Description

One of the most daunting aspects of academic writing is consistency. When drafting an article, it is easy to forget a writing rule that has been set by the publisher (for example, the use of British English spelling rather than American) or the presentation of an unusual name or title. Also, when overwhelmed by details, it is easy to lose track of the standard being used, but don't despair if you find yourself in this situation.

One way of maintaining consistency in your writing is using Trinka – an AI-powered language enhancement tool that is specially built for technical and academic writing. Trinka lets you adhere to a writing style – just choose between British or American English and Trinka helps you use the appropriate spellings. Also, with Trinka lets you incorporate all the style guide preferences as per your chosen style and journal. With such and many more features, Trinka is the one-stop solution for all your academic writing requirements.

Alternatively, to keep track of the formats you have settled on, it is useful to create a customized "cheat sheet"—a style sheet. This style sheet will be the toolkit that you use to shape your writing into its best possible form.

What Is an Academic Style Sheet?

A style sheet is a list of specific elements and how you have chosen to present them—the spelling or punctuation of a specific word or phrase, the format of numbers, dates, and measurements, and so on. The style sheet is also the place to record a format that conflicts with or is not found in the style guide being used. In other words, an academic style sheet documents the "decisions that differ from or are more specific than what can be found in the prevailing style guide."

Note that an academic style sheet is not a duplication of a style guide. There is no need to reiterate all the guidelines found in *The Chicago Manual of Style, AP Stylebook,* or *MLA Style,* only those specific to the piece you are writing.

Structure of a Style Sheet

When developing a style sheet, it helps to create four categories.

1. General Comments: This can include notes about the purpose of the article, the reading audience, or other special instructions.

2. Style

- Spelling conventions: In this section, document unusual terms, especially those with odd spellings or terms that you have invented.
- Grammar: Make a note of grammar issues (such as the use of "they" as a singular pronoun).
- Punctuation: Add reminders about punctuation rules: whether to hyphenate e-mail, add "'s" for a singular possessive (for example, "Marx's theories"), use the serial or Oxford comma, and so on.

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- Numbers: Insert your notes about the use of numerals. In scientific writing, many publishers spell out numbers up to ten and use numerals for everything else (see *The Chicago Manual of Style*3).

3. Formatting: Does “et al.” need to be italicized or the subheadings set in bold type? Record your comments in this section.

4. Additional Comments: Add any miscellaneous notes that don’t fit in the previous categories.

An example style sheet can be found here.

How Do Style Sheets Help Academic Researchers

A style sheet is useful in the following ways:

- As a reminder sheet: If you forget the format of an element that needs to be presented consistently—for example, whether you are using American English or British English spellings (*behavior* or *behaviour*), your style sheet gives you the answer. It helps you to shift into the role of an editor, which is sometimes difficult to do with your own writing.
- As a defense sheet: When your article is submitted to a publication, the editor may have a question about how you presented some element—a particular spelling or the punctuation of a company name. If this happens, you can go to the style sheet you created and review your notes.

Dos and Don’ts of Using Style Sheets

- DO: When recording spelling conventions, do list them in alphabetical order. The “Sort” function in Microsoft Word makes this easy.
- DON’T: Don’t make up presentations. Do your research to find the most standard or plausible format, and keep track of the sources you used to make your decision.

A style sheet enables you to maintain consistency in your writing. Consistency provides a better experience for the reader, especially in scientific fields where specificity is important. It also demonstrates to a reviewer that you took the time to build a strong framework for your article.

If you are looking for an expert assistance for your academic writing, try out Trinka. Trinka’s holistic improvements help you to make your writing consistent, clear, concise, formal, objective, and readable. With Trinka, write confidently and get your article ready for the global audience.

Reference

Jeri Walker (2015, June 15) *#Editor: Manuscript Style Sheet Template.* Retrieved from https://jeriwb.com/editor-manuscript-style-sheet-sample-54679

Category

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1. Journal Guidelines
2. Reporting Research

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