

The CEMEQ Style Guide

INTRODUCTION

This Style Guide has been created in an effort to establish firm guidelines for the translators and *conseillers techniques* working on the English-version learning guides for CEMEQ. The Style Guide will elaborate on basic decisions about writing conventions and style choices that have been made by the organization.

All references within the Style Guide will be to *The Canadian Style*, since it is the most widely used and accepted authority on questions of writing in Canada¹.

¹ The most recent edition, which was released in 1997, is the most complete. However, the older 1985 edition has been very widely distributed and is equally useful.

ABBREVIATIONS

In the chapter that deals with abbreviations, *The Canadian Style* says: “In recent years there has been a trend toward the omission of periods in abbreviations. This is particularly true of scientific and technical writing...” However, certain Latin terms retain a period, such as:

- etc.
- e.g.
- et al.
- i.e.

As regards the **International System of Units (SI)**, it is represented by symbols that are the same in English as in French, for example:

- degree Celsius °C
- kilogram kg
- kilometre km
- newton N

There are no periods when these symbols are used.

On the other hand, unit abbreviations in the **imperial system** require periods, as shown:

- 8 in.
- 11.6 sq. in.
- 100 sq. ft.
- 20 cu. yd.

Concerning the appropriate abbreviations for the words *number* or *numbers*, when the term is represented within the body of a text, use *No.* or *Nos.*

See *The Canadian Style*, for more information about abbreviations used with the SI and the imperial system.

ACRONYMS AND INITIALISMS

Use upper-case letters for acronyms or initialisms in their entirety, without periods or spacing between the letters. A few examples:

- AFBMA (Anti-Friction Bearing Manufacturers Association)
- SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers)
- API (American Petroleum Institute)

APOSTROPHE

The primary use of the apostrophe is to indicate possession. In technical writing especially, it is strongly recommended to use the possessive apostrophe as sparingly as possible. Its use may be necessary on occasion to render a description less wordy, or clearer. However, efforts should be made to use other possible structures, in order to eliminate the need for numerous possessive apostrophes. Some guidelines to keep in mind are listed below.

- Words that do not end in a sibilant (s or z sound), in singular or in plural form, become possessive by adding an 's:
 - the engine's speed
 - the wheel's adherence
 - the women's hairstyles
- Plurals that end in a sibilant take only the apostrophe:
 - the discs' rotation
 - the gears' teeth
- As well, certain plurals are sometimes written with an 's in order to avoid confusion, or if it is the plural of a lower-case letter, a symbol or a numeral:
 - SIN's
 - x's and y's
- When speaking of an inanimate possessor, especially an abstract concept, the apostrophe is generally not used to denote possession. Use an "of" construction instead.

THE ARTICLE A OR AN

The definite article **a** introduces nouns that start with:

- a consonant (a standard);
- an aspirated **h** (a home);
- a **w** or a **y** (a walk, a year);
- a **u**, **eu** or **ew** that has the **you** sound (a unit, a European, a ewe);
- an **o** that has the **wae** sound (a one).

The definite article **an** introduces nouns that start with:

- a vowel (an artist) other than the ones mentioned previously;
- a silent **h** (an honest person).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Although a bibliography in English bears a strong resemblance to one in French, there are a few important differences. For example, the arrangement and the punctuation of the entries are somewhat different. The following are a few examples of the basic entries one might find in a bibliography, showing the accepted way of presenting them.

– **A book with only one author**

Brown, Mara. *Life After Your Career*. Winnipeg: Cargo Press, 1990.

– **A book with multiple authors**

Franck, Thomas M., et al. *Canadian English and How It Came to Be*. Don Mills, Ont.: Longmans Canada, 1977.

– **A government publication**

Canada Employment and Immigration. *How to Find a Job*. Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1991.

– **An encyclopedia article without an author**

“Great Lakes.” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 15th ed., 1985.

– **A work listed by the editor or the translator**

Hindley, Geoffrey, ed. *The Larousse Encyclopedia of Music*. London: Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1975.

CAPITALIZATION (SEE ALSO THE SECTION DEALING WITH HEADINGS)

The Canadian Style devotes Chapter 4 entirely to the subject of capitalization. It is very complete and should be consulted whenever there is doubt concerning this question. Some especially helpful guidelines are the following:

– Words derived from proper nouns

As a general rule, capitalize an adjective derived from a proper noun or composed of a proper name, such as Canadian whisky or Newtonian physics.

– Governments and government bodies

The titles of governments and government departments and agencies, their organizational subdivisions, and the names of boards and committees are all capitalized: the Department of Labour, the House of Commons.

– Institutions

Capitalize the official names of universities, school boards, courts of law, corporations, associations, and political parties, etc.: the Quebec Superior Court, the University of Manitoba.

– Titles of office or rank

Civil, military, religious and professional titles are capitalized when they precede a personal name: Professor Layton, President Busch. Titles that follow and are placed in apposition to a personal name are capitalized, except those denoting professions: John Crosbie, Minister of Justice, but Gregory Reid, professor of literature.

Do not capitalize a title if it is in the plural or is preceded by an indefinite article: the premiers of Quebec and Ontario, and a member of Parliament.

– Time references

The names of months, days, holidays, historical periods and events are capitalized: World War II and the Middle Ages.

– Buildings, monuments and public places

Capitalize the official names of **specific** buildings, monuments, squares, parks, etc.: the Toronto Public Library, Centre Molson, but the Vancouver airport.

– Trade names (Copyrighted names)

All trade names for manufactured products must be capitalized unless they have been established as common nouns: Velcro or Plexiglas, but nylon or Styrofoam.

- Scientific names with eponyms

When a scientific term contains a proper noun or an adjective derived from a proper noun, the adjective of proper noun is capitalized, but not the common noun:

- Becquerel rays
- Ohm's law

Do **not** capitalize the names of laws or theories or the names of minerals, particles, or elements derived from proper names: boson, germanium.

- Chemical, medical and pharmacological terms

In text, do **not** capitalize the names of chemical elements and compounds: copper, sulphuric acid.

- Parts of a book or document

Certain common nouns, when they are used in text references with numbers of letters indicating place, position, etc. should be capitalized, for example: Figure 1.22, Chapter 3, Appendix C, Demonstration 3.1, Exercise 2.1.

COMMA

Rules of usage for the comma, especially when restrictive and non-restrictive sentence elements are involved; can be quite complicated. *The Canadian Style* contains a comprehensive section on the comma that provides detailed information to resolve almost all possible situations. Please refer to it for all applicable rules. It is of note that the *Style* remarks that there is a general trend toward less punctuation, and that it is no longer necessary to separate the final element in a series with a comma.

DASH AND HYPHEN

Often misused, the en dash (–), and the hyphen (-) have different roles.

- Use the en dash (–) to join inclusive numbers, for example: pages 17–22.
- Use the hyphen (-) to join certain nouns, adjectives, participles, adverbs or verbs as compounds, and to join certain prefixes or suffixes to nouns. See your dictionary when in doubt. The hyphen is also used with numerical expressions. See Chapters 2 and 5 for more details.

DECIMAL SYSTEM

In technical writing, and especially with SI units, decimals are preferred to fractions. According to *The Canadian Style*, the Metric commission recommends the use of the period as the decimal marker in English-language texts in Canada. This is the model that CEMEQ will follow. As well, normally no number should begin or end with a decimal point. A zero is written before the decimal point of numbers less than 1, while a whole number will have a zero following the decimal point or the decimal point will be absent. For example:

- 0.9 in.
- 10.0 kg or 10 kg
- 340.5 mm

Note: See *The Canadian Style*, on the subject of decimal fractions, especially the note which mentions that a comma is no longer to be used to separate groups of three figures from one another.

A space should be used instead, and such a space should also be inserted after triads of numbers to the right of the decimal point as well. To illustrate:

- Whole numbers:

5 005

50 005

500 005

- Decimals:

5.000 5

5.000 05

5.000 005

Note: Numbers of four digits **only** (on either side of the decimal marker) need not be spaced unless used in combination with other numbers of more than four digits, i.e. 5005 or 5.0005.

FIGURES

CEMEQ has its own personalized style for all visual aids and figures within their learning guides, and the graphic artists are familiar with the models. It is important to remember that **only** the initial letter of the first word of the figure heading and any words that require capitals in their own right are capitalized. As well, within the figure, only the initial letter of the first word in the figure identification and any words that require capitals in their own right are capitalized.

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HEADINGS

The purpose of headings is to divide the material into easier-to-handle sections and give the reader an idea what the material will discuss. The main headings in the learning guides are written without the proper article; so are the titles of the learning activities (demonstrations and practical exercises, these are considered as headings as well).

The initial letter of all significant words in the headings must be **capitalized**: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and subordinate conjunctions. Articles, prepositions, co-ordinate conjunctions, and *to* when used with a verb in the infinitive will remain in lower case lettering.

It is extremely important to follow the hierarchy for the headings and subheadings established by CEMEQ and shown in the following table:

Letter to enter in the margin	Signification	Result
Picto chapter or A	Chapter No. and title	1 ELECTRIC COMPONENTS
Picto book or B	Section No. and title	1.1 ELECTRIC COMPONENTS
C	Subheading	ELECTRIC COMPONENTS
D	Subheading of C	Electric Components
E	Subheading of D	<i>Electric Components</i>
F	Subheading of E	• <i>Electric Components</i>

ITALICS

In general usage, type in italics contrasts with roman type, so it is used to call special attention to particular words or passages. *The Canadian Style* provides the following guidelines:

- Foreign words and phrases and Latin terms and abbreviations

Italics are used **only** if the word or phrase is not yet considered to be Anglicized; once it is, the use of italics is discontinued. If a term is used repeatedly in a text it should be italicized the first time it is used and be accompanied by an explanation; subsequently, it may be set in roman type.

The modern tendency is to print Latin reference terms and abbreviations in roman type, but some are still italicized. Consult *The Canadian Style*, 6.04 to see what is in italics and what is in roman type.

– Titles of works of art and publications

The titles of books, pamphlets, published reports and studies, novels, newspapers and periodicals, as well as films, plays, operas and musical compositions, long poems, and works of art are all italicized.

ITALICS AND SCIENTIFIC EQUATIONS

Letters designating unknown quantities and constants in algebraic, geometric and similar matter are italicized:

$$4a \times 2y = 8ay$$

As well, italicize quantity symbols such as *l* for length, *m* for mass, and *v* for velocity in order to distinguish them from unit symbols such as ‘L’ for litre, ‘m’ for metre and ‘V’ for volt, which are normally printed in roman type:

$$60 \text{ N} = m \times 12\text{m/s}^2$$

$$m = 5 \text{ kg}$$

LISTS

When drawing up a list, it is important to pay attention to syntax, capitalization and punctuation.

Syntax

According to *The Canadian Style*, grammar and syntax determine the internal capitalization and punctuation of items in a list.

The introductory statement to the list must make sense and be as complete as possible. It is important to remember that items in a list must be balanced, or parallel, in construction and so must have a similar grammatical form (i.e. all items are introduced with noun, or a verb).

Capitalization

The first word of each item is **lower-cased** when the items in the list are syntactically linked to the introductory statement. In addition, incomplete sentences or single words entered as points are normally **lower-cased**. For example:

It is important to know the three methods of heat propagation:

- convection
- conduction
- radiation

The first word of each item is **capitalized** when the item is a complete sentence or when the introductory statement is complete. For example:

The regulator has a dual purpose:

- Its ability to restrict allows the compressor to raise the pressure in the condenser and lower the pressure in the evaporator.
- It controls the amount of refrigerant flowing into the evaporator to assure continued evaporation.

Punctuation

When drawing up a list, the dash (–) is to be used for enumeration in a main list, and a large dot (•) for a sub-list. Usually a colon follows the introductory statement unless it ends with a verb or a preposition, in which case the colon is omitted.

Punctuation can be **omitted** after each item when the items are brief. For example:

It is important to know the three methods of heat propagation:

- convection
- conduction
- radiation

Otherwise, **use** a semi-colon after each item and a period at the end of the list. For example:

The characteristics of mineral oil are the following:

- very refined and very light in hydrocarbons;
- indicated for systems using R 12;
- must not be used in vehicles with a R 134a cooling system or in a system converted to R 134a.

Items made up of complete sentences should end with a period. For example:

The regulator has a dual purpose:

- Its ability to restrict allows the compressor to raise the pressure in the condenser and lower the pressure in the evaporator.
- It controls the amount of refrigerant flowing into the evaporator to assure continued evaporation.

NUMERATION

According to *The Canadian Style* numerical information should be conveyed in a manner that can be understood quickly, easily, and without ambiguity. The guide then devotes Chapter 5 with 26 sections detailing all manners of situations. Only the most relevant ones will be discussed here. They are as follows:

Numbering

Figures are preferred to spelled-out forms in technical writing.

Consistency

Consistency is important, so numbers modifying the same item(s) should be treated alike within the same passage, which means that if figures are used for some of the numbers, they should be used for all the numbers. For example:

Of the 25 different types of differentials on the market today, only 6 operate hydraulically.

Initial numbers

Initial numbers should be spelled out – either the number or the word *number* - because it occurs at the beginning of a sentence:

Six to twelve discs may be in each clutch pile.

Adjectival expressions

For numbers used in adjectival expressions, follow the general rule that those from one to nine are written, while figures are used for the rest. Note the use of **hyphens** in the following examples:

- a seven-foot-long lever arm
- 20-year-old car

However, if an abbreviation or symbol represents the unit, use figures:

- a 2.36 m lever arm
- a 5 L engine

Do not put a space or use a hyphen between a figure and a non-letter symbol:

- a 90° angle of rotation
- a temperature of over 130°C
- 75% of the vehicles sold today

Ratios

The usual forms for expressing ratios are:

- 1 to 4 or 1:4
- a gear ratio of 2:4

Note that there are **no spaces** between the figures and the symbols.

Fractions

In technical writing, all fractions should be expressed in figures:

3/8 m or 7/8 km

Quantities and measures

Quantities and measures, especially in a technical context, or when there are two or more elements should be written in figures:

20 kg

50 cm × 75 cm × 2 m

Note: See also the section on the Decimal System.

PAGE LAYOUT

The graphic artists and the editing department are responsible for the layout of all manuals, so consult with them if there is any problem in this field.

PICTOGRAMS

It is important to make sure of the accuracy of the pictograms in the English versions, using the French manuals as guides.

PUNCTUATION

See *The Canadian Style*, Chapter 7, for complete details regarding the rules of usage for the different elements of punctuation.

See Appendix I at the end of this document for details about spacing when using the various punctuation marks.

See also the following sections in this Style Guide: Abbreviations, Comma, Dash, Decimal System, Lists, Numeration, and Quotation Marks.

QUOTATION MARKS

In English the main use of quotation marks is to set off the exact words of a speaker or written source from the main body of the text. The opening form is “and the closing form is”. The use of quotations is justified if the material is important to relate word-for-word, or if it is particularly well-known or memorable. Proper style dictates that commas and periods **always** be placed within the quote, whereas semicolons and colons be placed outside the quotation marks. Question marks and exclamation points may be placed either inside or outside the quote, depending on the form of the quotation. If it is necessary to insert a quote within a quote, single quotation marks are to be used: In his speech Dr. Ross talked about “Albert Einstein, the greatest mind to have ever walked this Earth, who spoke of the ‘master mathematician’ of our universe.”

Another use for quotes is to indicate slang or technical terms, or words used in a special sense, but this should be done very sparingly.

SPELLING

Spelling tends to be a major conundrum in Canada because of our proximity to the United States. CEMEQ has made the decision to adopt Canadian spelling in all its publications, based on the usage of the *Gage Canadian Dictionary*. It should be used as a reference at all times. If the *Gage* lists two spellings for a word in the same entry, it is the first spelling that should be chosen. As well, *The Canadian Style* devotes Chapter 3 to spelling, and the first section gives a brief summary of the variant spellings in British and American, with the British spelling in **the left-hand column**, this being the accepted form in Canada. Also, *The Canadian Style* has sections on frequently misspelled words, homonyms, words ending in a silent *e*, in *ise* and *ize*, and plurals, all of which are very useful in resolving problems.

Finally, the most important objective in this area is to be consistent in spelling throughout all documents. When there are several variants possible, CEMEQ has made the following choices:

- counterweight
- cross section
- flywheel
- limited-slip differential
- multiple disc clutch
- predetermine
- start-up (noun or adjective)
- troubleshooting chart

STYLE

Closely related to spelling is the question of style. CEMEQ has made certain decisions concerning style, some of which are as follows:

- hp
- psi
- rpm
- ABS (brakes)
- customer instead of client
- vehicle, when used in a general sense, instead of automobile
- accelerator instead of gas pedal

Subscripts and Exponents

Subscripts and exponents are most commonly seen in mathematical equations or within scientific terminology. A subscript is a small number or letter that is written just below, or below and to one side of the symbol (number or letter) it refers to. A few examples are:

$R_1, R_2, R_3 \dots R_n$

I_{\max}

P_{diss}

A symbol may even have a sub-subscript, placed after and slightly below the subscript.

Lower case letters in subscript are in roman type when they are abbreviations or they differentiate between sizes; the exceptions are variables, such as x or n .

An exponent is an index or small number written above and to the right of a symbol or quantity to show how many times it is to be used as a factor. For example: $a^3 = a \times a \times a$.

Exponents that are lower case letters are always italicized.

Numbers placed either as a subscript or an exponent are always in roman type.

TECHNICAL VOCABULARY

It is very important that the proper technical vocabulary be employed consistently throughout an entire guide. It is possible at the outset to mention several terms for a particular element, but afterward the same term must be used consistently to identify the same element.

As well, all translators working on a same program should be sure to use the same technical vocabulary. The OLF has now made the *Grand dictionnaire terminologique* available on-line (www.granddictionnaire.com), and it is a valuable source of information for resolving questions of technical vocabulary. Also, a French-English lexicon is being prepared by CEMEQ so that all translators and CT's will have the same vocabulary available to them. The first installation of the lexicon deals with automobile mechanics.

TERMINOLOGY

In order for all learning activities in the guides to be presented in a uniform manner, CEMEQ has established a model with its own vocabulary and layout to be followed at all times.

Parts of the entry system:

- Overview (summary of the chapters)
- How to Use this Guide
- Program of Study and Prerequisites (term used by the MEQ)
- Module Objective
- Introduction
- Duration of the modules, in the study program: Duration (MEQ)
- Operational and behavioral objectives: make use of the vocabulary used by the MEQ. It is very **important** to remember not to change or modify the wording used for these objectives. Only mistakes may be corrected.

Parts and activities in the body of the guide:

- Theoretical Exercise
- Practical Exercise
- Demonstration
- Summary

Headings and terms found in the practical exercises and demonstrations:

- *Durée*: Time required:
- *But*: Objective:
- *Matériel requis*: Materials:
- *Mise en situation*: Context
- *Marche à suivre*: Procedure
- *Première étape*: First, **read all the steps** of this exercise.
- *Faites vérifier votre travail*: Have your work checked. (Avoid using the terms teacher, instructor, etc.)
- *Matériel de protection individuelle*: personal protective equipment
- *Matériel de protection du véhicule*: vehicle protective equipment

Parts of the exit system:

- *Activité de synthèse*: Synthesis Activity
- *Conclusion*: Conclusion
- *Bibliographie*: Bibliography
- *Annexe A: Corrigé des exercices*: Appendix A – Answer Key

TIME

When the hours and minutes are mentioned with the use of *ante meridiem* for the morning or *post meridiem* for the afternoon, it is written as follows: work starts at 8:15 a.m. and ends at 5:00 p.m.

WORD DIVISION

As much as is possible, it is preferable not to divide words at the end of a line. If it is necessary, good sense and readability should be the main concerns. Usually, words may be divided between syllables, and the *Gage Canadian Dictionary* is a reliable guide that shows syllabication. However not all syllable breaks are acceptable when creating an end-of-line break. *The Canadian Style* enumerates a detailed list explaining the rules involved in Chapter 2, which should be examined carefully if there are any questions.

APPENDIX I

Table showing spacing conventions for English documentation

Sign or Symbol	Before the sign	After the sign
Comma	0	1
Comma separating numbers	0	0
Decimal point	0	0
Semicolon	0	1
Period (See <i>The Canadian Style</i> , 7.07)	0	1
Period in abbreviations	0	1
Ellipsis points	0	1
Question mark	0	1
Exclamation mark	0	1
Colon (Exceptions- see <i>CS</i> , 7.30 [7.27])	0	1
Colon, when representing time (Ex: 16:30)	0	0
Dash (em —, en dash –)	0	0
Hyphen (-)	0	0
Oblique (See 7.56)	0	0
Quotation marks, opening (“	1	0
Quotation marks, closing (”)	0	1
Opening parentheses	1	0
Closing parentheses	0	1
Mathematical signs (+, −, =, ÷)	1 (indivisible)	1 (indivisible)
Signs +, −, ± referring to a number (−5)	1	0
Dollar sign (Always in front of the number)	1	0
Cent sign (¢)	0	1
Percentage symbol	0	1
Units measure	1 (indivisible)	1
Degree followed by C or F (5°C)	0	0
Degree of an angle (5°)	0	1

