ISC2 Grammatical Conventions and Style Guide for Member Authors

<u>Academic, Geographic, Linguistic, Numerical</u>

As an organization, ISC2 follows AP Style for all writing. There are, however, some exceptions where AP Style does not yet have a set approach, which we have determined our own approach below. As always, please contact the team at insights@isc2.org with any questions when putting together your article submission. We are happy to help.

Titles and Naming

Academic Degrees

Do not capitalize academic degrees. Fields of study (with the exception of languages) should not be capitalized. Use an apostrophe in bachelor's, master's, etc.

Use an apostrophe in bachelor's degree or master's degree, but not in Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science.

> *Mark holds a bachelor's degree in marketing.*

> *Janet received a master's degree in English from the University of Florida.*

Use abbreviations (B.S., M.S., LL.D., J.D. and Ph.D.) only when you need to identify many individuals by degree on first reference. When an academic abbreviation is used after a full name, commas should set it off. For Honors degrees, (Hons) should be added after the degree abbreviation:

> *Casey Marks, Ph.D, will present in tonight's webinar.*

> *Chris Green, B.A. (Hons), was appointed to the committee.*

For ISC2 credentials, certifications are to be listed in the order of highest required experience to lowest: ISSAP, ISSEP, ISSMP, CISSP, CCSP, CSSLP, HCISPP, CGRC, SSCP, CC

Initials

Initials in a person's name should be followed by a period with no space between the initials. Include a space after the last initial and before the surname.

> *J.K. Rowling wrote books about wizards.*

Job Titles

If the title precedes the individual's name, it should be capitalized; if it follows the individual's name, it should be lower case.

> *Marketing Manager John Smith*

> *John Smith, marketing manager*

Professional Titles

If the title precedes the individual's name, it should be capitalized; if it follows the individual's name, it should be lower case. Proper nouns such as divisions should remain capitalized

> *ISC2 Vice President of Professional Programs Fred Smith.*

> *Fred Smith, director of cybersecurity advocacy at ISC2*

Name Suffixes

Abbreviate as Jr. and Sr. only with full names of persons or animals, and do not precede with a comma.

Sammy Davis Jr. was a famous actor and singer.

Geographic

Addresses

Avoid abbreviations and punctuation in addresses.

Follow number style for addresses, spelling out all numbers nine and below. Use figures for the number 10 and above. A comma is not needed between the state and the zip code.

10 Downing Street

One Park Avenue

Do not capitalize city unless referring to a government or political unit.

In which city is the building located?

The City of Tampa hosted a boat parade to celebrate.

Countries/Economies

Use the term *economies* rather than *countries* where possible.

Directions and Regions

Capitalize these words when they designate regions.

High temperatures will prevail throughout the West.

Capitalize these words when part of a proper name or when used to designate a politically divided regions: the Midwest, West Virginia, the South Side of Chicago, the Lower East Side, the East Coast, South Korea

Capitalize proper nouns like these: Central Park, East-West Corridor, Midtown Manhattan, North Carolina, Southeast Asia, South Dakota, West Indies, West Coast

Governmental Bodies

Capitalize the full proper names of governmental agencies, departments and offices.

The Internal Revenue Service

The West Palm Beach City Council

UK Cyber Security Council

Times

List times as 9:00 a.m./12:00 p.m. or 9:30 a.m./12:30 p.m., with a space between the numerical time and "a.m." or "p.m." Always use lower case and periods after a, p and m.

a.m. / p.m.

Time Zones

If a time accompanies the time zone, use the abbreviation (ex: 3:15 p.m. CT). No comma is required after a.m. or p.m.

Linguistic

Acronyms

Acronyms are abbreviations formed from the initial letters of other words and pronounced as a word. Use the full name with the acronym in parentheses on the first reference and then use the acronym alone on future references.

> *The American Bar Association (ABA) is a professional organization.*

> *The ABA is a voice for attorneys nationally and locally.*

Do not hyphenate acronyms or break them between two lines. In addition, do not use an apostrophe with plural acronyms (IPOs vs. IPO's).

In general, do not use an acronym on first reference unless it's well understood and established globally, such as CEO or FBI.

Active vs. Passive Voice

Be mindful of active vs. passive voice.

Voice refers to the form of the verb. The subject acts when you use the active voice verb. In passive voice the person or thing performing the action becomes the object of the sentence.

> *The candidate completed the exam. (active)*

> *The exam was completed by the candidate. (passive)*

> *The exam was completed. (passive)*

When passive voice is used, sentences are robbed of power. Strong verbs are weakened by this construction, and awkwardness may result. Although there are reasons to use passive voice, it is often employed unintentionally and unnecessarily.

And vs. Ampersand (&)

Always use the word "and" rather than the ampersand. Use the ampersand (&) when it is part of a formal name or title.

> *Smith & Wolensky's is a great restaurant.*

Brackets vs. Parentheses

Do not use brackets [ ] and parentheses ( ) interchangeably; when using parentheses inside of parentheses, brackets belong on the inside of the parentheses. Do not use brackets if the material can be set off easily with commas. Try not to overuse parentheses.

Bulleted Lists

For bulleted lists, if the bullet points are one word, a few words or short phrases, then no punctuation should be used at the end of each bullet point. If the bullet points are all complete sentences, then proper punctuation should be used at the end of each bullet point. If there's a mix of complete sentences and phrases, use your best judgment on what looks good in the overall bulleted list.

Hyphens

Hyphenate most compound modifiers when they appear before a noun except the adverb very and all adverbs that end in *ly*.

> *forward-thinking investor*

Period Spacing

Only one space should be used after a period. Do not use two spaces after a period.

Prefixes

In general, do not hyphenate when using a prefix with a word starting with a consonant. Use a hyphen when the word following the prefix is a proper noun or is capitalized.

pre-Columbian

premixed

Publication Names

Names of publications, articles and blogs should be in italics but not in quotation marks. Capitalize *the* in a publication's name only if that is the way it is known or it is part of the formal name of the publication.

My colleague reads *The New York Times.*

Sentence Structure

Vary sentence length for readability. Avoid introductory clauses when possible and break compound sentences for readability and variation in sentence length. Consider a 36-word maximum for long sentences and use long sentences sparingly.

Shorter paragraphs are generally easier to read and more effective for conveying information.

Be direct. Use simple language to convey complex topics when possible.

Delete unnecessary words (adjectives and adverbs). *That* is a commonly overused word you can often strike from copy.

The candidates knew ~~that~~ they had passed the exam.

Government sources say ~~that~~ they know about the cybersecurity skills shortage.

Oxford Comma

Do not use a serial comma. The Oxford (or serial) comma is the final comma in a list of things.

*ISC2 has offices in North America, Europe, Latin America and Asia-Pacific**.***

Title Case

Title case means that the first letter of each word is capitalized, except for certain small words, such as articles and short prepositions.

Use title case for headlines, subject lines, subheads, etc.

Cybersecurity Professionals Advocate for Organizational Awareness

Numerical
Currency

Use $, £, € etc.

Spell out the word *cents* or *pence* in lowercase, using numerals for amounts less than a dollar, pound, euro etc.

30 cents (not $.30 cents or 30¢)

Dates

For dates, always spell out the month when possible, to avoid confusion.

List the date in this order: month day, year (October 19, 2015).

Never use ordinals in dates.

The letter was mailed on August 31, 1994 (not August 31st)

Decades

Always use figures to indicate decades. Use an apostrophe to indicate numerals that are left out; show plural by adding the letters.

the 1960s (not the 1960's) the mid-1990s

Dimensions

Use figures and spell out inches, feet, yards, etc., to indicate depth, height, length and width. Hyphenate adjectives that precede nouns.

The traffic light is 5 feet tall.

This 3,500-square-foot home is expected to sell for more than $10 million.

Numbers and Numerals

Spell out numbers under 10, use figures for numbers above 9. For example: in the last five years, 10 employees, 20 sales.

Always spell out a number if it appears at the beginning of a sentence (calendar years are an exception). If the number looks awkward spelled out, rewrite the sentence.

For example, *Five trillion dollars is invested in mutual funds* could be rewritten as *Mutual fund investments total $5 trillion.*

Fractions

Spell out amounts less than one, using hyphens between the two words. Use figures for amounts greater than one.

Two-thirds, five-sixteenths

1 ½; 16 ¾

Ratios

Use figures and hyphens.

A ratio of 5 to 1; a 2-1 ratio

Some common exceptions:

- Use figures for sums of money ($5), time of day (2 p.m.), percentages (8%), years (1 B.C.), days of the month (January 3), ages (8 years old)
- Spell out standalone fractions (one-fourth of users)
- For clarity and ease of reading, be consistent within a sentence. For example, you would use the phrase "5 or 500 employees" rather than "five or 500 employees"

- For ordinal numbers, spell out first through ninth when they indicate sequence in time or location. For example: first in line, first base. Starting with 10th, use figures
- Numbers in the millions or higher should be expressed as: 1 million square feet (not 1,000,000)

No.

Use as the abbreviation for number in conjunction with a figure, position or rank.

He is No. 1 in running.

Percentages

Always use the % symbol for readability and always use a numeral.

30% of members were in favor of the new proposal.

The % symbol may be used in tables, statistical references and in bulleted items.