

## GFO Style Guide

The following chart reflects the general style preferences for GFO publications.

Some articles such as memoirs, diaries, or those containing historical text will retain their original style.

<b>People</b>		
Names with initials	Spaces and periods, or initials capitalized with no spaces or periods	J. F. Kennedy; JFK
Names with numerals	No punctuation precedes numerals	Adlai Stevenson III
Title Suffix	Use approved abbreviations; no comma between name and title	John F. Kennedy Jr.
Military titles	Spell out with full name; may be abbreviated with only surname	General George Patton; Gen. Patton (Lt., Maj., Capt.)
Religious titles	Spell out with full name and with "the"; may be abbreviated with only surname;	Reverend Josiah Brown; the Reverend Brown; Rev. Brown
Office titles	Upper case if preceding name, lower case if following name	President Lincoln the president, Abraham Lincoln Lincoln, president of the U.S.
Credentials	No periods between initials; academic degrees are lower case when generic, but upper case when it looks like a title - the subject area lower case	CG, CGL, FNGS, PhD; received a bachelor of arts in science
Specific racial, ethnic, and religious groups	Capitalize	African American, Mennonite, Black, Native American
Kinship	Lower case unless preceding name (as part of title) or used as substitute for name	Aunt Lily, my sister Gemma; Mom went, my mom went
<b>Frequently used words</b>		
grandson	No dash; grand compounds not hyphenated	
great-grandfather	Any great has a dash	
half sister	Always open, not hyphenated in relationships	

in-law	Always hyphenated and only the first element is pluralized	mother-in-law; mothers-in-law
stepbrother	Always closed except with grand or great no dash	
step-grandson	Always hyphenated with grand or great	
landowners	One word, lower case	
<b>Places</b>		
Abbreviations	In <i>most</i> cases, spell out Fort, Mount, Saint, etc.; exception: if the abbreviation has been used historically	Saint Paul (MN) but St. Johns, St. Helens, St. Louis (towns), Mount Hood, but Mount St. Helens
Place names	First time mentioned, include town, county, state, country (if not in US or if needed to differentiate from a location in another country); titles after each location	Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon,
Roads	Spell out in text; okay to use abbreviations in addresses	Street, Avenue, Boulevard; St., Ave., Blvd.
County	Spell out any word that designates a political division when following a name or in relation to any country name	Multnomah County; the county of Multnomah; Republic of Lithuania; the republic (used alone)
State	Spell out in text; Abbreviate in charts, lists, and addresses; two-character postal codes; three-characters for UK counties	Mississippi; MS; OFE (Oxfordshire)
Compass points	Spell out in text, don't capitalize; may be abbreviated in addresses, then use caps, no periods	the south Bronx; NE
Regions	Terms that denote regions of the world or of a particular country are often capitalized	the South
Country	Spell out first time; abbreviate with periods and no spaces; may omit after first use; in addresses may use USA	United States or U.S.
<b>Time</b>		

Time	Even, half, and quarter hours spelled out; for exact time use a.m. or p.m.—lower case, with periods, no space following inside period; exact hour has no :00; reserve hyphens for the naturally hyphenated cardinal number, but add a hyphen when the time of day precedes and modifies a noun, unless part of the expression is already hyphenated	ten thirty 10:22 a.m. 9 p.m.  eight forty-five; five fifteen; three thirty three-thirty train; eight forty-five appointment
Time Range	If a time range is entirely in the morning or evening, use a.m. or p.m. only once; if it goes from the morning into the evening (or vice versa), you need both;	6:30–10 p.m. 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
Dates at beginning of sentence	Years placed at the beginning of a sentence should be written out as words. American writers tend not to use and after thousand when expressing a year after 2000 in words, but it is common in British English. Both are correct.	The year 1929 brought the Great Depression. Nineteen twenty-nine brought the Great Depression.
Month	Always spelled out	
Month & year	No commas	April 1899
Day-month-year (preferred)	No commas	15 April 1899
Month-day-year	Two commas, one after the day and one after the year	April 15, 1899,
Month-day	When referring to a specific date in the month-day date format, use cardinal numbers (one, two, three) rather than ordinal numbers (first, second, third).	Daniel was born on May 13.
Dates with no years	If using "of", it is fine to use an ordinal number. It is also fine to use an ordinal number when referring to a specific day without reference to the month.	Daniel was born on the 13th of May. Daniel was born on the thirteenth.
With day of the week added	Use comma	Monday, May 5, is my last day of work.
Year span	Use full years with en dash	1800–1899

Decades	Entire decade with s; two-digit numbers with an apostrophe before them and an s after them; lower case if written out	the 1990s; '90s; the nineties
Centuries	If digits, no apostrophe; if written out, all lower case	1900s; the eighteen hundreds; the twentieth century
Seasons	Lowercase unless denoting publication date	Flowers bloom in spring; published Spring 2018
Holidays	Capitalize	
<b>Publications</b>		
Titles - Italic	art, blogs, books (but book series and editions use neither), cartoons, comic strips, drawings, journals, magazines, movies, newspapers, paintings, pamphlets, periodicals, <b>photographs</b> , plays, reports, tv programs	<i>The Hobbit, The Bulletin, Mona Lisa, Finding Your Roots</i>
Titles - Quotes	articles, blog entries, chapters, essays, lectures (individual), poems, short stories, songs, tv episodes, unpublished works, web pages and sections	"An Unexpected Party"
Titles - Neither	columns or departments in periodicals, conferences, lecture series, meetings, speeches (unless it has status, then use quotes), <b>websites</b>	Editor's Note, RootsTech, GenTalk, Wikipedia, Ancestry, FamilySearch, Find A Grave, WorldCat
Newspapers and other periodicals	Check the exact title on the issue cited; some, such as the <i>Oregonian</i> , have changed over the years	<i>The Oregonian, the Morning Oregonian</i>
URL address	Include the https:// portion of the website	<a href="https://gfo.org/support/donate">https://gfo.org/support/donate</a>
Document names being uploaded to website	[publication name date]	Insider 2019 05
Frequently used words	All lower case unless in a title	database, email, internet, web page

<b>Numbers</b>		
Numbers	Spell out all numbers under ten (10)	One, eight
Dollars	Use decimal point only if fraction amount is used; if the dollar amount is spelled out so is the unit of currency; if a numeral is used, use the \$ symbol	\$50.32 ten dollars \$10
Fractions	Spell out in most cases	two-fifths
Whole numbers & fractions		8½, 8 1/2, or eight and one-half
Height	No spaces, single and double prime symbols	6'1" 6 ft. 1 in. six feet, one inch
Ages	When the age is an adjective that comes before the noun, or when the age is a noun, hyphenate. When the age is part of an adjective phrase after the noun, don't hyphenate.	My eight-year-old neighbor ... That 70-year-old ... She is 45 years old. His twins are nearly two years old.
Numbered political and judicial divisions, successive governing bodies, military units, and places of worship	Spell out all numbers below 101.	Illinois Thirty-first Regiment; Ninety-Seventh United States Congress; Twenty-First Church of Christ; 101st Airborne Division
Numbered street names	Spell out if less than 10	Second Street, Third Avenue
Ordinals	22nd, no superscript; spell out if < 10	22nd, second
Phone numbers	Use hyphen between sets of number	1-800-123-4567
Roman numerals	Substitute Arabic numbers for Roman numerals when possible	
Longitude & Latitude	Spell out these words	

<b>Punctuation</b>		
Ellipsis	When three [dots] are used, space occurs both before the first dot and after the final dot. No space between dots.	... chocolate ...
More Ellipses	When four are used, the first dot is a true period—that is, there is no space between it and the preceding word.	“One further habit which was somewhat weakened ... was that of combining words into self-interpreting compounds.... The practice was not abandoned....”
Quotation marks	Periods and commas within quotes	" ... best of times."
Colons & semicolons	Follow closing quotation marks	
Semicolon	Use to divide when elements in a series include internal punctuation	... children, Jane, age ten; Tom, age five; and Sam, age two.
Semicolon or comma in compound sentences	Use a comma after the first independent clause when you link two independent clauses with one of the following coordinating conjunctions: and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet. Use a semicolon when you link two independent clauses with no connecting words. You can also use a semicolon when you join two independent clauses together with one of the following conjunctive adverbs (adverbs that join independent clauses): however, moreover, therefore, consequently, otherwise, nevertheless, thus, etc.	
Serial comma	Use in a list of three or more	one, two, and three
Commas and names	Use commas if there is more than one choice, i.e. there are several children and you are identifying only one; do not use commas if there is only one option, i.e., there was only one daughter.	His daughter, Mary, took the photos. (more than one daughter) His daughter Mary took the photos. (He only had one daughter)

Slash	If using a slash, no space unless one or more terms is an open compound	he/she; high school / college
Spacing	One space at the end of a sentence following the punctuation	
Possessive	Apostrophe and s unless the word ends in s, x, or z, then use only apostrophe; except <b>proper nouns</b> , including names ending in s, x, or z, add apostrophe s	"Kansas's legislature," "Marx's theories," "Berlioz's works," "Borges's library," and "Dickens's novels."
Contractions	Not used in formal writing, but may be used in prose	
[sic]	Sic in italics; brackets no italics	[ <i>sic</i> ]
Common abbreviations	Spell out or use alternate phrasing in text; may be used in notes or in quotations; not italic; careful of periods	Circa (about) – ca. et alia (and others) – et al. et cetera (and so on) – etc. exempli gratia (for example) – e.g. id est (that is) – i.e. Also known as – a.k.a.
Acronyms	Only after name is spelled out the first time it is used, followed by acronym in parentheses	Family History Library (FHL), Periodical Source Index (PERSI)
Link at end of sentence	Use space between link and period	at <a href="https://www.gfo.org">https://www.gfo.org</a> .

Hyphen	<p>To combine closely related words used as modifiers; No space before or after the hyphen; exception - a hanging hyphen (for example, the word "nineteenth" in the phrase "nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature");</p> <p>To separate numbers that are not inclusive (e. g., phone numbers and Social Security numbers); never used between a numeral and an abbreviation or symbol, even in adjectival form.</p>	<p>a 15-foot pole An eighteen-inch monitor by a solid 15 feet. was 17 feet long</p> <p>nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature</p> <p>496-00-00000</p>
en dash	The en dash means, quite simply, "through." We use it most commonly to indicate inclusive dates and numbers.	July 9–August 17; pp. 37–59
em dash or "dash"	Use the em dash to create a strong break in the structure of a sentence.	Dashes can be used in pairs like parentheses—that is, to enclose a word, or a phrase, or a clause—or they can be used alone to detach one end of a sentence from the main body.
<b>Usage and Grammar</b>		
"a" or "an"	In Chicago style, it's a historical novel. "With the indefinite article, the choice of a or an depends on the sound of the word it precedes.	"A" precedes words with a consonant sound, including /y/, /h/, and /w/, no matter how the word is spelled {a eulogy} {a historic occasion} {a onetime pass}. "An" comes before words with a vowel sound {an FBI agent} {an X-Files episode} {an hour ago}."
<b>Capitalization</b>		
Lower case (common terms)	Common terms are lower case unless they are in a title	book, volume, roll, census (even if it says 1940 U.S. census), city directory, death register, post office
Post Office	Spell out in text; PO Box okay in address; no periods, no space in PO	post office PO Box 2505
Publications	If "The" is part of the title, capitalize in citations; okay to use lower case in text	<i>The Bulletin</i> ; ... this issue of the <i>Bulletin</i> ...



Ships	Name of ship in italics; USS or SS not italic	USS <i>Enterprise</i> , the <i>Enterprise</i>
Wars	Use capital letters for each word	American Revolution, World War II
<b>Symbols</b>		
	Avoid the use of symbols (@ # \$ % * + = ) in the text, unless within a quote; percent uses a numeral with "percent" spelled out	10 percent, not 10%
<b>Citations</b>	CMOS or Evidence Explained styles are preferred. The underlying rule is that a reader be able to find the source based on the citation! See separate guides for citations examples.	
Placement in text	Footnotes are at end of sentence, unless there is a clause with comma or semicolon; otherwise, may have two at the end of a sentence	the 1900 census; <sup>2</sup> the best of times. <sup>3 4</sup>
Note number - in text	Leave no space between the superscript (note number) in the text and the word or mark of punctuation it follows. Place the superscript before a dash but after all other marks of punctuation.	the 1900 census. <sup>2</sup> the best of times." <sup>3</sup>
Spacing	Footnotes or endnotes are single-spaced and the first line is indented; format is double space # . double space	7. Gleim, handwritten letter, p. 3.
Numerals	Use Arabic numerals	
FHL film	Use commas in the numbers even though the originals do not have commas. Do not use leading zeros in these numbers.	1234567

Website link	Web links will remain live in text and citations. URL addresses will be underlined. CMOS style does not require access dates, but most publications prefer them. GFO editors will check and add or change access date as needed.	
Waypoints - an alternative for online records	From a collection title, to a database title, to the item.	"New York Probate Records, 1629-1971," FamilySearch (familysearch.org/search/collection/1920234 : accessed 20 February 2017) > Cayuga > Estate papers 1799-1904 box 4 > images 426-27, Raymond Greenfield, will, 10 October 1821.
Ibid.	Upper or lower case, no italics, always followed by a period	4. Maxine Janusson, <i>The Way of Things</i> (Boston: Littleman Press, 1989), 67. 5. Ibid. 6. Ibid., 98.
<b>Foreign Words and Translations</b>		
Words or phrases in text	use italics	The passage should be played <i>allegro ma non troppo</i> .
In quotations	do not use italics	The prelude is marked "allegro ma non troppo."
Translations of city names or other terms		... now mostly in Bratislava (Hung. <i>Pozsony</i> ; Ger. <i>Pressburg</i> )
<b>Captions and Image Credits</b>		
Image captions	Italic; words or phrases that would otherwise be italic revert to non-italic	
Position	Centered or left, depending on layout needs	
Credits	Included in caption or to the side, depending on layout needs	

Public Domain	Source not required, but best practice would be to note where the image came from - Wikimedia, Google Books, Internet Archive, Library of Congress, government website	
Creative Commons	Credit depends on license and is clearly stated in Wikimedia	
From Author	Courtesy of ...	
<b>Photo Layout</b>		
Drop shadows	Objects (book, documents), framed photos, cut out photos (such as ovals), newspaper snips, portraits	
Use Discretion	Newspaper and other snips, portraits	
No shadow	Maps, square or oval photos (including cropped), charts ads	