



Style Sheet Template Expanded/Professional

QUICK HELP

BASIC

EXPANDED

PROFESSIONAL

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This aid gives you the framework to create a detailed style sheet for any writing project. It also gives you a head start in developing general style guidelines for your entire organization, or specific style guidelines for use in individual divisions or departments.

Creating and following style guidelines is the best and easiest way to ensure that your written materials stay accurate and consistent, whether you're working on a single document or on many documents over time. The few moments you spend adding items to a style sheet, then referring to it for reminders, will save you endless frustration, hours of redundant research, and much needless error.

Keeping a style sheet is easy, and this template makes it easier still. As decisions are made, simply note here all applicable style choices—for general language usage or industry-specific conventions—and then consult this sheet when an item appears again to be sure the style for it is applied consistently. Circulate the sheet to everyone who needs it, and if more than one person will add to it, have each person mark their own entries with their initials or a unique symbol. Be sure to indicate the most recent version of the style sheet with either a date or a version number, on the sheet itself or in the file name.

This template is suitable for professional wordsmiths or for anyone who wants to ensure the highest level of accuracy in the writing they produce. For a style sheet template that covers the essentials in less detail, see our *Starter Style Sheet*, available in both electronic and hard-copy versions.



STYLE SHEET

Company/Dept./Project:

Author(s):

Editor:

Version/Last Update:

Proofreader:

Conventions

Note style choices in all applicable categories below.

- **Capitalization** Note capitalization conventions for items (such as department names and lengthy prepositions in titles) that can be treated in different ways.
 - In titles and headings:
 - In captions:
 - Following colons:
 - Following em dashes:
 - For special terms:

- **Fonts** Note the font types and sizes used for elements that repeat throughout a document.
 - Cover sheet/document title:
 - Chapter/section titles:
 - Body text:
 - Headings:
 - Running heads:
 - Footers:
 - Page numbers (folios):
 - Captions:
 - Tables:
 - Table of contents:
 - For emphasis:
 - For special terms:
 - Other:

- **Headers and Footers** Note the content that should appear in headers and footers and how it's located (e.g., flush left, flush right, or centered).
 - Header content (odd, even, and first page, plus front/back matter):
 - Header location (odd, even, and first page):
 - Footer content (odd, even, and first page, plus front/back matter):
 - Footer location (odd, even, and first page):
 - Page number (folio) style (lowercase roman or arabic for front matter):
 - Page number location (odd, even, and first page):



- **Lists** Note when a bulleted list is used versus a numbered list, whether all list introductions or only certain ones are followed by a colon, whether all list items begin with a capital letter, if and under what circumstances list items end with punctuation, how list item lead-ins are styled, how lists within lists are handled, and any other list guidelines.
 - Bulleted lists:
 - Numbered lists:
 - List introductions:
 - List item capitalization:
 - List item punctuation:
 - List item lead-ins:
 - Lists within lists:
 - Other:

- **Numbers** Note which numbers are spelled out and which are shown as numerals; whether commas are used in four-digit numbers; whether even dollar amounts are shown with a decimal and zeros; rounding guidelines; how percentages are shown; how dates, times, and telephone numbers are formatted; when numbers are used with units of measure; and any other style choices that apply to numbers.
 - Spelled-out numbers:
 - Numerals:
 - Commas in numbers:
 - Dollar amounts:
 - Rounding:
 - Percentages:
 - Dates:
 - Times:
 - Telephone numbers:
 - Units of measure:
 - Other:



- **Punctuation** Note whether series commas are used; whether there is space or no space around em dashes; how and where other types of dashes are used; whether quotation marks are used around new or specialized terms, and whether quotation marks are straight or curly; whether punctuation is used in headings; and any other punctuation style choices.
 - Series commas:
 - Dashes:
 - Quotation marks:
 - In headings:
 - Other:

- **Spacing** For all copy, note standard number of letter spaces following colons and between sentences. (With a few rare exceptions, such as in some legal or academic works, this should be one space.) For checking formatting as part of copyediting, and for proofreading, note page setup parameters such as margins and indents. Note standard line spacing in body text and around headings and such elements as lists, tables, and captions. Also note justification style (left, center, right, full) as appropriate for all elements.
 - Number of spaces following colons and between sentences:
 - Margins:
 - Indents:
 - Body text:
 - Above/below headings:
 - Above/below lists:
 - Above/below tables:
 - Above/below captions:
 - Justification:
 - Other:

- **Symbols** Note whether such things as ampersands, symbols, mathematical operators, and percent signs are used, and under what circumstances. If there is a choice of different symbols, be sure to note which one is used.
 - Ampersands:
 - Degree symbols:
 - Mathematical operators:
 - Monetary symbols:
 - Percent signs:
 - Other:



- **Tables** Note all table styles used and the kind of information that should appear in each. In addition to the style (wording, grid lines, shading, etc.), include formatting parameters such as column widths; text spacing within cells; and capitalization in column headings, left-column row labels, and table cells. Note any special use of abbreviations or numbers in tables.
 - Table styles:
 - Column widths:
 - Text spacing:
 - Capitalization:
 - Abbreviations/numbers:
 - Other:

- **Word Breaks, Widows, and Orphans (for Proofreading)** Note any special guidelines for word breaks at the ends of lines in a finished document (e.g., no more than three in a row), and for treatment of widows (a short line at the top of a page) and orphans (a single word or part of a word at the end of a paragraph).
 - Word breaks at ends of lines:
 - Widows
 - Orphans:

Word List

Include here, in alphabetical order, the exact spelling, capitalization, and font of individual words and terms as they should appear. Include words that can be spelled more than one way, abbreviations and acronyms, hyphenations, proper names, proprietary names and terms coined by the author or organization, and any other terms that might need verification by an editor or proofreader. For complex jobs, break this list into categories. For example, Product Names, Trademarked Titles, Module Names, Sample Cases, Contract Provisions, etc.

*If you instead—or also—would like to work with electronic and hard copy versions of a starter style sheet, see our **Starter Style Sheet—Electronic** for use on your computer, or **Starter Style Sheet—Hard Copy**, formatted for printing, with plenty of space to handwrite in your entries. And for more help in the world of words, see our entire set of easy-to-use [Job Aids for Effective Communication](#) that give you quick, clear guidance as you prepare anything from a memo to a manual to a web page.*

