

Editorial Style Guide

for Anselm Society Communications (Print or Digital)

RESOURCES

Statement of Faith

<https://www.anselmsociety.org/blog/2021/4/12/statement-of-faith>

Authoritative Style Guides*

- *The Associated Press Stylebook (56th ed)*. (Custom adaptations below.) Use when writing or editing Anselm Society marketing materials or AnselmSociety.org published pieces.
- *The Chicago Manual of Style (17th ed)*. Use primarily with book manuscripts.

Supplemental, Specialized Style Guides

- *The Little Style Guide to Great Christian Writing and Publishing*
- *The Christian Writer's Manual of Style*
- *MLA Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*
- *The Copyeditor's Handbook (4th ed.)*

* If authors do not own these resources or cannot find them (i.e., at a library), an Anselm Society publications team member may be able to provide them on loan.

STYLE STANDARDS

What to Avoid

- Avoid the passive voice. Write "Early Christians did not pressure women" instead of "Women were not pressured by Early Christians."
- Avoid jargon and academic terminology. Write for the lay audience (which is not to say, write *down* to them).
- Avoid adverbs. Instead, use a strong, descriptive verb.
- Avoid starting sentences with "There are . . ."
- Avoid cliches.

What to Strive For

- Tell a story.
- Write short sentences rather than long when possible. Write short paragraphs over long, as well.
- Show, don't tell.

Tense

- Use the past tense or present perfect when discussing authorship, “Brown reported” or “Brown has reported” instead of “Brown reports.”

Pronouns

- Unless in a direct quote, use singular pronouns for individuals, even if indefinite pronouns—not *they* or *their*. “Someone left his or her bag.” Otherwise, change the entire sentence to plural if it’s less awkward.
- Capitalize the initial letters of pronouns for the members of the Trinity.

Scripture

- Scripture references are entirely spelled out: “Genesis 1:1” rather than “Gen. 1:1.”
- Any reputable translation of the Bible is acceptable, but the version must be indicated in the citation (CEB, ESV, NLT, MSG, etc.)
- Capitalize the initial letter of the nouns *Scripture* and *Bible* but not the adjectives, *scriptural* and *biblical*.
- Refer to the author rather than the book, if possible: “The Apostle Paul says” rather than “1 Corinthians 7:17 says.” But “According to 1 Corinthians 7:17” is acceptable.
- Extracts of over four or more lines of text should be indented in a block quote and set in single line spacing. Do not set in quotation marks (but keep quotes in used in the original).

URL Links Usage

- For links to Scripture, use BibleGateway.com.
- Avoid Amazon.com.
- Avoid Wikipedia.com.
- Links should only be used once unless quoting is happening through the piece or referring to stats.

Quoting and Ellipses

- No ellipses beginning and end of quotation unless doing a purposeful trailing off.
- For an ellipsis ending a sentence and starting a new one, use four ellipsis points. “the quick brown fox. . . . The lazy dog . . .”
- Don’t insert brackets around ellipsis points.
- According to AP Style, ellipses are treated like a standalone word, meaning they always have spaces around them. E.g. “She thought . . . she recognized him.”
- When cutting out a portion in the middle of a quote, if the first part of the quote makes a complete sentence, place a period at the end (even if it’s not the end of the sentence in the original quote) and then follow that with a space and ellipses. E.g. “She thought she recognized him. . . . She couldn’t remember his name, though.”
- Extracts published online of over four or more lines of text should be indented in a block quote and set in single line spacing. Do not set in quotation marks (but keep quotes in used in the original).
- In books, extracts of 100 or more words should be set as block quotations.

Apostrophe

- Write *Jesus'*, not *Jesus's*
- Be on the alert to it's versus its.

Capitalization

- Capitalize after a colon if a complete sentence follows.
- Capitalize the initial letters of pronouns for the members of the Trinity.
- Capitalize religions or discrete philosophical worldviews (*Islam, New Age*) and organized political groups (*Communism Party*) but not political philosophical systems: *capitalism, socialism, communism*.

Comma, Serial (aka Oxford comma)

Before the "and" or "or" that introduces the final item in a series, insert a comma.

Dashes and Hyphens

- Hyphens are not dashes.
- The trend is away from hyphenation, but the grand rule is clarity. Consult Merriam-Websters Dictionary.
- Consult [Merriam-Webster](#) for specific spellings.
- Use an em dash (traditionally the width of a capital M) to set apart a thought or signal an abrupt change. No need to surround with spaces, unless for design purposes.
- Don't use an en dash (the width of a capital N), often used to indicate ranges.

Numbers

- Use all numerals for 10 and over for online content.
- For age: always use figures.
- Large numbers: Write *25,000*, not *25 thousand* for online content.
- Use a comma in thousands number: *1,000*.
- Use numerals for fractions: 1 in 4

Percentages

Use the word percent, not the symbol.

Titles of Works

- **Books:** Italicized. (But chapters in quotation marks.)
- **Periodicals:** Names of journals, etc., in italics; names of articles in roman and within quotation marks.
- **Poems:** Most in roman type and enclosed in quotation marks.
- **Plays:** Italicized.
- **Movies, TV / Radio Programs:** Italicized. A single episode in a series in in quotation marks.
- **Musical Works:** Long compositions (operas, oratorio) italicized; songs, other shorter compositions in roman and enclosed in quote marks.

SPELLINGS

the Apostle Paul, not apostle

Christian worldview instead of biblical worldview

the Church for entire body of Christ, the church for the local church

the Eucharist, eucharistic

the Fall

God's Kingdom

God's Story

the gospel (the good news of salvation and redemption)

the Gospel of John (the Bible books)

the Great Story

image bearer

Earth (when talking about the planet)

lifelong

livestream

name-calling

nonprofit

OK (AP style), not okay

U.S. instead of US, but after spelling out the full name

wellbeing

Western, when about culture or thought); western, when about cowboys and