Topic	Rule	Examples	CMS Ref	Questions or Comments
People				
Names with initials	Spaces and periods, or initials capitalized with no spaces or periods	J. F. Kennedy; JFK	8.4	
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.	6.47, 10.19	
Military titles	Spell out with full name; may be abbreviated with only surname	General George Patton; Gen. Patton (Lt., Maj., Capt.)	10.15	
Religious titles	Spell out with full name and with "the"; may be abbreviated with only surname;	Reverend Josiah Brown; the Reverend Brown; Rev. Brown	10.18	
Office titles	Upper case if preceding name, lower case if following name	President Lincoln the president, Abraham Lincoln Lincoln, president of the U.S.	8.18	
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	10.2	
Specific racial, ethnic, and religious groups	Capitalize	African American, Mennonite, Black, Native American, White	8.37	
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	8.35	
landowner	One word, lower case			
Relationships				
grandson	No dash; grand compounds not hyphenated		7.85	
great-grandfather	Any great has a dash		7.85	
half sister	Always open, not hyphenated in relationships		7.85	

in-law	Always hyphenated and only the first element is pluralized	mother-in-law; mothers-in-law	7.85	
stepbrother	Always closed except with grand or great no dash		7.85	
step-grandson	Always hyphenated with grand or great		7.85	

Places

Abbreviations	In *most* 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	10.31	
Place names	First time mentioned, include town, county, state, country (if not in U.S. or if needed to differentiate from a location in another country); titles after each location	Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon,

U.S. (not US) | | Insert a non-breaking space if the two words may break at the end of a sentence; applies to any city with two or more words (The Dalles) |
Roads	Spell out in text; okay to use abbreviations in addresses	Street, Avenue, Boulevard; St., Ave., Blvd.	10.34	
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)	8.50	
State	Spell out in text; Abbreviate in charts, lists, and addresses; two-character postal codes; three-characters for UK counties	Mississippi; MS; OFE (Oxfordshire)	10.28	
Compass points	Spell out in text, don't capitalize; may be abbreviated in addresses, then use caps, no periods	the south Bronx; NE	10.36	
Regions	Terms that denote regions of the world or of a particular country are often capitalized	the South	8.46	
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.		

Time

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	9.38	
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.		https://www.grammarly.com/blog/how-to-write-dates/
Month	Always spelled out			
Month & year	No commas	April 1899	6.45	
Day-month-year (preferred)	No commas	15 April 1899	6.45	
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.		Insert a non-breaking space between day and month to keep on the same line

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	9.63
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	9.33-9.34
Seasons	Lowercase unless denoting publication date	Flowers bloom in spring; published Spring 2018	8.87
Holidays	Capitalize		8.88

Publications

Titles - Italic	art, blogs, books (but book series and editions use neither), cartoons, comic strips, drawings, journals, magazines, movies, newspapers, paintings, pamphlets, periodicals, **photographs**, plays, reports, tv programs	*The Hobbit, The Bulletin, Mona Lisa, Finding Your Roots*	https://apvschicago.com/2011/04/titles-quote-marks-italics-underlining.html
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 - No italics or quotes | columns or departments in periodicals, conferences, lecture series, meetings, speeches (unless it has status, then use quotes), **websites** | Editor's Note, RootsTech, GenTalk, Wikipedia, Ancestry, FamilySearch, Find A Grave, WorldCat | CMOS 17 will no longer make an exception for the title of a website that is analogous to a traditionally printed work but does not have (and never had) a printed counterpart. The titles of such websites will remain in roman type, per the general rule for website titles: {Wikipedia; Wikipedia's "Let It Be" entry; Wikipedia's entry on the Beatles' album Let It Be} {Wordnik; Wordnik's "demilune" entry} Titles of websites with print analogues continue to be italic, as recommended in the 16th edition. {the website of the New York Times; the New York Times online; Grove Music Online}

Because a writer or copyeditor might not always know whether there is a printed analogue to a given website, and because there is often a reason to prefer consistency in the titles of websites regardless of their precise nature (such as in a list or bibliography or any time making a distinction would be confusing or distracting), editorial discretion is allowed |
| Newspapers and other periodicals | Check the exact title on the issue cited; some, such as the *Oregonian* , have changed over the years | *The Oregonian,* the *Morning Oregonian* | |

URL address	Include the https:// portion of the website	https://gfo.org/support/donate	We have specifically excluded https:// and www. In our stationery and E-news. Neither is needed to reach most websites. Including it in an underlying (invisible) embedded link is appropriate, but spelling it out is unnecessary for a functioning URL. An exception can be made for citations which traditionally include the full url (as reflected in the citation examples from Elizabeth Shown Mills). [nr - 18 Jan]
Document names being uploaded to website	[publication name date]	Insider 2019 05	File-naming guidelines to follow for GFO publications
Frequently used words	All lower case unless in a title	database, email, internet, web page	

Numbers

Numbers	Spell out all numbers under ten (10)	One, eight	9.3
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	 9.21
Fractions	Spell out in most cases	two-fifths	7.85
Whole numbers & fractions		8½, 8 1/2, or eight and one-half	9.15
Height	No spaces, single and double prime symbols	6'1" 6 ft. 1 in. six feet, one inch	 10.69

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.		https://www.quickanddirtytips.com/education/grammar/are-you-using-hyphens-correctly
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	9.46-9.49	
Numbered street names	Spell out if less than 10	Second Street, Third Avenue	9.52	
Ordinals	22nd, no superscript; spell out if < 10	22nd, second	9.6, 9.2	
Phone numbers	Use hyphen between sets of number	1-800-123-4567		Other countries do not use hyphens and group digits in less familiar groupings. A phone number from outside the U.S. may require special attention.
Roman numerals	Substitute Arabic numbers for Roman numerals when possible		9.66	
Longitude & Latitude	Spell out these words		10.37	
Punctuation			6.2	Punctuation surrounding a word or phrase should be in the font of the surrounding text, unless the punctuation is part of the text in question (e.g., the movie title *Help!*).
Ellipsis	When three [dots] are used, space occurs both before the first dot and after the final dot. No space between dots.	… chocolate …	13.48	No space between dots

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...."		https://www.dailywritingtips.com/in-search-of-a-4-dot-ellipsis/
Quotation marks	Periods and commas within quotes	" … best of times."	6.9	"...when dealing with quotations that extend over more than one paragraph, put quotation marks at the beginning of each paragraph but at the end of only the final one."
Colons & semicolons	Follow closing quotation marks	" … to the store";	6.10	
Semicolon	Use to divide when elements in a series include internal punctuation	… children, Jane, age ten; Tom, age five; and Sam, age two.	6.19	
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.			https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/punctuation/commas/commas_vs_semicolons.html
Serial comma	Use in a list of three or more	one, two, and three	6.18	
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. (one daughter).		There are generally only two correct options: two commas, one before and one after the name/title, or no commas at all. https://thecriticalreader.com/commas-with-names-and-titles-simplified/

Slash	If using a slash, no space unless one or more terms is an open compound	he/she; high school / college	6.104	
Spacing	One space at the end of a sentence following the punctuation		2.9 & 2.11	
Possessive	Apostrophe and s unless the word ends in s, x, or z, then use only apostrophe; except **proper nouns**, 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."		https://www.grammarphobia.com/blog/2011/12/possessive.html
Contractions	Not used in formal writing, but are may be used in prose		5.103	
[sic]	Sic in italics; brackets no italics	[sic]	7.53 & 13.59	
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.	10.43	
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)	10.8	Small caps (?)
Link at end of sentence	Use space between link and period	at https://gfo.org .		This is not necessary if only the URL is linked. Highlight it carefully, omitting the period when embedding the link; then the period can appear naturally at the end of any sentence, even those ending in URLS. If a reader of this on a printed page types in "gfo.org." it will still go to correct website.

Hyphen	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"); 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.	a 15-foot pole An eighteen-inch monitor by a solid 15 feet. was 17 feet long nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature 496-00-00000		On typewriter and computer keyboards, the hyphen appears on the bottom half of the key located on the top row between the "0" and the equals mark (=).
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	6.78	In Microsoft Word, go to Insert>Symbol>Special Characters, or Alt + 0150 or Ctrl + - (minus) Macs - option+hyphen
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.	6.82–6.89	Many word processing software programs automatically turn two hyphens into an em dash (if NO space before or after them); or In Microsoft Word, go to Insert>Symbol>Special Characters; or Em dash:Alt + 0151 or Em dash: Alt+Ctrl+ - (minus) Mac: Option+Shift+Hyphen

Usage and Grammar

| "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}." | 5.74 | |

Capitalization

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	10.34	
Publications	If "The" is part of the title, capitalize in citations; okay to use lower case in text	*The Bulletin;* … this issue of the *Bulletin* …		Editorial board discussion 6 Nov 2019
Ships	Name of ship in italics; USS or SS not italic	USS *Enterprise* , the *Enterprise*	8.115	
Wars	Use capital letters for each word	American Revolution, World War II	8.112 & 8.113	

Symbols

| | Avoid the use of symbols (@ # $ % * + =) in the text, unless within a quote; percent uses a numeral with "percent" spelled out | 10 percent, not 10% | 9.18 | |

Citations	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;[2] the best of times.[3][4]		Editorial board discussion 6 Nov 2019
Multiple footnotes in one sentence	Do not place multiple footnotes at the same point in your text (e.g. 1, 2, 3). If multiple sources apply to one sentence, combine the citations into one footnote, separated by semicolons.	1. Hulme, "Romanticism and Classicism"; Eliot, "The Waste Land"; Woolf, "Modern Fiction," 11.	section 14.57 Several Citations in One Note, of the 17th	https://www.scribbr.com/chicago-style/footnotes/
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.[2] the best of times." [3]		Editorial board discussion 6 Nov 2019: space after quotation mark
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.		Editorial board discussion 6 Nov 2019; this is the default setting for InDesign
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.	1,234,567 9.55		

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.		Editorial board discussion 6 Nov 2019
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.	from *Mastering Genealogical Documentation* by Tom Jones. GFO Catalog - 070.9 Jone 2017
Ibid.	Upper or lower case, no italics, always followed by a period	4. Maxine Janusson, The Way of Things (Boston: Littleman Press, 1989), 67. 5. Ibid. 6. Ibid., 98. 7.53	When you have two consecutive references to the same work, whether the reference is to the same page or a different page, historians generally use the latin word "Ibid." followed by the page number, if a different page.

Foreign Words and Translations
CMS17, 11.6

Words or phrases in text	use italics	The passage should be played *allegro ma non troppo* .	
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. *Pozsony* ; Ger. *Pressburg*)	

Captions and Image Credits
We are generally following the style used in the NGS journal.

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 …	

Photo Layout

Drop shadows	Objects (book, documents), framed photos, cut out photos (such as ovals), newspaper snips, portraits	Editorial board discussion 6 Nov 2019
Use Discretion	Newspaper and other snips, portraits	Editorial board discussion 6 Nov 2019
No shadow	Maps, square or oval photos (including cropped), charts ads	Editorial board discussion 6 Nov 2019

Anti-Bias Style Guide

	The GFO has a commitment to inclusivity in our programs and publications. These are guidelines to assist users in creating and editing content.	Board vote 12 Oct 2021. Added by G. Auerbach on 14 December 2021
Abstracting, extracting, and/or transcribing documents	When abstracting, extracting, and/or transcribing documents, the exact wording of the original document will be kept. When the document is discussed, current language guidelines apply, making sure that the references between the historical language and current language are clear.	
Terms related to slavery	With specific respect to slavery, the word "slave" should be replaced with "enslaved person" or "enslaved individual,, "slave owner" would be replaced with "enslaver."	

Individuals of indigenous ancestry	When discussing individuals of indigenous ancestry, use the person's self-identification. Where it is not possible to know the individual(s) self-identification, the individual tribal nation identification is preferred. Tribal nations should be capitalized.	i.e., Yakama Nation, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.	
Individual and Group Identification	Individuals and groups should be referred to as the wish to be referred to. When referring to racial and ethnic identity use the most specific designation possible.	i.e., Mexican American rather than Hispanic or Latin(o,a,x).	
Captialize Black & White Americans			See Specific racial, ethnic, and religious groups above.
People-First Language	Utilize people-first language when writing about persons with disabilities and/or chronic conditions. Emphasize the person, not a characteristic.	For example: "wheel-chair bound" would be "uses a wheelchair."	
For Additional discussion and more word choice suggesstion see:	APA Style: General Principles for Reducing Bias at: https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/bias-free-language/general-principles A Progressive's Style Guide at: https://dfwhcfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SUM-OF-US_PROGRESSIVE-LANGUAGE-STYLEGUIDE.pdf		