

## ECSA style guidelines for English text

### Introduction

This document outlines ECSA's style guidelines (or 'house style') for all text in English (online and printed). It is adapted from a style sheet created by [Green Ink](#).

### Why do we need a style guide?

A style guide establishes standard style requirements across the association. This improves our communication, with each other and the public, in a number of ways:

- It ensures consistency, both within a document and across multiple documents.
- It sets out agreed standards in areas such as punctuation, capitalization, spelling, formatting - thus avoiding staff members using their own preferences or approaches.
- It provides guidance and rules for non-native English speakers.
- It looks professional, which increases the reader's confidence in what we are writing; typos, grammatical errors and inconsistency make a publication look unprofessional, rushed or unedited.

Overall, our style guide aims to ensure that our written outputs are as clear and simple to read and understand as possible.

If there is a conflict of interests (i.e. a publication jointly written with another organization that has a different house style), then we do not need to fight to the death to defend our own style. The most important issue is consistency within a document, not a mix of styles (i.e. inconsistency).

### General points

- Use UK spelling, with ~iz- (i.e. organization, specialization).
- For all spelling queries, refer to the [Cambridge Online Dictionary](#).
- Do not use serial commas (e.g. eggs, beans and chips - not eggs, beans, and chips).
- Our preferred typeface/font is Calibri 12pt for running text in Word and/or in printed materials.

### Headings

- Use the same typeface for headings as for text.
- Use bold text and sentence case.
- Colours can change according to the look of the document; if in doubt, use the same colour as the main text.
- Do not capitalise nouns or 'important' words in the title because:

- this is hard to apply consistently
- there is no convention for it in written English (unlike, for example, German in which nouns are capitalized).

Level 1	<b>16pt, bold</b>
Level 2	<b>14pt, bold</b>
Level 3	Firstly, ask: does my document need three heading levels?  If so, use <b>12pt, bold</b>

### Figure/table captions

- Title above the figure/table; sentence case for all titles.
- Sources are placed below the figure/table; this is only needed if it is taken from another publication/organization.

Figures	Figure 1: Ten principles of citizen science
Tables	Table 2.1: Ten principles of citizen science
Sources	Source: D-NOSES (2019)

### Lists

- Bullets unless there is a specific number of points/order to be followed.
  - Sub-bullets should be a white dot.
- No space above list (i.e between preceding sentence and top of list).
- Use a full stop at the end if the point is a complete sentence.
- If the points are not a full sentence, you should:
  - use a lower case letter to start, as it is a continuation of the same sentence (not the start of a new one)
  - not use a semicolon at the end, as it is not needed
  - use a full stop for the last point only, as that is the 'end' of the sentence.
- If a point extends over more than one sentence, you can do two things:
  - you can split it into two separate points, or
  - you can make it part of the main text (i.e. not a bullet), as bullets should be brief and punchy.

## Quotation marks

- Use “double quotes” for directly quoted speech only.
- Use ‘single quotes’ for
  - defined words
  - newly introduced terms.

## Italics, bold and underlining

Use *italics* for:

- scientific names of organisms
- foreign words and phrases (e.g. only if they don’t appear in the preferred English dictionary)
- book and journal titles (when used in text and in reference lists).

Use **bold** for:

- emphasis.

Never use both together and never underline text or use CAPITALS for emphasis because it makes the text harder to read, and underlined text is commonly assumed to be a hyperlink. And never use excessive punctuation either!!!!

## Numbers

- Spell out one to nine, unless there is a mix of numbers in the same sentence (e.g. there were 9 members and 23 non-members).
- Use digits if they are accompanied by a unit (i.e. six people, but 6mm) or part of a range (e.g. 8–10).
- Use a comma as a thousand separator in 4-digit numbers, i.e. 1,000, 2,000.
  - Note: German uses a decimal point, but English uses a comma (1,000, not 1.000).
- For number ranges, use an en-dash (e.g. 2,000–5,000, 8–10).
- For decimal points use the full point (.) not a comma (,) as in German.

## Dates and times

- Write dates as: 12 August 2019. This avoids confusion over the order (e.g. 1/2/2018 - is that the second of January or the first of February?).
- There is no need for a superscripted <sup>th</sup> after the date (i.e. not 12<sup>th</sup> April).
- For time, use the 24-hour clock, i.e. 9:00, 14:00.
  - There is no need for an initial 0 (i.e. 09:00).
- For fiscal or academic years, use: 2014/15.
- For ranges, use: 2014–15.
- Avoid using seasons if possible, as these vary depending on location (i.e. summer in Europe is winter in Australasia).

- If a season is important to the text, clarify if it is not referring to European seasons (e.g. Austral winter).
- Use months as well for clarification, as these are the same worldwide.

## Units

- Use percent in text (but % in tables).
- No space between the number and the units, e.g. 6km, 3kgs.

## Currencies

- Use [the ISO currency code](#) at the first instance [for all currencies](#) (e.g. USD, AUD, GBP, EUR).
- You can use a standard symbol thereafter, but remember that more than one country uses \$ for its currency - so make sure it is clear which one is being referred to (e.g. US\$, A\$, NZ\$).
- No space is needed between the symbol and the digits (e.g. €50, US\$60).

## Capitalization

In English, you only need to capitalize:

- proper nouns (e.g. place names)
- organizations, associations and institutions (e.g. European Citizen Science Association, Berlin High School, Natural History Museum)
- official positions, but not job titles
  - Executive Chair is capitalized, scientist is not
- publications (e.g. *the Guardian*, *the Economist*, *Bild*).

## Citations

- Use the Harvard system for in-text citations, e.g. Gold, Rüfenacht and Riemenschneider (2018) state that ...; sausages are best eaten with beans and chips (Mazonetto, 2018).
- If there are more than three authors, use et al., e.g. (Woods et al., 2018).

## References

These should be kept as 'clean' as possible, and largely based on the [Harvard style](#) (check this if unsure).

Book:

Neville, C. 2010. *The complete guide to referencing and avoiding plagiarism*. Open University Press, New York.

Dym, C.L., Little, P., Orwin, E.J. and Spjut, R.E. 2009. *Engineering design: a project-based introduction*. 3rd edition. Wiley, Hoboken, NJ.

Chapter in a book:

Franklin, A.W. 2012. 'Management of the problem', pp. 83-95 in Smith, S.M. (ed.) *The maltreatment of children*. MTP, Lancaster.

Journal:

Ruxton, C. 2016. 'Tea: hydration and other health benefits', *Primary Health Care* 26(8): 34-42. doi:10.7748/phc.2016.e1162

Geraghty, S., Lauva, M. and Oliver, K. 2016. 'Reconstructing compassion: should it be taught as part of the curriculum?', *British Journal of Nursing* 25(15): 836-839. doi:10.12968/bjon.2016.25.15.836

Newspaper article:

Lewis, S. 2015. 'Rainbow support for York pride', *The Press, York*, 18 June, p.6.

Website:

*Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821)*. 2015. Available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic\\_figures/bonaparte\\_napoleon.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/bonaparte_napoleon.shtml) (accessed 18 July 2015).

## Footnotes

- Use superscript numbers in the main text (not a, b, c, or i, ii, iii).
- Do not mix footnotes and endnotes in a document.

## Common terms and abbreviations

ABC	DEF	GHI
citizen science (always lower case)	decision-maker e.g.	i.e.

<b>JKL</b>	<b>MNO</b>	<b>PQR</b>  policy-maker  pp. for pages (e.g. pp. 12–13)
<b>STU</b>	<b>VWX</b>	<b>YZ/other (e.g. symbols)</b>  % use only in tables, in text use percent