

# Communications Nova Scotia Style Guide for Publications

**Note:** This is the style guide is used for material published through Editorial Services. For Media Services material, please refer to the *CNS Style Guide for News Releases*.

## EDITORIAL STYLE

### ABBREVIATIONS

In general, abbreviations should be avoided, except in tables or other applications where space is limited.

Except as noted below, use periods in all abbreviations, except units of measure.

p.	cm
Co.	ft
Mr.	tsp

### Acronyms and Initialisms

Do not use periods between the letters of abbreviations that consist of upper-case letters—RCMP, HST, CBC.

Unless it is very well known to the audience (YMCA, RCMP), spell acronyms and initialisms out in full on the first occurrence. For example, “The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) lists 10 species as extinct or extirpated.” Do not provide a short form in parentheses after its full name if the short form is never used again within the text.

### AD, BC; am, pm

Write these abbreviations without periods.

### Geographical Names

Spell out the names of provinces (and states) when they stand alone (“The choir will be performing at a music festival in Prince Edward Island.”). The name of a province may be abbreviated when it follows a place name (Sackville, NB). Similarly, do not abbreviate *County* when the name of the county stands alone (Halifax County); it may be abbreviated when it follows a place name (Lawrencetown, Annapolis Co.; but Lawrencetown in Annapolis County).

### Titles

When a civil or military title is used with the surname alone, the title is spelled out (Captain Bligh); with full names, such titles are generally abbreviated. (Rev. Sidney Smith). The titles *Reverend* and *Honourable* are spelled out if preceded by *the* (the Honourable John Hamm).

### CAPITALIZATION

- Capitalize complete titles and proper names (the Department of Environment and Labour, “the Minister in Charge of Administration of the Human Rights Act”). Passing references, “the department,” “the act,” “the society,” generally are not capitalized.

- Use caps for *the Government of Nova Scotia* or *the Government of Canada* where it is being used in an official sense, but *the government*, when it is being used generally: “Funding for the program is cost-shared by the Government of Nova Scotia and the Government of Canada”; but: “The federal and provincial governments share the cost of the program.” This also applies to *province, city, town*, etc.
- In general, for nouns and adjectives describing ethnicity, race, or culture, use upper case only when they are derived from proper names, for example, aboriginal, Arab, black, African Canadian, Inuit, white.
- See the Style Sheet section of this document for specific cases. *Editing Canadian English* includes a rather nice discussion of capitalization as “a source of confusion and ambivalence for Canadian editors.”

## CITATION/DOCUMENTATION

When citing works in a footnote or bibliography, use the following style. For more detailed information about notes and bibliographies, see *Chicago Manual of Style* or *Editing Canadian English*. For specialized publications, other styles may be used, but they must be used consistently and correctly.

### Bibliography

Author, A. N., and J. Writer. *Book Title*. Place: Publisher, 1999.

Writer, John Q. “Title of Article,” *Journal* 23 (June 2000): 199–201.

Scribe, I. N. “Chapter Title.” In Jane Doe, ed., *The Compendium*. Place: Publisher, 1985.

Nova Scotia. Department of Words. *Policy Guidelines*. [Halifax]: Department of Words, 2001.

### Footnote or Endnote

Ann Author, *The Title of the Work* (Place: Publisher, 2004), 21.

### Material on the Internet

When citing material available on the Internet, give the usual information—author's name (if known); the full title of the section or page, in quotation marks (if different from the name of the website); the title of the complete work, or website in italics; any version or file numbers; and the date of the document or last revision (if available). Next, list the protocol (e.g., “http”) and the full URL, followed by the date on which the page was accessed, in parentheses.

“Questions and Answers.” *The Chicago Manual of Style*. 2003.

<http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/cmosfaq/cmosfaq.html> (October 27, 2003).

### Author/Date Citations

The author/date system of citation seems to be gaining ground. In this method references in the form of author's last name and date of publication are placed in the text in parentheses (University of Chicago Press 2003, 616). Rather than notes or bibliography there is a reference list at the end of the publication, which is formatted the same as for a bibliography, except that the date of the publication follows the author's name (or authors' names):

University of Chicago Press. 2003. *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed.

## COPYRIGHT

Do not use any copyright material in any publication without first seeking permission from the copyright holder to use or adapt it. Even if there is no copyright notice or it was produced by an agency of another agency, permission must be sought. For more information, see the Intellectual Property Guidelines at <[http://iweb.gov.ns.ca/cmns/intellectual\\_property\\_g.htm](http://iweb.gov.ns.ca/cmns/intellectual_property_g.htm)>.

## DATES

- Write month/year dates without a comma: January 2003.
- Use an en-dash between inclusive dates: 1998–99, 2002–2003
- Write longer dates as month/day/year, with commas before and after the year: “Children born before January 1, 1987, are not eligible for this deduction.”

## GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

The official spelling for Nova Scotia place names is given in *The Gazetteer of Nova Scotia* and in *A Map of the Province of Nova Scotia*. See below under Reference Books. On-line resources (which include an option to view the location on a map) are Nova Scotia Geographical Names, at <<http://www.nsplacenames.ca/>>, and Canadian Geographical Names, at <[http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/index\\_e.php](http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/index_e.php)>. Note that the official Canadian spellings generally omit the apostrophe (Peggys Cove, St Peters), but not always. The municipal district of St. Mary’s in Guysborough County is written with an apostrophe, although the river in the same district is St Marys River.

## GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Watch that the names of provincial and federal government departments are given correctly—particularly after a reorganization. For example, the federal department HRSDC has gone from being Human Resources Development Canada to Human Resources and Social Development Canada to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and back to Human Resources and Social Development Canada.

If there could be some confusion, be sure that it is clear that it is a provincial or federal department that is being referred to: the Nova Scotia Department of Justice; the federal Department of Justice.

For up-to-date information, check the government websites or call the government information lines: Nova Scotia: website, <[www.gov.ns.ca](http://www.gov.ns.ca)>; telephone, 424-5200 or 1-800-670-4537; Canada: website, <[http://www.gc.ca/main\\_e.html](http://www.gc.ca/main_e.html)>; telephone, 1-800-622-6232.

## LISTS

The following is an attempt to rationalize the punctuation and capitalization of lists where each element begins on a new line. It eliminates the use of semicolons and the vexing question of whether to put “and” at the end of the penultimate clause. When working with material presented this way, it is often necessary to rewrite some elements—usually making them into complete sentences. If it won’t work with a particular publication, ensure that the method chosen is logical and is used consistently<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The Department of Education curriculum guides are a case in point. They contain suggestions for teaching and suggestions for assessment that are set as bulleted statements below the words “Teachers can” or “Students

- Where a section consists only of **a list following a heading** (a list of materials or qualifications, for example), use initial caps, but no terminal punctuation unless the items consist of complete sentences. All elements in the list must be parallel.
- Where each element in the list forms **a complete sentence**, use an initial capital letter and end the element with a **period**.
- If the elements are **words or phrases** that complete the introductory sentence, but cannot stand alone, use an initial lowercase letter (unless it is a proper noun) and **no terminal punctuation**.

When introducing a list, it is not necessary to use a **colon** unless it is grammatically correct to do so. (This also applies to lists in running text.) If the last word in the introductory phrase is “including,” “such as,” “that,” or “to,” for example, no punctuation is used. If the list is introduced with an expression such as “namely” or “for example,” a comma is used. If the introductory statement is complete and followed by other complete sentences, it is followed by a period. Examples of these styles follow.

#### **Qualifications**

- Grade 12 or equivalent
- Certificate in early childhood education
- Valid driver’s licence

#### **Qualifications**

To be considered for this position you must have the following qualifications:

- grade 12 or equivalent
- certificate in early childhood education
- valid driver’s licence

The act recognizes the following principles:

- The protection of the environment is essential to the integrity of ecosystems and the social and economic well-being of society.
- Sustainable development, which ensures that the needs of the present can be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, is a guiding principle.
- Government must play a leadership role in the areas of environmental education and research, promotion of technology, and development of environmental standards.

The Environment Act authorizes the Minister of the Environment to

- establish environmental policies, programs, and standards

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can.” Treating the bullets points as continuations of the introductory phrase (i.e., lower case and with no terminal punctuation) is fraught with difficulty, because they frequently consist of several sentences. The most recent solution is to change the introductory phrase to “Teachers can do the following:” and begin each statement with a capital letter and end it with a period. For example: “Have students prepare a written report with graphics. Appendix C includes a list of suggested topics.”

- coordinate activities with other departments, agencies, and governments
- involve the public in environmental decision making
- regulate waste management and disposal
- promote conservation
- develop, administer, and enforce laws to preserve, protect, manage, and enhance the environment

## Numbered Lists

The elements are usually introduced with bullets, although they are sometimes enumerated. Do not use numbering unless it relates to the text—outlining a step-by-step procedure, for example. If points are enumerated, the numbering of subsections should be logical and the system should be used consistently: do not use numbers in one chapter and letters in the next. Also be consistent in numbering secondary lists, for example, Arabic numbers for the first level, lower-case letters for the second level; and lower-case Roman numerals for the third.

Remove numbering from headings and subheadings (1.1 Introduction; 1.1.1 Background). Numbers interfere with the readability of the text and make it harder to locate information.

## MEASUREMENT

Except under special circumstances (historical documents, for example), imperial measures should not be used alone. Convert all imperial measures to metric. SI measurements may be used alone where SI has been established, generally in distance (km) and temperature (°Celsius) and for highly technical material. Since metric is being used most consistently in the schools, publications intended for elementary and high school students would also use SI alone.

In publications for readers who are likely to be unfamiliar or uncomfortable with SI, include the imperial equivalents in parentheses. Examples of this would be measurement in cooking and other household activities and construction or repairs by non-professionals (home insulation, for example), as well as material for visitors to the province.

Exercise editorial judgment, weighing the age and knowledge of the reading audience. For example, information on nutrition for seniors should contain both SI and imperial forms of measurement; the same publication for adolescents should be in metric alone.

The precision of a converted value should reflect the precision of the original. For example, “The sand beach stretches for **almost four miles**” would be “The sand beach stretches for **more than six kilometres**,” not **6.4 km**.

Be sure that the correct size is given for items that are sold in metric quantities: 1/2-inch tape is sold as 13 mm, not 1.27 cm or 1.3 cm.

For more information and references on metric usage, see Chapter IX of *Editing Canadian English*.

## NUMBERS

These are general rules for using numbers in government publications. In some instances, particularly in scientific copy, different rules may apply. Check with Editorial Services if you are unsure.

- **Spell out all numbers under 10**, except for percentages, which are always in figures (**5 per cent**), and where a figure begins a sentence—“Twenty-five per cent of those who responded.” Note that **per cent** is written out (as two words), except in tables where the per cent sign (%) can be used in the table and stub headings, but not in the title of the

table. Note that numbers are used for public school grades and that the “g” is lower case: grade 5, grade 12.

- Percentages are always expressed in figures (e.g., Only 2 per cent of the students failed.).
- Numbers in the same category should be treated alike within the same context: “During the year there were **nine** fewer producers registered under the plan. The average herd size dropped to **50** cows, a reduction of **5** animals.”
- Use a comma to separate triads of numbers (4,000 acres, \$567,893), except for year dates (1989) and with SI measurements where a space is used instead of the comma (45 598 ha). In SI the space may be omitted where there are only four digits to the right of the decimal place (2500 kg).

When proofing SI measures separated by a space, mark places where the space is so large that it looks odd (125 689 ha). This is particularly likely to happen in justified type. The designer can manually reduce the spacing (125 689 ha). Also mark where there is a line break in the middle of the measure.

- Treat inclusive numbers according to the following system (taken from *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 13th edition). The numbers are separated by en dashes

Less than 100	Use all digits	3–10; 71–72
100 or multiple of 100	Use all digits	100–104; 600–613; 1100–1123
101 through 109 (in multiples of 100)	Use changed part only, omitting unneeded zeros	107–8; 505–17; 1002–6
110 through 199 (in multiples of 100)	Use two digits, or more as needed	321–25; 415–532; 1536–38; 11564–68; 13792–803
But if numbers are four digits long and three digits change, use all digits		1496–1504; 2787–2816

## PUNCTUATION [SEE ALSO DATES, NUMBERS ABOVE]

### Apostrophe

An apostrophe is used to denote possession: “the book of John” becomes “John’s book.” Similarly, expressions based on the old genitive case are formed in the same way, so “I have 14 years of experience” becomes “I have 14 years’ experience” (the genitive here implies *of*).

### Commas

- Always use a **serial comma** (also known as an Oxford or Harvard comma) before **and** or **or**. (“The Finance Section develops, implements, and administers programs for monitoring budgets.”)
- Use commas to set off the identifying element in geographical entities (names of towns, counties, provinces, and countries): “Lawrencetown, Annapolis County, was chosen as the site of College of Geographical Sciences in 1948.”
- Watch out for a tendency for writers to omit the comma between **independent clauses** in **compound sentences**, but to put one into compound subjects or predicates.

- Coordinate adjectives (i.e., those whose order does not affect meaning) should be separated by a **comma**. Where they are not coordinate (one adjective modifies the phrase formed by the following adjective(s) plus the noun), they should not be separated by a comma. For example, in the phrase “an old, poorly installed culvert,” the adjectives are coordinate; in the phrase “a corrugated steel culvert,” they are not. (To check this, try saying the phrase with “and” between the adjectives: if it makes sense, the adjectives are coordinate.)

### Dashes

- En dashes separate inclusive numbers and replace the hyphen in compounds where one element consists of two or more words (e.g., Nova Scotia–New Brunswick border). When the two elements of a compound are also compound, a solidus (/) may also be used (the total Halifax-Toronto/Montreal-Vancouver flying time ...)

Except in these cases, en-dashes do not replace hyphens: for example 12-page booklet and Halifax-Dartmouth Metropolitan Area both use hyphens. See Numbers, above, for a table of inclusive numbers.

### Hyphens

- Follow the general rules for hyphenating compound words. *Editing Canadian English* (see Reference Books below) devotes an entire chapter to this, and the *Chicago Manual of Style* has a very useful table. As Fowler says, “the hyphen is not an ornament but an aid to being understood.”
- A hyphen should not be used after an adverb ending in -ly.

### Points of Ellipsis ...

- Regardless of location, show points of ellipsis as three points only, with the points set tight and word spacing before and after ...

### Quotation Marks

- In quoted matter, periods and commas should be placed within the **quotation marks**, whether or not they are part of the quoted matter.

## REFERENCE MATERIAL

This list covers some of the reference books and websites used by the Creative Services Section. Books should be available at the reference section of the public library.

- *Editing Canadian English*, by the Freelance Editors Association of Canada, is an excellent resource. It contains a section on avoiding bias, a useful glossary of terms that are of interest in a Canadian context, and an interesting discussion of “Canadian style.”
- *The Chicago Manual of Style* is invaluable for information on long documents and is the work most often referred to for matters of arrangement of elements, punctuation, hyphenation, capitalization, etc. The section on tables is especially useful for editing annual reports. The current edition is the 15th. The monthly questions and answer section on the University of Chicago Press website (<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/cmosfaq.html>) is informative and sometimes amusing.
- There are a number of books available on gender-free usage. Two that I use are: *The Handbook of Nonsexist Writing: For Writers, Editors and Speakers* by Casey Miller and Kate Swift, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1988) and *The Nonsexist Word Finder: A Dictionary of Gender-Free*

*Usage* by Rosalie Maggio (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989). The latter contains 5,000 entries, including four alternatives to “manhole” that don’t involve that straw man (red herring?) “personhole.”

- The source for the correct spelling of Nova Scotia place names is the Geographical Names Board of Canada, which has a searchable database at [http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/search/search\\_e.php](http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/search/search_e.php). The responses link to maps, which will help to sort out, for example, which of nine Grand Lakes in Nova Scotia is being referred to.

## SPELLING

Communications Nova Scotia follows the Canadian direction of using both American and British styles for different categories of words and being consistent within those categories (except where the other spelling is used in official names: Bar Harbor, Maine, or Performing Arts Center, for example). In general, *Oxford Canadian Dictionary* is the dictionary of choice, but *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary* is used for words not found in the Oxford. When in doubt, look it up. For example, “civilize,” “criticize,” “organize,” and “realize” are all Oxford’s first choice, although many people assume that the “British” spelling for those words is “-ise.”

In general, if a word isn’t in the dictionary, don’t use it (current examples include transition or credential being used as verbs (“We are transitioning this project ...”) and the noun “mentee” (a person being mentored). Even if it is in the dictionary, don’t use an awkward word where a common word will serve as well (“utility” or “usefulness” rather than “functionality”). The exceptions are in titles (a project called “Demarketing Smoking,” for example) or where the word has a special meaning for a particular group and the publication is intended for that group (environmental reports often use the word “exceedance” to mean the amount by which acceptable levels are exceeded).

## URLS

One problem with information on the World Wide Web is that it changes or is moved, so URLs frequently become obsolete. Check all URLs to ensure that they are still valid. Avoid long strings of letters by using only as much of the address as needed to locate the document: “Go to our website at [www.gov.ns.ca](http://www.gov.ns.ca)/•••• and click on Publications.” Except in bibliographies (see Citation/Documentation above), it is not necessary to include the protocol (<http://>) unless the URL does not begin with “www” (<http://museum.gov.ns.ca>).

As more people become familiar with the Internet, they are less likely to include sentence punctuation in a URL. However, where a URL is given within a paragraph, it is better to word the sentence so that the URL is not followed by a comma or period. If this is unavoidable, the URL should be surrounded by angle brackets so that the punctuation does not appear to be part of the address: <http://www.gov.ns.ca>. Note that angle brackets are not needed if the URL will be set out in some way (e.g., in a different colour) or if it is in a list.

## STYLE SHEET

This list includes unusual spellings (the words you keep having to look up), style decisions that have been made for publications edited within Editorial Services, and things to watch out for. This style sheet is evolving, so be sure you have a current copy.

When in doubt, be consistent—and keep a style sheet.

**aboriginal.** Note that the term includes Métis and Inuit, as well as First Nations, so it should not be used with “reserve.”

**act,** when referring to a piece of legislation use lower case unless the full name is given (“ ... the act ...”; “The ●●●● Act

**AD 1990, 55 BC:** use caps without periods for year designations.

**am, pm** use lower case without periods for time

**analyse,** not analyze

**appendix, appendixes.** See **-ex/exes, -ix/ices** entry for more information.

**anglophone, francophone**

**blackfly**

**by-law, by-product, by-way;** but **bypass, bystander**

**caregiver**

**cheque,** not check

**child care** (n.)

**child-care** (adj.)

**clean up** (v.), **cleanup** (n.), **clean-up** (adj.)

**clearcut** (noun and verb)

**coalfield**

**coal mine**

**collective nouns:**

Sum of money: singular “Over \$2.6 million has accumulated in the fund.”

**co-operate, co-op,** but **coordinate**

**co-worker,** not **coworker**

**data/datum.** Unless the work is clearly technical in nature, the plural form, **data,** is usually used for both singular and plural (yes, it’s an Americanism, but ...).

**dates.** Names of months are always spelled out in text, whether alone or in dates. In chronologies, notes, tabular matter, etc., they may be abbreviated.

**day care** (n.)

**day-care** (adj.)

**decision making** (n.), **decision-making** (adj.)

**deep-sea** (adj.), **deepwater** (adj.)

**defence,** not defense

**dyke**

**dykeland**

**down payment**

**e.g./i.e.** Ensure that these terms are used correctly. E.g. is from the Latin *exempli gratia*, “for the sake of example,” and is used to introduce one or more examples that illustrate something stated directly or shortly before it. I.e., from the Latin *id est*, “for example,” is used to introduce a rewording or clarification of a statement that has just been made or of an expression that has just been used. In other words, e.g. simply indicates an example; i.e. specifies or explains.

Also ensure that these terms are preceded and followed with a comma (unless they are introduced with a colon).

**e-mail**

**enrol, enrolment,** but **enrolled, enrolling**

**exceedance,** this noun is used in environmental reporting to mean an

occurrence of an air quality measurement exceeding a particular objective (usually the acceptable level). It doesn't appear in Webster's Third, but it is an example of a new word that expresses a concept that cannot otherwise be described concisely. It should be used with caution.

**-ex/-exes, -ix/-ices**, use **-exes** or **-ixes** when plurals of **-ex** are used in a popular sense and for words that have become established English ("The book has two indexes." "You will find that information in the appendixes."). Use **-ices** for words used in purely scientific or technical sense ("Common matrices of agate include ..." "Note on the manuscript the use of subscript and superscript for mathematical indices.")

**federal** is lower case unless it is part of a proper name: **federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans**, but **Federal Business Development Bank**

**First Nation**, not **Indian** unless in specific reference to the *Indian Act*. See also **aboriginal**.

**floodplain**

**focused**, not **focussed** (except in publications following the Department of Education style)

**fresh water** (n.), **freshwater** (adj.)

**fundraising, fundraiser**

**furharvester, furharvesting** is the term used in the industry and by the Department of Natural Resources

**goodwill**

**Governor in Council** (not hyphenated, but see **order-in-council**)

**Governor General**

**grassroots**

**grade** (lower case, with the grade level expressed as a number, e.g., grade 2). Note: **grade primary**, but **grades P-6**.

**grey**

**ground cover**

**groundwater** (n. and adj.)

**he/she, his/her**. See **they**.

**health care** (n)

**health-care** (adj)

**hectare** There are 2.471 acres to the hectare. Multiply acres by 0.4 (or if you want to be really accurate, by 0.4046944) to convert to or check the metric equivalent.

**index**. For plural, write as **indexes**, except in the mathematical sense, when the Latin plural, **indices**, is used. See **-ex/exes, -ix/ices** entry for more information.

**Indian**. Do not use the term for aboriginal Canadians unless it is in the context of the Indian Act (i.e., status Indian) or in quoted material. It is preferable to use the term First Nation(s) for general reference or the specific nation, Mi'kmaq or Malecite, for example. Note that the term "aboriginal" includes Métis and Inuit.

**-ing**. Compound nouns formed with an object + gerund, such as **decision making, dry cleaning, problem solving** (n) are written as two words; but the adjectival forms are hyphenated: **decision-making skills, dry-cleaning fluid**, etc.

**inquiry, inquire**, not **enquire, enquiry**

**Internet, the Internet**

**intranet**

IV (for intravenous) and other abbreviations made up of letters within a word (**TV, TB**, etc.) are set in caps without periods.

**jewellery**, not **jewelry**

**judgment**

**Kleenex** and other trademarked names—even those that have passed into common usage—should be written with caps. It is not necessary to use the <sup>TM</sup> or the ® symbol. The symbols are for the trademark owner to indicate its rights to its own materials. It

would be preferable to use a generic term such as tissue.

**land owner**, not **landowner**

**leverage** in financial terms means using a small amount of money to make an investment that is worth more.

**licence/license** should follow the “practice/practise” distinction for noun and verb forms as shown below. However, the spelling of “license” as a noun is deeply entrenched in some departments, so the spelling for the noun should follow their established practice. The verb form should always be **license**.

**Lieutenant Governor**

**lifelong**

**lifestyle** (noun and adj.)

**long-standing**

**look-alike**

**-ly**: Compound adjectives formed with adverbs ending in **-ly** are **not** hyphenated: “**privately owned land**.” Such compounds as “environmentally-friendly products” are found rather frequently in the local newspaper, and this usage is beginning to creep into publications that come into this office

**micro-organism**

**Mi'kmaq/ Mi'kmaw\*** Both terms are a single word with only the first letter capitalized. *Mi'kmaq* is a noun and is the plural form; it is used to refer to more than one person and to the First Nation as a whole (the Mi'kmaq). *Mi'kmaw* is used for the singular form of the noun, including an individual

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\* This entry was changed for clarification on May 12, 2006, following a conversation with Dr. Bernie Francis. The examples and explication are taken from correspondence with speakers of Mi'kmaq, from Ruth Holmes Whitehead, *Tracking Dr. Lonecloud: Showman to Legend Keeper* (Fredericton: Fiddlehead Poetry & Goose Lane, 2002), p. 25, and from information on the Mi'kmaq College website, <http://mrc.uccb.ns.ca/mciprofile.html>.

person and the Mi'kmaw language, and as an adjective (to modify both singular and plural forms). Here are some examples:

They are Mi'kmaq. She is a Mi'kmaw.

He speaks fluent Mi'kmaw. She is studying the Mi'kmaw language.

the Mi'kmaw people/Mi'kmaw communities

**mould, mouldy**

**mucous** (adj.), **mucus** (noun)

**mud flat**

**offshore**

**old-fashioned**

**ongoing**, not on-going (and only if unavoidable)

**online** (adj. and adv.)

**order-in-council, orders-in-council**, but see **Governor in Council**; abbreviated as OIC, OICs

**-our** is used rather than **-or** (**colour, labour, favour**) except where it is part of a proper name: **Bar Harbor, Maine**. But watch for derivatives: **coloration, honorary, humorous**, but **behavioural, colourful, honourable** (if you are unsure check Oxford).

**overwinter**

**P.E.I.** and other geographic abbreviations (**U.S., U.S.S.R.**) are written with periods, most other abbreviations are without stops. See **Abbreviations**

**per cent** (see Numbers, p. 6). Note that for Department of Education use **percent**, the spelling in *Gage Canadian Dictionary*. Note that **percentage** is preferred when expressing

**Plasticine** and other trademarked names—even those that have passed into common usage—should be written with initial caps. It is not necessary to use the <sup>TM</sup> or the ® symbol. The symbols are for the trademark owner to indicate its rights to its own materials. It is

preferable to use a generic term, such as modelling clay.

**plough, ploughing** (but **snowplow**)

**Post-it.** See Plasticine above. It would be preferable to use the term “sticky note.”

**practice** (noun), but **practise** (verb)

**pre-eminent**

**program**, not **programme**

**provincial** is lower case unless it is part of a proper name: **provincial government**, but **Provincial Tax Commission**

**provincewide**

**rainwater** (n.)

**RCMP** and other abbreviations made up of initials (except for geographic names) are written without periods. See **P.E.I.** and **IV.**

**-re** is used rather than **-er** (**centre**, **manoeuvre**, **fibre**, **litre**)

**realize**, not **realise**

**recognize**

**re-establish**, but **reorganize**, **readmit**, etc.; also **co-operate**, but **coordinate**

**reserve**, not **reservation**, is the correct term in Canada. Note that it is preferable to use “First Nations” rather than “aboriginal” with **reserve**, since the term **aboriginal** includes Métis and Inuit who do not have reserves.

**résumé**, which is Oxford Canadian’s first choice and is also the CP style

**runoff** (n.)

**Saint, St, St-, Ste** For individual place names in Nova Scotia, only Saint Ninian is spelled out. Note that although in Quebec, French place names containing **St** and **Ste** are hyphenated and have no period after the abbreviation (Ste-Anne-des-Monts), most Nova Scotian names have been anglicized (St. Croix, Ste. Anne du Ruisseau), except for Petit-de-Grat and Main-à-Dieu, which retain the hyphens.

**Saint Mary’s University, Mount Saint Vincent University**, but **St Francis Xavier University**.

**salt marsh** (n.), **saltmarsh** (adj.)

**salt water** (n.), **saltwater** (adj.)

**seabed, seabird, seacoast, seashore, seawater** (but see **water** below), **seaweed**

**sea floor, sea level, sea slug**

**shorebird**

**shoreline**

**skeptic, skeptical**, not **sceptical**. For the reason, see Fowler’s *Modern English Usage*.

**Styrofoam** and other trademarked names—even those that have passed into common usage—should be written with initial caps. It is not necessary to use the ™ or the ® symbol. The symbols are for the trademark owner to indicate its rights to its own materials. It would be preferable to use a generic term such as rigid foam.

**that/which.** The subject is dealt with thoroughly in Fowler’s *Modern English Usage* under “that”; in Gowers’s *The Complete Plain Words*; and in Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*. People writing “officialese” tend to think that “which” is more formal and use it indiscriminately to introduce both defining and non-defining (or commenting) relative clauses. Although one should not “which” hunt too dogmatically (this is discussed in Gowers), the general rules should apply.

**they.** We recommend the use of the singular “they” when a pronoun is needed for a gender-neutral (or indefinite) antecedent. Other strategies for making language inclusive, such as using “he/she” or “he or she,” making the construction plural, or alternating gender in different paragraphs, do not work in all cases and can be awkward. The singular “they” (and “their,” etc.) is a form that was in common use until 19th-century grammarians decided that it broke Latin-based grammar rules and was therefore “bad grammar.” Modern grammarians are inclined to view this as

faulty logic and instead consider the singular “they” to be “old established good usage” and preferable to other means to avoid the generic “he.” See

<http://www.crossmyt.com/hc/linghebr/austheir.html> for a more detailed discussion, which includes a list of writers who have used this form and many examples from Jane Austen.

**timeline** and **timetable**, but **time sheet** and **time span**

**™** is a symbol used by the owner of an unregistered trademark to indicate their intention to defend the mark. It is not necessary for anyone else to use this symbol (or **®** for a registered trademark), which are for the trademark owner to indicate its rights to its own materials. The name should be capitalized or (better yet) a generic term should be used. (See entries under Kleenex, Plasticine, Styrofoam, and Xerox for examples.)

**trademark**, but **trade name**

**tree line**

**under-served** (adj.) Without a hyphen, this word at first glance may be read as “undeserved,” and it could cause readability problems.

**under way**

**universities.** Ensure that the correct name is used: Cape Breton University, Mount Saint Vincent University, NSCAD University, St. Francis Xavier University, Saint Mary’s University.

**Vaseline** and other trademarked names—even those that have passed into common usage—should written with caps. It is not necessary to use the **™** or the **®** symbol. The symbols are for the trademark owner to indicate its rights to its own materials. It

would be preferable to use a generic term such as petroleum jelly.

**videocassette**

**videotape** (n. and v.)

**water** compounds: **freshwater**, **saltwater**, **groundwater**, **deepwater** (adj.); but, **fresh water** (noun); **salt water** (noun), **seawater** (noun and adjective); **rainwater** (noun and adjective); **groundwater** (noun); **wastewater** (noun); **cold-water** (adj.), **hot-water** (adj.).

**watercourse**

**Waverley**, but **Waverly Game Sanctuary**

**website**, **webmaster**, **web browser**

**wellhead**

**well field**

**wharfs**

**workforce**

**workgroup**

**workplace**

**Workers’ Compensation Board**, also **Workers’ Compensation Act**

**World Wide Web**, **WWW**, but **web**, **the web**  
**worldwide**

**X ray** (n), **X-ray** (v) (Note: cap for X)

**Xerox** and other trademarked names—even those that have passed into common usage—should written with an initial cap. It is not necessary to use the **™** or the **®** symbol. The symbols are for the trademark owner to indicate its rights to its own materials. It would be preferable to use the generic term photocopy.