community Development

CED — county extension director (internal use only)

CES — Cooperative Extension Service (avoid using “extension” alone)

CGAHR — USDA-ARS Center for Grain and Animal Health Research (formerly the Grain Marketing Production Research Center, GMPRC)

CDC — Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (note “s” n Centers)

COA — College of Agriculture

CRP — Conservation Reserve Program

CSSA — Crop Science Society of America

DCOP — Department Committee on Planning

DEA — district extension agent (internal use only)

DED — district extension director (internal use only)

DMP — Diagnostic Medicine/Pathobiology (department in College of Veterinary Medicine)

DPO — Diversity Programs Office

EDEN — Extension Disaster Education Network

EEO — Equal Employment Opportunity

EFNEP — Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

ESARP — Extension Systems and Research Programs (used in budget line only)

ESP — Epsilon Sigma Phi

EXCOP — Extension Committee on Planning

FCS — family and consumer sciences

FNHS — Food, Nutrition, Health and Safety

FNP — Family Nutrition Program

FSCOT — Faculty Senate Committee on Technology

FSCOU — Faculty Senate Committee on University Planning

FSHS — School of Family Studies and Human Services

FSI — Food Science Institute

GEAPS — formerly Grain Elevator and Processing Society

GIPSA — Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

GPDN — Great Plains Diagnostic Network

GPIEA — Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance

GSD — Gamma Sigma Delta

HACCP — Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points

HFRR — Horticulture, Forestry and Recreation Resources

IDEA — Interactive Distance Education Alliance

IFT — Institute of Food Technologists

IGP — IGP Institute (International Grains Program)

IMLP — International Meat and Livestock Program

KABSU — Kansas Artificial Breeding Service Unit

KACAA — Kansas Association of County Agricultural Agents

KAE4-HA — Kansas Association of Extension 4-H Agents

KAES — Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station

KAMS — Kansas Agricultural Mediation Services

KARL — Kansas Agriculture and Rural Leadership Inc.

KCARE — Kansas Center for Agricultural Resources and the Environment

KCSAAC — Kansas Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Alternative Crops

KDA — Kansas Department of Agriculture

KEAA — Kansas Extension Agents Association

KEAFCS — Kansas Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences

KDHE — Kansas Department of Health and Environment

KDWP — Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

KFB — Kansas Farm Bureau

KFMA — Kansas Farm Management Association

KLA — Kansas Livestock Association

KFS — Kansas Forest Service

KOHP — Kansans Optimizing Health Program

K-PICS — K-State Research and Extension Program Impacts Collection System

KPA — Kansas Pork Association

KPC — Kansas Pork Council

KSRE — K-State Research and Extension (used for internal communication only)

KSU — Kansas State University (K-State is preferred)

KSUAES&CES — Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service (proper name of K-State Research and Extension, which must appear on organizational documents)

KWA — Kansas Water Authority

KWO — Kansas Water Office

KWRI — Kansas Water Resources Institute (formerly KWRRI)

LMIC — Livestock and Meat Industry Council

LPC — Livestock Publications Council

LTIO — long-term intended outcome

MAB — master of agribusiness (degree program)

MAST — Management Analysis and Strategic Thinking (online agribusiness learning program)

MANRRS — Minorities in Agriculture, Natural

Resources and Related Sciences

NABC — National Agricultural Biosecurity Center

NAADA — National Agricultural Alumni Development Association

NACAA — National Association of County Agricultural Agents

NAE4-HA — National Association of Extension 4-H Agents

NAMP — North American Meat Processors Association

NASULGC — National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (now APLU)

NBAF — National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility

NEAFCS — National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences

NIFA — National Institute of Food and Agriculture (formerly CSREES)

NISTAC — National Institute for Strategic Technology Acquisition and Commercialization

NPC — National Pork Council

NPDN — National Plant Diagnostic Network

NRCS — Natural Resources Conservation Service

NWREC — Northwest Research-Extension Center

OEIE — Office of Educational Innovation and Evaluation

OLG — Office of Local Government

OMK — Operation Military Kids

PBC — Plant Biotechnology Center

PDC — program development committee

PDIS — Plant Diagnostic Information System

PFT — program focus team

PI — principal investigator

RMC — Reciprocal Meat Conference sponsored by the American Meat Science Association

SARE — Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education

SHICK — Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas

SEARC — Southeast Agricultural Research Center

SNAP-ED — Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education

SRS — Social and Rehabilitation Services

SWREC — Southwest Research-Extension Center

TMDL — total maximum daily load

UDP — university distinguished professor

USAID — United States Agency for International Development

USDA — United States Department of Agriculture

WDL — Weather Data Library

WERU — Wind Erosion Research Unit

WGRC — Wheat Genetics Resource Center

WIC — Women, Infants, and Children

WHO — World Health Organization

WKARC — Western Kansas Agricultural Research Centers

WRAPS — Watershed Restoration And Protection Strategy

Write Clearly

Good writing is clear and consistent. It doesn't have to be complicated or include lots of big words. Most of our publications, brochures, and websites are intended for the public and should be understandable to the lay reader.

Here are a few more guidelines:

- Avoid jargon. If you must use special terminology, define or explain it early in the publication. Apply the same rule to acronyms. Spell out the name or term before using the acronym alone: Division of Water Resources (DWR).
- Use the active voice (Joe hit the ball) rather than passive voice (the ball was hit by Joe).
- Revise and rewrite. Most of the time, your second draft will be shorter and clearer.
- Be sure any tables or charts clearly convey the information and coincide with the text that refers to them.

Not all repetition in writing is bad. Sometimes repeating a word or phrase adds emphasis. Using two words when one will do, however, is redundant. Here are some examples (with best choice bold in parentheses):

- adequate enough (**adequate**)
- as a general rule (**as a rule**)
- basic fundamentals (**fundamentals**)
- close proximity (**proximity** or **close**)
- consensus of opinion (**consensus**)
- current status (**status**)
- different varieties (**varieties**)
- disappear from sight (**disappear**)
- early beginnings (**beginnings**)
- empty space (**empty** or **vacant**)
- end result (**result**)
- exactly alike (**alike** or **identical**)
- final completion (**completion** or **final**)
- for the sum of (**for** or **sum**)
- free gift (**free** or **gift**)
- honest truth (**truth**)
- joint partnership (**partnership**)
- new breakthrough (**breakthrough**)

on pages 20 to 30 inclusive (**pages 20 through 30**)
precisely correct (**correct**)

regular weekly meetings (**regular meetings** or **weekly meetings**)

separate entities (**separate**)

surrounded on all sides (**surrounded**)

true facts (**facts**)

visible to the eye (**visible**)

From **Media Mix, First Quarter 2002**, at:

<http://www.communications.ksu.edu/>

Streamline Your Writing

Whether you are writing for a scientific journal or your website, be concise. Convey meaning without extra words.

Wordy	Preferred
a distance of 175 miles	175 miles
add up	add
cancel out	cancel
circulate around	circulate
connect together	connect
continue to remain	remain
cylindrical in shape	cylindrical
during the month of July	during July
few in number	few
finish up	finish
in order to	to
in this day and age	now
joined together	joined
open up	open
period of time	period
prior to the start of	before
red in color	red
refer back to	refer to
repeat again	repeat
send out	send
small in size	small
still remain	remain
summer months	summer
the reason is because	the reason is
the reason is why	the reason is
try out	try

Writing for the Web

Suggestions by Amy Hartman, electronic documents librarian, K-State Research and Extension

Content and Readability

Users skim webpages. They may not take time to figure out how a site is supposed to work. To make a webpage lend itself to skimming:

- Keep paragraphs short, and use subheadings and lists. Not all readers will scroll down to finish a long page.
- Avoid blocks of small print, jargon, and complex sentences.
- If a title is long, put the most important words first.
- Sans-serif fonts, such as Arial, may be easier to read online than serif fonts, such as Times. This text is in a serif font. This is in a sans serif font.
- Black text on white background has the best contrast.
- Links should be easy to find (colored text, often underlined).
 - Link to a file to print (PDF, for example) for easier in-depth reading.
 - Don't confuse readers with text that looks like a link but isn't.
- Webpages should be discovered by search engines; therefore, each page should make sense if read alone with identifying information (header, footer, etc.) so readers know where it came from.
 - The title, subheadings, links, and text should include keywords the audience will use to find your topic.

Technical Issues

- Avoid using spaces in names of files and folders on the Web.
- Avoid posting scanned documents that are actually pictures of text.
 - Use real text so search engines can locate content. To prove text is real (if necessary), copy and paste the text into a word processor (MS Word, for instance).
- Test your pages. Proofread text and check links. Look at the pages with more than one Web browser. Check all the links on your pages every few months because some external links may have gone bad.
- Keep file size as small as possible.
 - Multipage documents (such as PDFs or PowerPoint) should be less than 1,000K.
 - Large documents are slow to download. Use low-resolution graphics files (less than 100K, smaller if there are several graphics on a page). Add alternate text to graphics so search engines can read them.
- If you use several photos in a rotating slide show, make sure they are exactly the same width and height.
 - Rotating photos of different heights makes the text below the photos seem to "bounce."
 - Animated graphics can be distracting.
- For PDF files, add a good title to the document properties. This title is displayed in search results.

Some concepts from: *Don't Make Me Think!* (2nd ed.) by Steve Krug (2005, New Riders Publishing)

Additional Resources

Agricultural Stylebook and Guide for Journalists, Terence L. Day (retired), Washington State University, <http://cabnrs.wsu.edu/agricultural-style-guide-for-journalists>

The American Heritage Guide to Contemporary Usage and Style. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 2005.

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th ed. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 2006.

The Associated Press Stylebook 2011. 45th ed. Basic Books. 2011.

The Chicago Manual of Style. 16th ed. University of Chicago Press. 2010.

The Dictionary of Concise Writing: More Than 10,000 Alternatives to Wordy Phrases. 2nd ed. Marion Street Press. 2006.

The Elements of Internet Style: The New Rules of Creating Valuable Content for Today's Readers. Allworth Press. 2007.

The Elements of Style. bnpublishing.net. 2008.

Garner's Modern American Usage. Bryan A. Garner. Oxford University Press. 2009.

The New Oxford American Dictionary. 2nd ed. Oxford University Press. 2005.

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. 5th or 6th ed. American Psychological Association. 2001 or 2009.

Scientific Style And Format: The CSE Manual for Authors, Editors, And Publishers. 7th ed. Council of Science Editors. 2006.

U.S. Government Printing Office Style Manual: An Official Guide to the Form and Style of Federal Government Printing, 2008. 1st ed. U.S. Government Printing Office. 2009.

Webster's New World College Dictionary. 4th ed. Webster's New World. 2004.

Working with Words: A Handbook for Media Writers and Editors. 7th ed. Bedford/St. Martin's. 2009.

Copyright Information

One habit can help keep educators on the right side of copyright law: If you did not originally write, film, design, paint, draft, photograph, compose, sketch, or otherwise create the work, you must obtain permission to use it and properly credit it.

Following are a few recurring questions.

Q: I found material for my newspaper column on the Web, but I always include the website as a source. Is that OK?

A: You certainly may direct readers to relevant educational websites that offer information about the column's topic. You may not copy and paste material from the site into your column, unless you obtain permission and attribute the material to the originator. Keep the attribution with the quoted or paraphrased material to avoid any appearance of plagiarism. Newspapers often delete the last part of an item to fit, which could eliminate references at the end of the column.

Q: What about material from K-State Research and Extension news stories or publications? May I use that?

A: Only with attribution. Never present it as your own work — even if an author has given you permission to do so.

Q: Another state has a publication I would like to revise for Kansas. How should I proceed?

A: If the material comes from another land-grant university site, send the author or publication coordinator a letter to request permission. (Sometimes e-mail will do.) Some states are generous with reprint/revision rights, but others are protective of their intellectual property. Using the material might involve a fee. Most material from the federal government is in the public domain.

Q: Does the concept of fair use cover me as an educator?

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*Knowledge
for Life*

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