

The following is a style and usage guide for general grammar and punctuation practices in CMDA publications. It is to be used as a standard for the design and writing of documents.

As a rule, all publications will follow Associated Press style guidelines as set forth in the *Associated Press Stylebook*. In addition, *The Christian Writer's Manual of Style* and the *AMA Manual of Style* will be used for religious and medical styling, respectively. The following are site-specific standards that have been adopted and will be observed in CMDA's publications. These standards will supersede guidelines set forth in the national guides.

This stylebook will continue to be added to on an as needed basis as common styling questions arise.

1. Items in a Series
 - a. Use commas to separate elements in a series, but do not put a comma before the conjunction in a simple series.
 - i. For example: The flag is red, white and blue.
2. Times
 - a. Use the following punctuation when referencing a specific time: 10 a.m. or 8 p.m.
3. Titles
 - a. Titles of books and periodicals (including magazines, audio magazines and newsletters) will be *italicized*. This rule includes video or audio tapes published by CMDA.
 - i. For example: *Today's Christian Doctor* and *Christian Doctor's Digest*
 - b. Titles of movies will appear in *italics*.
 - c. Titles of television and radio shows will appear in "quotes."
 - d. Sub-portions of books, such as an article from a magazine or a chapter from a book will appear in "quotes."
 - e. CMDA entities such as Global Health Outreach, Medical Malpractice Ministry and so forth will be capitalized and appear in regular type.
4. Telephone Numbers
 - a. When referencing a telephone number, use the following form:
 - i. Regular numbers: 423-844-1000
 - ii. Toll Free numbers: 800-230-6237 or 888-230-6237
 - iii. The "1" is unnecessary and will not be used
 - b. This form will be used in any advertisements or classifieds generated by CMDA.
 - c. If an advertiser chooses to use a different style that is inconsistent with this style, they may choose to do so.
5. Quotations
 - a. The period and the comma always go within the quotation marks.

- i. Example: "I am looking forward to the convention," said Tom.
- b. The dash, semicolon, question mark and exclamation point go within the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted matter only. They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence.
 - i. Example: "Are you going to the convention?" asked Tom.
- c. Use a comma to introduce a complete quotation within a sentence.
 - i. Example: Tom said, "I am looking forward to the convention."
- d. Do not use a comma at the start of an indirect or partial quotation.
 - i. Example: Tom said that he was "looking forward to the convention."

6. Ellipses

- a. In place of a word or several words in the middle of a sentence, use three dots.
 - i. Example: "...so loved the world...have eternal life."
- b. When the ellipsis ends a sentence, four dots are used.
 - i. Example: "For God so loved the world...."

7. State Abbreviations

- a. Spell out the name of a state when it stands alone in a text.
- b. The following states should never be abbreviated: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.
- c. Spell out the name of a state in conjunction with a city if space is available.
- d. In conjunction with the name of a city, use the following abbreviations if space is not available to spell it out:

Ala.	Ill.	Miss.	N.C.	Vt.
Ariz.	Ind.	Mo.	N.D.	Va.
Ark.	Kan.	Mont.	Okla.	Wash.
Calif.	Ky.	Neb.	Ore.	W.Va.
Colo.	La.	Nev.	Pa.	Wis.
Conn.	Md.	N.H.	R.I.	Wyo.
Del.	Mass.	N.J.	S.C.	
Fla.	Mich.	N.M.	S.D.	
Ga.	Minn.	N.Y.	Tenn.	

- i. When naming a city and state, place one comma between the city and state name.
 - e. Use the two-letter Postal Service abbreviations ONLY with full addresses, including ZIP code. All other references should be spelled out or abbreviated as discussed above.
 - f. Use periods when abbreviating United States, as U.S. Omit the periods so it reads US when using the abbreviation in a headline.
 - g. ZIP is an acronym, so it should always be capitalized as "ZIP."
8. Addresses
- a. Use the following abbreviations only when used in conjunction with a numbered address: Ave., Blvd. and St.
 - i. Example: 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
 - b. Use periods in the abbreviation for Post Office Box

- i. Example: P.O. Box 5000

9. Numbers

- a. If at all possible, try to avoid beginning a sentence with a numeral. If it is necessary to have the numeral first, spell out the numeral.
 - i. Wrong: 23 people attended the conference.
 - ii. Right: A total of 23 people attended the conference.
 - iii. Right (but avoid if possible): Twenty-three people attended the conference.
- b. Spell out whole numbers below 10, and use the figures for 10 and above.
 - i. Wrong: Sara has 2 dogs, 3 cats and 10 birds.
 - ii. Correct: Sara has two dogs, three cats and 10 birds.
- c. Use a comma for most figures greater than 999, with exceptions such as street numbers and telephone numbers
 - i. Example: 1,889 birds instead of 1889

10. Percentages

- a. The word “percent” should always be spelled out, and the % sign should not be used.
- b. Use the figures for percentages, even for numbers below 10.
 - i. Wrong: Eight percent
 - ii. Correct: 8 percent

11. Dates

- a. Where possible, always spell out dates as follows:
 - i. Correct: September 30, 2018
 - ii. Incorrect: September 30th, 2018 ***These “th, nd, rd” additions are **NEVER** necessary when the full date is used. The only time these are used is when the date is referenced by itself, such as “the deadline is the 30th of September.” In this case, it is typed in regular font, not in superscript.
 - iii. Correct: October 5-19, 2017
 - iv. Incorrect: October 5 – 19, 2017
 - v. Correct: February 27 – March 5, 2018
 - vi. Incorrect: Feb. 27-Mar. 5, 2018
- b. The only times dates shouldn’t be completely spelled out is when space does not allow.

12. Professional Titles and Credentials

- a. If mention of academic degrees is necessary to establish someone’s credentials, the preferred abbreviation has no periods and no spaces (i.e. MD, PhD and MA)
- b. In references to persons with doctorates in medicine or dentistry, use “Dr.” followed by their full name for the first reference, and then use “Dr.” with their last name in all additional references.
- c. “Dr.” and the coordinating degree (MD, DDS, etc.) are not to be used together.
 - i. Correct: Dr. David Stevens
 - ii. Correct: David Stevens, MD, MA (Ethics)
 - iii. Incorrect: Dr. David Stevens, MD, MA (Ethics)
- d. When a professional title is used in the narrative, commas are necessary to separate degrees as well as to signify the end of the title. So the punctuation should read as

follows: David Stevens, MD, MA (Ethics), is the CEO of Christian Medical & Dental Associations.

- e. When a person's title is referenced, that title should only be capitalized when it is used directly before the individual's name.
 - i. Correct: Executive Vice President Mike Chupp, MD
 - ii. Correct: Mike Chupp, MD, executive vice president of CMDA
 - iii. Incorrect: Mike Chupp, MD, Executive Vice President

13. Biblical References - Capitalization

- a. Capitalize all commonly accepted names for the persons of the Trinity (i.e. Christ, God, Messiah, Holy Spirit, etc.)
 - i. When compound words are formed with the word God as deity, the compounds are hyphenated and God is capitalized (i.e. God-fearing vs. godsend)
- b. Capitalize all pronouns when referring to persons of the Trinity (i.e. Him, His, etc.)
- c. Capitalize all commonly accepted names for Satan (i.e. Beast, Satan, etc.)
- d. The words apostle and prophet are lowercase unless used as part of a proper name (i.e. the prophet Jeremiah vs. the Weeping Prophet)
- e. Capitalize all commonly accepted names for the Bible (i.e. Holy Bible, the Word, Scripture, etc.). This includes names for different translations of the Bible.
 - i. Conversely, adjectives commonly used to indicate the Bible are lowercased (i.e. biblical, scriptural, biblically, etc.)
- f. Capitalize all names of the books of the Bible.
- g. The word "church" is lowercased unless it is part of the formal or official name of a specific denomination (i.e. the church vs. First Christian Church)
- h. The word "gospel" has come to have several common meanings and becomes subject to misinterpretation. To avoid confusion, all references to the word "gospel" will be lowercased with a few exceptions:
 - i. Capitalize if it's used as part of a title such as *The Gospel According to Peanuts*
 - ii. Capitalize when referring to the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)
 - iii. Capitalize if the translation being used lists the title as the Gospel of Thomas
- i. The following are miscellaneous biblical terms and their proper guidelines:
 - i. Holy Land, Holy City and Holy Grail – capitalized
 - ii. A "call" or "calling" – lowercase
 - iii. John the Baptist – capitalized
 - iv. Christian and Christianity – capitalized
 - v. hosanna and hosannah – both spellings are acceptable and are lowercase
 - vi. megachurch – no hyphen is necessary, all one word, lowercase
 - vii. kingdom – lowercase in all circumstances
 - viii. cross – lowercase
- j. Christian "language" frequently tends to capitalize terms and miscellaneous words unnecessarily. When in doubt about capitalization of Christian terms, please check with Mandi.

14. Biblical References – Abbreviations

- a. The names of the books of the Bible and the Apocrypha are generally spelled out in text, but can be abbreviated in parenthetical references. If space is available, you should refrain from abbreviating the names **at all times**.

i. When needed, use the following abbreviations:

Gen.	2 Kings	Isa.	Nah.	Rom.	Titus
Ex.	1 Chron.	Jer.	Hab.	1 Cor.	Philem.
Lev.	2 Chron.	Lam.	Zeph.	2 Cor.	Heb.
Num.	Ezra	Ezek.	Hag.	Gal.	James
Deut.	Neh.	Dan.	Zech.	Eph.	1 Peter
Josh.	Est.	Hos.	Mal.	Phil.	2 Peter
Judg.	Job	Joel	Matt.	Col.	1 John
Ruth	Ps.	Amos	Mark	1 Thess.	2 John
1 Sam.	Prov.	Obad.	Luke	2 Thess.	3 John
2 Sam.	Eccl.	Jonah	John	1 Tim.	Jude
1 Kings	Song	Mic.	Acts	2 Tim.	Rev.

- b. The translations of the Bible are generally spelled out and italicized the first time they are referenced in the text, but can be abbreviated in all additional notations and any parenthetical references.

i. The following are some common translations and their abbreviations:

AB	Amplified Bible
Anchor	The Anchor Bible
ESV	English Standard Version
KJV	King James Version
LB	The Living Bible
MSG	The Message
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NET	The New English Translation
NIV	New International Version
NKJV	New King James Version
NLT	New Living Translation
TNIV	Today's New International Version

ii. For additional translations and their abbreviations, reference the *Christian Writer's Manual of Style*.

15. Biblical Translations

- a. For work products and publications generated within CMDA, the following Bible translations are preferred:
- i. New American Standard Bible
 - ii. English Standard Version
 - iii. New International Version, 1984 edition*
- b. A variety of other translations may also be acceptable. However, due to controversy related to accuracy of content, CMDA will **avoid** using these translations: TNIV 2002 or 2005 and NIV 2011.
- c. When an author submits work to be published by CMDA, when possible, the author should be made aware of this policy in advance. Whether or not the author is aware of

the policy, if he/she requests that a specific translation be used, CMDA will generally comply with the request, and where appropriate, add an editor's note such as, "NIV 2011 used at author's request."

- d. As the 1984 NIV edition is no longer in print and not carried by major online Bible sources, use of this translation should be limited.

16. Biblical References – Quotations

- a. All biblical quotations should be identical to the translation they are taken from, including capitalization and content. As a rule, all Scripture references must be checked for accuracy.
 - i. This can create a conflict with other CMDA style rules such as capitalization, but the quotation needs to accurately reflect the translation regardless of our rules.
- b. The proper listing of a biblical reference is as follows:
 - i. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16, NIV 1984).
 - ii. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16, NASB).
- c. When referencing only a specific part of a verse, an ellipsis should be used. Introductory words such as "and, for, therefore, etc." can be omitted without the need to insert an ellipsis.
- d. Italics in the King James Version and New King James Version – to avoid confusion with the readers, words that are italicized in these biblical translations do not need to be italicized when referenced in a publication.
- e. For *Today's Christian Doctor*, the reference of the "NIV 1984" as a translation source is unnecessary since the masthead clarifies that the NIV 1984 is our standard translation. All undesigned Scripture references are taken from this translation.
- f. **Since all other CMDA publications do not have a masthead, the translation should be referenced and included for ALL Scripture references, regardless of the translation and regardless of where and how the verse is being used.**
 - i. Please make every attempt to include a translation with each Scripture reference so the verse can be quickly verified.

17. Other Religious Issues

- a. Every religion develops its own unique vocabulary, jargon and cliché phrases. Writers should be wary of using Christian jargon when writing for a larger audience as it tends to leave segments of the readership feeling excluded. Religious writing is strengthened when writers find fresh and contemporary ways to express their ideas.
- b. Profanity - Many religious publishers request that their writers avoid all forms of taboo or profane speech, but the issues are complex. At times, some writers will use a certain word or phrase as an example, but this should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
 - i. There are typically six categories of taboo speech that are to be avoided in religious works:
 1. Profanity – using the names of the Trinity in inappropriate ways
 2. Scatology – coarse slang terms for bodily functions and waste products

3. Venerly – obscene words and expressions describing body parts or sexual acts
4. Vulgar Interjections – taboo words as expressions of sudden emotions
5. Vulgar Epithets – socially unacceptable terms to describe individuals
6. Social Insensitivity – words that communicate a derogatory attitude toward people because of their social standing, race, etc.

18. Common Electronic Terms

- a. The following are common social media or electronic terms and their proper guidelines:
 - i. Email or email – the hyphen is no longer necessary but is still necessary for other usages such as e-commerce, e-business, e-book, etc.
 - ii. cell phone – preferred listed as two words instead of one
 - iii. smartphone – now listed as one word instead of two
 - iv. website – one word, lowercase w including other usages such as webcam, webcast, webpage, web, etc.
 - v. World Wide Web – the only time that “web” needs to be capitalized is when referring to it as the full name in formal settings
 - vi. When providing a full website or email address in text, the address should be set in *italics*.

19. Common Healthcare Terms

- a. The following are common medical terms and their proper guidelines:
 - i. Healthcare – one word with no hyphen at all times to avoid confusion
 - ii. OB/Gyn – making sure to follow this correct capitalization
- b. Doctor vs. physician vs. dentist
 - i. Physicians and dentists are both “doctors.” So the term “doctors and dentists” should **NEVER** be used to try and differentiate between the two. In that case, the term should be “physicians and dentists.”
 - ii. However, as CMDA’s membership has grown to include more than just doctors, we make all efforts to avoid using simply “doctors.” Instead, “healthcare professionals” is the more widely used and accepted term to be used throughout CMDA’s publications.
- c. Medicine vs. healthcare
 - i. As our membership has grown, we’ve also made efforts to use healthcare whenever possible, as opposed to “medical” and “medicine.”
 1. Correct: Christians in healthcare...
 2. Incorrect: Christians in medicine...
 - ii. This also includes references to missions, as we try to use “healthcare missions” instead of “medical missions” when possible.

20. Miscellaneous CMDA Style

- a. When writing out “Christian Medical & Dental Associations,” the ampersand (&) should be used at all times instead of the word “and.”
- b. When a reference is being made “Christian Medical & Dental Associations” as a single entity, all references should be singular.

- i. Example: The Christian Medical & Dental Associations is a national organization that supports healthcare professionals. It exists to motivate, educate and equip. CMDA has more than 40 different outreaches.
 - ii. Individual reference example: The Christian Medical Association and the Christian Dental Association are individual ministries of CMDA. [In this situation, there are two associations so all references should be in plural form.]
- c. Our various ministry and departmental acronyms can become very confusing very quickly, especially for our members and those unfamiliar with CMDA. In all instances, the name should be spelled out the first time it is used, with the acronym in parentheses after it. Once it is spelled initially, the acronym can be used in any following references.
 - i. Correct: Global Health Outreach (GHO) is a short-term missions program.
 - ii. Incorrect: GHO is a short-term missions program.
- d. The above rule regarding acronyms is extremely important to remember for **all** acronyms, not just ministry acronyms.
- e. One acronym that we try and avoid using if at all possible in written publications is “PAS” – which stands for physician-assisted suicide. In all instances, it should be spelled out to reiterate the term.
- f. When writing and editing for all CMDA publications, the general rule of thumb is to assume that your audience is unfamiliar with your topic. Don’t assume they know what you’re talking about, who you’re talking about, etc., especially given the breadth of CMDA’s ministry.
- g. When referencing CMDA staff members, remember to always include titles, full name and credentials the first time they are referenced.
 - i. Correct: I traveled to Michigan this week with CMDA’s Executive Vice President Mike Chupp, MD, to speak to student groups in the area.
 - ii. Incorrect: I traveled to Michigan this week with Dr. Chupp to speak to student groups in the area.

21. Miscellaneous Style Rules

- a. Only one space is necessary between sentences. Using two spaces is no longer required per AP style guidelines.
- b. Trademark Symbol – ® – the symbol is not necessary when a brand name is used in a text but should be used elsewhere when its use might be taken as an endorsement (i.e. advertisement, masthead, etc.)
- c. “OK” is the accepted form and the word “okay” should not be used.
- d. Worldview – one word with no hyphen
- e. Short-term and long-term (a short-term missions trip vs. a long-term commitment)
- f. Full-time and part-time (always use the hyphens to create consistency)
- ~~g. Wellbeing – one word with no hyphen~~ The word “well-being” is now included in one of CMDA’s ministry names: “The Center for Well-being.” Due to this revised spelling, the rule for CMDA publications has now been changed to allow for a hyphen at all times.
- h. Board of Trustees – capitalized only when used in this format as the full name. If it’s listed as the “board” or the “trustees,” then they are not capitalized.