

THE VARSITY

STYLE GUIDE

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Introduction

The Varsity's Style Guide is based in large part on the *Canadian Press Stylebook*. It serves to inform our writers about the writing formalities at *The Varsity* and to instruct our copy editors in matters of editing.

A checklist for copy editors:

- Highlight every fact and claim made in the article for fact-checking purposes.
- Write your first and last name at the top of the first page of every article that you edit. Also indicate whether you have fact-checked the article.
- Each article is to be edited and fact-checked by two different copy editors before it is returned to the corresponding section editor.

Elements of an article

Every article must have a headline, a sub-heading, and a byline. The following elements should appear on every draft of an article. Please note if they are not present.

HED: The headline of an article, which tells the reader what the article is about. No period is necessary at the end of a headline.

DEK: The sub-heading of an article, which provides the reader with more information about the story. No period is necessary at the end of a sub-heading.

BYLINE: The author's name

Example:

HED: Low youth voter turnout a concern in upcoming provincial election

DEK: Many students away from campus for summer, unable to vote

BYLINE: James Flynn

EXCEPTION: Sometimes the name of the author will appear in the DEK. It is not necessary to note a missing byline in such cases

Edit Marks

EDIT	EDIT MARK	EXAMPLE
Delete a letter, word, sentence, or punctuation	— or e	The cat in the the hat
Insert word or punctuation	^	The cat in ^{the} hat
Insert space	# or ^	The cat [#] the hat
Delete space	()	The cat in() ⁽ the hat
Join two words to make one)	The cat braced himself for take ⁾ off
Insert em dash		I like your cat — wait, that's a dog. ^M
Insert en dash		The score was 5-2. ²
New paragraph	¶	
Transpose letters, words	~	The in [~] cat the hat
Change case		The cat's name is <u>cat</u> .
Italicize text	ital.	The <u>Toronto Star</u> wrote about the cat. ^{ital.}
Romanize text	rom.	The <u>Toronto Star</u> wrote about the cat. ^{rom.}
Awkward phrasing/sentence fragment	awk	The cat had a hat, but he drank heavily. ^{awk}
Ignore this edit	stet	The cat in the hat stet

Punctuation

APOSTROPHE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Apostrophes are used to denote a contraction of two words. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. Don't try to stop me. <p>NOTE: <i>The Varsity's</i> News and Science sections tend to avoid using contracted words, except if the contraction appears in a quote.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Apostrophes are used to denote possession. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use apostrophe s ('s) after singular terms and proper nouns ending in s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – e.g. The cat's hat – e.g. James's cat ○ Use only an apostrophe (') for plural terms ending in s and ancient names <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – e.g. The cats' respective tails – e.g. Achilles' heel <p>NOTE: Do not use the apostrophe where numbers or capital letters are pluralized (unless it is necessary to avoid ambiguity).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. He learned his ABCs. (<i>Not</i> ABC's) ○ e.g. I bought him a few CDs.
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<p>COMMA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use the oxford comma (also called the serial comma) in a list: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. She ate strawberries, apples, and oranges. ▪ Input a comma between two independent clauses conjoined by <i>but</i>, <i>and</i>, <i>or</i>, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. I told him to go to the store, but he went home instead. ○ e.g. I told him to go to the store but learned that he went home instead. <p>NOTE: The second sentence above lacks a comma because “but learned that he went home instead” lacks a subject and cannot stand on its own as a sentence.</p> ▪ Input a comma when introducing a relative clause and to set off non-restrictive or non-essential elements of the sentence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. The car, which was covered in decals, was on fire. <p>NOTE: “Which” clauses give a reason or add a description to the sentence that may not always be essential; “that” is generally used when the clause defines or limits the noun (e.g. The car that was covered in decals was on fire). “Which” clauses need commas, and “that” clauses do not.</p>
<p>SEMICOLON</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The semicolon helps to convey a close connection between two related ideas. Use the semicolon to join together two independent clauses that are closely related in meaning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. Abdominal exercises help prevent back pain; proper posture is also important. ○ e.g. She has been falling asleep in class lately; she needs to get more rest. ▪ Also use the semicolon to separate list items that are long and complex. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. Thomas Mulcair, leader of the NDP; Bob Rae, leader of the Liberals; Stephen Harper, leader of the Conservatives and prime minister of Canada.

<p>COLON</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Using the colon in a sentence is like using an equal sign (=) in math. The colon is placed after an independent clause to introduce a list, a quotation, or an explanation. Use it only in cases when it can be replaced by the phrases <i>for example</i>, <i>namely</i>, and <i>that is</i>. Make sure that the first part of the sentence can stand alone as a complete sentence (rather than a fragmented one). <p>Do not capitalize the first letter of a sentence following a colon, unless the word is a proper noun or the beginning of a quotation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. Visitors to foreign countries require the following items: a foreign language phrase book, money, health insurance, and a desire to experience different cultures. ○ e.g. The coach urged his struggling team to reflect on the immortal words of Buddha: “There is suffering in life.” ○ e.g. The reason for the company’s success is plain: it is far more nimble than its competitors.
<p>EM DASH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The em dash is the width of the letter M. Use the em dash when a comma or parentheses would create confusion for the reader. The em dash always appears with a space on either side of it. ○ e.g. The tea — infused with lavender and chamomile — was fragrant and soothing. ▪ Use the em dash to indicate an abrupt change of thought, an interruption, or added emphasis within a sentence. ○ e.g. Never have I met such a lovely person — before you. ○ e.g. My agreement with her was clear — she teaches me math and I teach her English. <p>Keyboard shortcut (for Mac): <i>em dash</i> = <i>alt+shift+hyphen</i></p>

<p>EN DASH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The en dash is roughly the width of the letter N. Use the en dash for scores, votes, decisions, rulings, and odds. The en dash does not have spaces on either side of it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. The Blues won 5–2. ○ e.g. The court ruled 6–3. ▪ En dashes are also used in place of a hyphen in compound terms where one element of the compound itself is a compound of two or more words. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. post–World War II (not post-World-War-II) <p>Keyboard shortcut (for Mac): <i>en dash</i> = <i>alt + hyphen</i></p>
<p>HYPHENS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hyphens are used in hyphenated compound phrases. Use a dictionary to determine whether a word is commonly hyphenated. There are no spaces before or after a hyphen. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. Three-year degree programs
<p>ELLIPSIS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The ellipsis is its own glyph; it is not three adjacent periods. It is used to indicate any omission from the text or a quotation. For an intrasentential omission, make sure that the ellipsis is preceded and succeeded by a space. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Original: “Brevity is the soul of wit.” ○ Abbreviated: “Brevity is ... wit.” ▪ Where there is an elision between sentences, do not place a space before the ellipsis, and only place a space after it. Make sure the first letter of the second sentence is capitalized. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Original: He said, “Hamlet is one of my favourite plays, and I always enjoy reading it. It has endless subtleties to be noticed.” ○ Abbreviated: He said, “Hamlet is one of my favourite plays... It has endless subtleties to be noticed.” ▪ For an elision at the end of the sentence and quotation, an ellipsis should not be preceded by a space and should be immediately followed by the closing quotation mark. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. He said, “Hamlet is one of my favourite plays, and I always enjoy reading it...”

<p>PARENTHESES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use parentheses sparingly. ▪ It is better to create separate sentences, use commas, or use em dashes in the place of a parenthetical remark. Parenthetical remarks generally don't contain information that is vital to the entire sentence. ▪ Punctuation is to be placed outside of parentheses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. (Like this), okay?
<p>QUOTATION MARKS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capitalize the first word in every quote. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. The woman said, "He sneered and said nothing." ▪ Single quotes are to be placed around quoted phrases embedded in quoted statements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. Jane explained, "Bruno didn't say whether he would be attending the meeting, but he said, 'I'll be there if I don't have any dinner plans.'" ▪ Place punctuation inside quotation marks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. She belted out the lyrics "Thunder only happens when it rains." <p><u>EXCEPTIONS:</u> If the last word(s) of a sentence appear in quotations, the followings marks should be kept outside the quotation marks: ?, !, ;, and :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. I love the song "Maxwell's Silver Hammer"! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not use quotation marks to enclose slang or colloquialisms, but idiosyncratic words should appear in quotation marks accompanied by an explanation the first time the word appears in the article.

Numbers

Spell out numbers below 10, and use numerical figures for numbers 10 and above.

Examples

- The game stayed tied for almost 12 minutes, but the Blues scored within the final two minutes.
- A deadly disease, six to 11 per cent of individuals who suffer from anorexia die.

Exceptions to the rule

- First word of a sentence
 - e.g. Twenty-four people died in the avalanche.
- Official names and organizations
 - e.g. *The 6th Day* (a film)
 - e.g. *8 Mile* (a film)
 - e.g. Firm 13 Limited (a company)
- Addresses
 - e.g. 2 Albertus Avenue
- Dates and years
 - e.g. September 4, 2020
- Monetary units when using a symbol
 - e.g. A \$5 lunch
 - e.g. A \$35 dinner
- The ordinal ranking of numbers
 - e.g. He ranked twelfth out of 20
 - e.g. They were the twenty-second team to register

Numbers and commas

Use commas to set off numbers of four or more digits.

- e.g. 1,000
- e.g. \$14,000

Year of study

Always spell out the year of study — do not use numerals.

- e.g. She was a fourth-year student.
- e.g. He was in his second year of study.

Centuries, Decades, Dates, Times, And Percentages

Centuries

Spell out the ordinal ranking of centuries. Avoid using numerals.

- e.g. The nineteenth century screed by Marx
- e.g. The music of the mid-twentieth and twenty-first centuries

Decades

Decades are plurals, and as such do not need an apostrophe before the letter s.

- e.g. The 1980s British band The Cure.

When abbreviating a decade, be sure to place an apostrophe before the first digit. *Be sure that the apostrophe appears as a closed single quotation mark.*

- e.g. The '80s British band The Cure.
- e.g. They met in the '90s.

Dates

Never place a “th” after the numeral of a date.

- e.g. They were scheduled to meet on May 8.

Times

Always write “am” or “pm” in lowercase and without periods between the letters. *The Varsity* uses a colon between numerals where the time is not precisely on the hour.

- e.g. Breakfast was served at 7:30 am.
- e.g. Dinner was served at 8 pm.

Percentages

The Varsity does not use the per cent symbol (%) in its writing; rather, the word “per cent” is spelled out.

- e.g. An eight per cent raise.
- e.g. Two per cent of students believe that dean Meric Gertler’s first name is Dean.

Personal Titles

— Uppercase/Lowercase —

Titles

The *CP Stylebook* makes a distinction between formal titles — those that are almost an integral part of a person’s identity — and occupational titles. How “integral” a title is to a person’s identity is, of course, a matter of opinion, so use your judgment when deciding whether to capitalize.

Here are some general guidelines, mostly adopted from the *CP Stylebook*.

Formal Titles

Formal titles that appear directly before a name should be capitalized.

- e.g. President Obama
- e.g. Prime Minister Stephen Harper
- e.g. Governor General David Johnson
- e.g. Queen Elizabeth II

All other uses of these formal titles should be written in lowercase.

- e.g. The president will arrive at Camp David in the morning.
- e.g. Michelle Obama, the president’s wife, supports the veterans.

Occupational Titles

Occupational titles are never capitalized, unless, of course, the title is the first word in the sentence.

- e.g. That was when professor Smith lost his marbles.
- e.g. U of T president David Naylor found said marbles.
- e.g. The UTSU’s president Yollen Bolo-Kamara gave an interview to *The Varsity*.
- e.g. Order was restored when vice-dean Suzanne Stephenson spoke.

Other Titles

- Never use Mr., Mrs., or Miss before someone’s name.
- The titles Dr. and Sir are used only the first time someone’s name is mentioned in the article.

For a more comprehensive explanation, please refer to the *CP Stylebook*’s sections on capitalization.

Italicizing and Romanizing

Creative Works

Most of the time, whole works must appear in italics; constituent parts must appear in quotes. University courses are not creative, so do not italicize them.

Follow this style:

<i>Album</i>	“Song”
<i>Collection of stories</i>	“Individual Story”
<i>Novel</i>	“Chapter Title”
<i>Television show</i>	“Episode Title or Description”
<i>Journal or Blog</i>	“Title of Article”
<i>Newspaper or Magazine</i>	“Title of Article”
<i>Film</i>	
<i>Play</i>	

Do not italicize the following:

- Exhibits and exhibitions
- Conferences
- Course names

Romanizing

Romanize things that would normally be italicized when the surrounding text is italicized.

- e.g. *With files from The Globe and Mail and The New York Times.*

More Directives Re: Italics

- Italicize foreign phrases and words.
 - e.g. *habeas corpus* (“may you have the body”)
 - e.g. *caveat emptor* (“let the buyer beware”)
 - e.g. *burek* (an Eastern European cheese pie)
 - e.g. *gurdwara* (a Sikh temple)

NOTE: When using a foreign phrase in a sentence, define the phrase in round brackets (or square brackets if the phrase appears in the middle of quoted text) for the benefit of the reader.

- e.g. The PhD candidate studies land rights and the *parsi panachayat* (community government)
- e.g. “I do *navjotes* [a religious initiation ceremony] of kids.”

- Italicize genera and species.
 - e.g. *Rattus norvegicus*
- Italicize legislation.
 - e.g. The *Stop Online Piracy Act*
 - e.g. The *Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act*
- Italicize websites.
 - e.g. *thevarsity.ca*
 - e.g. *blogTO.com*
 - e.g. *news.sciencemag.org*

EXCEPTION TO THE RULE: Sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Wikipedia, Reddit, Etsy, Pinterest, and Twitter (among others) have become corporatized cultural mainstays, and are so widely known that their zeitgeist status makes it unnecessary to italicize and write out their web address when they appear in text.

Writing Style Re: Organizations At U of T

U of T has a number of colleges, unions, clubs, and associations, many of which are commonly referred to by their acronym.

When writing about any of these groups and associations, it is important for the benefit of the reader to **write out the full title of the organization in the first instance that it appears in the article, then put the organization's acronym in parentheses** if the organization is mentioned again in the article. **Use the acronym in every instance thereafter when referring to the organization.**

EXCEPTION: University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC) and University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM)

- Do not write out their full names. Refer to these campuses only by their acronyms.

Below are a few of these acronyms with directions on how they must appear in *The Varsity*.

Note: With the exception of UCLit, VUSAC, and EngSoc, all other acronyms for groups and unions are preceded with “the.”

The University of Toronto Students' Union (UTSU)

- e.g.: The UTSU's annual general meeting is scheduled for March 16, 2012.
 - **Note:** When making reference to the union it is not necessary to capitalize “union.”
- e.g. The union's treasurer spoke with *The Varsity*.

The University College Literary and Athletic Society (UCLit)

- e.g. The referendum scheduled by UCLit has been postponed.

The Trinity College Meeting (TCM)

- e.g. The TCM has retained counsel to represent its interests.
- **A note about titles within TCM:** TCM elects a male and female head of college, head of non-resident affairs, and head of arts.
 - e.g. Paulina Bogdanova is the female head of college.

Victoria University Students' Administrative Council (VUSAC)

- e.g. Many students demanded that VUSAC produce its records, and VUSAC complied.

The Engineering Society (EngSoc)

- e.g. Many students attended the frosh event put on by EngSoc.

Social Media

Twitter

- Treat tweets, hashtags, and usernames as you would quotes: introduce and end them with quotation marks, and keep their phrasing, spelling, and punctuation **exactly as they are**.
 - e.g. In his paper, the student referenced a tweet by Lil Wayne, which states: “and this is the thanx I get? Joke's on me. Laugh now, kry never.”
 - e.g. On September 10, Miley Cyrus tweeted: “It's @britneyspears BITCH #bangerz.” It is unlikely that anyone will ever understand the meaning behind this tweet.
 - e.g. “Only first week of school and already behind. #uoftproblems.”

YouTube

- **Channels** should appear in their exact format. Do not edit for grammar/spelling. This includes unwarranted capitalization.
 - All students enjoyed watching the following Youtube channels: vlogbrothers, CollegeHumour, and SourceFed
- **Note:** If you are referencing the people running the channels, spell their respective titles as they popularly appear (this may require some fact checking).
 - e.g. John and Hank Green, commonly known as the Vlogbrothers, are really cool.
- Video names should appear in quotation marks.
 - e.g. The YouTube video “Don’t Hug me I’m Scared,” posted by thisisitcollective, is very disturbing.

Style Rules for News and Science Briefs

News briefs are very short summaries of news stories. The writer's name should appear on the line below the last sentence of the body of the brief preceded by an em dash. The writer's name should be flush with the left margin.

The sources used should appear italicized on the line directly below the writer's line.

Examples:

— Newsy P. Writer
With files from The Globe and Mail.

— Brian R. Science
Source: Science Daily and Nature.

Style Rules for Interviews

Interviews

- *The Varsity's* questions must always appear in boldface and italics, and the interview subject's name/initials must appear in boldface only.
- The first question and response in the interview should be preceded by the full titles for each the interviewer (which will be *The Varsity*) and the interviewee. The initials of the interviewer and interviewee must precede every subsequent question and response.

Example:

The Varsity: *What is the title of your new album?*

David Bowie: I have no idea. I was hoping we could figure that out during this interview.

TV: *Seriously?*

DB: I'm afraid so. I've got nothing.

Style Rules for Arts and Culture, Sports, and Comment Sections

Arts

- Use parentheses for actor and director names.
 - e.g. The character Benjamin Button (Brad Pitt) slightly resembled Golem.
 - e.g. *Fight Club* (Dir. David Fincher) is a movie that explores the inner workings of the male psyche.

Sports

- Report scores using en dashes.
 - e.g. The Blues won 32–2.
- When writing about competitions relating to distance (i.e. track and field, swimming, etc.) be sure to write thusly:
 - e.g. He ran the 60-metre dash (**not**: He ran the 60m dash **or** 60 m dash).

Comment

- *The Varsity* has a specific style for letters to the editor, which goes as follows:

Re: “Title of article”

(letter)

— *letter writer’s name* (note: it may be a pseudonym)

Spelling Variants

British vs. American spelling

There are several areas of English writing in which the British and American spelling of words differ.

*****Please note that *The Varsity* generally favours the British spelling of words.**

Below is a short list of examples of the differences between British and American spellings of commonly used words.

<u>BRITISH</u>	<u>AMERICAN</u>
-our words	
Endeavour	Endeavor
Demeanour	Demeanor
Colour	Color
Neighbour	Neighbor
Harbour	Harbor
Labour	Labor
Humour	Humor
Valour	Valor
Favour	Favor
-re words	
Centre	Center
Metre	Meter
Fibre	Fiber
Litre	Liter
Theatre	Theater
Calibre	Caliber
-gue words	
Catalogue	Catalog
Monologue	Monolog

Dialogue	Dialog
<i>Other words</i>	
Councillor	Councilor

Some Exceptions:

Words ending in *-yse* are the traditional British spelling of such words, however, ***The Varsity*** generally adopts the American spelling in these instances.

The following are a few such words in which *The Varsity* adopts the American spelling:

Realize/Realization

Capitalize

Authorize/Authorization

Organize/Organization

Apologize

Paralyze

Colonize

Harmonize

Anthologize

Cozy

In Other Words...

Here are some other words and phrases with variant spellings.

The words that appear in bold typeface in the left column accord with *The Varsity's* style:

<u>VARSAITY'S SPELLING PREFERENCE</u>	<u>ALTERNATE SPELLING</u>
bylaw	by-law, by law
email	e-mail
preventive	preventative
exploitive	exploitative
In regard to...	In regards to...
UK	U.K.
US	U.S.
Montréal	Montreal
Québec	Quebec
PhD	Ph.D.
Internet	internet
okay	OK, O.K.
BA	B.A.
MA	M.A.
hip-hop	hiphop, hip hop
post-secondary	postsecondary

Note that this list will expand over time.

Fact-Checking

Accurately reporting facts is integral to maintaining *The Varsity's* journalistic integrity.

While you are editing an article, please be sure to highlight any facts that are being reported so that they can be verified for their accuracy.

What qualifies as a fact?

- Names of people, places, species, books, albums, published works, etc.
 - e.g. The president of Djibouti is Ismail Omar Guelleh.

- Titles
 - e.g. The former UTSU vice-president of university affairs is Munib Sajjad.

- Statistics
 - e.g. According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, five per cent of Canadians are affected by anxiety disorders.
 - **Exception:** Scores from *The Varsity Sports* section are not fact-checked.

- Quotes
 - e.g. "I would say that the likelihood is that they are not going to be able to get an assault weapons ban through this Congress," NRA president David Keene told CNN's State of the Union.
 - **Exceptions:**
 - *The Varsity Sports* section (remarks made by Varsity Blues players are not fact-checked)
 - If the author is clearly quoting a phrase for effect
e.g. He strikes me as a man "in love" with his career.

A CAVEAT ABOUT QUOTES:

Under no circumstances are quotes to be edited for grammar. Only edit for punctuation and spelling, no matter how grammatically incorrect the quote might be. The idea here is not to over-edit something that someone has said. If, for ease of readability, an additional word or phrase may provide context to the quote, make a note in the margin suggesting to the section editor that the additional word or phrase should appear in the sentence in square brackets.

e.g. “Even if the outer representation of self doesn’t reflect a diagnosis, [it] doesn’t mean you’re not interacting with it on an interior level every day,” she said.

EMAIL/WRITTEN QUOTES:

Do not edit email and written quotes **at all, except** in the cases of email interviews and letters to the editor. In these cases, you can add words (in square brackets) and punctuation, sparingly, because both interviews and letters contain the disclaimer “This interview/these letters may be edited for length and clarity.”

How to fact-check

- Verify facts by conducting a key word search in Google.
- Verify quotes by inputting the quote in part or in its entirety into the search field, along with the name of the person who uttered the remark.
 - **Example of search terms:** Councillor Doug Holyday, controversy, “the mayor should resign.”
- Place an encircled check-mark beside all facts that you have been able to confirm.

A CAVEAT ABOUT THE INTERNET AS A FACT-FINDING TOOL:

The Internet is brimming with all manner of claims and opinions. Be sure when you are verifying facts from the Internet that the source is reputable. Sources such as *The Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Star*, *CTV News*, *CBC*, *National Post*, *Science Daily*, etc. are reputable sources because they are held to a high standard of journalistic integrity, whereas personal blogs are not. Proceed with caution when using Wikipedia.

Fret not if your eternal quest for truth has been fruitless. Simply demarcate the fact in question with a square bracket and note in the margin that you could not locate the fact.
