Journal of Extension Style and Guidance for Avoiding Common Manuscript Problems

Those interested in publishing their work in any journal face the challenging task of complying with the journal's editorial standards by adhering to requirements set forth in the journal's submission guidelines and following rules of grammar, mechanics, and style. In general, *Journal of Extension* (*JOE*) style is based on guidance provided in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, Sixth Edition (APA manual), and, in a supplemental sense, *The Chicago Manual of Style* (16th Edition). For certain matters, however, *JOE* style differs from that prescribed in these sources. Also, the *JOE* editor occasionally makes ad hoc style decisions.

This document addresses (a) *JOE*-specific style information, including instances in which *JOE* style contradicts other style sources; (b) information that can be found in the APA manual or *The Chicago Manual of Style* but relates to errors prospective *JOE* authors commonly make; and (c) obscure style information from other sources. The document is organized alphabetically by topic. If you do not find what you are looking for in one section of the document, look in another section. For example, information about whether to include an abbreviation in an in-text citation is found not in the "Abbreviations" section but in the "Citations and References" section.

Because this document is updated as needed, check it regularly for new information.

Abbreviations

When determining whether to abbreviate a term, consider the following points:

- Per APA style, in general, it is appropriate to use an abbreviation only if (a) it is conventional and readers are more familiar with the abbreviation than with the complete form or (b) considerable word count can be saved and cumbersome repetition avoided. Keep in mind that all members of the widely varied *JOE* audience may not have had the same experience with an abbreviation as you have.
- Per APA style, it is not acceptable to introduce an abbreviation unless it will be used multiple times. Also, in general, if an abbreviation will be used fewer than three times, you serve readers better by writing out the term each time.
- Per APA style, even for an abbreviation that appears often in a publication (e.g., the abbreviation *USDA* for the term *U.S. Department of Agriculture* in *JOE*), the term should be written out at first use.
- Per *JOE* style, abbreviations that are listed as words or service marks in the dictionary (e.g., *DNA*, *GED*) should be used without writing out the term at first use.

When you have decided to use an abbreviation, introduce the abbreviation in parentheses at first use of the term in the body of the manuscript, and use only the abbreviation thereafter.

For the term *Cooperative Extension System*, you may use the shortened forms *Cooperative Extension* and *Extension* as desired. You do not need to introduce either shortened form at first use—in *JOE* articles, the meaning of these terms is understood.

Per APA style, use *United States* when the term functions as a noun and *U.S.* when it functions as an adjective. Use periods in the abbreviation *U.S.*

Per APA style, use standard Latin abbreviations, such as *e.g.* and *etc.*, only in parenthetical material; in nonparenthetical material, use the English translations, such as *for example* and *and so forth*. Also, do not use the abbreviations *e.g.* and *etc.* together (use of *e.g.* indicates that you are giving examples from a larger set, so it is redundant to include *etc.* as well).

Per APA style, abbreviate most units of measurement when they are used with specific numbers. For information about abbreviations for units of measurement, see APA manual sections 4.27–4.30; *Chicago Manual of Style* sections 9.16, 9.17, and 10.52–10.71; and *[A Dictionary of Units of Measurement](#)*, a resource from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Center for Mathematics and Science Education). Also, consider the following points:

- Standard abbreviations for units of measurement do not need to be written out on first use (see APA manual section 4.27).
- Per *JOE* style, the abbreviation for *inch* includes a period (i.e., *in.*).
- Per *JOE* style, the abbreviation for *acre* is *ac*.
- Per *JOE* style, the superscript is used where applicable for metric units and nonmetric units (e.g., km^2 not *sq km*, ft^2 not *sq ft*).

Per APA style, abbreviate units of time other than *day*, *week*, *month*, and *year* when they are used with specific numbers. Use the following abbreviations: *hr* for hour(s), *min* for minute(s), and *s* for second(s). See APA manual section 4.27 for additional information.

Abstracts

Per *JOE* style, center the heading (Abstract), and make it bold.

Summarize the content of the manuscript in 100 words or less by describing (a) the article topic (in one sentence, if possible); (b) the purpose, thesis, or organizing concept of the article and the scope of the article; (c) the sources of data used, if appropriate; and (d) conclusions, recommendations, and implications. Write the abstract with the idea of motivating readers to read the manuscript when it is published as an article in *JOE*.

Per APA style, do not include information in an abstract that is not included in the body of the manuscript.

Per *JOE* style, if an abstract includes a term you have chosen to abbreviate and the term is used more than once in the abstract, introduce the abbreviation in the abstract in the same way that you do in the body of a manuscript. (Introduce the abbreviation in the body of the manuscript as well.)

Per *JOE* style, do not include references or hyperlinks in an abstract.

Acknowledgments

Per *JOE* style, include an Acknowledgment(s) section as desired or as needed. See the *JOE* Submission Guidelines for more information.

Active Voice

Use active voice wherever necessary to avoid grammar errors, improve clarity and readability, and achieve conciseness. Passive voice is the enemy of directness, clarity, and concision—key qualities of effective scholarly writing. The use of active voice, by contrast, decreases the likelihood of grammar errors, improves clarity and readability, and reduces wordiness. For additional information, consult a grammar resource and see APA manual section 3.18. Also, see the "First Person" entry in this document for related information.

Anthropomorphism

Avoid anthropomorphizing when discussing studies, projects, programs, and so on. For example, it is incorrect to say that a study sought something or that a program developed something—people seek and develop things. For more information, see the "Anthropomorphism" entry in APA manual section 3.09.

Appendixes

Per APA style, if you include one appendix in a manuscript, label it with the word *Appendix*, and title it. If you include more than one appendix in a manuscript, include capital letters in the appendix labels (e.g., Appendix A, Appendix B), and title each appendix.

Per *JOE* style, center the label and title for an appendix, on separate lines, at the top of the appendix. Apply title-case capitalization style, as it is defined in APA manual section 4.15, and make the label and title bold.

Per *JOE* style, refer to any appendix in the body of the manuscript. If only one appendix exists, refer to it simply as "appendix" (e.g., see appendix). If multiple appendixes exist, refer to each appendix by its label (e.g., see Appendix A).

Article Categorization

Ensure that a manuscript is categorized appropriately. For example, Feature articles are allotted an extra 1,000 words over Research in Brief articles so that authors can emphasize and discuss implications for as wide an audience of Extension professionals as possible. A manuscript that addresses implications specific to those in a particular discipline or region likely is more suitable as a Research in Brief submission. A Tools of the Trade submission should describe a specific resource, technique, or technology that has been proved to be useful to Extension professionals, whereas a manuscript about a method may be more suitable as an Ideas at Work submission or a Research in Brief submission. See the *JOE* Submission Guidelines for more information.

Ensure that you stay within the designated word count limit for the applicable article category. The word count excludes title, author information, tables, figures, acknowledgments or other such sections, references, appendixes, abstract, and keywords. Do not omit words that are needed for clarity in an attempt to stay within the word count limit.

Article Versus Research

Distinguish between a manuscript and the research it is about by using appropriate wording—that is, do not use language such as "this study/this research/this project" (or "the current study"); instead, use language such as "the study described in this article" or "the study reported here" or "our/my study" on first reference and simply "our/my study" or "the study" thereafter. For more information, see guidance on the *JOE* website about [not confusing your research with a manuscript about your research](#).

Author Information

Per *JOE* style, place the author information after the title. Apply title-case capitalization style, as it is defined in section 4.15 of the APA manual, and center it. Stack the elements within each entry in the author information (as author information appears in *JOE* articles). If there are multiple authors, include a line of space between entries.

Per *JOE* style, in the author information, include each author's name, title, and institutional affiliation (institution name, city, and state) at the time the research/project was conducted and current email address and, optionally, Twitter handle. Do not include authors' academic degrees. As desired, include academic departments. Do not include abbreviations, except the abbreviation *DC* for the District of Columbia. Do not include street addresses, zip codes, or phone numbers.

For authors whose names involve three or more parts (e.g., Jane Taylor Doe), the manuscript should include a note indicating how the name should be structured when listed in alphabetical order according to last name (e.g., Doe, Jane Taylor or Taylor Doe, Jane).

If an author's institutional affiliation has changed since the time the research/project was conducted, you may include an Author Note(s) section to address the change. See the *JOE* Submission Guidelines for more information.

Bias-Free Language

Make every attempt to avoid using biased language. See the "Reducing Bias in Language" section of APA manual chapter 3 for a detailed discussion of this topic.

Per *JOE* style, use "he or she," "him or her," and so on to avoid gender bias.

Per APA style, do not use *America* to mean the United States or *American* to mean U.S. Per *JOE* style, as needed, you may use *America* when it is part of an idiom (e.g., rural America), and you may use *American* as a noun.

Boldface, Italics, and Underlining

Per *The Chicago Manual of Style*, use italics not boldface for emphasis. (In general, emphasize text in this manner only sparingly.)

Per APA style, italicize phrases used as phrases, words used as words, abbreviations used as abbreviations, letters used as letters, and so on (e.g., One definition of the term *curriculum* is . . .).

Per *JOE* style, do not italicize Extension program names, unless doing so is necessary for clarity (e.g., for clarity in a table title).

Per APA style, italicize labels for points on a scale—for example, "1 (*poor*) to 5 (*excellent*)." (Note: The guidance for italicizing labels for points on a scale, not just the anchors of a scale, is from *Writing with Style: APA Style Made Easy*, Sixth Edition, p. 49).

Per APA style, do not italicize foreign phrases and abbreviations found in the dictionary, Greek letters, or subscripts to statistical symbols.

Per *JOE* style, do not use underlining.

Capitalization

Per *JOE* style, use capitalization sparingly, typically only for proper nouns and adjectives. See *Chicago Manual of Style* section 8.1 for more information.

Per *JOE* style, capitalize the term *Extension* in any context related specifically to any aspect of the U.S. Cooperative Extension System, use the lowercase term *extension* when discussing outreach in a general way, and use *eXtension* as applicable.

Per *JOE* style, in general, do not capitalize Extension program area names (e.g., agriculture, natural resources, family and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development). The names of Extension program areas should not be considered proper nouns because nomenclature used to identify program areas varies from state to state.

Per *JOE* style, capitalize specific Extension program names (e.g., Minnesota's 4-H Science of Agriculture Challenge program).

Per *JOE* style, do not capitalize the term *institutional review board* unless you are using the full name of the board (e.g., Texas A&M University System Institutional Review Board).

Per APA style, do not capitalize the names of laws, theories, models, statistical procedures, or hypotheses.

Per *The Chicago Manual of Style*, in general, do not capitalize the names of movements (e.g., the civil rights movement, the maker movement). (The names of some movements are capitalized; as needed, the *JOE* editor will make necessary corrections.)

Per *The Chicago Manual of Style*, capitalize a noun that names a region of the United States (e.g., the Midwest) but not an adjective derived from that noun (e.g., midwestern). For more information, see *Chicago Manual of Style* section 8.46.

Per *The Chicago Manual of Style*, capitalize a professional title only when it immediately precedes and thus is used as part of a personal name (and not when the title is used in apposition to the person's name). For more information, see *Chicago Manual of Style* sections 8.18 and 8.20.

Per APA style, if the first word after a colon begins an independent clause, capitalize the word.

Per *JOE* style, in general, do not capitalize nouns simply because they are followed by a numeral or a letter (e.g., grade 1, not Grade 1).

Citations and References

Per the *JOE* Submission Guidelines, cite at least one *JOE* source in your manuscript. You may use the [*JOE* Search](#) site to locate *JOE* articles relevant to your topic. See guidance on the *JOE* website about [why and how you should cite *JOE* articles in your manuscript](#) and guidance in the *JOE* Submission Guidelines about correct formatting for *JOE* sources.

Except when you are citing seminal works, cite sources that are as current as possible.

Per APA style, in general, include a citation in each sentence in which you present information from a source. If an entire paragraph is based on one source, it is permissible to find an elegant way to indicate that circumstance without including a formal citation in each sentence (see the sample paragraph in APA manual section 1.10).

Per APA style, for a direct quotation, cite the exact position of the quoted material in the source text. Typically, this involves identifying a page number. For online sources that do not use page numbers, such as *JOE*, identify the section and paragraph number (e.g., "Discussion," para. 2). See APA manual sections 6.03 and 6.05 for more information.

Per APA style, treat statutes as sources. See APA manual pp. 219–221 for more information.

Per APA style, do not include citations or References list entries for standard software programs, programming languages, and so forth that are used to conduct analyses (e.g., Microsoft Word, Java, SAS, SPSS). Instead, provide the proper name of the item and any applicable version number in the body of the manuscript. For more information, see APA manual section 7.08.

Ensure that information (e.g., spellings of author names, order of author names, date) is consistent between a citation and its associated entry in the References list. Also, ensure that all sources cited in the body of a manuscript are included in the References list and that all sources included in the References list are cited in the body of the manuscript.

Per APA style, for works having one or two authors, include all author names in all citations. For works having three to five authors, include all author names in the first citation and only the name of the first author followed by "et al." for all subsequent citations. For works having six or more authors, include only the name of the first author followed by "et al." for all citations, including the first one.

Per APA style, in all citations, tend toward writing out (rather than abbreviating) the name of a group or an entity that serves as an author (e.g., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). However, if a name is long and cumbersome and if the abbreviation is familiar or readily understandable, you may introduce the abbreviation parenthetically in the first citation and then use the abbreviation in all subsequent citations. In all entries in the References list, use the written-out name (not the abbreviation).

Per APA style, apply alphabetical order to two or more works within the same parenthetical citation.

Follow guidance provided in the document *How to Cite Something You Found on a Website in APA Style* to cite websites in their entirety or portions of websites.

Per *JOE* style, do not use a hanging indent for References section entries.

Ensure that entries in your References list adhere to APA style. (This is not a fun task, but it is a requirement of scholarly writing. Do not shirk this duty.)

Clarity

Organize your content and apply principles of writing clearly and precisely to ensure that your meaning will be as clear to readers as it is to you. To achieve this goal, consider taking the following actions:

- Refer to APA manual chapter 2 for guidance about structuring a manuscript in a clear and cohesive way. (Do not feel that you must adhere to the rigid manuscript structure described in the manual; instead, consider the information in the manual to be an example of one way to effectively structure a manuscript. Also, keep in mind that *JOE* style differs from APA style for some manuscript elements.)
- Refer to APA manual chapter 3 for information about writing clearly. This chapter has guidance that will help you improve your manuscript development skills, thereby increasing your chances of having articles published in *JOE* and other journals.
- Enlist one or more colleagues unfamiliar with the work that is the topic of your manuscript to read the manuscript carefully and provide constructive feedback with respect to the clarity of the writing (among other things). (For more information, see Getting Published in *JOE*—Strategies for Success, Step 7.)
- Consult a grammar resource for information about standards of grammar and mechanics that seem to elude you on a regular basis.

In a description or discussion of a study, avoid using wording from the study instrument or other materials if using such wording is not contextually appropriate; instead, use natural language. For example, do not write this: About half the respondents indicated "I did not change my practices." Instead, write this: About half the respondents indicated that they did not change their practices.

Use clear, accurate, and precise language when discussing findings. For example, the language "the majority of respondents were White females ranging in age from 35 to 44" may not be accurate if the situation actually was that the majority demographic groups among the respondents were females, Caucasians, and those ranging in age from 35 to 44.

Use consistent ordering of like items throughout a manuscript. Consistent ordering of like items aids readability, which improves clarity.

Ensure that you use consistent language when referring to a particular group, entity, concept, or so on (see APA manual section 3.06). Select one term and use it consistently throughout a manuscript (although you may use a shortened version of a term—a shortened version of a program name, for example—on all subsequent references after you have introduced it at first reference).

Take care when using words interchangeably. In general, it is more effective to choose the more precisely correct word and use it consistently. (As an example, one might be tempted to use the words *practice* and *action* interchangeably; however, these words do not mean precisely the same thing. The word *practice* conveys a sense of an ongoing behavior that the word *action* does not convey.)

Use logical ordering (e.g., alphabetical, chronological) of items in a list (e.g., We conducted focus group research in Adams County, Brown County, and Warren County). Logical ordering of items in a list aids readability, which improves clarity. If there is a reason to list items in an order that may seem nonsensical to the reader, make that reason clear.

Ensure that there is a clear referent for any pronoun you use. For more information, consult a grammar resource and see the "Pronouns" entry in APA manual section 3.09.

Use *that* where needed for clarity and to achieve parallelism. For example, err on the safe side clarity-wise by using *that* to introduce clauses that follow verbs of attribution (*find*, *show*, *note*, *state*, *recommend*, *indicate*, and so on). See When to Use "That" on University of Kansas Professor Malcolm Gibson's Wonderful World of Words website for helpful information.

In general, use literal language, rather than metaphoric language or other rhetorical devices. Rhetorical devices can work in scholarly writing, but they should enhance clarity not detract from it. If you use a metaphor or other rhetorical device, ensure that clarity is enhanced.

Contractions

Per *JOE* style, do not use contractions (other than in direct quotations).

Currency

Keep in mind that manuscripts submitted to most academic journals, including *JOE*, are not published until months after the submission date. Refrain from using language that will not make sense or be accurate when a manuscript is published as an article. For example, instead of saying "over the past 10 months" to describe when something occurred, provide an exact time frame, such as "from September 2015 through June 2016."

Dates

Per *JOE* style (based on *Chicago Manual of Style* guidance), in general, use month-day-year order for dates. If material requires many full dates, day-month-year style (with the names of months abbreviated) may be used.

Disclaimers

Per *JOE* style, include a Disclaimer(s) section as needed. See the *JOE* Submission Guidelines for more information.

Figures

If a figure is reproduced or adapted from a copyrighted source, follow APA guidelines and style for giving credit to the source. For information, see APA manual section 5.06 (and related sections) as well as [Navigating Copyright for Reproduced Images: Overview](), a relevant series on the APA Style blog, and, in particular, [Navigating Copyright for Reproduced Images: Part 4. Writing the Copyright Statement]().

Per *JOE* style, center a figure's number and title (on separate lines) above and outside the figure. Apply bold to the figure number (e.g., **Figure 1.**); do not apply bold to the figure title. Apply title-case capitalization style to the figure title. Ensure that a figure does not have two titles—the appropriate one above and outside the figure and another one within the figure itself.

Per APA guidance, ensure that the content of a figure supplements rather than duplicates information in the body of the manuscript. The body of the manuscript should discuss only highlights of the figure, alerting readers about what to look for.

Per APA style, refer to all figures, by figure number, in the narrative text. Be precise when referring to figures. For example, in a paragraph that highlights material from a figure, do not include a parenthetical reference to the figure in only one sentence relating to the figure and not other such sentences. Instead, either include a general statement about what readers will find in the figure at the beginning or end of the paragraph or include a parenthetical reference to the figure in each relevant sentence.

Place a figure at the appropriate point in the text—near but following the discussion of the figure in the narrative.

Do not include explanatory information in the figure title. As needed, include a legend and/or a caption for the figure to provide any necessary explanatory information.

Per APA style, include all information needed to understand a figure within the figure title and the figure itself. If you wish to include an abbreviation in a figure title, write out the term and include the abbreviation in parentheses. For an abbreviation used elsewhere in a figure, explain the abbreviation in a legend or a caption. Standard abbreviations/symbols used in a figure (e.g., *n*) may be used without explanation. Explain an abbreviation that is used in more than one figure in each figure it is used in.

Ensure that the textual content of a figure aligns with all rules of *JOE* style, grammar, and mechanics and is consistent with material presented elsewhere in the manuscript. Keep in mind that certain verbatim language from study materials may be inappropriate for use as a figure title or for inclusion in other parts of a figure. For example, a title of a figure should be a concise explanation of the data shown in the figure, not a survey question that relates to the data.

Ensure that data included in a figure are correct and are consistent within the figure and with material presented elsewhere in the manuscript.

Per *JOE* style, if a figure includes color, ensure that the figure will be comprehensible if printed in grayscale. For example, use varied shapes (e.g., circle, square, triangle) to distinguish the lines in a line graph.

Ensure that a figure is of acceptable visual quality. See the *JOE* Submission Guidelines for the technical requirements for figures.

First Person

Per APA style, use first person, not third person, to describe yourself and any other author(s) of your manuscript. If you are the sole author, use the singular personal pronouns (e.g., *I*, *my*); if you have coauthors, use the plural personal pronouns (e.g., *we*, *our*). Beyond helping you comply with APA style, using first person will help you avoid grammar errors, improve the clarity and readability of your work, and promote conciseness. For additional information, see the "Attribution" entry in APA manual section 3.09 and guidance on the *JOE* website about [using first person](#). Also, see the "Active Voice" entry in this document for related information.

Per APA style, use plural personal pronouns, such as *we* and *our*, only when referring to yourself and your coauthors. (This is the general rule; for information about exceptions, see the "Editorial *we*" entry in the APA manual.)

Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage

Ensure that your writing is grammatically and mechanically correct and demonstrates attention to standards of usage. Sources for grammar, mechanics, and usage rules include the APA manual and other style guides along with any of several standard grammar handbooks. In addition, [*JOE* Guidance for Terminology, Usage, and Spellings](#) provides usage information about terms and language frequently used in *JOE* articles.

Headings

Per *JOE* style, when you divide a manuscript into sections through the use of first-level headings, include at least two such headings in the manuscript. When you divide any section of a manuscript through the use of subheadings, include at least two such subheadings in that section.

Per *JOE* style, you may include the heading "Introduction" for the introductory section of a manuscript. (This strategy can be especially useful when there is only one additional first-level heading in the manuscript.)

Per *JOE* style, apply title-case capitalization style, as it is defined in APA manual section 4.15, to all headings. Make first-level headings bold and centered. Make second-level headings bold, flush left, and stand-alone (not run in). Make third-level headings bold, italic, flush left, and stand-alone (not run in). Make fourth-level headings italic, flush left, and stand-alone (not run in).

As desired for clarity, use a run-in heading at the beginning of a paragraph. As with other headings, if you use a run-in heading, include at least two such headings in the applicable section of the manuscript. Run-in headings may be fragments or sentences, but related headings must be grammatically parallel. Apply sentence-case capitalization style, end punctuation, and italics to run-in headings.

Hyperlinks

Per *JOE* style, use the URL itself, not descriptive text, as the anchor text for a hyperlink.

Correct: Information is available in the *Journal of Extension* at http://www.joe.org/index.php.

Correct: Information is available in the *Journal of Extension* (http://www.joe.org/index.php).

Incorrect: Information is available in the *Journal of Extension*.

Hyphenation

Use hyphenation appropriately. See APA manual section 4.13 for comprehensive rules on hyphenation, including rules regarding words containing prefixes and suffixes.

Keywords List

Per *JOE* style, include a keywords list at the end of the manuscript. Use the bold run-in heading "Keywords:" to introduce the horizontal list of five or fewer keywords or key phrases that reflect the content of the manuscript. Use commas to separate the items in the list. Capitalize only proper nouns and proper adjectives and abbreviations.

See the *JOE* resource Choosing Effective Keywords and Key Phrases for information about selecting optimal keywords and key phrases.

Manuscript Formatting and Structure

Adhere to *JOE* rules related to manuscript formatting and structure considerations. For comprehensive information, see the *JOE* Submission Guidelines.

Masked Text

Do not mask content in a manuscript you are submitting for initial review. When advancing a manuscript for peer review, the *JOE* editor requests that the corresponding author remove or mask applicable content (content providing clues about the identity of any author or entity involved in the research) at that time.

Numbers

Follow APA style for expressing numbers as numerals or words. See APA manual sections 4.31–4.34 for comprehensive information. Some examples of APA guidelines for expressing numbers as numerals or words are as follows:

- Use numerals (not words) to express numbers that represent time.
- Apply the rules for expressing numbers as numerals or words to ordinal numbers as well as to cardinal numbers.

Per APA style, in general, use a comma in numbers that are greater than three digits; see APA manual section 4.37 for exceptions (such as page numbers).

Per *JOE* style, use *-plus* (e.g., 50-plus) rather than the plus symbol (e.g., 50+) in nonparenthetical narrative text.

Per APA style, use parallel construction with regard to number ranges:

Correct: respondents between 2.5 and 4.0 years of age
Correct: respondents 2.5–4.0 years of age
Incorrect: respondents between 2.5–4.0 years of age

Per APA style, in statistical copy, omit the leading zero for *p* and *r* values (e.g., $p < .01$, not $p < 0.01$) because these values can never exceed 1.

Pluralization

In general, use the first spelling of a plural, as indicated in the current edition of *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (e.g., *appendixes*, *phenomena*).

Keep in mind that the noun *data* is plural. Use plural pronouns and plural verbs with it.

Pseudonyms

Per *JOE* style (based on guidance provided in the APA manual and *The Chicago Manual of Style*), indicate in the narrative the use of pseudonyms (e.g., Participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their anonymity). Also, put quotation marks around any pseudonym at first use but not thereafter.

Punctuation

Per APA style, use the serial comma; that is, use a comma between elements in a series of three or more items (e.g., Participants grew blueberries, apples, and other fruits).

Per *JOE* style, use a comma for introductory phrases of five words or more; otherwise, use your judgment. An introductory adverbial phrase may be set off by a comma but need not be unless misreading is likely. Shorter adverbial phrases are less likely to merit a comma than longer ones. As needed, consult a grammar resource for more information.

Per *JOE* style, use your judgment with regard to the use of semicolons in a complex series. When items in a series contain internal punctuation, separating the items with semicolons can aid clarity. If ambiguity seems unlikely, commas may be used instead.

Per APA style and *The Chicago Manual of Style*, use three spaced ellipsis points (. . .) to indicate omitted material within a sentence or elsewhere (e.g., in a References list entry) and four spaced ellipsis points (. . . .) to indicate any omission between two sentences.

Per *JOE* style, use back-to-back sets of parentheses rather than combine unrelated elements in one set of parentheses.

Quoted Material

To achieve the highest level of clarity and effectiveness, make prudent decisions about when to paraphrase, when to use fragmentary quotations, and when to use lengthier quotations.

Provide enough context for the meaning and significance of quoted material to be clear.

Per APA guidance, introduce quoted material and incorporate it into surrounding text in ways that are logically, grammatically, and mechanically appropriate. For example, you may use a clause followed by a colon to introduce quoted material, use an attributional phrase to introduce quoted material, or include fragmentary quoted material in a sentence.

Examples:

- Smith and Smith (2017) explained why their study participants demonstrated this characteristic: "The producers' unwillingness to adopt the practice stemmed from their perception that doing so would be cost prohibitive" (p. 20).
- Participants we surveyed considered the program to be helpful to their bottom lines. One participant said, "After implementing practices I learned during the program, I was able to increase profits at my business by 14%."
- Focus group members expressed the desire to learn more about "practical" and "efficient" ways to improve their health habits.

Per *The Chicago Manual of Style*, change the case of the initial letter of a quotation as needed to make the quoted material fit into the syntax of the surrounding text. For more information, see *Chicago Manual of Style* section 13.7.

Use bracketed text and ellipses wherever necessary to increase the clarity of quoted material.

Quotations from Sources

Per APA style, incorporate quoted material of less than 40 words into surrounding text, and display quoted material of 40 words or more as a block quotation. For more information, see APA manual section 6.03.

Quotations from Study Participants

Per *JOE* style, in general, incorporate quotations from study participants into surrounding text. If you are including *many* long quotations (40 words or more) from study participants, use block quotations for all such material.

When quotations are transcriptions of spoken words, ensure that they do not contain mechanical errors, such as missing or incorrect punctuation and misspellings.

Per *The Chicago Manual of Style*, consider editing transcriptions for minor grammatical issues and unnecessary verbiage (e.g., repetition of words, use of "you know" and "um") to enhance clarity and impact. If you take such action, include a note indicating that you have done so.

Recommendations for Further Reading

Per *JOE* style, include a Recommendation(s) for Further Reading section as desired. See the *JOE* Submission Guidelines for more information.

Seriation (Including Vertical Lists)

Per APA guidance, ensure that all items in a series are parallel in construction. As needed, consult a grammar resource for more information.

Per APA guidance, in any use of seriation—whether it involves a list in running text or a vertical list—ensure that the elements of the seriation are syntactically correct. That is, they should read and be capitalized and punctuated and so forth like normal sentences and paragraphs. See the following examples and APA manual section 3.04 for more information.

Examples:

The program was designed to achieve the following goals:

- Introduce participants to the concepts of environmental stewardship.
- Suggest strategies for accomplishing environmental stewardship.
- Encourage participants to volunteer in community environmental stewardship programs.

The program was designed to

- introduce participants to the concepts of environmental stewardship,
- suggest strategies for accomplishing environmental stewardship, and
- encourage participants to volunteer in community environmental stewardship programs.

Per APA style, if you wish to accentuate the separation of elements in a series within a sentence or paragraph, use lowercase letters enclosed in parentheses. Example: The participant's three choices were (a) working with another participant, (b) working with a team, and (c) working alone.

Per APA guidance, use bullets rather than numbers for vertical lists unless you intend to indicate chronology, ranking of importance, or some other ordinal positioning of items in the list.

For grammatical correctness, do not use the word *following* as a noun when introducing lists (e.g., Respondents said the following: . . .); you may use the word *following* as an adjective when introducing lists (e.g., Respondents made the following comments: . . .).

As desired for clarity, use run-in headings at the beginnings of entries in a vertical list. The run-in headings may be fragments or sentences, but they must be grammatically parallel. Apply sentence-case capitalization style and italics to the run-in headings.

Social Titles

Per *The Chicago Manual of Style*, omit social titles (e.g., Mr., Ms., Dr.).

Spellings

In general, use the first spelling of a word, as indicated in the current edition of *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. For additional information, see *JOE* [Guidance for Terminology, Usage, and Spellings](#).

Statistical Information

Ensure that data included in a manuscript are correct. In other words, check your math! If there is an appropriate reason for what appears to be a mathematical error, explain, such as by noting that totals may not equal 100% due to rounding or that although some participants did not answer every survey question, completed questions from incomplete surveys were accepted for data analysis.

Per APA style, when using a statistical term in the narrative (other than in parenthetical text), use the term, not the abbreviation.

Use the statistical abbreviations *N* and *n* appropriately. These abbreviations relate to a sample that is studied. Do not use them to refer to other numbers, such as the number of people who answered a particular questionnaire item in a certain way. Instead, use an appropriate abbreviation, such as the statistical abbreviation *f* (for frequency) or the general abbreviation *No*.

Ensure that you have applied appropriate style in any presentation of statistical copy. (For example, per APA style, certain statistical abbreviations and symbols are italicized.) See the "Statistical and Mathematical Copy" section in APA manual chapter 4 for comprehensive information.

Per APA style, space mathematical copy as you would space words. See APA manual section 4.46 for information.

Per APA style, carry all comparable values to the same number of decimal places.

Symbols

Per APA style, use the percent symbol when a number is given; use the word *percentage* when a number is not given. (This guideline applies to narrative text, not tabular matter.)

Per *The Chicago Manual of Style*, repeat the percent symbol when giving a range of percentages.

Per *JOE* style, in general, do not use the ampersand except in tabular matter, figures, notes, citations, and references. (Note: The *JOE* editor may change an ampersand to the word *and* in a title that is referred to in narrative text, a note, or a references list, in accordance with *Chicago Manual of Style* guidance.)

Per *The Chicago Manual of Style*, omit the registered trademark symbol (®) or unregistered trademark symbol (™) after a brand name.

Tables

If a table is reproduced or adapted from a copyrighted source, follow APA guidelines and style for giving credit to the source. For information, see APA manual section 5.06 (and related sections) as well as [Navigating Copyright for Reproduced Images: Overview](), a relevant series on the APA Style blog, and, in particular, [Navigating Copyright for Reproduced Images: Part 4. Writing the Copyright Statement]().

In accordance with the *JOE* Submission Guidelines, ensure that a table is part of the manuscript file (created through the use of the Tables function in Microsoft Word), not an object embedded in the manuscript file. Ensure that a table contains no unnecessary spaces, hard returns, columns, or rows and that indentation is achieved through appropriate margin settings.

Per *JOE* style, center a table's number and title (on separate lines) above and outside the table. Apply bold to the table number (e.g., **Table 1.**); do not apply bold to the table title. Apply title-case capitalization style to the table title.

Per APA guidance, ensure that the content of a table supplements rather than duplicates information in the body of the manuscript. The body of the manuscript should discuss only highlights of the table, alerting readers about what to look for.

Per APA guidance, ensure that the content of a table is appropriate for a table. For example, a table shows relationships; two lists set in two columns do not make a table.

Per APA style, refer to all tables, by table number, in the narrative text. Be precise when referring to tables. For example, in a paragraph that highlights material from a table, do not include a parenthetical reference to the table in only one sentence relating to the table and not other such sentences. Instead, either include a general statement about what readers will find in the table at the beginning or end of the paragraph or include a parenthetical reference to the table in each relevant sentence.

Place a table at the appropriate point in the text—near but following the discussion of the table in the narrative.

Per APA guidance, ensure that information in a table is ordered logically. For example, quantitative data should be arranged in an order that allows readers to grasp the meaning of the data quickly and easily, such as greatest amount to least amount.

Per APA style, ensure that the table title is concise and does not contain explanatory information; such information belongs in the body of the table or in a table note.

Per APA style, include all information needed to understand a table within the table title and the table itself. If you wish to include an abbreviation in a table title, write out the term and include the abbreviation in parentheses. For an abbreviation used elsewhere in a table, explain the abbreviation in a note in the table. Standard abbreviations/symbols for nontechnical terms and statistics (e.g., *No.* for *number*, *SD* for *standard deviation*) may be used in tables without explanation. Explain an abbreviation that is used in more than one table in each table it is used in. See APA manual sections 5.12, 5.13, and 5.16 for more information.

Per APA style, ensure that each column heading in a table is a concise explanation of the data shown in the column.

Ensure that the textual content of a table aligns with all rules of *JOE* style, grammar, and mechanics and is consistent with material presented elsewhere in the manuscript. Keep in mind that certain verbatim language from study materials may be inappropriate for use as a table title or for inclusion in other parts of a table. For example, a title of a table should be a concise explanation of the data shown in the table, not a survey question that relates to the data.

Ensure that data included in a table are correct and are consistent within the table and with material presented elsewhere in the manuscript.

For enhanced clarity and readability, ensure that entries in a particular column of a table (and, in some cases, entries in a particular row) are syntactically and conceptually parallel.

For aspects of table content and formatting not addressed by *JOE* style (as indicated herein), follow APA style. See APA manual chapter 5 for information. Some examples of APA's style and formatting guidelines for tables are as follows:

- Do not include vertical rules or unnecessary shading.
- Include column headings for all columns, including the stub (leftmost) column.
- Use sentence-case capitalization style for table column headings and table body text, unless title-case capitalization style is appropriate (e.g., proper nouns). Capitalize the first word after a colon or an em dash.
- When a cell of a table cannot be filled because data are not applicable, leave the cell blank. When a cell of a table cannot be filled because data were not obtained, insert a dash (—) in the cell, and then explain the use of the dash in a general note in the table.
- Do not include data that can be calculated easily from other data. For example, totals rows are often expendable.
- Set table notes as part of the table itself, not as text outside the table. Also, format table notes as general notes, specific notes, or probability notes. (APA manual section 5.16 provides more information about appropriate content and formatting for the three types of table notes.)

Terminology and Usage

Apply usage standards to relevant terminology and language. For additional information, see *Chicago Manual of Style* section 5.220 and *JOE* Guidance for Terminology, Usage, and Spellings.

Titles

Per *JOE* style, center the manuscript title on the first line of the manuscript. Apply title-case capitalization style, as it is defined in APA manual section 4.15, and make the title bold.

Follow APA guidance for developing an effective manuscript title (see APA manual section 2.01).

Per *JOE* preferences (and APA recommendations), keep a manuscript title to 12 or fewer words if possible.

Per APA style, do not use abbreviations in a manuscript title.

Verb Tenses

Per APA guidance, use past tense or present perfect tense in a literature review and past tense in a description of a procedure and its results. In general, use present tense to discuss implications and conclusions. See APA manual section 3.06 for more information.

Do not use future tense to describe the content of a manuscript (e.g., say "This article addresses . . ." not "This article will address . . ."). For more information, see guidance on the *JOE* website about avoiding future tense to describe the content of a manuscript.

Weak Constructions

Whenever possible, avoid using weak and wordy sentence constructions and phrasings that make writing less effective. Examples include the phrases *there is*, *there are*, *there was*, and so on.