

What to Include in an Editorial Style Guide?



An editorial style guide is a must-have reference tool. It details important rules and guiding principles to ensure that an organization's communications are consistent, on-brand, and grammatically correct.

Essential Elements of a Style Guide



Basic copy rules for grammar, punctuation, and formatting.



Include organization-specific policies or exceptions. A company's "house style" often references and builds on the rules from a foundational guide like the [Associated Press Stylebook](#) or the [Chicago Manual of Style](#).



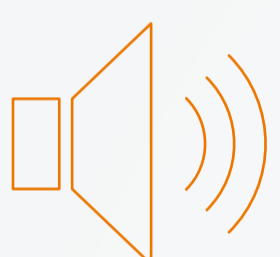
Alphabetical list of words.



Define the treatment and spelling of company product names, branded or trademarked terms, industry terminology and acronyms, and "tricky words" that may have multiple spellings (e.g., "ecommerce" vs "e-commerce" or "healthcare" vs. "health care").



Voice and tone.



Describe these attributes of the brand (with examples) and how best to convey them across mediums. Include examples of how tone may vary based on context (e.g., inspirational for solution descriptions, crisp and functional for transactions).



Common errors to avoid.



Focus on common errors or inconsistencies encountered at your company, such as jargon or passive voice. Include examples of both good and bad style practices.



Guidelines for specific formats.



Include web-specific copy rules (for example, how to treat CTAs or image alt text), as well as guidelines for technical documents, videos, e-newsletters, and social media.



Accessibility and inclusion.



Define how to make content as accessible as possible for users, including those who use screen readers or Braille interfaces. Promote using inclusive language and avoiding bias or offensive phrases.



Policies for legally required content.



Many companies work within certain legal restrictions, in which case this section of the style guide can provide instructions for receiving legal approval before publishing a piece of content.

What Complements an Editorial Style Guide?

An editorial style guide should complement your organization's [visual style guide](#), which establishes a brand's rules and guidelines for designers, including color palettes, typefaces, logos, icons, images, and document templates used in branded materials. Often, an editorial style guide and a visual style guide are both included as sections of a comprehensive brand style guide.

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