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## Style Guide for Authors and Editors (page 1 of 6)

This brief guide is a quick reference intended to answer questions about manuscript preparation asked by authors and editors. [Click here for more comprehensive style guides.](#)

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### General Information

#### Authorship

Being the primary author or a coauthor is both an honor and a responsibility. Having one's name on a paper implies acceptance of responsibility for the facts and the conclusions of the paper. All coauthors should be able to defend the design, execution, and conclusions of the study if challenged.

Given the degree of specialization and the complexity of today's research methods, each member of the publishing team must be able to defend their accredited contribution independently. Collectively, the team must be able to explicate and defend the content of the report. If a collaborator's contribution is too narrow to meet this description (e.g., involvement in study design but not in drafting or revising the report), that person should be given credit in some manner other than the assignment of coauthorship.

No one should be listed as an author without his or her knowledge and expressed consent. Persons who qualify as coauthors may choose not to be given credit; for example, when it is necessary to protect the confidentiality of data from a given institution.

No person shall be listed as coauthor of a report merely by virtue of his or her position in the responsible organization. "Work done under the auspices. . ." does not constitute coauthorship.

#### Determination of Primary Author

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The primary author should be determined by assessing actual contributions in the conception, planning, and execution of the study. On occasion, when two or more investigators have contributed equally or nearly equally to a project, the one who actually writes the paper and coordinates the editorial review process should be listed as the primary author. If the primary author fails to produce a draft manuscript within an agreed-upon time frame and someone else prepares the first draft of the report, the latter collaborator should be listed as the primary author.

### **Listing of Secondary Authors**

Secondary authors should be listed in a sequence generally consistent with the magnitude and pertinence of their input, as judged by the collaborating group.

### **Manuscript Approval before Publication**

Each draft of a manuscript should be shared with all coauthors. Such drafts should include authorship and other credits to prevent misunderstandings and promote timely resolution of disagreements. If copyrighted material is incorporated into the manuscript, the material should be properly attributed and, in some cases, permission to use the copyrighted work may be necessary.

All coauthors must approve the manuscript before it is submitted for clearance and publication.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Laws, regulations, policies, and guidelines are insufficient to prevent intentional unethical conduct. However, the failure to carefully consider ethical principles can cause significant harm to personal and institutional credibility and erode public trust. It is particularly important for CDC authors and peer reviewers to consider the following principles:

#### **Redundant and duplicate publications:**

All manuscripts are assumed to be primary publications, unless a full statement of prior or partial publication is included when the paper is submitted to the journal editor.

Exceptions to this rule may be publications in another

language or country. All individual circumstances cannot be addressed in these guidelines, but the prevailing rule is that full detail of prior publication must be submitted to the editor, if applicable. (Exception rules have been formulated by The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 324, No. 6, Feb. 7, 1991, Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals.)

**Disclosure of potential conflict of interest:**

Conflict of interest exists when an author or reviewer has ties to activities that could inappropriately influence objective evaluation of the scientific methods and conclusions described in the manuscript.

Financial and personal relationships as well as professional competition are important areas to examine for potential conflicts of interest.

Known or potential conflicts of interest must be disclosed in a statement included in the cover letter to the editor when a paper is submitted for publication. This letter must be signed by all authors.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the act of claiming credit for passages, ideas, or quotations from someone else's work. Careful attention to proper accreditation is an increasingly stringent requirement in today's electronic document environment.

Plagiarism is included in the Federal definition of reportable scientific misconduct.

**[Clearance Procedures for CDC Authors](#)****Copyright**

All material published in *Emerging Infectious Diseases* is in the public domain and may be used and reprinted without special permission; proper citation, however, is appreciated.

GPO's Copyright Law of United States; 162 pp  
<http://www.loc.gov/copyright/circs/circ92.pdf>

## Instructions to Authors

For instructions to authors go to  
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/instruct.htm>.

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### Specific Style Issues

(Note: parenthetical acronyms refer to style guides listed in [Other Resources](#) )

#### Abbreviations and Acronyms

A sentence can begin with an abbreviation. It cannot begin with a figure or symbol.

WBC count was . . .

Alpha (not the symbol) particles are. . .(CMS)

The article "a" or "an" should match the sound of the abbreviation or acronym, not the word for which it stands. (AMA)

an HMO report, but a health maintenance organization

However, articles are often omitted in front of abbreviations.

CDC, not "the CDC"

Avoid too many abbreviations. Use standard abbreviations only; do not make up abbreviations. Spell out on first mention and use only if acronym occurs at least five times.

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If an organization's name has been translated into English, the organization's original acronym can be used on the second use of the organization's name even if the organization is not mentioned five times.

Abstracts may contain abbreviations after a single mention. (ASM)

See ASM for complete list of abbreviations that need not be introduced, for example:

AIDS  
bp  
DNA  
EDTA  
HIV  
RNA

The following are abbreviations that must be introduced but are allowed after initial mention (see ASM for complete list):

AZT  
CFU  
CNS  
CSF  
ECG, not EKG  
ELISA  
Government agencies (PAHO, WHO, CDC, WTO, FAO, USDA, FDA, APHIS, EPA)  
HACCP  
HPS  
HUS  
IFA (immunofluorescence assay)  
IgG, IgM  
IL  
MDRTB (not MDR-TB)  
PCR  
RT-PCR  
TB  
VRE

Dates – Spell out months in text. In tables, figures (AMA), and references (UR),

abbreviate months using the first three letters.

### ***SI Units***

Use SI units for units of measure (AMA), for example:

centimeter	cm
cubic millimeter	mm <sup>3</sup>
dalton	Da
deciliter	dL
gram	g
kilodalton	kDa
kilogram	kg
liter	L
meter	m
microgram	μg
microliter	μL
milligram	mg
milliliter	mL
millimeter	mm

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## **Appendixes**

Generally, avoid using appendixes; however sometimes they serve a useful purpose for data that cannot be presented easily as a table or a figure. In these cases, appendixes are cited in the text as a table or figure would be cited. (e.g., Appendix 1) and are usually placed at the end of an article, before the references.

If the appendix cites references but contains no figures or tables, it should be placed before the reference list for the article, and the references should be sequential with those in the text.

If the appendix contains figures or tables, but cites no references, the appendix should be placed after the text and text reference list, and the figures and tables should be numbered

separately in the appendix and the text (e.g., Appendix Table, Appendix Figure).

If the appendix has figures or tables and references, the appendix should be placed after the text and text reference list, and both the figures and tables and the references should have new numbering (e.g., Appendix Figure 1, Appendix Table 1, and a separate reference list beginning with reference 1).

## Capitalization

Avoid unnecessary capitalization. Follow CMS.

Capitalize any word, including an article, following a colon a) if it begins a full sentence, b) if it begins a subtitle, or c) if it is the first word in a table stub (heading) or cell within a table. This does not apply to subtitles in references (See [Uniform Requirements](#)).

### ***accession number***

Do not capitalize accession number, and use the abbreviation no. instead of number.

### ***other capitalization preferences***

a.m., p.m. (ASM)

*California encephalitis virus*

*Eastern equine encephalomyelitis*

Ebola (named after the Ebola River in Zaire)

federal

formalin

Guinea worm disease

Gulf Coast

Internet

Legionnaires' disease

Mercurochrome

Pacific Coast

*Simian immunodeficiency virus*

*Sin Nombre virus*

Southeast Asia

Southern blot  
*St. Louis encephalitis virus*  
 Suramin  
 Teflon  
 the Gambia, the Netherlands, The Hague  
 Gram stain, gram-negative, gram-positive  
 (CBE)  
*Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitis virus*  
 Web page, Web site, the Web  
 West Africa (CMS)  
*Western equine encephalomyelitis virus*  
 Western Hemisphere  
 Western blot  
 x-ray

### ***specific designations***

Do not capitalize the following words, even when used as specific designations, unless they are part of a title: case, group, series, or patient.

### ***statistical tests***

The exact and complete titles of tests are capitalized. When the word test appears with the name of a test that is in written form and that is used as a survey or tool, the word test is capitalized. For tests that involve a process, as is the case with most statistical tests, the word test is not capitalized. (AMA)

For a list of statistical tests and capitalization, see AMA Manual of Style.

### ***titles***

Capitalize the first initial of all words except articles, coordinating conjunctions, and prepositions (regardless of length). (ASM)

#### ***Exceptions:***

Lowercase "to" as a preposition but capitalize as an infinitive.

## Ability of Gene xyz To Induce Susceptibility to Penicillin

Lowercase "that" as a subordinating conjunction but capitalize as a relative pronoun.

## Evidence That Penicillin- Resistant Strains Are Common Strains that Are Resistant to Penicillin

Capitalize both words in hyphenated compound adjectives. (ASM)

## Penicillin-Resistant Gonorrhea

Titles of books and journals are neither italicized nor placed within quotation marks.

Lowercase specific epithets in the scientific names of organisms in titles as you would in running text: *Escherichia coli*, NOT *Escherichia Coli*. (ASM)

### ***trade names***

Trade names should generally be capitalized. If a name is not found in dictionary or style manuals, follow author. Do not use <sup>TM</sup> and ® with trade names.

### ***words derived from proper nouns***

Most words derived from proper nouns are not capitalized

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## **Geographic Designations**

Spell out names of states and U.S. territories and possessions when they stand alone or follow a county name. (AMA)

Use postal abbreviations in references, addresses, or product

identification.

XYZ product (ABC Co., Atlanta, GA)

Abbreviate U.S. as adjective; write out as noun. U.K. may be used as a noun or adjective.

U.S. citizens  
Citizens of the United States

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## Numbers

Use [SI units](#) or other conventional units of measure (AMA). Some medical measurements, however, follow other conventions.

height (meters)	blood pressure (mm Hg)
weight (kilograms)	oxygen pressure (cm H <sub>2</sub> O)
volume (liters)	blood and clinical chemistry
temperature (Celsius)	

To report both SI and conventional units, repeat the number in parentheses along with the unit of measure.

20 mmol/L (20 meq/L)

Use commas in all numbers with four or more digits.

***Exception:***  
Dates

2,000 people by 2002



**blood factors**

factor VIII (Roman)

**confidence intervals**

Use "to" instead of a hyphen in a confidence interval.

(95% CI 0.8 to 1.6)

**equations**

Displayed equations and text are not separated with punctuation.

Distance is calculated as follows:

$$D = x(y)$$

where D = distance, x = time,  
and y = rate

But if the same equation is run into text (i.e., not displayed), use a comma.

Distance is calculated as D = x(y), where D = distance and...

In equations, single letter abbreviations and variables are italicized; the surrounding parentheses are not. (ASM)

Word equations have initial capital letters and no end punctuation.

(Number of new cases/Number of people at risk)

***figures versus words***

Use figures for all units of measure (including standard deviations, volumes, drops), age, time (including decades), and money. In table headings, follow rules for numbers. In journal titles, spell out numbers.

Twofold through ninefold, 10-fold on up, 2.5-fold, severalfold (ASM)

Spell out words for numbers and ordinals from one to nine; use figures for 10 and above; do not use superscript for ordinals.

Nine, 10, ninth, 10th

***Exceptions:***

For two or more numbers in a series or related numbers within a sentence, if one number is 10, use figures for all.

Of the 300 tumors, 2 to 11 were adenocarcinomas.

We used 5 of the 82 samples. These five showed...

At the beginning of a sentence, spell out all numbers.

Twenty milligrams was injected.

When two numbers are adjacent, spell out one (usually the nonmeasure) number.

### ***fractions***

Decimals are preferred to fractions, when possible. Spell out fractions whose terms are both lower than 10, and use figures and the virgule if higher. (ASM)

three quarters, two thirds, 1/12  
two-thirds majority

Hyphenate fractions used as adjectives but not as nouns (CBE).

two thirds of the diagnoses  
a two-thirds majority

### ***numbered lists***

Avoid unless necessary; use Arabic numbers followed by single parentheses (to avoid confusion with references). (CBE)

Three conditions were met: 1) handwashing procedures, once not strictly followed, were enforced; 2) isolation procedures were instituted; and 3) staff were trained in additional preventive measures.

### ***percentages***

Immediately follow the number, not the phrase.

The disease was found in 12 (50%) of the 24 children at the picnic.

### ***ranges***

Limit to specific statistical meaning. In text,

use "to."

18 to 20 years  
from 5% to 10%  
from 1984 to 1990

Use the en dash to connect continuing, or inclusive, numbers—dates, time, or reference numbers. Use the hyphen, not the en dash, between numbers that are not inclusive. (CSM, p. 187)

Inclusive  
1982–1984  
May–June 1999

Not inclusive  
25%-35%

Repeat symbols in ranges, but do not repeat words. (AMA)

40°C to 70°C, 25% to 50%  
The angles varied by five to six degrees.

### ***ratios***

Use colon (length:width, 2:1).

### ***virus designations***

HIV-1, HIV-2 (Arabic)  
HTLV-III (Roman)

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## Style Guide for Authors and Editors (page 4 of 6)

### Preferred Usage

#### *affect, effect*

affect (v), to influence

affect (n), subjective aspect of an emotion (psychological studies)

effect (v), to bring about or initiate

effect (n), result or outcome

#### *Alaskan Native, Alaska native*

Alaska native, anyone who was born and raised in Alaska, regardless of cultural background.

Alaskan Native, a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the area that is now Alaska, and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition

#### *American Indians, Native Americans*

Both terms are acceptable. [source: *Indians Are Us? Culture and Genocide in Native North America* by Ward Churchill, 1994] Native Americans is preferred.

#### *among, between*

"among" always applies to more than two objects.

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"between" literally applies to only two objects but may be used with more than two when each is treated individually, as in "a treaty between three powers" (CBE).

#### ***and, or***

Avoid. In most cases, either "and" or "or" is correct. When a choice cannot be made, use "X, Y, or both."

#### ***age designations***

neonate or	birth to 1 month
newborn	of age
infant	1 month to 2 years of age
child	2 to 13 years of age
school-age	5 to 18 years
teenage	13 to 19 years
adolescent	13 to 17 years of age
adult	18 years old and older
childbearing age	15 to 44 years old
elderly	(follow author)

#### ***Note:***

Do not say "zero age."

#### ***based on, on the basis of***

"based on" is often erroneously used to mean "on the basis of." Correctly used, it follows forms of the verb "to be."

The calculations were based on the following results.

#### ***biopsy***

The procedure of removing and examining tissue, cells, or fluids from the living body. Observations are made on the biopsy specimen, not on the biopsy itself. Biopsy is a noun; do not use as a verb. (AMA)

***black, African-American***

Follow author, but "black" is not capitalized.

***brevity***

Use as few words as possible to make a point

the	
majority	most or
of	many
prior to	before
at the	
present	now
time	
at the	
time that	when
in terms	
of	in, of, for
the truth	
is	is
the facts	
are	are
in order	
to	to

***burden***

Avoid.

***CDC***

not "the CDC"

***case, patient***

A case is a particular instance of disease, illness, injury, or asymptomatic disease. Distinguish between a case (a situation or set of circumstances) and a patient (a human being). Cases do not show symptoms, experience side effects, recover, or die; patients do. Do not dehumanize persons into cases. ("Case-patient," however, is an



acceptable term.)

*Clostridium perfringens* was isolated in a case of diarrhea or from a patient with diarrhea.

Erythromycin is recommended for treating patients with legionellosis.

***commercial sex workers, prostitutes***

Follow author.

***compare to, with***

One thing or person is usually compared with another when the aim is to examine similarities or differences in detail. A thing is compared to another when a single striking similarity (or dissimilarity) is observed, or when a thing of one class is likened to one of another class, without analysis (AMA). In most cases, use compare with.

compare with: to examine in detail so as to discover the similarities or differences

The sodium levels of the patients in the control group were compared with those of the patients in the study group.

compare to: to liken to (to point out comparison without the act of detailed analysis)

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

***compose, comprise***

compose: to total, form, to go together, to make up (an object)

The district is composed of three counties.

comprise: to include, to contain, to be made up of (do not say is comprised of)

The whole comprises the parts; the parts do not comprise the whole.

A district comprises three counties.

***controls***

Persons are used as controls.

***dehumanizing terms***

Describe a person as having a condition, not being the condition.

person with diabetes, not a diabetic  
person with arthritis, not an arthritic  
person with asthma, not an asthmatic  
person with AIDS, not AIDS patient

***develop***

Diseases develop in patients. Patients do not develop diseases.

***diagnose***

To evaluate, identify

Conditions, syndromes, diseases, and pathogens are diagnosed. Patients are not diagnosed.

***die of***

Patients die of, not from specific diseases or disorders. (AMA)

***different from***

Use different from, not different than.

***dosage, dose***

Dosage implies a regimen; dose implies a quantity. (AMA)

dosage, the amount of medicine to be taken by a patient in a given period

dose, the amount taken at one time

***due to, owing to***

These terms are not synonymous. "Due to," an adjective, should be attached only to a noun or pronoun and should not be used in place of owing to, because of, on account of, which are compound prepositions. (WIT) A good rule of thumb is to use "due to" with forms of the verb "to be."

Her success is due to talent and hard work.  
("Due to" follows a form of "to be" and modifies success.)

***e.g. and i.e.***

Place a comma after these abbreviations. Do not use "etc." in an e.g. or i.e. segment.

e.g. = for example, such as  
i.e. = that is, in other words

Examples may be introduced by "e.g." but should not be followed by "e.g."

***Correct:***

In evaluating an I.Q. score, several factors, e.g., socioeconomic level, must be considered.

***Incorrect:***

Socioeconomic level, e.g., is a factor to be considered.

***eliminate, eradicate***

Disease is eradicated from the entire world, eliminated from a country or region.

***epidemic, endemic***

A disease is endemic in an area; the area is not endemic.

endemic malaria, disease-endemic areas

epidemic, a disease that occurs suddenly and in numbers in excess of what would be expected (because it was introduced from outside)

endemic, belonging or native to a particular people or country, indigenous

***etc.***

Do not use in scientific writing; it is considered vague.

***etiology, cause***

Etiology is the study or description of causes (agents) of a disease. Do not use "etiology" as a synonym for "cause." Etiology encompasses all the possible causes of a disease.

***expire, die***

Patients do not expire or have fatal outcomes; they die.

***feel, believe***

Use "feel" to express physical sensations; use "believe" to express personal conviction, accepting something as true.

The patient felt cold.

The author believed that the theory was sound.

***fever, temperature***

Fever is a rise of body temperature above normal. If a patient has a temperature of 37.8°C, he has a fever of 0.8°C.

***Also correct:***

The patient was febrile (37.8°C). (AMA)

***Note:***

Please use the Times New Roman degree symbol; do not use a superscript lowercase "o."

***few, less (fewer, less; fewest, least)***

"Few" refers to units or people that can be counted.

"Less" refers to quantities of mass, bulk, or volume.

***former Soviet Union***

Refer to individual country. As a whole, refer to "Newly Independent States."

***gram***

Gram should be capitalized and never hyphenated when used as Gram stain. Gram negative and gram positive should be lower case and only be hyphenated when used as a unit modifier.

Gram staining  
 gram negative  
 gram-positive bacteria

***homosexual, bisexual, gay***

Follow author on these terms. Sometimes the phrase "men who have sex with men" is used because some of these men do not label themselves as gay, homosexual, or bisexual.

***-ic versus -ical***

Dispense with most -al endings. For example, use epidemiologic, geographic, serologic, logistic, immunologic, toxicologic, anatomic.

Author's preference, however, should be considered, e.g.,

biological warfare.

***immunize, vaccinate***

immunize, to confer immunity

vaccinate, to administer vaccine

***in, among***

Conditions usually occur in, not among, persons.

The 25 cases of measles were in school-aged children  
infection in patients, not infection among patients

***incidence, prevalence***

incidence (a rate), number of new cases per unit of population per unit of time

prevalence, number of existing cases per unit of population at a given time (point prevalence) or in a given time (period prevalence).

***individual, person***

"Person" is a noun; "individual" is an adjective (e.g., an individual student).

***inject, inoculate***

Inject a fluid; inoculate an animal or person. Liquid cannot be inoculated into an animal or a petri dish; it is injected into or spread on.

We used a 0.5-mL aliquot to inoculate each mouse.

We injected a 0.5-mL aliquot into each mouse.

***injection, intravenous drug user(s)***

Be aware of the difference between injection drug users (IDU) and intravenous drug users (IVDU). The former includes other forms of drug use such as intramuscular injection.

***insure, ensure, assure***

insure, to guarantee life or property against risk (e.g., to underwrite; to give, take, or procure insurance [CBE])

ensure, to make certain or guarantee (CBE)

assure, to make safe, to give confidence to (Webster)

***in vitro***

Do not hyphenate foreign phrases that are printed open in other circumstances (e.g., in vitro translation, in situ protein synthesis, in vitro-stimulated growth, in situ-synthesized proteins). ASM, p. 45

***male, female***

Both terms are adjectives. For nouns, use man, woman, boy, girl, or infant if possible.

***molecular weight***

The relative mass of a substance. It is a pure number and has no units.

***Incorrect:***

The molecular weight of a protein is 30,000 Da.

***Correct:***

The molecular weight of the protein is 30,000. (CBE)

***Correct:***

The molecular mass . . . is 30,000 Da. (ASM)

***morbidity, morbidity rate***

morbidity, the condition of being diseased, the rate of illness or disease. "Illness" or "disease" is preferred over "morbidity"; avoid "morbidity rate."

***mortality, mortality rate (AMA)***

mortality, the number of deaths from a particular condition. "Death" is preferred over "mortality."

mortality rate, the number of deaths in a particular population divided by the size of that population at the same time.

***negative, normal***

Examinations and most laboratory tests are neither negative nor normal in and of themselves; interpretations of the tests, however, may be negative or normal.

Observations, results, or findings from examinations and tests are normal or abnormal.

Cultures, tests for microorganisms, tests for specific reactions, and reactions to tests may be negative or positive.

Electroencephalograms, electrocardiograms, isotope scans, and roentgenograms are "pictures" and are, therefore, normal or abnormal, not negative or positive. (AMA)

Urinalysis results were normal, not urinalysis was normal.

***offspring***

Use "children," not "offspring" for humans.

***-ology***

This suffix means "a branch of knowledge, science, or study of." Terms ending in -ology (e.g., etiology, pathology, serology) should not be used to describe particular items.



(AMA)

***Incorrect:***

The pathology was located in the upper part of the gastrointestinal tract.

***Correct:***

The pathologic lesion was located in the upper part of the gastrointestinal tract.

***Incorrect:***

The histology was small-cell carcinoma of the lung.

***Correct:***

The histologic diagnosis was small-cell carcinoma of the lung.

***Incorrect:***

The patient's serology showed . . .

***Correct:***

The patient's serologic test results showed . . .

***Incorrect:***

We used the following methodology.

***Correct:***

We used the following methods.

***parameter***

Parameter has a specific statistical meaning and should not be used simply to mean measurement, value, or number. Ordinarily, except when a descriptive quantity for a statistical population is meant, parameter should be changed to measurement, value, quantity, variable, number, or a comparable term. (AMA)

***parasitemia***

Change to "levels of parasitemia."

***patient***

An ill person who is receiving or has received medical care.  
Do not use the term "normal patients."

***person, persons, people***

Person is preferred over "individual."

The plural of person is "persons," not "people." The latter term refers to a group of persons who share particular characteristics (e.g., the American people).

***present, present with***

Jargon.

***Incorrect:***

The patient presented with . . .

***Correct:***

The patient sought treatment for . . .

***Correct:***

The patient had . . .

***preventative, preventive***

"Preventative" is becoming obsolete. "Preventive" is preferred.

***react, test***

A substance is tested for a reaction with another substance; it is not reacted with another substance.

***redundant phrases***

large in size - large  
period of time - period  
very unique - unique

***resolve***

Symptoms are resolved; patients do not resolve their symptoms.

***risk of, for, from***

What is my risk of getting AIDS?

Men who have sex with other men are at highest risk for AIDS.

The most serious risk from AIDS is death.

***sacrifice***

A euphemism for killing laboratory animals after an experiment. Preferred terms are "humanely kill" or "euthanize."

***serum, sera***

Serum samples or serum specimens are preferred terms, but "sera" is acceptable.

***sex partners***

not sexual partner

However, "sexual behavior" is a correct term.

***significant***

Significant has a specific statistical meaning. If that is not the meaning intended, substitute a synonym, e.g., important, marked, noteworthy, substantial.

***subject***

Substitute participant, patient, or person.

***time designations***

March to August (not inclusive)

March through August (inclusive)

1960s, not 1960's

once a day, not daily

twice a day, not twice daily  
1986 to 1987 (1-year period)  
1986 through 1987 (2-year period)  
Avoid "between" (e.g., between 1986 and 1987)

***titer***

A noun, not a verb.

***Incorrect:***  
were titered

***Correct:***  
titers of . . . were determined

***tracking***

Jargon.

***Incorrect:***  
tracking people

***Correct:***  
analyzing trends among persons . .

***U.S. citizens***

Is preferred over Americans.

***varying, various***

varying, that which is changing (adjective) or causing to change (verb)  
various, of different kinds or aspects

***youth in high-risk situations***

to avoid categorization by group, do not use "high-risk youth." Similarly, replace "high-risk groups" with "groups at high risk."

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### Punctuation

#### *colon*

A colon may be used to introduce a list or series. Do not capitalize the first word after a colon (unless it would be capitalized for other reasons such as beginning a sentence or a subtitle). Do not use a colon to introduce a series of complete sentences. Either change the colon to a period or edit the list so that it is no longer made up of complete sentences.

#### *Incorrect:*

The cells were prepared as follows: Strain 12B was grown in G broth. The cells were harvested by centrifugation. The pellet was dissolved in solution Y.

#### *Correct:*

The cells were prepared as follows. Strain 12B was grown in G broth.

#### *Incorrect:*

The cells were harvested by centrifugation. The pellet was dissolved in solution Y.

#### *Correct:*

The cells were prepared as follows: strain 12B was grown in G broth, the cells were harvested by centrifugation, and the pellet was dissolved in solution Y.

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If any item in a list includes a complete sentence that gives information about that item only, either edit out the colon or put the additional information in parentheses.

#### ***Incorrect:***

This conclusion is based on the following results: 1) The mapping of the mutations between 0.13 and 0.23 map unit. This indicates that they lie within a 1.2-kbp region. 2) The presence of the Nif phenotype in all the mutants.

#### ***Correct:***

This conclusion is based on the following results: 1) the mapping of the mutations between 0.13 and 0.23 map unit (this indicates that they lie within a 1.2-kbp region) and 2) the presence of the Nif phenotype.

Do not use a colon if the items in the list complete the sentence grammatically.

#### ***Incorrect:***

XYZ medium contained: A, B, and C.

#### ***Correct:***

XYZ medium contained A, B, and C.

### ***commas***

Place a comma:

- after all items linked by "and" or "or" in a series, including the item before the conjunction.
- after state when city is mentioned in text (In Dallas, Texas, in 1995...)
- after date that gives month, day, and year in text. (The test given January 1, 1997, showed that . . .)
- after an introductory phrase of five or more words. A comma can be used after fewer words if necessary to clarify the meaning.
- after i.e. or e.g.

***em dashes***

Avoid in scientific writing. Their use is for sudden breaks in thought that change the sentence structure or amplify and expand a phrase in the main clause. Try parentheses instead.

***en dashes***

Use the en dash to connect continuing, or inclusive, numbers (e.g., dates, time, or reference numbers). Use the hyphen, not the en dash, between numbers that are not inclusive. (CSM)

**Inclusive**

1982–1984

May–June 1999

**Not inclusive**

25%-35%

Use between compound adjectives when one element is an open compound or when at least two elements are hyphenated compounds; or, in complex modifying phrases that include suffixes and prefixes and hyphens.

New York–Boston connector

In complex modifying phrases that include suffixes or prefixes, hyphens and en dashes are sometimes used to avoid ambiguity.

non-group–specific blood  
manic-depressive–like symptoms

***footnote symbols, numbers, letters***

For addresses and affiliations, footnote symbols are used in the following order: \*, †, ‡, §, ¶, #. They are doubled if more are needed. Footnotes in text use superscript numbers.

Tables and figures use superscript letters. (ASM) All information at the bottom of a table must be footnoted, but all abbreviations may be in one footnote.



**note:** see ASM Style Manual for a list of abbreviations that may be used without introduction in a table.

### ***hyphens***

Terms formed by combining two or more words or elements of words may be open (with a space between them), hyphenated, or solid (as one word). If in doubt about how to treat a compound, consult Webster's Dictionary or ASM.

Common and unambiguous adjectives need not be hyphenated.

food safety issues, foodborne illness study,  
public health nurse

Do not hyphenate after an adverb ending in -ly even when used in a compound modifier preceding the word modified.

The rapidly rising temperature caused . . .

Do not hyphenate foreign phrases that are printed open in other circumstances (e.g., in vitro translation, in situ protein synthesis, in vitro-stimulated growth, in situ-synthesized proteins) (ASM).

Do not hyphenate CDC mailstops.

Mailstop C12

### ***italics***

Emphasis: do not introduce italics, underlining, or bold face type for emphasis. Use only as indicated in this style guide.

Foreign words and phrases: some foreign words and phrases have become part of standard English usage and do not need to be italicized, unless not using italics would be confusing. These terms include:

in vivo

in vitro  
falciparum (in falciparum malaria)  
et al.

### ***parentheses and brackets***

Nested parentheses sometimes appear in chemical names. Follow author (ASM).

(x(yy)x)

If a designation that already contains parentheses must be enclosed within parentheses, do not change the designation. Instead, use brackets in place of the outer set of parentheses (ASM).

***Incorrect:***

another strain (strain 123(pXYZ))

***Incorrect:***

another strain (strain 123[pXYZ])

***Correct:***

another strain [strain 123(pXYZ)]

In circumstances other than mathematical expressions, the inner set of parentheses should be changed to brackets. (ASM)

***Incorrect:***

The procedure we used [the Lowry method (12)] . . .

***Correct:***

The procedure we used (the Lowry method [12]) . . .

In numbered lists, use a single parenthesis to avoid confusion with references (CBE).

Three procedures were instituted hospitalwide:

1) handwashing, which is associated with fewer nosocomial infections; 2) isolation

precautions, according to established guidelines; and 3) mandatory screening of staff.

### ***periods***

Use periods in in-text abbreviations.

U.S. citizens from Washington, D.C., were . . .  
et al.

If an e-mail address ends a sentence, do not add a period at the end of the sentence. Likewise, e-mail addresses or URLs in references are not followed by a period.

### ***possessives***

6 months' gestation  
Legionnaires' disease  
woolsorters' disease

Year indications are not possessive.

1960s, not 1960's

Diseases or syndromes named after a person or place are generally not possessive:

Bright disease  
Chagas disease  
Down syndrome  
Hodgkin disease  
Kaposi sarcoma  
Kawasaki syndrome  
Lyme disease  
Marfan syndrome  
Minimata disease  
Reye syndrome  
Rocky Mountain spotted fever

### ***prefixes***

Terms formed by combining two or more words or elements of words may be open (with a space between them), hyphenated, or solid (as one word). If in doubt about how to treat a compound, consult Webster's Dictionary or ASM.

Following are a list of common prefixes. They should always be solid except as noted below.

ante-	inter-	over-	sub-
anti-	intra-	post-	super-
co-	macro-	pre-	supra-
counter-	micro-	pro-	trans-
de-	mid-	pseudo-	ultra-
extra-	multi-	re-	un-
infra-	non-	semi-	

***Exceptions:***

- before a capital letter (un-American)
- before an abbreviation or acronym (non-mRNA )
- before a numeral (pre-1970)
- to avoid confusion with a similar unhyphenated word (re-cover, re-creation)
- to avoid a confusing meaning, as in immunologic terms such as anti-rabbit, anti-goat, anti-mouse, anti-human. "Goat anti-rabbit IgG" means goat antiserum against rabbit IgG, not goat IgG that is antirabbit.

Even if letters are doubled, common prefixes are usually not joined by hyphens.

antiinflammatory  
 intraabdominal  
 nonnegotiable  
 posttraumatic

***restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses***

Place commas around nonrestrictive clauses (extra information).

The samples, which James analyzed, had been stored for 2 weeks.

(Only one set of samples is being discussed; therefore, the clause "which James analyzed" is not necessary for defining the samples.)

Do not place commas around restrictive clauses (necessary information).

The samples that James analyzed had been stored for 2 weeks.

(More than one set of samples is being discussed. The clause "that James analyzed" defines the noun "samples," telling which samples were analyzed.)

### ***semicolons***

- are used to separate independent clauses containing commas.
- are used between two parts of a compound sentence when the independent clauses are not joined by a conjunction.
- separate items in a series if internal punctuation is present.

### ***suffixes***

The following suffixes are joined without a hyphen: -fold, -hood, -less, -like, -wise, unless doing so

- creates an unclear or excessively long word
- triples a consonant (bell-like)
- follows a proper noun (Whitman-like)
- follows a number and for decimal fractions, e.g., 10-fold; 2.5-fold (ASM)

Follow the dictionary, ASM, or CSM to determine whether terms are written as one word, two words, or hyphenated.

The following is a list of common terms.

acute-phase serum samples	groundwater
age group (2 words)	handwashing
antibody-capture ELISA	health care (n), health-care (adj)
antibody-positive children	immunodeficiency, not immune deficiency
back to back (adv), back-to-back (adj)	life cycle
bedbug	lifestyle
bed net (n), bed-net (adj)	live-born
birthplace	long term (n), long-term (adj)
birth weight (2 words)	long-standing
bloodborne	managed care (n, adj)
bottle-fed	needle-stick
breast-feed, breast-fed	online (adv, adj)
case-fatality rate	overestimate (most over- or under-prefixes are solid)
case-patient	person-to-person transmission, but transmission was person to person

chickenpox	post-mortem (adj), postmortem (n)
childbearing	postpartum
child care (n), child-care (adj)	readout
coauthor	schoolchildren
convalescent-phase serum samples	seawater
co-worker	snowblindness
cut off (v), cutoff (adj)	stand by (v), standby (adj)
cross-reaction, cross-infection (see CMS for hyphenated "cross" words)	stillborn
database	short term (n), short-term (adj)
day care (n), day-care (adj)	sub-Saharan
desktop publishing	T cell (n), T-cell (adj)
e-mail	tick-borne
en route	toxic shock syndrome
enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay	under way
fast food (n), fast-food (adj)	vector-borne
finger-prick, finger-stick	waste water

follow-up (n), follow up (v)	waterborne
foodborne	Web site, Web page
food handlers	well-being
food handling (n), food-handling (adj)	well-known person, but he is well known
fresh water (n), freshwater (adj)	work-up (n), work up (v)
Gram stain	workplace
gram negative, gram positive (hyphenate if used as an adjective)	worldwide

### ***virgules***

The virgule often implies duality (AMA).

The physician/patient experience implies the physician and patient are one and the same.  
The physician-patient relationship implies two different persons.

"or" or "and" should replace the virgule; avoid and/or.

He or she, not he/she  
Father and son bowling league, not father/son bowling league

### **References**

Identify references in text, tables, and legends as they appear consecutively by Arabic numerals in parentheses.

"Editor" is spelled out in references.

Use postal abbreviations in parentheses for states for location



of publisher (omit DC after Washington), but write out states when given as meeting locations.

Follow [Uniform Requirements](#) noting in particular the following:

### ***abstracts***

Abstracts should not contain references because abstracts need to stand alone.

Abstracts can be cited in the references. If the abstract has only a page number, cite the name of the booklet (e.g., Program and Abstracts).

Galil K, Singleton R, Levine O, Fitzgerald M, Ajello G, Bulkow L, et al. High prevalence of *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) carriage among Alaska Natives despite widespread use of Hib-conjugate vaccine. In: Abstracts of the 35th Infectious Disease Society of America; San Francisco, California; 1997 Sept 13–16; Abstract 421. Alexandria, Virginia: Infectious Disease Society of America; 1997.

### ***articles in press***

Number any references to articles in press and place in the references. Include year. For articles submitted to be published, place in text as for personal communications and unpublished data (W.W. Lamb, submitted for pub.).

### ***dissertations, theses***

Dissertations can be used as references; theses cannot. Cite theses in the text, giving all information that would normally be included in a reference. International variations in terminology occur; the primary distinction is whether or not the work is published.

### ***Internet citations***

Follow [Uniform Requirements](#).

Morse SS. Factors in the emergence of infectious diseases. *Emerg Infect Dis* [serial online] 1995 Jan–Mar [cited 1996 Jun 5];1. Available from : URL: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID/eid.htm>

### ***journal names***

Use [Index Medicus](#) journal abbreviations; spell out the journal name if it is not in Index Medicus.

### ***organization as author***

Spell out the full name of the organization if it is the author, or just put title with no author. Never use anonymous or "no author given."

World Health Organization, not WHO

### ***personal communications, unpublished data***

Place in text

(D.E. Berg, pers. comm.)

(D. Stantio, unpub. data)

### ***ProMed Citation***

Lipkin I. West Nile-like virus: PCR primers and protocols. ProMed. October 13, 1999. Accessed at: <http://www.promedmail.org>, archive number: 19991013.1826.

### ***secondary sources***

(e.g., USA Today) Avoid. Suggest that the author use a primary source.

### ***when CDC is the author***

The name can differ.

1992–present Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

1980–1991 Centers for Disease Control

1970–1979 Center for Disease Control

## Scientific Nomenclature

### ***bacteria***

Italicize species, variety or subspecies, and genus when used in the singular. Do not italicize or capitalize genus name when used in the plural.

*Listeria monocytogenes* is; *Listeria* is a ubiquitous organism.

*Listeria* are; salmonellae; mycobacteria

If a paper is about several species of the same genus, the genus needs to be spelled out only in the title and at first use in the abstract, text, tables, and figures. It may subsequently be abbreviated for other species. (ASM)

"We studied *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *P. putida*, and *P. fluorescens*."

Do not italicize the name of a class, order, family, or tribe. (AMA)

### ***Exception:***

The genus *Salmonella* consists of only two species: *S. enterica* (divided into six subspecies) and *S. bongori*. Most salmonellae encountered in EID will be serotypes (serovars) belonging to *S. enterica*. On first mention, put the genus and species in italics, followed by initially capped serotype in Roman (e.g., *Salmonella enterica* serotype Paratyphi; on 2nd mention, just put *S.*

Paratyphi). Serotypes belonging to other subspecies are designated by their antigenic formulae following the subspecies name (e.g., *S. enterica* subspecies *diarizonae* 60:k:z or S. IIIb 60:k:z

### ***viruses***

When used formally, virus family, subfamily, and genus names should be capitalized and printed in italics. A virus species name should also be printed in italics, with the first letter of any subsequent proper noun capitalized.

*Avian leukosis virus*  
*Hepatitis B virus*

Subsequent reference to the same virus should be an accepted acronym, not italicized, e.g.,

WNV (for *West Nile virus*)  
HBV (for *Hepatitis B virus*)

The name of a tentative species whose taxonomic status is uncertain should not be in italics, but its first word (and any proper noun) should be capitalized.

For more information on this new virus nomenclature style, recently adopted by several international organizations, see [International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses](#). Virus taxonomy: classification and nomenclature of viruses: seventh report of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses. Van Regenmortel MHV, chairman. New York: Academic Press;2000.

## **Spelling**

### ***change British spelling to American***

analog, not analogue  
analyze, not analyse  
anesthesia, not anaesthesia  
color, not colour

estradiol, not oestradiol  
 homolog, not homologue  
 orthopedics, not orthopaedics  
 titer, not titre

***Exceptions:***

aerobic  
 anaerobic  
 proper names (The XYZ Programme, *S. faecalis*, *N. gonorrhoeae*)

***commonly misspelled words***

(See also Hyphens for list of terms written as one word, two words, or hyphenated.)

acknowledgment, not acknowledgement  
 Cameroon, not Cameroun  
 Côte d'Ivoire, not Ivory Coast  
 Dhaka, not Dacca  
*Escherichia coli* O157 use the letter O, not the number 0.  
*Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib)  
 helminthic, not helmintic  
 hemorrhage  
 inoculation  
 judgment, not judgement  
 leukocyte, not leucocyte  
 mucus (n), mucous (adj)  
 occurred, occurrence  
 omit, omitted  
 precede  
 proceed  
 protozoon (n, s), protozoa (n, pl) protozoan (adj)  
 repellent  
 supernatant, not supernate  
 villus (n), villous (adj)

**Statistical Terms**

***common tests***

For tests named after a person, avoid the possessive unless the term is always written in the possessive.

Fisher exact test  
 Pearson correlation coefficient  
 Sorenson correlation coefficient  
 Student *t* test

***mathematical symbols (+, †, , =, <, >, , , ~.)***

Are closed up when they indicate mathematical operations. In all other contexts, a space should be printed on each side of the symbol. (ASM)

a probability of <0.01 (note:  
 always use 0 before decimal in p  
 value)  
 a >25% drop, but 45%±2%  
 -70°  
 between nucleotides -55 and  
 +19  
 G+C content  
 densities of <10<sup>3</sup>  
 magnification of x200, but 4 x  
 10<sup>6</sup>  
 10× lens objective [note: math  
 font ×]  
 the MIC was <8.0 g/ml  
 >10-fold, greater than fourfold

Use words, not mathematical symbols, in nonmathematical expressions in text. Disregard this rule in the bodies of tables. (ASM)

Tumor cells plus IFN injections,  
 not tumor cells + IFN injections

Exception: >, <, may be used in text.

Do not allow a mathematical symbol to stand for the main verb in a clause.(ASM)

***Incorrect:***

When  $p < 0.005$ . . .

***Correct:***

When  $p$  was  $< 0.005$ . . .

***Incorrect:***

densities  $< 103$

***Correct:***

densities of  $< 103$

***other common statistical terms***

Check ASM and Reporting Statistics in Medicine for large glossaries.

chi square (noun; chi-square, adjective); if not spelled out, use Greek Chi symbol

Mann-Whitney U test

Wilcoxon matched-pairs, Wilcoxon rank -um test, Wilcoxon signed-ranks test, Log-Rank analysis, Wilcoxon 2-sample test,

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for goodness-of-fit

Epi Info 5

SAS statistical package

***probability***

$p = 0.05$  (lower case  $p$ , no italics; put zero

before decimal)

### ***symbols***

Use the % symbol within a sentence. Begin a sentence with "percent."

Put a space between a number and its measure (5 mL, 5 M).

***Exception:***

No space before the percent or degree symbols.

5%, 70°C

## **Tables and Figures**

Follow ASM style for figures and tables. If there is only one figure or table, do not number it. Tables must be created with the word-processing program's table editor.

### ***abbreviations***

Tables and figures should be self-explanatory; therefore, spell out terms even if introduced in the text.

### ***captions and legends***

Place table heading above, not below, the table. Capitalize the first letter only. Do not make into a sentence; do not add a period.

Place figure legend within the text, not below the figure. Capitalize the first letter only. The legend may begin with a sentence or a sentence fragment. Add a period.

### ***footnotes***

Use superscript letters to indicate footnotes, even if only one footnote; there is no space between a footnote symbol and the footnote.



- Stack footnotes.
- Cite all table abbreviations in one footnote.
- Place a period at the end of footnotes.
- Footnote symbols need not be repeated in like boxhead entries. (ASM)
- Convert unwieldy table data to footnotes.

### ***orientation***

Tables should be arranged with like data reading downward (e.g., organism names, virus titers). Do not use landscape orientation; use portrait.

### ***units of measure in tables***

Need not be repeated in every row but should be given once in the boxhead (in parentheses and abbreviated if possible). The unit of measure usually appears after the thing it measures, not necessarily at the end of the boxhead.

Use [SI units](#) or other common units of measure.

Animal wt (g) during treatment

## **Units of Measure**

Common units of measure may be abbreviated without introduction if used with numbers or in tables but not alone in text.

30 ng, but protein measured in nanograms

Common units of measure, [SI units](#). See AMA for a complete list.

### **versus**

Use "versus" in text (this method versus that one); "vs." in statistics (2.5 vs. 3.4); and "v" in legal citations (Roe v. Wade).

## **Verbs**

dialyze blood, not animals or humans  
 transfuse blood, not animals or humans

***subject-verb agreement***

In a noncount noun in a prepositional phrase with "none," the verb plurality is determined by the object of the preposition.

None of the blood was...  
 None of the patients are participating.  
 A number (total, group) of persons are.  
 The number (total, group) reported is 25.  
 Seventy-eight percent is the largest percentage reported.  
 The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is...

A quantity indicated by a unit of measure is singular, even when the units are spelled out. (ASM)

Twelve milliliters was injected.  
  
 . . .10 mg was added  
 . . .5 mL was injected  
 . . .10 days has passed  
 . . .220 cpm of radioactivity was detected

***Exceptions:***

Non-absolute or informal units

. . .10 drops were added

Do not allow a mathematical symbol to stand for the main verb in a clause.(ASM)

***Incorrect:***

When  $p < 0.005$  . . .

***Correct:***

When  $p$  was  $< 0.005$  . . .

Medical jargon often uses nouns as verbs. Avoid.

***Incorrect:***  
was electrophoresed

***Correct:***  
underwent electrophoresis

***Incorrect:***  
The patient was biopsied.

***Correct:***  
A biopsy was performed.

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## Style Guide



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## Style Guide for Authors and Editors (page 6 of 6)

### Other Resources

#### Comprehensive Style Guides and Other Print Resources

For a more in-depth discussion of medical writing and editing issues, refer to other authoritative sources, including print versions of

- A Dictionary of Virology (Mahy)
- American Medical Association Manual of Style (AMA)
- ASM Style Manual (ASM)
- Chicago Manual of Style (CSM)
- Control of Communicable Diseases Manual (APHA)
- Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary
- How To Report Statistics in Medicine (Lang)
- Index Medicus
- International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria (1990 Revision), P.H.A. Sneath, editor, 1992, American Society for Microbiology
- Manual of Systematic Bacteriology (Bergey)
- Physicians Desk Reference
- Scientific Style and Format (Council of Science Editors [CSE])
- Stedman's Medical Dictionary
- Stein's Medical Abbreviations
- Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals (UR)
- Virology (Fields)
- Virus taxonomy: classification and nomenclature of viruses: seventh report of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses. Van Regenmortel MHV, chairman. New York: Academic Press;2000
- Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary

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- Webster's Third New International Dictionary (unabridged)
- Words Into Type (WIT)

#### Internet Resources

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Acronym Finder

<http://gungadin.cs.brandeis.edu/~weiluo/main3.htm>

Checklist of North American Birds

<http://www.aou.org/aou/birdlist.html>

Encyclopaedia Britannica

[www.Britannica.com](http://www.Britannica.com)

GPO's Copyright Law of United States; 162 pp

<http://www.loc.gov/copyright/circs/circ92.pdf>

Index Medicus

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/tsd/serials/lji.html>

LBSN-List of Bacterial Names with Standing in Nomenclature

<http://www.bacterio.cict.fr/>

Mammal Species of the World (MSW)

<http://www.nmnh.si.edu/msw/>

Merriam-Webster Collegiate 10th dictionaries

<http://www.m-w.com>

Northern Light: good, all-purpose search engine for locating people and addresses, in particular

<http://www.nimr.mrc.ac.uk/intro.htm>

Online thesaurus of geographic names

[http://shiva.pub.getty.edu/tgn\\_browser/](http://shiva.pub.getty.edu/tgn_browser/)

Source of online classics including reference works for editors (Strunk, Fowler's) and 3rd edition of American Heritage Dictionary, 2000 edition of Columbia Encyclopedia, and 1996 edition of Roget's Thesaurus  
[www.bartleby.com](http://www.bartleby.com)

Physicians Desk Reference

<http://www.pdrel.com/> ;

also available free through CDC for CDC employees at

<http://www.pdrel.com/>

Stedman's Medical Dictionary

<http://www.stedmans.com/>

Uniform Requirements

<http://www.acponline.org/journals/resource/unifreqr.htm>

Virus taxonomy: classification and nomenclature of viruses: seventh report of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/ICTVdb/Ictv/index.htm>

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