The *Journal* of The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

Style Guide for Authors

Purpose of this document:

This document is intended to provide contributors to the *Journal* with a brief guide to the English language style standard in use. We hope that the rules and examples provided here will help authors avoid the most common spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.

General Information:

The *Journal* is written in English, with French translations provided for abstracts and other key features. Submitted articles are expected to be written in a relaxed prose style, but conforming to proper English grammar and spelling rules. Canadian spelling can be found in the Oxford Dictionary of Canadian English. Grammatical and other rules can be found in, for example, Fowler's Modern English Usage, the Canadian Press Stylebook, or the Chicago Manual of Style.
Electronic submissions are STRONGLY encouraged and will speed the publication process. Documents submitted in MS Word or Word Perfect will be accepted.
Research papers are presently charged $100 CAD per printed page.

Manuscript Submissions:
Research papers are expected to have the general form:

- Title
- Author's name(s)
- Author Affiliation
- Email Address
- Abstract
- Text
- Acknowledgments (if any)
- Appendices (if any)
- References
- Figure captions (if any)
- Figures (if any)
- Tables (if any)

Punctuation:

Period:
The period is used to indicate a full stop at the end of a sentence. It is also used to indicate when a word has been abbreviated with the exception of some acronyms in common use. Periods are never used at the end of a reference.

Comma:

A practical rule that works most of the time is that the comma is used when there is a natural pause in speech. Modern practice is to not use a comma following short introductory phrases. A comma is used to separate every item in a list, and is used before the word “and” at the end of the list.

Colon:
The colon follows a complete sentence and is used to separate a list from the rest of a sentence. It is also used before a quotation that is longer than two lines.

Semi-colon:
This mark is used when two thoughts are only loosely related, but when the author wants to leave them in the same sentence. It should be used sparingly.

Quotation marks:
Double quotation marks are used when repeating another author’s words. If the quotation is longer than three lines, then a long quote should be used (see separate section). Quotations are enclosed in double-ticks. A quotation within a quotation is demarked by a single tick.
The modern usage is to put all punctuation inside the quotation marks, whether they are a part of the original quotation or not. The exception is where the use of the quotation makes the meaning of the sentence or phrase ambiguous. This modern usage is different than the historical or “strictly correct” usage.
Quotation marks are also used when the author wants to indicate that the enclosed word or phrase is being used outside of its strict dictionary definition. Examples are colloquialisms.

Short versus long quotes:
Quoted material that is three lines or shorter remains part of the current paragraph structure and is demarcated by quotation marks. Quotes longer than three lines are separated from the rest of the paragraph in that they are started on a new line and are indented. Never end a paragraph with a long quote.

Parentheses:
Used for incidental information. Parentheses whisper.

Dashes – Three types:
- hyphen (single dash) – used as the normal part of an expression,
- en dash (double dash) – used to separate dates or a range of dates; as a minus sign
- em dash (long dash) – used to indicate a break in thought, no space before or after

Italicized print:
Used for book titles when cited in the main text of an article but not in the reference section, and only the full title, not acronyms or initialisms. Also used for some proper names, such as software packages, magazines, and newspapers. Some of these will have their own font convention, e.g. IRAF and AIPS.

All orbiter names should be capitalized (e.g. *Atlantis, Columbia, Discovery*). Also italicize lunar module and command module names (e.g. *Eagle, Columbia, Odyssey, Aquarius*). Do not italicize mission names (e.g. STS-44). All ships should be italicized (e.g. the *Hornet*, the *Enterprise*).

Punctuation:
All punctuation marks should appear in the same font—roman or italic—as the main or surrounding text, except for punctuation that belongs to a title or an exclamation in a different font. No comma following Latin phrases, like e.g. or et al. (and not italicized). No periods in degrees, i.e. PhD; MA, MBA.

Apostrophes:
In words ending with "s" follow the suggestion given here—add an "s" in every case (www.eng-lang.co.uk/apostrophes.htm):
Some ... are pronounced with an awkward "zuziz" or "eeziz" sound so some people prefer to drop the final s, and some guides allow this "for classical names ending in s," which would thus have Venus' statue but Venus's tennis serve. It seems illogical to restrict it to classical names, so I feel Cervantes' novels would also be acceptable. Personally, I use 's in every case (so Jesus's writings) or avoid the problem by using the novels of Cervantes.
It seems common in U.S. usage to drop the second "s" even in non-classical names (and in nouns which are not names...), but this is not recommended by The Columbia Guide to Standard American English.

Ellipsis:
Three dots (...) are used to indicate the omission of words from a quotation. They are never used to indicate pauses in thought or the presence of an incomplete thought or as an indication that the reader is supposed to draw a conclusion. If the omission includes the end of a sentence, use four dots.

Spelling:
Canadian spelling is a mixture of British and American forms.
1. Use of the letter "u" is British: it is retained in words like "colour," "favour," and "neighbour."
2. The letter "z" is American: it is used in words like itemized, authorize, and realize.
3. Corporate-inspired conventions are not followed, e.g. "employee" is used instead of "employe."

Other spelling conventions:
Capitalization
- planetary names are capitalized, Venus, Mars
- "earth" is not capitalized when synonymous with "soil"
- "Sun" when referring to it specifically as a star
- "the Moon" when referring specifically to Earth's moon
- fields of study are not capitalized, e.g. astrobiology, physics
- star names with Greek letters are upper case, e.g. Mu Geminorum

- use “Universe” and “Solar System”

Dates and Times:
All dates should be of the form “2007 December 25,” except in tables where they are abbreviated “Dec. 25.” If only the month and year are given, follow the form “December 2007.” Only use “st” “rd” “th” or “nd” if the month isn't shown, e.g. 15th or 22nd. If the month is shown, e.g. August 15 or September 22.

- 3 BCE, but the 3rd century BCE
- 5 CE, but the 6th century CE
- December 8
- 1999 and ’99 (latter should be avoided)
- the 1920s, and the ’20s

In scientific or technical papers, times are shown in the 24-hour clock. Civil time is shown as “a.m.” or “p.m.” in popular articles.

Abbreviations:
Should an acronym or other abbreviation be deemed necessary, the abbreviated term should be written in full when it first appears in the main text. Standard abbreviations are:

- Latin terms, as e.g.; i.e.; et al.; etc.
- SI units (mg, kJ, K)
- y = year, as in “My” (million years) (In running text, when no value is given, use “year”; instead of using “ky” use “1000-year period”)
- chemistry: small caps for ionization stages, e.g. HII, CA I
- normal font for elements and compounds, e.g. H_2O
- normal font for isotopes, e.g. ^{13}CO
- units are written using exponential notation, not fractions, e.g. m s^{-1}, g cm^{-3}
- astronomical units written as (au)

References:

In the body of the *Journal*:

In-line citations are given in parentheses, like (Hubble 1929). If the citation is part of the sentence, then the author’s name is excluded from the parentheses, as in “...according to Hubble (1929)....”

Reference section:

A reference list appears at the end of the paper as a separate section. All citations in the main text must be listed here with complete bibliographical information, and items not cited must not appear in the reference section.

We adopted the standard provided by the APA (American Psychological Association) as a reference style: Elements of the APA stylesheet include such in-text matters as

punctuation standards, margin depth, line spacing, and heading format. See https://apastyle.apa.org/products/publication-manual-7th-edition

Journal abbreviations to be used in Reference section:
A&A – Astronomy and Astrophysics
A&AS – Astronomy and Astrophysics Supplement Series
AJ – Astronomical Journal
ApJ – Astrophysical Journal
ApJS – Astrophysical Journal Supplement
Ap&SS – Astrophysics and Space Science
ARA&A – Annual Review of Astronomy and Astrophysics
BAAS – Bulletin of the American Astronomical Society
JRASC – Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
MNRAS – Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society
PASP – Publications of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific
Note: The Observer's Handbook is referred to as the "*Observer's Handbook*." (Italicized in running text.)

Miscellaneous word usage:
1) This
The word "this" should not be used as a noun. It should always be accompanied by a modifier, as in "this idea" or "this result" or "this observation."
2) Real and really:
These words should not be used for the purpose of emphasis. They are synonyms for "true" and "truly."
3) "Which" vs. "That"
These two words are not interchangeable. As for "which" vs. "that," the use of "which" is a Briticism that found its way into North American speech but is technically incorrect, unless it is preceded by a comma (which you seldom find in spoken prose!) and it introduces a non-restrictive clause. *The Chicago Manual of Style* puts it this way "A distinction has traditionally been made between the relative pronouns 'which' and 'that,' the latter having long been regarded as introducing a restrictive clause, and the former, a non-restrictive one. Although the distinction is often disregarded in contemporary writing, the careful writer and editor should bear in mind that such indifference may result in misreading or uncertainty.
When the commas intended to set off a non-restrictive clause are omitted, perhaps with the purpose of using 'which' restrictively, the reader may well wonder whether the omission was inadvertent. Some uncertainty will persist."

4) Data:
The word "data" is plural.

5) Telescope Sizes:
10-inch or 10-cm, don't use double quotation marks

6) Eyepieces, cameras:
35-mm, 135-mm

7) Telescope powers:
35 × <— the × is really a multiplication symbol

8) Webpages and email Addresses:
Webpages and email addresses are put in a special font. With webpages beginning "www," the "http://" is omitted since it is redundant (otherwise the "http://" remains for a URL that does not begin "www").
The use of the term "web," as in "website," or "webmaster" is not capitalized.

9) Astronomical Positions:
RA is like: $20^{h}\ 34^{m}\ 34^{s}$ (with h, m, s superscripted)
Dec is like: 30° 34′ (with the d being a degree symbol and the ′ being a prime symbol, not an apostrophe)

10) Spaces:
There is one space after a period separating sentences.

11) Equations:
If using Microsoft Word, use the equation editor.

12) Footnotes:
If using Microsoft Word, use the footnote feature.

13) Tables:
If using Microsoft Word, use the set TAB feature.

14) Scanned Figures:
If black-and-white line drawings, use high resolution (600 dpi) and save as a TIF.

15) Monetary units are given as stated in the CP style guide (i.e. $27.50 USD, $12.00 CAD).

16) Large numbers include commas after every three digits (example: 1,000,000) except when the number only contains four digits (i.e. 4000).

17) Email is spelled "email."

18) Doctoral degree abbreviation should be written as "PhD" or "MSc"

19) Numbers containing "th" or "rd" etc. are written in normal font, not superscript. Example, "20th century" is acceptable.

20) Contractions are not to be used in research papers, but are acceptable in "popular"-style articles (their use is discouraged).

21) Beginning a sentence with a conjunction is discouraged.

22) Figures must be sent as separate files and NOT embedded within a document (e.g. Word file). Figure formats can be jpeg, bitmap (at least 300 dpi at final size), tif, ps, or eps.

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