

THESIS STYLE GUIDE BIZCOMM
Chicago Manual of Style &
American Psychological Association
Edition

September 2025

Based in almost its entirety on the underlying version
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English Business Communication (August 2019)

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Introduction

This Style Guide is based on the sixteenth edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, issued in September 2010 (referred to henceforth as CMS), with slight modifications appropriate for WU students' texts. Instead of CMS, students may also use the style of the American Psychological Association (referred to henceforth as APA). This style guide contains general information on the structure, design, and language of a thesis, as well as on the CMS/APA methods of document formatting and citations. Please note that the Style Guide does **NOT** provide a comprehensive list of answers to all possible citation and bibliography questions. **If you have questions that are not answered below, it is your responsibility to consult the respective CMS/APA guidelines.**

The CMS guidelines are available in the WU campus main library (*Bibliothekszentrum LC*) both as a hard copy and online resource (homepage: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/>). Note that the latter is the official CMS website which, among other things, includes the most recent content updates and a fully searchable Q&A section. For the further information on the APA Style, please consult <https://apastyle.apa.org/>. Do not rely on any unofficial websites.

To simplify searching, links to the relevant sections of CMS/APA in this Style Guide and other sources are provided in green, without page numbers, so that you can look for further information in either the hard copy or the online resource. Example: See CMS: "Quotations and Dialogue"; APA: "Quotations".

Since you are writing your thesis at a communication department,
make sure you proofread it not only for content,
but also for grammar, word choice, punctuation and spelling errors before you hand it in.

Please note that this Style Guide does not cover all general principles of academic writing. For these, please consult: Mautner, Gerlinde and Christopher J. Ross. 2023. *English Academic Writing*. Munich: UVK.

You are strongly advised to read this Style Guide carefully and to refer to it continuously while writing your thesis.

Flaws in presentation and, above all, in the use of quotations, may have a severe impact on your evaluation.

1. Organization of a thesis

1.1 Overall structure

A thesis must contain:

- a title page
- a table of contents
- an introduction
- a main part (divided into numbered sections and subsections)
- a conclusion
- a bibliography.

The pages must be numbered, with the bibliography beginning on a separate page.

Optional:

- Appendix (participant information, interview guide, questionnaire, transcripts, further data analysis...)

Note: Audio files from interviews or focus groups should **NOT** be included in the Appendix/thesis due to data protection.

1.2 Title page

The title page contains the following information:

- The **title** of your thesis. The title should be specific to the topic of the thesis, descriptive and concise, and include keywords comprehensible to readers outside the subject field.
- Specification: Bachelor's / Master's **Thesis**.
- Your **name** and **registration** number.
- Name of the **supervisor** who supervised the thesis.
- Name(s) of **additional supervisors** who supervised the thesis or its individual units.
- Name of the **program, university** and the **date of submission**:

Example: "A thesis submitted to the Department of Business Communication at the Vienna University of Economics and Business for the degree of Bachelor / Master of Science, Vienna, July 2025".

➤ See also the template file provided.

1.3 Table of contents

The table of contents must include the **sections** (e.g. 1. Introduction) and **subsections** (e.g. 3.1. Denationalization) as they appear in the thesis, as well as the page numbers. All headings are numbered and the page numbers are joined up by a **dotted line**.

Example:

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. The nationalised industries in 1979.....	5
3. Privatisation and deregulation.....	15
3.1. Denationalisation.....	16
3.2. Advantages and disadvantages of privatisation and deregulation.....	25
4. Case studies.....	29
5. Conclusion.....	38
Bibliography.....	40

Note that, in general,

- it does not make sense to have subsections (e.g. 3.1, 3.1.1, etc.) if there is only one (i.e. no 3.1 if there is no 3.2).
- subsections should not be too short and should contain at least two to three paragraphs. A sequence of mini subsections consisting of only one paragraph each usually means that there is something wrong with the overall structure of the thesis and/or with the flow of the argumentation.

2. Formatting Specifications

2.1 Spacing

- Running text: **1.5 spaced**.
- Footnotes, bibliography, and block quotations: single-spaced.

2.2 Font and font sizes

- The same highly legible typeface must be used throughout the thesis. Standard fonts are Aptos, Calibri, Palatino or Times New Roman.
- Color can only be used for charts and other illustrations, never for text.
- Section headings: **16 pt** and **bold**.
- Subsection headings: **14 pt** and **bold**.
- Running text: **12 pt**.
- Footnotes, headings of figures, charts, graphs, tables, etc.: **10 pt**.

2.3 Margins

- The standard setting for margins in Word is “Normal” (Top: 2.5cm, Bottom: 2cm, Left: 2.5cm, Right: 2.5cm).
- Except for page numbers, nothing must be written in the margins (do not use “headers” and “footers”).

2.4 Page numbers

- Pages of the entire thesis must be numbered consecutively.
- Do not number the title page.
- Number the pages at the bottom-right corner or bottom-center.

2.5 Paragraph format (indentation)

Indent the first line of all paragraphs except the first one under a numbered headline or under a figure or table. New paragraphs must also be indented if they happen to start at the top of a page.

Do not write one-sentence paragraphs!
--

2.6 Figures and tables

Figures and tables must be numbered consecutively. If you have taken them from a book or an article, they need to be followed by **source name + year + page citation** (if available), just like any other citation. If you have created a graph yourself from data you have found in literature, add “adapted from” or “based on”. Also, always refer to all figures and tables in the text (e.g. “(See Figure 2)” rather than “this table”) and include captions directly above them.

Example captions:

Figure 1: Illustration by Anna Paz for Johnson (2018, 68).

Figure 1.2: Russian GDP, OECD; quoted in *The Economist* (2017, 31).

Figure 2: Top ten nouns in the data

Figure 3: Exchange rate volatility between 1994 and 2014. Adapted from Smith (2015, 45).

Figure 4: Industrial production, retail sales and unemployment in selected Asian countries. Based on data from *The Economist* (2019b, 86).

3. Orthography and Punctuation

3.1 Orthography

- You are free to use either **British** or **American** spelling, but you have to stay consistent with whichever option you have chosen.
- Titles of **other sources** mentioned in the thesis should be **capitalized** and formatted in either **italics** or **quotation marks** depending on the type of work they name:
 - The titles of **books** and **journals** (i.e. larger works) should be italicized.
According to statistics published in *The Economist*, ...
In *Bargaining Across Borders*, Dean Foster argues that ...
 - The titles of **articles** and book **chapters** (i.e. shorter works) should be in double quotation marks.
As argued by Jones in “Corporate Responsibility Challenge” ... The authors of “Marketing as Warfare, Revisited” claim that ...
- In academic writing, as in other forms of formal written English, one does not use contractions. For example, you should use *do not* (not *don't*), *they are* (not *they're*), *you have* (not *you've*), etc. Also, use *and*, not an ampersand (&).

3.2 Punctuation

- It is your responsibility to use correct punctuation. There are many resources available for you to clarify when and how to use various marks of punctuation, such as **CMS: “Punctuation”** or **APA: “Punctuation”**.
- Wrongly placed punctuation signs not only look weird, but interfere with the flow of reading and, potentially, with comprehension.
 - Do not use a comma before **that**, **whether** and **what**, as well as in **restrictive relative clauses** (general rule, no comma before *that*!).
 - **Dashes** [–] must be twice as long as hyphens. It is recommended to add a space before and after a dash.
 - INCORRECT: “Georg Simmel - arguably the first and most penetrating analyst of modernity - was a sociologist of time as well as of space” (Lash and Urry 1994, 13).
 - CORRECT: “Georg Simmel – arguably the first and most penetrating analyst of modernity – was a sociologist of time as well as of space” (Lash and Urry 1994, 13).
- Punctuation marks in **numbers**: remember that English uses decimal points, not commas. Commas are used in figures of a thousand and over.
 - INCORRECT: 13,2%; 1.200 units
 - CORRECT: 13.2%; 1,200 units

Make sure to proofread your thesis for punctuation and spelling errors before you hand it in!

4. Quotations

4.1 Academic integrity

In all of your writing, you must acknowledge your intellectual debts to the sources you use, whether assigned readings, individual research, personal interviews, and websites, through the use of in-text citations and a properly constructed Bibliography / References page(s) in accordance with *Chicago Manual of Style* or *APA Style* guidelines.

Citations are always required for direct quotations, paraphrases, or the restatement of someone else's ideas, as well as for the presentation of specific factual information. Whenever you use the exact words of others, even as small a quotation as three or four words, you must enclose those words within quotation marks. Lack of proper quotation marks and citations constitutes **plagiarism, a very serious breach of academic integrity**, which may lead to a failing grade for the thesis or even more stringent sanctions from the administration of the WU.

4.2 Direct quotations vs. paraphrasing

- **Direct quotations:** terms, phrases or longer passages copied word-for-word from the information source; neither the wording nor the spelling are changed. You must attribute the quotation to the original author.
 - Use a direct quotation to present another author's position or argument and when *the way the words are used* in the information source is important. In general, it is recommended to use direct quotations only if you have a good reason. Too many quotes undermine your voice as an author.
 - If a direct quotation is five or more lines, use a **block quotation**. Block quotations always start a new line. They are single spaced and NOT enclosed in quotation marks. Indent the entire quotation from the left and from the right.
- **Paraphrasing (indirect quotations):** expressing someone else's ideas in your own language. The actual wording must be different from the original. No quotation marks are needed. However, you still have to attribute the paraphrased text to the original author.
 - Use paraphrasing when what you want from the information source is the idea but not the specific language used to present it.

Important information about the CMS/APA quotation rules, including permissible changes to quotations (ellipses, clarifications, interpolations, emphasis, etc.), poetry, interview, and foreign-language quotations, and more, is provided in CMS: "[Quotations and Dialogue](#)". For the APA rules, look at APA: "[In-Text Citations](#)". For useful introductory verbs/phrases for quotations, see [Style Guide Appendix](#).

4.3 Parenthetical documentation of the sources: CMS

CMS offers two different documentation styles:

- 1) *Documentation I: Notes and Bibliography,*
- 2) *Documentation II: Author-Date References.*

Use the **parenthetical Author-Date references** in your thesis, reserving footnotes for comments that you want to make but which you feel are not central enough to your argument to be put into the main text. See CMS: “Documentation II: Author-Date References”. Below are the general form and examples of the common Author-Date in-text citations. It is your responsibility to consult CMS for details on citing less common types of sources. See CMS: “Author-Date References: Special Cases” and CMS-Online: “Chicago Style Q&A”

General form: ... text text text (Author(s) Surname(s) Year of Publication, Page number(s)).

Example: (Smith 2000, 145)

Examples and variations:

- [illegible]

4.4 Parenthetical documentation of the sources: APA

Use the **Author–Date Citation System** to cite references in the text in APA Style. See APA: “Author–Date Citation System”. Below are the general form and examples of the common Author-Date in-text citations. It is your responsibility to consult APA for details on citing less common types of sources.

General form: ... text text text (Author(s) Surname(s), Year of Publication, Page number(s)).

Example direct quotation: (Smith, 2000, p. 145)

Example paraphrasing: (Smith, 2000) → no page number needed!

Number of authors to include in in-text citations

For work with one or two authors, the author’s name(s) should be included in every citation. If a work includes three or more authors, write the name of only the first author plus “et al.” in every citation (even the first citation).

Examples and variations:

- Direct quotation
“... text text text” (Luna, 2020, p. 470)
“... text text text” (Salas & D’Agostino, 2020, p. 56)
- Indirect quotation/ paraphrased material
... text text text paraphrased in your own words (Koehler, 2016).
- Direct quotation of a work with more than three authors
“... text text text” (Martin et al., 2020, p.4)
Note that in the References you have to include the full names of all authors
- If the author’s name appears in the text, it need not be repeated in the parenthetical citation.
... Johnson argues that “text text text” (2005, pp. 20-21).
... Baker and McEnery (2010) argue that text text text.
- If the same author published two or more works in the same year, lowercase letters are used after the year to distinguish between them
(Fogel 2004a, pp. 45-46) and (Fogel 2004b, p. 218).
- When the author of a text is an organization or a corporation
... text text text paraphrased (Stanford University, 2020)
- When there is no date of publication, use the abbreviation “n.d.”
- When a work has been accepted for publication but has not been published yet, use “in press.”
“... text text text” (Johnson, in press, p. 14)
- If a work’s author is unknown, include the title and year of publication.
... text text text paraphrased in your own words (The Best Spaghetti, 2016)

5. References/Bibliography

5.1 General guidelines

- “References” or “Bibliography” (also acceptable, “Works Cited”) **must** contain **all the sources** you have quoted or referenced in your thesis, and consistently follow one citation style (i.e., Chicago or APA).
- Each individual entry is **single-spaced**; leave one blank line after each entry.
- All entries must be listed in **alphabetical** order.
- All lines except the first of each entry are **indented** so that the surname of the author stands out clearly on the left.
- For two or three authors, write out all surnames in the “References” as well as in the text.
- For four and more authors, write out all names in the “References” but only the first author’s surname plus “et al.” in parenthetical in-text citations (see section 4.2).
- Unless you are quoting from a first edition, state **which edition** you are using after the title. Reprints do not have to be identified.
- If a printed source does not have a publication date, use “n.d.”
- For electronic sources, include the date of access in addition to the publication date, if available. Provide DOIs for academic articles and full URLs for other sources.

5.2 Different types of bibliographical entries

- Book with single author or editor

Chicago:

Anderson, Benedict. 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Greenberg, Joel, ed. 2008. *Of Prairie, Woods, and Water: Two Centuries of Chicago Nature Writing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

APA:

Jackson, L. M. (2019). *The psychology of prejudice: From attitudes to social action* (2nd ed.). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000168-000>

Sapolsky, R. M. (Ed.). (2017). *Behave: The biology of humans at our best and worst*. Penguin Books.

- Book with multiple authors

Chicago:

Crain, Stephen and Rosalind Thornton. 2000. *Investigations in Universal Grammar. A Guide to Experiments on the Acquisition of Syntax and Semantics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Grin, François, Claudio Sfreddo, and François Vaillancourt. 2010. *The Economics of the Multilingual Workplace*. New York and London: Routledge.

APA:

Svendsen, S., & Løber, L. (2020). *The big picture/Academic writing: The one-hour guide* (3rd digital ed.). Hans Reitzel Forlag. <https://thebigpicture-academicwriting.digi.hansreitzel.dk/>

- Chapter in an edited volume

Chicago:

Gould, Glenn. 1984. "Streisand as Schwarzkopf." In *The Glenn Gould Reader*, edited by Tim Page, 308-11. New York: Vintage.

APA:

Dillard, J. P. (2020). Currents in the study of persuasion. In M. B. Oliver, A. A. Raney, & J. Bryant (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (4th ed., pp. 115–129). Routledge.

- Journal article

Chicago:

Blair, Walter. 1977. "Americanized Comic Braggarts." *Critical Inquiry* 4(2): 331-49.

Karmaus, Wilfried, and John F. Riebow. 2004. "Storage of Serum in Plastic and Glass Containers May Alter the Serum Concentration of Polychlorinated Biphenyls." *Environmental Health Perspectives* 112(6): 643–47. doi: 10.1289/ehp.6768..

APA:

Grady, J. S., Her, M., Moreno, G., Perez, C., & Yelinek, J. (2019). Emotions in storybooks: A comparison of storybooks that represent ethnic and racial groups in the United States. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 8(3), 207–217. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000185>

- Newspapers and magazines

Chicago:

Carey, Benedict. 2008. "For the Brain, Remembering Is Like Reliving." *New York Times*, September 4. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/05/science/05brain.html>.

Kauffman, Stanley. 1989. Review of *A Dry White Season* (film), directed by Euzhan Palcy. *New Republic*, October 9, 24–25.

APA:

Carey, B. (2019, March 22). Can we get better at forgetting? *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/22/health/memory-forgetting-psychology.html>

Lyons, D. (2009, June 15). Don't 'iTune' us: It's geeks versus writers. Guess who's winning. *Newsweek*, 153(24), 27.

- Websites

Chicago:

Evanston Public Library Board of Trustees. 2008. "Evanston Public Library Strategic Plan, 2000–2010: A Decade of Outreach." Evanston Public Library. Accessed July 19, 2015.

<http://www.epl.org/library/strategic-plan-00.html>.

APA:

Bologna, C. (2019, October 31). *Why some people with anxiety love watching horror movies*. HuffPost. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/anxiety-love-watching-horror-movies_I5d277587e4b02a5a5d57b59e

- Unpublished master's theses and doctoral dissertations

Chicago:

Ambrosio, Tara. 2007. "Marketing of Communication Services." Master's thesis, Vienna University of Economics and Business.

Choi, Mihwa. 2008. "Contesting *Imaginaires* in Death Rituals during the Northern Song Dynasty." PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, ProQuest (AAT 3300426).

APA:

Harris, L. (2014). *Instructional leadership perceptions and practices of elementary school leaders* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Virginia.

- Unpublished interviews

Chicago:

Mfundishi Maasi (cofounder, Black Community Defense and Development), in discussion with the author, March 2013. Transcript available on request.

Benjamin Spock, interview by Milton J. E. Senn, November 20, 1974, interview 67A, transcript, Senn Oral History Collection, National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, MD.

APA:

Cloyd, A. (2014, July 29). Personal communication [Personal interview].

For further types of sources and examples, consult the CMS and APA guidelines directly (see page 3).

6. AI

Information regarding the use of AI in your academic practice is provided by WU's code of conduct for students, which you can find here: <https://www.wu.ac.at/en/students/wu-campus/code-of-conduct/ai-and-your-academic-practice>

Please take a careful look at this link, especially with regard to

- citing AI-generated content,
- data protection and
- [the list of aids used](#).

7. Appendix: Phrases for Academic Writing

Based on material originally compiled by Gerlinde Mautner, Josef Weidacher and Geoff Wright, with revisions by Milda Žilinskaitė. Further useful phrases can be found in [Mautner, Gerlinde and Christopher J. Ross. 2023. *English Academic Writing*. Munich: UVK.](#) and at <http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>

Introduction: Stating your purpose, giving an outline

- The purpose/aim/intention of this thesis is to...
- This thesis describes ... / analyses ... / surveys .../ reports on ... / is intended to provide ...
- This thesis explores the ways in which ... / examines the role of ...
- This thesis/project has a dual objective. On the one hand, it seeks to explore ... On the other hand, it aims to highlight ...
- It will be argued that ...
- My primary/key/central/overarching/overall argument is that ...
- I will attempt some tentative explanations of ...
- I will first discuss the genesis of the project and the importance of ...
- I will then outline the aims of the project ... The results will be discussed in ...
- I will address the following questions: First, ... Second, ... Finally, ...
- The ... section sketches the history / examines the state of research on ...
- The ... section examines the extent to which ...

Structuring your discussion

- Although this thesis is intended to be a factual account of ..., and not a discussion of ..., it may be useful to look briefly at ...
- The following points need to be made ...
- Three arguments will be reviewed to illustrate ... One holds that ... A second and related argument claims that ... Finally, the third presents a significantly different ...
- In this chapter I will ...
- Two basic situations should be distinguished.
- Having established ..., I will now look at ...
- The key question is, then, how ... / The question that remains to be considered ...
- Scholars have traditionally disagreed about ...
- When placed in a broader historical/cultural context ...
- From my research, it appears that ...
- To the best of my knowledge, only two studies on ...
- The process has the following characteristics ...
- Another example is ... / For instance, ...

Referring to other parts of your paper (**very important in academic writing!**)

- As mentioned above / previously ... As already mentioned ...
- The examples analyzed in the previous section ...
- As pointed out in Section 3.2, ...

- In the next section, the ... will be analyzed in greater detail.
- This aspect of the problem is discussed in more detail in Section 3.2.

Referring to tables and charts

- Figure 1.1 illustrates this point.
- Figure 3.2 shows ...
- The following table summarizes ...
- As the above chart suggests, ...
- For recent figures see Table 4.1 in Section 4.2.2.

Introductory phrases for quotations

The introductory verb/phrase leading up to quoted or paraphrased material from your information source represents an important link between your claims and those of the other author(s). Note that introductory expressions vary in tone. For example, “notes,” “has discovered,” “points out,” and “suggests” imply that you *agree* with the person you are citing, while “alleges,” “supposes,” and “contends” could hint towards your *disagreement*.

Try to get away from the verbs “says,” “writes,” “thinks,” “believes” or “feels”. Introductory verbs that are more appropriate for an academic paper include:

acknowledges, admits, argues, asserts, claims, compares, confirms, contends, disagrees, disputes, emphasizes, endorses, establishes, finds, holds, maintains, notes, points out, posits, postulates, proposes, reasons, refutes, states, suggests

- As Taylor (year) points out, ...
- Fowler (year) draws our attention to ...
- Balderston (year) makes the point that ...
- According to Espinosa (year), ...
- Rose and Zoutendijk (year) have proposed ...
- Jones and Miller (year) suggest/state/argue/maintain that ...
- In the words of Donskis (year, page/s), “...”
- As Saer (year, page/s) has noted, “...”
- Summarizing, Concluding, Signaling the Significance of your Work
- In conclusion, ... / To sum up, ...
- To conclude, I return to ...
- The aim of this thesis has been to profile ... and suggest ways in which researchers can achieve added insights into ...
- I have tried to set out some of the reasons for ...
- I have tried to provide a new outlook on the question of ...
- With regard to the question of ..., I have observed that current scholarship ...
- This thesis has attempted to illustrate ...
- The main concern has been to illustrate the effects of ...
- This thesis makes an important contribution to the debate on ... because it ...