

# CHSRF ENGLISH STYLE GUIDE

Clarity. Simplicity. Consistency.

CANADIAN HEALTH SERVICES  
RESEARCH FOUNDATION  
CHSRF Communications Unit  
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# CHSRF ENGLISH STYLE GUIDE

## Introduction

Canadian English is a mix of American and British language and spellings. It is constantly evolving, which is why selecting and committing to in-house styles can help organizations achieve consistency, a basic principle of good communications.

This style guide captures our current styles and is a tool to help Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF) staff, researchers, external authors and editors prepare written materials for CHSRF. It covers clear writing principles, key spelling and punctuation rules, common grammar and usage mistakes, and CHSRF's style for references.

This is a living document and can be amended at any time (new terms, new spellings, new or adjusted styles). We welcome your input and feedback at any time.

The principles behind this guide are:

1. **Clarity** – First and foremost, CHSRF communications products should be easy for our audiences to understand.
2. **Simplicity** – CHSRF's approach is to keep things as simple as possible, for example, minimizing punctuation and capitalization.
3. **Consistency** – It is important for an organization to be consistent in the way it presents information.

## 1 KEY RESOURCES

In general, CHSRF uses the following English references:

- ▼ For spelling, we use the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, second edition (2004).
- ▼ For style, we use *The Canadian Style: A Guide to Writing and Editing*, second edition (1997).

The Canadian Style is available free through TERMIUM at: <http://www.termiumplus.gc.ca/tpv2guides/guides/tcdnstyl/index-eng.html?lang=eng>.

- ▼ For references, we use a hybrid of styles (see [5 References](#)), but mainly follow the American Psychological Association (APA) style, which you can access free through the Purdue Online Writing Lab at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/05/>.

CHSRF style does differ occasionally from these three references, so when there is a disagreement, this style guide prevails.

For hard copies of these references, or assistance with writing and editing, please see the CHSRF communications team.

## 2 IMPORTANCE OF CLEAR WRITING

Clear writing is vital to ensure that CHSRF’s target audiences can understand CHSRF communications products and take action based on the content.

Writing clearly and in plain language is not about “dumbing down” information. It is about presenting thoughts logically, expressing ideas as simply and concisely as possible, using a positive and direct tone, making information visually appealing, and being consistent in spelling and grammar.

In today’s busy world, people appreciate information that can be understood and absorbed the first time it is read.

*It does not matter how pleased an author might be to have converted all the right data into sentences and paragraphs; it matters only whether a large majority of the reading audience accurately perceives what the author had in mind.*

—George D. Gopen and Judith A. Swan, “The Science of Scientific Writing,” *American Scientist*, 1990

### Structure information logically

A logical progression of ideas is important. Each paragraph should develop one idea. Sentences and paragraphs should be short and linked together with connecting words. Break information into sections where it makes sense, and use clear headings and sub-headings.

### Express ideas simply and concisely

Try to explain your topic as if you are talking to someone who is relatively new to the subject. Use plain language—the shortest, most common words possible to get your idea across.

Avoid jargon. If needed, define complicated terms, and explain complex ideas using examples, anecdotes, comparisons and graphics.

Be concise and stick to essential facts, particularly at the beginning of document sections and paragraphs. Elaborate with more detail later in the body text.

## Use a positive, direct tone

At CHSRF, we want to avoid appearing either overly familiar or cold and patronizing. Use a positive, objective and direct tone. Avoid using contractions (don't, I'll) unless you are intentionally writing in conversational style for the public (for example, on the website, in news releases, speaking notes and in *Mythbusters*).

Try to avoid negative phrasing by flipping the idea into positive expression.

**Not:** Do not speak negatively.

**But:** Speak positively.

Use active sentence structure by using subject-verb-object order as often as possible.

**Not:** The funding was approved by CHSRF.

**But:** CHSRF approved the funding.

To make your text come alive and read more smoothly, choose action verbs (decide vs. make a decision) and concrete nouns (things that can be observed with the senses, like car, as opposed to abstract ideas, like transportation).

**Not:** Information will be provided to you by mail.

**But:** We will mail you a course outline.

## Make information visually appealing

The way information is visually presented also affects how well readers understand it. Here are a few tips to increase the readability of text:

- ▼ Use lots of white space (the space around text) by avoiding long blocks of text and breaking sections into sub-sections with headings and sub-headings.
- ▼ Use vertical (bulleted or numbered) lists to present a series of ideas (see [4.1 List format](#)).
- ▼ Emphasize important information with call-outs and summaries.
- ▼ Include visuals like tables, charts and figures to reinforce and explain ideas.
- ▼ Include a table of contents or web navigation to help readers understand the order of information.

## Be consistent

Be consistent in how you use spelling, abbreviations, capitalization, punctuation and numbers. This style guide outlines CHSRF's standard grammar, formatting and spelling rules.

### 3 TOP STYLE TIPS

Below are some of the recurring style issues at CHSRF:

1. Say “CHSRF,” not “the CHSRF” or “the Foundation.”
2. “Healthcare” is one word, not two.
3. Use Canadian spelling. Set the language in Word to “Canadian English.” (See [4.2 Spelling](#).)
4. Use hyphens for “decision-making,” “decision-maker,” “policy-making” and “policy-maker.” (See [6.1 CHSRF spellings for more common spellings](#).)
5. Use full capitalization for the titles of major publications (*The Ottawa Citizen*) and proper names. Use sentence capitalization for headings and sub-headings (Top style tips). (See [4.4 Capitalization](#).)
6. Use only one space after periods and colons, not two.
7. Do not use a comma before the last “and” or “or” in a list, unless needed for clarity. (See [4.5 Commas](#).)
8. Use commas for numbers of 1,000 or more (1,637,000).
9. In text, write out single-digit numbers (one through nine), except with percentages. Use numerals for the rest (10 and up).
10. When writing percentages, always use a numeral followed by a percent symbol, with no spaces (9%). Only spell out “percent” (one word) at the beginning of a sentence (but better to reword the sentence to start with a different word).
11. Use em (–) dashes—with no spaces on either side—for mid-sentence lists and interjections. Use en (–) dashes with no spaces for inclusive numbers (1999–2000). (See [4.5 Dashes and hyphens for more, including keyboard shortcuts](#).)
12. Write out “for example” and “that is” in body text. Abbreviate (e.g. and i.e.) when space is tight, like in charts and tables. The abbreviation is *not* followed by a comma.
13. Where appropriate, it is preferable to use *pan-Canadian* or *across Canada* rather than *national*. National is often interpreted as *federal*, which can be contentious in a domain such as healthcare, which falls primarily under provincial jurisdiction (See [4.7 Usage](#).)
14. Use CHSRF reference format: number references sequentially within the body of the text and link to endnotes, following APA (American Psychological Association) style. (See [5 References](#).)
15. For lists, use lower case and no punctuation for most bullets. For full sentences, use a capital letter at the beginning and period at the end. (See [4.1 List format](#).)

## 4 STYLE GUIDE

### 4.1 Formatting

#### *Font style*

##### Italics

Use italics sparingly. Italics may be used to:

- ▼ emphasize or stress a word (Sometimes honesty is the *worst* policy.)
- ▼ contrast two words (He did not *have* to go. He *wanted* to go.)
- ▼ highlight foreign words that are not part of everyday usage, including scientific Latin names (*laissez-passer*, *Escherichia coli*)
- ▼ highlight the title of published books, pamphlets, reports and studies, acts and statutes, plays, musical compositions, paintings, films, newspapers and periodicals (*Ottawa Sun*)

##### Bold and underlining

Use bold sparingly. Bold may be used for headings and, on rare occasions, to emphasize important words.

Avoid underlining text unless it is a clickable hyperlink or cross-reference.

#### *List format*

A vertical (or point-form) list breaks up text and makes a series of ideas easier to follow and understand. CHSRF uses a modern list style:

- ▼ Use ordered (numbered or lettered) lists only when the order or rank of ideas is important. Otherwise, use unordered (bulleted) lists.
- ▼ For list items that form complete sentences, begin with a capital letter and end with a period.
- ▼ For simple list items, begin with a lowercase letter and use no punctuation at the end.
- ▼ Use punctuation sparingly and avoid using semicolons.

A simple list would look like this:

- ▼ a few words or phrases
- ▼ no complete sentences
- ▼ no capital letters or punctuation

## ***Quotation format***

For quotations of three lines or more, use block format (single-spaced, indented, no quotation marks).

Quality and patient safety are increasingly recognized as governance responsibilities. However, our interviews with Canadian leaders, including CEOs of hospitals, health region board chairs and executives of other healthcare organizations, suggested that efforts to improve the governance of quality and patient safety in Canada were still in early stages in many organizations.

Do not change spelling or punctuation in a quotation, even when it does not conform to CHSRF style guidelines.

## ***Sentence and paragraph structure***

It is difficult to read long, dense blocks of text. To improve clarity, keep paragraphs and sentences short. Each sentence should explain one idea, and each paragraph should develop one idea. A longer sentence is acceptable if it closely connects related ideas. Vary sentence length for interest, but avoid individual sentences over 2.5 lines.

Avoid front-end loading sentences. Front-end loading means putting a long explanation in front of the meat of the sentence. Often this can be corrected by flipping the clauses or splitting into two sentences.

**Not:** Recent efforts in Ontario, where the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has linked new funding for surgical procedures to improved quality measures, including infection rates, suggest that governments may be broadening their focus.

**But:** Recent efforts in Ontario suggest that governments may be broadening their focus: the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has linked new funding for surgical procedures to improved measures, including infection rates.

Use active sentence structure. Using action verbs and showing who is doing the action to whom (subject-verb-object) will keep your reader’s attention and make your meaning clearer.

**Not:** The packages were sent to them on Friday.

**But:** CHSRF mailed packages to conference participants on Friday.

## 4.2 Spelling

This section outlines CHSRF’s guidelines for spelling. Also see [3 Spelling](#) in *The Canadian Style*.

### *Canadian spelling*

CHSRF uses Canadian spelling. The only cases where you should not use Canadian spelling are when:

- ▼ quoting directly from an American or British source
- ▼ writing a proper name (use the person or company’s preferred spelling)
- ▼ referencing a publication in its original language (for example, the French title of a book that is only available in French)

In general, Canadians use:

- ▼ -our endings for words like colour and honour (exceptions: honorary, error)
- ▼ -re endings for words like metre and centre
- ▼ -ze endings for words like organize and analyze (exceptions: advertise, exercise)
- ▼ -ce endings for nouns like licence and practice (but -se endings for verbs license and practise)
- ▼ double consonants (when adding the suffixes “ing,” “ed” and “es”) for words like labelled and labelling (exceptions: focused, focusing, focuses)

When in doubt, please refer to the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, second edition (2004). When two spellings are listed in the same entry, use the one that appears first. When two spellings appear in two separate entries, use the primary entry (the one followed by the definition).

For spellings that CHSRF commonly uses, please see [6.1 CHSRF spellings](#).

## Using spelling and grammar check

The spelling and grammar check tool can help avoid mistakes, but it will not pick up mistakes in usage (“their” vs. “there”) or errors like “heath” instead of “health.” When using the “find and replace” function, avoid selecting “replace all”—review each change individually.

Make sure that your spelling checker is set for Canadian English. To set your spelling checker to “Canadian English” in Word 2007:

1. Click the “Review” tab.
2. Click “Set Language” in the toolbar (toward the left).
3. In the window that appears, select “English (Canada)” and click OK.

To change the language for existing text, simply select all text and follow the above steps.

## 4.3 Abbreviations

This section outlines CHSRF’s guidelines for abbreviations. For more information, please see [1 Abbreviations](#) in *The Canadian Style*.

### Acronyms and initialisms

Acronyms and initialisms are abbreviations made from the first letters of a series of words. They save space when you need to refer to something with a long name repeatedly in a document. An acronym is sounded out as a word (NATO), while the letters of an initialism are sounded out one by one (CHSRF).

These tips will help you use acronyms and initialisms properly:

- ▼ Spell out the entire expression in your document the first time you use it, with the abbreviation in brackets. For unfamiliar abbreviations, spell out the expression at the beginning of every major document section.
- ▼ In general, do not use periods or spaces between letters (BSc, GST). Exceptions include:
  - ▼ geographic locations, which take periods (N.B.)
  - ▼ people’s initials, which take periods followed by spaces (J. K. Rowling)
- ▼ When writing the plurals of capital letters or numbers, do not use an apostrophe (MPs, PhDs, ‘90s) unless needed for clarity (A’s in math, Q’s and A’s).
- ▼ Do not use acronyms and initialisms for unfamiliar expressions if you are only using them once or twice in your document.

For the most common acronyms and initialisms used at CHSRF, please see the [CHSRF Lexicon](#) (PDF).

## *Degrees, designations and titles*

### Academic degrees and professional designations

When academic degrees (doctor of philosophy) and professional designations (registered nurse) are written in full use lowercase letters. When abbreviating, do not use periods or spaces between the letters (BA, PhD, BSc, MD, RN).

### Honorifics (courtesy titles)

Always write a person's name in full the first time it is used. Courtesy titles (Dr., Mr., Jr., Hon., Prof.) followed by the person's last name may be used in subsequent references (Mr. Toner).

**Note:** “Dr.” should only be used for medical doctors. For people with doctorate degrees, please list the name followed by the abbreviation for the degree (Jill Smith, PhD).

## *Geographic abbreviations*

In body text, spell out the names of provinces and streets (Ontario, Baker Street). For charts, tables and references, you may use abbreviations with periods and no spaces in between (Ont., B.C., P.E.I., St., Ave.). Use Canada Post short forms (without periods) only in mailing addresses.

See [1.09 Geographical Names](#) in *The Canadian Style* for a list of correct geographical abbreviations.

**Note:** Spell “Quebec” and “Montreal” without accents in English.

## *Numbers*

### Dates

Always spell out the names of months and days in body text (December, Monday). Abbreviate (Wed., Aug. 12) only for references, charts, tables and figures. Note that May, June and July are never abbreviated. See [4.6 Dates and time](#) for how to properly punctuate dates.

### Mathematical units

Spell out mathematical units in body text (centimetre), but abbreviate for tables, charts and figures (cm). Include a space between the numeral and short form (4 cm).

SI unit abbreviations (m, kg, C) do not take periods, or an “s” to form the plural. Imperial unit abbreviations (ft., in., mi., oz.) do take periods, but still no “s” for plural. See [1.23 The International System of Units \(SI\)](#) and [1.24 The imperial system](#) in *The Canadian Style* for correct spellings and abbreviations of mathematical units.

## Percentages

Always use a numeral followed by a percent symbol for percentages, with no space in between (100%). Only spell out “percent” at the beginning of a sentence (but try to reword instead).

## Time

To abbreviate units of time, use periods (no spaces) between the letters and a space after the number (9 a.m., 10:00 p.m.).

Time zones are written in full in body text (Pacific standard time) unless they follow an exact time, in which case they are written using uppercase letters with no spaces or periods (5:00 a.m. EST).

For Canadian time zones, see the National Research Council of Canada’s website at: <http://www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/services/inms/time-services/time-zones.html>.

## *Other abbreviations*

### Ampersand

Avoid using the ampersand (&) symbol in body text, unless it forms part of a proper name (Proctor & Gamble) or common expression (R&D).

### Latin terms

Write out Latin terms in body text. Abbreviate when space is tight, like in charts and tables. When you do abbreviate, do not follow with a comma. Be careful not to confuse the use of these common terms:

e.g.	for example (introduces an example)
i.e.	that is, in other words (introduces an explanation)
etc.	and so on (replaces additional examples)
et al.	and others (replaces additional authors in references)

**Note:** The following terms are not abbreviations and are not followed by a period:

ad hoc   et   ex   idem   par   per   pro   re   sic   via

### Lowercase abbreviations

Most lowercase abbreviations take periods (a.m., fig., vol., e.g.), but not math units and chemical symbols (cm, kg, log, tan).

## 4.4 Capitalization

This section outlines CHSRF's preferences and guidelines for capitalization. For more information, please see [4 Capitalization](#) in *The Canadian Style*.

### *General*

Avoid capitalization where possible. Do capitalize the following:

- ▼ proper names (Maureen O'Neil)
- ▼ places (Ottawa, Ontario)
- ▼ religions, both nouns and adjectives (Catholicism, Jewish comedy)
- ▼ languages, both nouns and adjectives (Francophone, English tea)
- ▼ nations and races, both nouns and adjectives (First Nations, Aboriginal communities)
- ▼ days, months and holidays (Monday, July, Thanksgiving)

**Note:** For proper names, follow the capitalization preferred by the individual or organization, unless it affects readability.

Use lower case for most other words, including:

- ▼ the names of seasons (spring, fall)
- ▼ centuries and decades (twentieth century), unless they have a proper name (Dirty Thirties)
- ▼ general directions and points of compass (north, west, eastern provinces, prairie wildlife), unless referring to a defined geographic region (the North, Atlantic Canada, the East Coast)
- ▼ short forms of job titles and organizations (our manager, the committee)
- ▼ plurals of places, job titles and organizations (Atlantic and Pacific oceans, first ministers, provincial governments)

### *Job and organization titles*

Capitalize formal titles that form part of the person's name (Prime Minister, King, Queen Elizabeth II) or that follow a person's name (John Williams, Director of Public Relations).

Use lower case for non-specific, generic titles that refer to a role (the editor), are plural (the provincial ministers, the departments), are preceded by a possessive or indefinite article (our prime minister, a department), or precede the full name (coach Paul Kelly, manager Jessie Young).

**Note:** Do not capitalize academic professions (Jane Allen, professor of history).

## ***Publication titles and headings***

Use *full capitalization* for the titles of major publications, like published books, pamphlets, reports and studies, acts and statutes, plays, musical compositions, paintings, films, newspapers and periodicals. Capitalize all major words, including the first letter of the first word, any word that follows a colon or em dash, and any other word (except conjunctions and prepositions that are fewer than four letters).

Quality of Healthcare in Canada: A Chartbook

Use *sentence capitalization* for all headings, sub-headings and news releases. Capitalize only the first letter of the first word, first word after a colon and words normally requiring capitalization (see [4.4 Capitalization](#)).

Judith Ritchie recognized with award for healthcare leadership

Capitalize the major parts of publications when they precede a number (Chapter 1, Figure 2, Table 10, Appendix 1), but use lower case for smaller parts (page 1, line 11, paragraph 2). Use lower case when the parts are plural or used in a general sense (the next chapter, tables and figures).

## ***Scientific and medical terms***

Use lower case for most scientific and medical terms, including the names of plants, birds, animals, chemical elements and compounds (sodium bicarbonate), generic drugs (acetaminophen), conditions and diseases (diabetes).

Capitalize words derived from proper names (Canada goose, Down syndrome) and the names of infectious organisms (Salmonella), but not their associated conditions (salmonellosis). For proper scientific (Latin) names, capitalize only the first word (*Listeria monocytogenes*).

## **4.5 Punctuation**

This section outlines CHSRF's guidelines for punctuation. For more information, please see [7 Punctuation](#) in *The Canadian Style*.

In general, use punctuation sparingly to organize words logically and clarify meaning.

### ***Spacing***

Follow these general rules for the spacing of punctuation:

- ▼ Use only one space after periods (not two).
- ▼ Avoid use of obliques where possible. Do not use spaces before or after an oblique (and/or).

## Commas

Use commas to clarify meaning, but avoid overusing them as they can break the flow of reading.

Do not use a comma before the last “and” or “or” in a list, except for clarity.

**Correct:** CHSRF is involved in research, knowledge transfer and knowledge brokering.

**Also correct:** CHSRF provides funding for research, education and mentoring, and linkage and exchange activities.

Use commas to separate a series of adjectives when their order does not affect the meaning. Omit commas if the order of the adjectives could not be changed and still make sense. A good test is to see if the adjectives can be separated by “and” and still make sense—if they can, use commas.

**Correct:** a rich, kind man

**Also correct:** a naïve domestic worker

## Dashes and hyphens

### Dashes

Use em (–) dashes—with no spaces on either side—for mid-sentence lists, interruptions, explanations and other strong breaks in sentences.

Use en (–) dashes with no spaces for inclusive numbers (1999–2000, pages 50–55) and to join place names (the region of Ottawa–Gatineau).

**Note:** You can insert em and en dashes in Word by selecting “Insert,” “Symbol,” “More Symbols” and choosing the symbol you want. Or you can use shortcut keys—the window that appears when you click “More Symbols” will show you the shortcut for each symbol. The common shortcut for an en dash is *ctrl+minus/hyphen* and for an em dash, *ctrl+alt+minus/hyphen*. If you click on the “Shortcut Key” button, you can set your own keyboard shortcut.

### Hyphens

Write compound words with hyphens to provide clarity, especially when forming a new word from two separate concepts (evidence-based). You do not need to use hyphens when the meaning is clear without them (public sector workers).

In general, hyphenate compound adjectives and adverbs before a noun (well-known actors). Note that adverbs ending in *-ly* are not followed by a hyphen (a rapidly decreasing population).

Use hyphens for “decision-making,” “decision-maker,” “policy-making” and “policy-maker.” See [6.1 CHSRF spellings](#) and the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* for more definitive spellings. See [2 Hyphenation: Compounding and Word Division](#) in *The Canadian Style* for more on using hyphens.

## *Other punctuation*

### Ellipsis points

When omitting part of a quoted passage, use three ellipsis points ... with a space before and after, but no spaces in between. See [8.09 Omissions](#) in *The Canadian Style* for more.

### Parentheses

Punctuation goes outside of parentheses unless it is part of the sentence or phrase in parentheses. (Tip: If the first word of a sentence is in parentheses, the ending punctuation should be too.)

### Quotation marks

Always use double quotation marks, including to highlight individual words (spell “notorious”). Use single quotation marks only when there is a quote within a quote.

“I was honoured to receive the award, particularly when the president said, ‘Jane is a remarkable scientist.’”

Always place periods and commas within the closing quotation mark. Other punctuation marks (em dashes, exclamation points, question marks, colons and semicolons) go inside the quotation marks if they belong to the quote, but outside if they belong to the rest of the sentence.

**Correct:** Remember to ask “How are you feeling?” when first approaching a patient.

**Also correct:** Did you remember to say “goodbye”?

### Semicolons

Semicolons should only be used to join two related, independent clauses not already joined by a coordinating conjunction, or to separate complicated list items with internal punctuation. However, try to reword the sentence or to separate it into two or more sentences where possible.

**Correct:** Obesity in children is increasing rapidly; over 30% of Canadian children are overweight.

**Also correct:** The council assists with program creation, implementation and promotion; ongoing strategic advice and direction for program development; and monitoring, enforcement and evaluation activities.

## 4.6 Numbers

This section outlines CHSRF’s guidelines for using numbers. For more information, please see [5 Numerical Expressions](#) in *The Canadian Style*.

### *General*

In body text, spell out one-digit numbers (one through nine) and use numerals for 10 and up. Similarly, write out “first” through “ninth” and use figures for 10 and above (10th).

**Note:** Do not superscript the “th” (100th).

Use numerals for percentages, money, math symbols, charts and graphs. Also use them for consistency when there are many numbers in the same passage of text.

**Exception:** Spell out a number that is the first word of a sentence.

Use commas for numbers of 1,000 or more (except years, addresses, phone and serial numbers).

Use this phone number format: 613-492-5662.

### *Dates and time*

(See [4.6 Numbers](#) for how to abbreviate dates and time.)

#### Dates

Avoid writing “today,” “tomorrow” or “last year” because these quickly become outdated. Instead, provide context by using the date (In May 2009, CHSRF issued five research grants).

Use alphanumeric format for dates in body text (Sunday, August 4, 2009). If words follow the year, add another comma (on August 4, 2009, CHSRF presented an award). Use international numeric format (year/month/day) only in calendars, charts and tables (2009/08/04).

When writing the month and day only, use the cardinal format (May 12, not May 12th).

## Time

In body text, use 12-hour clock time (8 p.m.). Use 24-hour clock time (20:00) only for bilingual documents, calendars and tables.

## *Measurements*

### Decimals

Use a consistent number of decimal spaces in a document (for example, if you use two, stick with two).

No number should begin with a decimal (add a “0” before).

### Fractions

Fractions should be hyphenated. Otherwise, use numerals (1/10) with no “th”.

One-tenth of the pie was left.

### Percentages

When writing percentages, always use a numeral followed by a percent symbol, with no spaces in between (100%). Only spell out “percent” (one word) at the beginning of a sentence (but try to reword instead).

### Money

Use numerals for sums of money (\$6.05), unless referring to round or indefinite amounts (a few thousand dollars). Use Canadian currency, unless writing for a U.S. audience or listing multiple currencies. Use International Monetary Fund (IMF) abbreviations: C\$ for Canadian dollars, US\$ for American dollars, A\$ for Australian dollars, NZ\$ for New Zealand dollars.

## 4.7 Usage

This section outlines common usage mistakes. For more, see [12 Usage](#) in *The Canadian Style*.

### *affect and effect*

*Affect* is used as a verb and means “influence.”

Budgetary constraints have seriously affected our grants and contributions program.

*Effect* is usually used as a noun and means “result” or “impact.” When used as a verb, it means “bring about” (but try to reword instead).

The Supreme Court ruling will have a lasting effect on official languages services.

## ***comprise, compose, constitute, include***

*Comprise* means “consist of” and implies all of something. Avoid saying “is comprised of.”

The book comprises six chapters.

*Include*, like *comprise*, means “consist of,” but implies part of something.

The book includes a chapter on finances.

*Constitute* and *compose* both mean “make up, account for, form.”

Women constitute 65% of our employee population.

The city of Kanata is composed of five small communities.

## ***fewer and less***

If you are referring to nouns in the plural, use fewer.

People these days are buying fewer cars.

If you are referring to something in the singular, or to numbers on their own or in expressions of measurement or time, use less.

People want to spend less time in traffic.

The building is less than four miles away.

## ***pan-Canadian and national***

Where appropriate, it is preferable to use *pan-Canadian* or *across Canada/across the country* rather than *national*.

CHSRF hosted a pan-Canadian dialogue on healthcare policy.

The roundtables took place across the country.

It was a national day of mourning.

National is often interpreted as federal, which can be contentious in a domain such as healthcare, which falls primarily under provincial jurisdiction. In addition, most of our texts are translated, and Quebec uses national to refer to provincial matters (e.g. L'Assemblée nationale). However, national will be appropriate in some cases. Please see the communications team if you have any questions.

## ***its and it's***

*Its* is the possessive of “it.”

The committee called *its* members on Saturday.

*It's* is a contraction of “it is” or “it has.”

*It's* great to see you again.

## ***that and which***

*That* is used when the clause following it is essential to the noun it modifies.

The car *that* was involved in the accident was towed.

*Which* is used to add a non-essential reason or new idea, and usually comes after a comma.

My car, *which* was brand new, was involved in an accident.

## ***who and whom***

*Who* is the subject of a verb. Use *who* when it stands for he, she or they.

Jeff hired a manager *who* was known for her communication skills.  
(*She* was known for her communication skills.)

*Whom* is the object of a verb. Use *whom* when it stands for him, her or them.

Dana gave the key to a friend *whom* she trusted.  
(Dana trusted *her*.)

# **5 REFERENCES**

CHSRF's style for references is to number them sequentially within the body of the text and link to endnotes, with the format of the endnotes following APA (American Psychological Association) style.

## **5.1 In-text citations**

When referencing another document in the body of your text, please use the citation-sequence format. In other words, place a superscript number after each citation (the number follows all punctuation except dashes, in which case it should come before). The number

refers back to the full reference in the endnotes. The references in the endnotes should appear in the same sequential order as the citations in the text.

The benefits of using citation-sequence are:

- ▼ uses less space within the main body of text
- ▼ is less distracting than listing the author and date after every citation
- ▼ is easier to read and follow for lay people
- ▼ makes it easier if a citation is removed (most software programs auto-update these removals, whereas with author-date you have to manually search for and remove the reference)
- ▼ is less confusing when several publications by the same author are cited

If it is important to reference authors within the body of your text, try to work their names into the sentence itself.

When Smith and Parker looked into this trend in 2002, they found something entirely different.<sup>1</sup>

## 5.2 Endnotes and footnotes

For simplicity and readability, CHSRF uses endnotes organized into a reference section at the end of a publication.

Footnotes (references at the bottom of the same page the citation is on) may be used for substantive notes that clarify/elaborate/add to a reader's understanding, though these should be used sparingly.

## 5.3 Endnote and bibliographic reference lists

Endnotes are a list of references cited in a text (organized by sequential number). A bibliography is a list of references *consulted*, but not necessarily cited (organized alphabetically by the last name of the first author for each work). CHSRF uses APA style for both endnote and bibliographic references. You can access APA style for free through the [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#).

### *General rules*

- ▼ Titles of major works, like books and journals, are written in title case with italics.
- ▼ Titles of smaller works, like chapters, articles and web pages, are written in sentence case with no italics or quotation marks.
- ▼ Author names are inverted (last name first, then the author's initials).

## Single author

For two or more works by the same author, list chronologically (earliest first):

Jiang, H. J. (2008). Board engagement in quality: Findings of a survey of hospital and system leaders. *Journal of Healthcare Management*, 53(2), 121–134.

Jiang, H. J. (2009). Board oversight of quality: Any differences in process of care and mortality? *Journal of Healthcare Management*, 54(1), 15–29.

Organization as author:

Health Quality Council. (2007). Quality of surgical care in Saskatchewan: A look at eight complex procedures. Saskatoon, SK: Health Quality Council.

If the author's name is unknown, list alphabetically by title.

## Multiple authors

Use last names and initials, with commas separating and an ampersand between the last two:

Alexander, J. A., Weiner, B. J., & Bogue, R. J. (2001). Changes in the structure, composition, and activity of hospital governing boards, 1989–1997: Evidence from two national surveys. *Milbank Quarterly*, 79(2), 253–279.

CHSRF does not place an upper limit on the number of authors you can list.

## Books

The location and publisher should be separated with a colon:

Coffey, A., & P. Atkinson. (1996). *Making Sense of Qualitative Data: Complimentary Research Strategies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

For subsequent editions, add the edition number after the book title (in parentheses):

Coffey, A., & P. Atkinson. (1996). *Making Sense of Qualitative Data: Complimentary Research Strategies* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

For an article or chapter in an edited book, use “p.” (singular) or “pp.” (plural) before the page numbers:

Johnson, T. (2003). The way things were. In A. G. Turner (Ed.), *A New Vision for Healthcare* (pp. 15–31). New York, NY: Penguin.

## ***Periodical articles***

For journal articles, include the volume, issue (in brackets if available) and pages referenced.

Prybil, L. D. (2006). Size, composition and culture of high performing hospital boards. *American Journal of Medical Quality*, 21(4), 224–229.

Magazine articles are the same as journal articles, except that the issue date is also listed.

Munro, S. A. (2001, June 10). Unravelling bureaucracy. *Time*, 112, 20–21.

Newspaper articles are the same as magazine articles, except there is no issue number and “p.” or “pp.” precedes the page numbers.

Allen, K. L. (2010, March 3). Eating organics. *The Ottawa Citizen*, p. 10A.

## ***Encyclopedia entries***

Waltham, P. G. (1997). Vaccines. In *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* (Vol. 23, pp. 301–308). Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica.

## ***Electronic sources***

Articles from online periodicals follow the same rules as for print periodicals, except that you list the Digital Object Identifier (DOI) or web address at the end (DOIs are preferred when available because, unlike URLs, they do not change when content is moved):

Prybil, L. D. (2006). Size, composition and culture of high performing hospital boards. *American Journal of Medical Quality*, 21(4). doi:10.1108/03090560710821161

For online book chapters, list the chapter number (in parentheses), followed by the DOI or web address:

Bruce, S., & Prior, H. (2006). Application of patient safety indicators in Manitoba: A first look. In *Manitoba Healthcare* (5). Retrieved from <http://mchp-appserv.cpe.umanitoba.ca/reference/patient.safety.pdf>

For online encyclopedias and dictionaries, move the entry name to the front if no author is available and use (n.d.) if there is no date of publication:

Diabetes mellitus. (n.d.). In *Encyclopedia Britannica* online. Retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/160921/diabetes-mellitus>

For non-periodical web documents, pages or reports, list as much information as is available:

Romanow, R. J. (2002, May 10). *Building on Values: The Future of Health Care in Canada*. Ottawa: The Commission on the future of Health Care in Canada. Retrieved from [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hcs-sss/alt\\_formats/hpb-dgps/pdf/hhr/romanow-eng.pdf](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hcs-sss/alt_formats/hpb-dgps/pdf/hhr/romanow-eng.pdf)

**Notes:** Link to the reference directly (not to the website's home page) and best practice is to include a date of retrieval. Do not include periods at the end of DOIs or URLs.

## ***Secondary sources***

It is best to reference the original source of information where possible. If you cannot read the original source, name the original work in your text but cite the secondary source.

In McIntyre and Stewart's study on ADHD (as cited by Smith and Jones in 2002),<sup>1</sup> etc.

List the secondary source that you read (where the original work was discussed) in your endnotes:

<sup>1</sup>Smith, B. & Jones, P. (2002). Your child's mental health. In *Psychology Today*, 102, 89–108.

## 6 APPENDICES

### 6.1 CHSRF spellings

Use these spellings for common Canadian, healthcare and CHSRF words.

#### A

Aboriginal Peoples, but Aboriginal people  
 acknowledgement  
 advisor  
 after-hours care  
 aging  
 among (not amongst)  
 analyze, analyzes, analyzed, analyzing

#### B

benefit, benefits, benefited, benefiting

#### C

centre, centred  
 child care (hyphenate before a noun: *child-care worker*)  
 colour  
 co-operation  
 counselling

#### D

decision-maker  
 decision-making  
 defence, defensive

#### E

email  
 enrol, enrolment, enrolled  
 evidence-based  
 evidence-informed

## F

favour

First Nations

focus, focuses, focused, focusing

forums (not fora)

front line (hyphenate before a noun: front-line worker)

fulfill, fulfills, fulfilled, fulfilling, fulfillment

fundraising

## G

grey

## H

healthcare (except: mental health care)

high-quality care

## I

install, installed, instalment

Internet

interprofessional

## J

judgment

## K

## L

label, labelled, labelling

labour

level, levelled, levelling

long-term (adjective: *a long-term objective*)

long term (modified noun: *in the long term*)

## M

medicare

model, modelled

Montreal (no accent)

## N

nurse practitioner-led clinics

## O

off-line

online

on-site (when before a noun)

organize, organization

## P

panel, panellists

part-time (adjective: *They do part-time work.*)

part time (modified noun: *They work part time.*)

pediatric

percent (but generally use the symbol %)

policy-maker

policy-making

postnatal (not post-natal)

prenatal (not pre-natal)

privatize

program (not programme)

problem-solving

## Q

Quebec (no accent)

## R

recognize

re-examine

roundtable

## S

skeptical

## T

target, targeted

timeframe

total, totals, totalled, totalling

travel, travels, travelled, travelling

U

V

W

(the) web  
web browser  
webcast  
web page  
website  
well-being  
workforce  
workplace  
(the) World Wide Web

X

Y

Z

## 6.2 *Editing checklist*

Use this checklist when editing to help you catch the most common spelling and grammar mistakes. For more editing tips, see [16 Revision and Proofreading](#) in *The Canadian Style*.

- Spelling**  
Always check spelling using the spell check tool in Word, but review each suggested change individually instead of accepting all. Be sure the language is set to Canadian English. (See [4.2 Spelling](#).) Also verify spelling using [6.1 CHSRF spellings](#).
- Abbreviations**  
Make sure acronyms and initialisms are spelled out on first reference. Avoid using periods or spaces for most abbreviations. (See [4.3 Abbreviations](#).)
- Capitalization**  
Use full capitalization only for titles of major published works. Use sentence case for headings. (See [4.4 Capitalization](#).)
- Punctuation**  
Do a “find and replace” to replace double spaces after periods with single spaces and remove spaces before and after obliques (and/or) and em dashes (—). Remove the final comma before “and” or “or” in a list, unless needed for clarity. (See [4.5 Punctuation](#).)
- Numbering**  
Make sure you have spelled out numbers one through nine and used numerals for 10 and up. Always use numerals and the percent sign (100%) for percentages. Use commas for numbers 1,000 and over. (See [4.6 Numbers](#).)
- References**  
Make sure you have used CHSRF reference format. (See [5 References](#).)
- Lists**  
Make sure you have used CHSRF list format. (See [4.1 List format](#).)
- Clear writing**  
Check to make sure you have used plain language, short sentences and paragraphs, and clear headings and sub-headings. (See [2 Importance of clear writing](#).)
- Sentence structure**  
As much as possible, use active sentence structure by making sure the subject is the doer of the action and is close to the start of the sentence (use subject-verb-object order). (See [2 Use a positive, direct tone](#).)
- Visual presentation**  
Be sure to use tables, figures and other graphics to explain and reinforce information. (See [2 Make information visually appealing](#).)