

Guidelines for Writers and Editors

(Digital Design and Resource Authorization Branch)

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Introduction

This document was created by an editorial committee of the Digital Design and Resource Authorization Branch to provide writers and editors of Alberta Education documents with basic guidelines. Included is information regarding writing for the web; key points for Alberta Education documents; various elements of style, including preferences for spelling, punctuation, formatting and referencing; and copyright.

A distinction is made in this document between web content and print resource content. Web content is that which is intended to be read online. Print resource content is that which is intended to be read on the printed page. The Writing for the Web Guidelines are directed primarily to writers/editors of web content, although writers/editors of print resource content may also find information in this section that has relevance for their work. The key points, style preferences and copyright information in the other sections of the document are equally relevant for writers/editors of web content and writers/editors of print resource content.

Note: Writers/editors of action requests (ARs) should refer to the Minister’s *Style Guide* for appropriate guidelines.

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Reference Books

For more detailed information regarding the elements of style dealt with in this document, refer to the following dictionary and style guides.

- De Wolf, Gaelan Dodds et al. *Gage Canadian Dictionary*. Revised and Expanded Edition. Toronto, ON: Gage Learning Corporation, 2003.
- *The Canadian Style: A Guide to Writing and Editing*. Revised and Expanded Edition. Toronto, ON: Dundurn Press Limited in Cooperation with Public Works and Government Services Canada, Translation Bureau, 1997.

The Canadian Style: A Guide to Writing and Editing was produced to help ensure quality, consistency and clarity in government writing. The chapters provide detailed guidelines for various aspects of usage and style.

- Tasko, Patti (ed.). *The Canadian Press Stylebook: A Guide for Writers and Editors*. 15th ed. Toronto, ON: The Canadian Press, 2008.

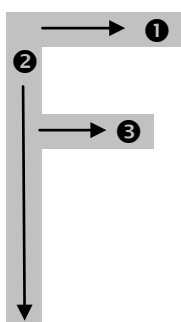
The Canadian Press Stylebook: A Guide for Writers and Editors is a comprehensive reference used by newspapers and businesses across Canada. It provides information on communicating clearly and offers practical advice on writing and editing. It includes detailed information on grammar and style and examines common pitfalls in writing.

Writing for the Web Guidelines

Developing Web Content for Teachers

Use these guidelines to create content that meets the unique needs of online users. People reading online tend to:

- make their decision within the first 15 seconds whether to read on or leave the site
- read 25 percent slower than those reading print material
- scan rather than read in depth
- read in an F pattern, scanning the top and left sides of a web page; i.e.,



Writing for the web differs significantly from writing for print resources. Web writing needs to be concise and tightly organized and it needs to capture the reader's attention from the very first line.

These guidelines contain tips to help you:

- consider multiple perspectives
- consider multiple contexts
- organize information logically
- use bulleted lists
- set a positive tone
- write clear, straightforward sentences
- write concise paragraphs
- choose better words
- trim unnecessary words
- reread and revise
- rewrite print content.

If you are going to do only a few things to streamline your writing:

- write in short sentences and short paragraphs
- start with a summary of the content you will be covering
- write in the active voice.

Consider Multiple Perspectives While Developing Content

- Create personas of potential readers. Write down relevant facts about one or more fictitious but typical persons who might be using the web information. Use this profile information to think about:
 - how these individuals might use the information you are writing
 - what kinds of unique needs and questions they might have.
- Keep the needs of various teacher-users in mind as you develop and organize content.

A Sample Persona for a Teacher Using the Health and Life Skills K–9 Guide to Implementation

Teacher H:

- has no post-secondary training in health education
- has one year of teaching experience
- teaches three different grade levels at one hour per week each
- does not know the students very well
- has minimal preparation time and often plans late in the evening for a class the next day
- has minimal print resources available in the school, with no other teacher teaching health
- is interested in linking health to other subject areas and community events
- is willing to use instructional strategies, e.g., brainstorming and cooperative groups, that work well in other subject areas.

A Sample Persona for a Teacher Using the Social Studies Online Guide

Ms. Green:

Ms. Green is in her late twenties. She teaches Grade 2 in a small rural school where she is the only teacher at that grade level. She commutes 45 minutes each way.

Ms. Green is engaged to be married and spends much of her free time planning for her wedding. She and her fiancé are considering the purchase of an acreage closer to the school to reduce her commute.

Ms. Green has always wanted to be a teacher. She loved school as a child and her goal is to provide similar experiences and memories for the students in her charge. She believes in a child-centred approach to teaching and sees her primary role as one of facilitation. She plans for many integrated, interactive activities, using lots of manipulatives and support materials. She spends many hours creating materials and has spent a considerable amount of money purchasing classroom supplies.

Ms. Green is an outdoor enthusiast who has little interest in sitting indoors in front of a computer screen unless it cannot be avoided. She has concerns regarding the infusion of technology outcomes in the new social studies program. She relies on publisher resources to help her cope with the changes in the new curriculum. She has very limited access to the computer lab.

Consider Multiple Contexts While Developing Content

- Create a series of potential scenarios. Write down relevant facts about one or more typical learning environments in which this web content might be used. Consider the:
 - characteristics of these environments and situations
 - implications for what information is needed and how it might be used.

Potential learning environments could include, but are not limited to:

- single grade-level classrooms
- combined-grade classrooms
- outreach centres
- specialized settings
- home education
- distance education
- urban/rural settings.

Organize Information Logically

- Start with a short summary of the entire content.

Example

This resource offers information and strategies to help students with AD/HD better manage their learning.

- Move from familiar or easy material to new and difficult material. Add detail with each new subsection.
- Begin each subsection with the most important information.
- Chunk text into short paragraphs of two to five sentences.
- Use meaningful, descriptive titles, headings and subheadings of less than five words. The heading text has to stand on its own and make sense when the rest of the content is not available.

This

Consider Multiple Perspectives
Consider Multiple Contexts
Organize Information Logically
Use Bulleted Lists
Set a Positive Tone
Write Clear, Straightforward Sentences
Write Concise Paragraphs
Trim Unnecessary Words

Not This

Who?
Where?
Order
Use Bullets
Be Positive
Be Clear
Keep It Short
Cut It

- Use different initial key words in each heading. This will make scanning easier.

This

Organize Information Logically
 Set a Positive Tone
 Write Clear, Straightforward Sentences
 Trim Unnecessary Words

Not This

Keep It Logical
 Keep It Positive
 Keep It Clear
 Keep It Short

- Use graphics thoughtfully.
 - Do they advance the message or story?
 - Do they enhance clarity?
 - Are they needed for linking?

Use Bulleted Lists

- Use bullets to organize three or more points. Bulleted text:
 - focuses attention
 - organizes content
 - simplifies conclusions.
- Identify a reason why the contents have value and use this reason to find a logical way to organize the list; e.g.,
 - alphabetical
 - chronological
 - geographical
 - step-by-step
 - numerical value
 - supporting evidence
 - persuasive order
 - relative importance or priority.
- If ranking or ordering of entries in a list is unintentional, make sure that order is not implied accidentally.
- Organize to reduce the use of repetitive words. Move repetitive words to the lead-in line.

This

Enhanced message content includes:

- repetition
- structure
- readability.

Not This

Enhanced content includes:

- message repetition
- message structure
- message readability.

- Sentences and paragraphs used as list entries end with a period.

Use punctuation and capitalization in lists consistently throughout a document.

- The key rule of sentence use is consistency, with each sentence following the same logic of use. Keep the order of nouns and verbs, verb tense and use of modifiers parallel, with these key words in the same position in each entry.
- Paragraph entries need consistent structure, using the same order of emphasis in each. Use a key sentence or phrase at the beginning. This style of list benefits from the use of subheads that summarize the contents of each entry with a word or phrase placed at the beginning.

Example

Be a model. Managers must lead the way by incorporating the new guidelines in all their written communication. This type of modelling is critical to success and must be implemented across the branches.

Set a Positive Tone

- Write directly to your readers. Use the second person.

This

Use role-playing to teach alternative responses to conflicts with peers.

Not This

Teachers should utilize role-playing to teach alternative responses to conflicts with peers.

- Choose informal over formal language. This may mean using the occasional contraction.

This

Teach strategies for jotting down keywords or questions so students won't forget what they want to say as they wait for their turn.

Not This

Teachers should provide direct instruction in cognitive strategies for recording key words and questions to assist in memory retention that students can use while awaiting their turn.

- Use the active voice. (If the subject acts, the voice is active. If the subject is acted on, the voice is passive.) The active voice is typically shorter, livelier and more direct than the passive voice.

Active voice

A. S. Miles **wrote** that book
Teachers **are interested** in
assessment for learning.

Passive voice

That book **was written by** A. S. Miles.
The subject of assessment for
learning **is of interest** to teachers.

- Use the passive voice sparingly. The passive voice is preferred when the emphasis is on what is happening rather than on who is doing the action.

Emphasis on action

The program of studies was developed
to ...

Emphasis on actor

Alberta Education developed the program
of studies to ...

- Write in a positive rather than a negative way. Tell readers what you want them to do (rather than what they shouldn't do).

This

Write in the affirmative.

Not This

Do not write in the negative.

- For clarity, replace missing subjects and use the active voice so readers know who is doing the action.

This

Students must complete these projects by the end of the school year.

Not This

All projects must be submitted by the end of the school year.

Write Clear, Straightforward Sentences

- Write simple sentences. Ideas are easier to digest in a simple subject–verb–object progression.

This

Editors cut unnecessary words.

Not This

The job of cutting excess words lies with the editor.

- Frontload sentences by beginning with the most important, information-carrying words.

This

Solution-focused meetings can be an effective way to resolve difficult situations.

Not This

Learning teams can resolve difficult situations through solution-focused meetings.

- Keep sentences short and crisp. Aim for less than 14 and never more than 20 words per sentence.
- Put only one idea in a sentence.
- Break long sentences into two or more sentences. Scanning the content for the word “and” will help you identify and remedy many of the problems this little word causes.
- Give your reader some relief with a sentence of 5 to 10 words. The strongest positions for the short sentence are at the beginning and the end of a paragraph—especially at the beginning or end of a piece.

- Put parallel ideas in parallel constructions. Whenever a sentence includes a series of similar items, describe each item using similarly constructed phrases. For example, use the same tense for all verbs in a list or use all adjectives when describing a specific concept.

This

Good examples are *clear, concise* and *helpful* to the reader.

Not This

Good examples are *clear, concise* and *help* the reader.

Write Concise Paragraphs

- Write short paragraphs of between two and five sentences. Paragraph breaks refresh the eye.
- Use a basic paragraph structure. An all-purpose paragraph is made of a topic sentence, two or three supporting sentences and a conclusion. It works.
- Split a long paragraph into leading and continuing paragraphs. (Although a single paragraph shouldn't contain more than one topic, some topics deserve more than one paragraph.)

Choose Better Words

- Choose short words over longer words.

This

begin
use
discuss
say
end

Not This

commence
utilize
dialogue
express
terminate

- Choose concrete words over abstract words.

This

drive
people

Not This

motivation
population

- Choose everyday language over unfamiliar words.

This

illness
death

Not This

morbidity
mortality

- Use the same wording consistently. Using different terms for the same idea will confuse the reader.

This

Many **documents** are full of **words** that are difficult. These **words** make sentences longer and more complicated than they need to be. Many readers don't understand the **difficult words** so do not finish reading the **document**. Write to communicate. Use **words** that most people understand.

Not This

Many **documents** are full of **words** that are **difficult**. These **terms** make sentences longer and more complicated than they need to be. Many readers don't understand the **complex terminology** so do not finish reading the **text**. Write to communicate. Use **vocabulary** that most people understand.

- Define special terms. Every field has special terms. These terms become a problem only when a writer can't distinguish between terms that are necessary working tools and terms that are jargon. It is better to write a longer sentence that explains a concept simply than to use jargon that may exclude or confuse your reader. When special terms are necessary, provide easy-to-understand definitions or relevant links that provide clear explanations.

Example

Variable ratios (sometimes referred to as intermittent scheduling) deliver the reinforcement on an average of every fourth time the desired behaviour occurs (sometimes after the third time, sometimes after the fifth).

- Make pronoun references clear. If the use of **this**, **that**, **these** or **those** causes any question about what the pronoun refers to, restore the noun or create one.

This

Students sometimes overuse examples when they have only one or two to use when completing a self-assessment. Deconstruct concepts into several simple, concrete ideas that students can easily use to illustrate their work.

Not This

When students have only one or two choices to use as examples when completing an assessment, they are sometimes overused. These can be augmented by deconstructing concepts into simple, concrete ideas that they can easily use to illustrate their work.

- Avoid ambiguity. If two or three nouns vie for a pronoun, repeat the noun or eliminate its competitor by changing its number.

This

The main problem that **people** run into with **pronouns** is not tying the **pronouns** to nouns.

or

The main problem that **a writer** runs into with **pronouns** is not tying them to a **noun**.

Not This

The main problem that **people** run into with **pronouns** is not tying **them** to nouns.

Trim Unnecessary Words

- Avoid unnecessary preambles; e.g.,
 - It is important to remember ...
 - Please note ...
 - As most teachers are aware ...
 - In this case ...
 - Despite the fact that ...
 - It is interesting to point out
- Eliminate expletives (words that have no real meaning and simply fill out the syntax); e.g., **there were, that is, it is, it was** and **there are**.

This

Many resources are available ...

Not This

There are many resources available ...

- Be objective and eliminate unnecessary adverbs and adjectives; e.g., very, excellent, high quality.
- Search or scan content for **-ion** endings and try switching to something shorter, cleaner and more obvious. Verbs express actions better than nouns, and actions are more meaningful to readers.

This

producing
collecting

You should **apply** plain language techniques every day.

Not This

the production of
the collection of

You should **practice the application of** the techniques of plain language every day.

- Delete meaningless words; e.g.,
 - kind of
 - actually
 - particular
 - really
 - certain
 - various
 - virtually
 - individual
 - basically
 - generally
 - given
 - practically.

This

Productivity depends more on psychology than on technology.

Not This

Productivity **actually** depends on **certain** factors that involve psychology more than any **particular** technology.

- Delete doubled words. When you use a familiar pair of adjectives, your readers probably need only one of them. Common pairs still used today include:
 - full and complete
 - each and every
 - any and all
 - first and foremost.
- When a word implies its modifier, drop the modifier; e.g.,
 - completely finish
 - past history
 - personal beliefs
 - future plans
 - each individual
 - final outcome
 - consensus of opinion
 - more complete.

Reread and Revise

- Use consistent spelling and punctuation. (See Preferred Spellings on pages 16–18 and Punctuation Guidelines on pages 19–21 and refer to the *Gage Canadian Dictionary*.)
- Check for pronoun–antecedent agreement. It is often easier to use plural subjects, e.g., **students**, and avoid the awkward **he or she**.
- Check readability level. Aim for a Grade 8 reading level or lower. Use the Reading Level feature in Microsoft Word 2007 to get an approximate reading level.
 - Click the **Microsoft Office Button** and then click **Word Options**.
 - Click **Proofing**.
 - Make sure **Check grammar with spelling** is selected.
 - Under **When correcting spelling and grammar in Word**, select the **Show readability statistics** check box.
 - Press the “F7” key in the document you want to check. When Microsoft Word finishes checking spelling and grammar, it displays information about the reading level of the document.

- Look for ways to reduce word count. (Revisit tips in **Trim Unnecessary Words**.)
- Isolate headings and use them as an outline. Consider if the content is complete and if the heading sequence is logical.
- Embed links in text; they should display in blue and with an underline.

Rewrite Print Content for the Web

- Reorder text by beginning with a summary of important points and adding detail with each new subsection.
- Rewrite sentences. (Revisit tips in **Write Clear, Straightforward Sentences**.)
- Rechunk text into shorter, one-topic paragraphs.
- Identify content that can be made into bulleted lists. (Revisit tips in **Use Bulleted Lists**.)
- Add meaningful, descriptive headings.
- Add links.
- Look for ways to reduce the word count by up to 50 percent. (Revisit tips in **Trim Unnecessary Words**.)

Sources

Dorner, Jane. *Writing for the Internet*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Long, Kim. *Writing in Bullets: The New Rules for Maximum Business Communication*. Philadelphia, PA: Running Press Books, 2003.

Nielsen, Jakob. "Alertbox: Current Issues in Web Usability." *useit.com*.
<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/> (Accessed May 12, 2008).

Nodder, Chris. *Writing for the Web*. Unpublished document from session for Alberta Education. Edmonton, AB: October 4, 2007.

Ross-Larson, Bruce. *Writing for the Information Age*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002.

Williams, Joseph M. *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. 5th ed. New York, NY: Longman, 1997.

Key Points

Plain Language

Write in plain language, which:

- is clear and concise
- uses words that are familiar to the reader
- presents information in a logical and straightforward manner
- uses good standard English
- is written with the needs of the reader in mind
- has a positive tone
- uses the active voice. (In most sentences, the active voice—where the subject performs the action—is more direct and effective than the passive voice—where the action is received by the subject. For example, “Students read books in class” [active voice] vs. “Books are read in class by students” [passive voice].)

Recognizing Diversity and Promoting Respect (RDPR)

Resources developed by Alberta Education are required to meet standards for Recognizing Diversity and Promoting Respect. In so doing, they develop in students a sensitivity to other points of view, the ability to reject extreme or unethical positions, and a freedom from undue bias and prejudice. In meeting the standards for Recognizing Diversity and Promoting Respect, ensure there is fair representation in any references to:

- age
- gender
- race/ethnicity
- religion
- people with disabilities
- social and/or economic systems
- political and/or belief systems
- any current controversial issues.

Ideally, where applicable to the learning context, resources should provide an accurate and comprehensive representation of the diversity and contributions of peoples of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds in Canada, Aboriginal peoples and communities in Canada (i.e., First Nations, Métis and Inuit), and Francophone peoples and communities in Canada. Further details are available at <http://www.education.alberta.ca/departement/publishers.aspx>.

Numbers

- In general, write out in words the numbers one to nine. Use numerals for 10 and above, except at the beginning of a sentence. Always use numerals with metric symbols and when referring to credits, ages and grades; e.g., 4 cm, 1-credit course, 6-year-old, Grade 5.
- In numbers with more than four digits, use spaces, not commas, between sets of three digits; e.g., 4000 **but** 40 000 **and** 400 000. Numbers with four digits may include a space if used in combination with other numbers of more than four digits.
- When abbreviating the word “number” within the body of text, use No. (with a capital “N”) **not** the symbol (#).

Other Points

- Use a variety of sentence lengths to make writing more interesting and effective. However, avoid overly lengthy sentences.
- Nouns and pronouns must agree. For example, when a sentence begins with a singular noun, the pronoun must also be singular.
Example: “A **student** should be accompanied by **his or her** parents.”
Not, “A **student** should be accompanied by **their** parents.”

Note: It is often simpler to write in the plural to avoid the “his or her” construction. For example, “**Students** should be accompanied by **their** parents.”
- When referring to students with special needs, put the student ahead of the need; e.g., “student with learning disabilities,” **not** “learning-disabled student.”
- For curriculum materials, put the emphasis on the student rather than the teacher.
- The term “program of studies” refers to a single program; e.g., Mathematics Grades 7–8–9 Program of Studies. The term “program of studies” is only capitalized if it is part of a title, as in the preceding example. It is not capitalized in a general reference; e.g., “This resource supports the outcomes in the program of studies.”
- The term “programs of study” refers to more than one program; e.g., “Several programs of study are posted on the Alberta Education website.” The term “programs of study” is never capitalized.
- Acronyms or abbreviations: When first referring to an acronym or abbreviation, spell out the name or phrase in full, followed by the acronym or abbreviation in parentheses; e.g., Alberta Associations for Bright Children (AABC). The acronym or abbreviation can be used alone thereafter.
- Use **e.g.** (for example) when presenting a partial list of examples. Use **i.e.** (that is) only when presenting a complete list of examples or a definition. These abbreviations should always be followed by a comma. When used at the end of a sentence, these abbreviations should be preceded by a semicolon. When they are used in the middle of a sentence, they should be placed in parentheses with the accompanying text or between commas with the accompanying text.

- Avoid the use of brand or trade names. Use generic terminology; e.g., “fast-food restaurant” **not** “McDonald’s.” A list of other examples follows.

Instead of ...	Use ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rollerblades • Xerox • Kleenex • Band-Aid • Post-it notes • PowerPoint • Frisbee • Styrofoam • Scotch tape • Pictionary • Dollar Store • Hula Hoop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inline skates • photocopy • paper tissue • adhesive bandage • sticky notes • presentation software/electronic slide show • flying disc • plastic foam • adhesive tape • pictorial dictionary • discount store • plastic hoop

Other examples of generic terminology can be found in *The Canadian Press Stylebook* (2008) on page 410. Note: If, in exceptional cases, a brand or trade name is used, it should be capitalized. The symbols TM or ® do **not** need to appear.

- When a print resource contains references to many websites (URLs), the following disclaimer can be used:

Several websites are listed in this document. These sites are listed as a service only to identify potentially useful ideas for teaching and learning. Alberta Education is not responsible for maintaining these external sites, nor does the listing of these sites constitute or imply endorsement of their content. The Crown and its agents, employees or contractors will not be liable for any direct or indirect damages arising from the use of any of these sites. The responsibility to evaluate these sites rests with the user.

Note: All website addresses were confirmed as accurate at the time of publication but are subject to change.

Preferred Spellings

General Guidelines

- Use “our” spellings in words such as behaviour, honour, humour.
- Do not hyphenate “non” words; e.g., nonprint, nontraditional, nonverbal.
- Do not hyphenate “re” words; e.g., readjust, reinterpret, reoccur.
- Do not hyphenate “co” words; e.g., coauthor, codesign, cohost.
- Affect is usually a verb, meaning “to influence.” Effect is usually a noun, meaning “result.” However, effect can also be a verb, meaning “to bring about.”
- Alternate means “occur by turns.” Alternative means “giving a choice.”
- Between is used when the reference is to two persons or things only. Among is used when the reference is to more than two persons or things.
- Hyphenate fractions when written in words and used as modifiers or adjectives; e.g., a one-third increase. Do not hyphenate fractions when written in words and used as nouns; e.g., One third of the respondents ...

The principal reference for spelling is Gaelan Dodds De Wolf et al., *Gage Canadian Dictionary*, Revised and Expanded Edition (Toronto, ON: Gage Learning Corporation, 2003).

Aboriginal	card stock
Aboriginal peoples	CD-ROM
ACCESS The Education Station	cell phone
acknowledgement(s)	centre
afterward	check mark
age-appropriate	checklist
Al Qaida	colour
a.m./p.m.	cooperation
among	corequisite
analyze (-zing)	council
Anglophone	counsellor
audiocassette	Creation theory
audiotape	credentialling
audio text	cross-curricular
audiovisual	cutoff (noun/adjective)
backward	database
black-and-white (adjective)	dialling/dialled
black and white (noun)	disc
blackline master	download
Block Parent	downsizing
by-product (noun)	Down syndrome
caliper	drop-down (adjective)
cannot	

early childhood educators	interbranch
Earth (capitalize when reference is to planet)	interconnect
e-commerce (capitalize initial “e” only in headings/titles)	interministry
Elder(s) (capitalize when referring to the keeper/teacher of Aboriginal oral tradition and knowledge)	Internet
e-mail	interrelated
encyclopedia	Inuit
enroll/ed/ment	jewellery
e-pal	job-entry (adjective)
et al.	job-related (adjective)
e-textbook (capitalize initial “e” only in headings/titles)	job site
extracurricular	judgement
face-to-face	keyword(s)
fairy tale	Kindergarten
First Nations	KWL
flash cards	labelled/ing
flipchart	laptop
flowchart	layout (noun)
focuses/ing/ed	left-hand (adjective)
folk tale	licence (noun)
follow-up (noun/adjective)	license (verb)
foreword	lifelong
forward	lifestyle
Francophone	loose-leaf (adjective)
French immersion	metadata
fulfill/fulfillment	meta tag
full-time (adjective)	Métis
hand out (verb)	metre
handout (noun)	mock-up
hands-on (adjective)	modelled/ing
hard copy (noun)	movable
hard-copy (adjective)	MP3
hardcover	multimedia
health care	N/A (abbreviation for “not applicable”)
home page	non-Indigenous
HTML	no one
human-made	notepad
humorous	note-taking (adjective)
in-depth (adjective)	offline
Indigenous	okay
in-service	on-the-job (adjective)
instill/s/ed	one-to-one
	ongoing
	online
	onsite (adjective or adverb)
	open-ended

part-time (adjective)
 PDF
 peer assessment (noun)
 peer-assessment (adjective)
 pen pal
 percent (noun) (% as adjective)
 percentage
 PMI
 policymaker
 postreading
 post-secondary
 postwriting
 powwow
 practice (noun)
 practise (verb)
 preapproved
 preauthorized
 predevelopment
 prereading
 preservice
 prewriting
 prioritize
 problem-solving (adjective)
 Québec
 readers' theatre
 real-life (adjective)
 reinvestment
 rereading
 results-based (adjective)
 résumé
 right-hand (adjective)
 role-modelling (adjective)
 role-play/ing
 schoolwide
 skillful
 slide show
 socioaffective
 sociocultural
 socioeconomic
 softcover
 spell check
 spell checker
 spray paint (Hyphenate when using as an adjective or a verb; e.g., She is a spray-paint artist. He is going to spray-paint the chair.)

spreadsheet
 story line
 storyboard
 storybook
 storytelling
 subcommittee
 sweetgrass
 T-chart
 T-shirt
 teacher-directed (adjective)
 teacher-prepared (adjective)
 textbook
 thank you (Hyphenate when using as an adjective or noun; e.g., She sent a thank-you letter.)
 time frame
 time line
 timetable (-ing)
 toll-free (adjective and adverb)
 toward
 under way
 United States of America (USA)
 up-to-date (adjective)
 usable
 user-friendly
 Venn diagram
 vice-principal
 videocassette
 videodisc
 videotape
 website
 work space
 whiteboard
 work force
 workplace
 worksheet
 work site
 work space
 work station
 worldview
 World Wide Web
 worldwide
 X-ray
 zeros

Punctuation Guidelines

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use simple punctuation. ➤ When items in a bulleted list are a continuation of the introductory statement, do not capitalize the first word of each item and put end punctuation only after the last item in the list. If each item in a bulleted list is a complete sentence, capitalize the first word of each item and put end punctuation after each item. ➤ Avoid using etc. at the end of a sentence or listing. Instead, use “e.g.,” or “such as” at the beginning of the list. ➤ Avoid using an ampersand (&) in text, except where it is part of a name; e.g., Ginn & Company.
Apostrophe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use an apostrophe in plurals of lower-case letters; e.g., dot your i’s. ➤ Add an “s” but not an apostrophe to form the plural of a capitalized abbreviation or when referring to a number of years; e.g., ADMs or 1990s.
Capital Letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Capitalize subjects only when referring to specific courses. For example, “The student’s favourite subject was social studies.” but “The student is currently taking Social Studies 30.” ➤ Capitalize the words “grade” and “division” when followed by a number. For example, “In Grade 9, students ...” and “During the school year, Division 2 teachers ...” Lowercase these words in plural use. For example, “In grades 7, 8 and 9, students ...” and “During the school year, divisions 1 and 2 teachers ...” ➤ Capitalize the word “branch” when referring to a specific branch name; e.g., Curriculum Branch, Digital Design and Resource Authorization Branch. Lowercase this word when it is used generally or when it is used in plural form; e.g., “The branch is responsible for ...,” “The Curriculum and Special Programs branches ...”
Colon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use a colon to introduce the words that follow it; e.g., a bulleted list, a long quotation.
Comma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use commas between simple items in a series but not before the final and or or, except when required for clarity or understanding; e.g., binders, paper, pencils and pens but Cosmetology Studies, Information Processing, Management and Marketing, and Financial Management. ➤ Omit the comma between the month and year in dates, but retain the comma if the day is included in the date; e.g., December 2005 but December 6, 2005 and Tuesday, December 6, 2005.

Dashes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There are three types of dashes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A hyphen (-) is used in hyphenated words and adjective phrases; e.g., problem-solving skills. Do not capitalize the second word in a hyphenation; e.g., Off-campus, Well-being. – An en dash (–) is often used to join numbers; e.g., telephone numbers: 780–412–3456, dates: 2000–2001. It is also used as the minus sign in mathematical equations and to indicate negative integers; e.g., $4 - 3 = 1$, -9. To create an en dash, hold down the CTRL key and press the minus (-) key from the number pad. – An em dash (—) is used in place of a colon, commas or parentheses when the writer wants to further explain, clarify or summarize text in a sentence. Text set between em dashes is given more emphasis than it would have if set between commas or in parentheses. To create an em dash, hold down the CTRL and ALT keys, and press the minus (-) key from the number pad.
Ellipsis (...)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use ellipsis points to indicate omissions in text. ➤ Insert a space before and after the ellipsis points. ➤ Do not use periods for ellipsis points. To create the ellipsis character, hold down the ALT and CTRL keys and press the period key on the main keyboard.
Oblique (/)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The oblique may be used as a symbol for “per”; e.g., km/h. ➤ The oblique may be used for fractions that occur in running text. For example, “She needed to add 1½ cups of flour.” ➤ The oblique may be used to indicate alternatives; e.g., teacher/teacher assistant. ➤ There are no spaces on either side of the oblique.
Parentheses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Avoid use of parentheses. They are disruptive to reading flow and can often be replaced by commas or em dashes.
Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Omit periods in metric abbreviations; e.g., 100 km, 25 kg, 2 L. ➤ Do not use periods or spaces between letters of an acronym; e.g., Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) not R. A. P.
Quotation Marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Avoid use of quotation marks around routine words and phrases. Reserve quotation marks for directly quoted material. ➤ Use ‘single quotation marks’ for quotations within quotations only; otherwise, use “double quotation marks.” ➤ Put commas and periods inside quotation marks. ➤ Colons and semicolons go outside closing quotation marks.

Semicolon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Use a semicolon to separate phrases that contain commas. For example, “The three projects were completed by Tom, Juan and Maria; Ismail, Carmen and Tony; and Ann and George.”➤ Use a semicolon to separate complete statements too closely related to stand as separate sentences. For example, “A career encompasses more than activities just related to a person’s job or occupation; it involves one’s personal life in both local and global contexts.”
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Format Guidelines

Format Guidelines for Writers/Editors of Print Resource Content

- Submit documents in Microsoft Word format. Preferred fonts are Times New Roman and Arial, 11 point.
- Leave a 1-inch margin all around the page.
- Use a ragged right margin. For example, this list uses a ragged right margin.
- For headings and titles, capitalize all words except articles, conjunctions and prepositions; capitalize articles, conjunctions and prepositions as well if they immediately follow a period, colon or dash or if they are the first or last word.
- Use different levels of headings (usually no more than four) to organize the text into sections and subsections.
- Avoid large blocks of capital letters.
- Insert one space after periods and colons.
- Italicize titles of books, websites, journals, videos, plays, paintings, sculptures and legislative acts. Otherwise, use italics sparingly.
- Use boldface sparingly.
- Avoid use of shading.
- Avoid use of underscoring.
- Use single spacing in text.
- Do not indent paragraphs.
- Leave a double space between paragraphs.
- Use bullets, rather than numbers or letters in lists, unless step-by-step order is important. Bullets do not give the impression that the order of the items is significant. When using numbers and/or letters, use the following style: 1. 2. 3. a. b. c.
- Number the pages in the document.
- Use smart (or curly) quotes for quotation marks (“ ”) and apostrophes (’) rather than straight quotes (" " and '). To do this in Word 2007, click on the **Microsoft Office Button** and then click **Word Options**. Click **Proofing** and then click **AutoCorrect Options**. In the **AutoCorrect** dialog box, click the **AutoFormat As You Type** tab, and under **Replace as you type**, select the “**Straight quotes**” with “**smart quotes**” check box. Then under the **AutoFormat** tab, select the “**Straight quotes**” with “**smart quotes**” check box and then click OK.
- For documents not intended to be downloaded and printed from the website, submit graphics in TIFF or EPS format.
- Use the Alberta Education logo on external documents only. This logo should be placed in the lower right-hand corner of the cover page.

Format Guidelines for Writers/Editors of Web Content

Use these format guidelines to create content that is free of design. Such “bare-bones” formatting is easier to edit, design, convert to HTML and post online.

- Submit documents in Microsoft Word format. Preferred font is Times New Roman, 12 point.
- Use a ragged right margin. For example, this list uses a ragged right margin.
- For headings and titles, capitalize all words except articles, conjunctions and prepositions; capitalize articles, conjunctions and prepositions as well if they immediately follow a period, colon or dash or if they are the first or last word.
- Avoid writing words in all capital letters.
- Present all headings in boldface, Times New Roman, 12 point font. Limit headings to two levels, and indicate level number inside square brackets at the end of the heading; e.g., **Format Guidelines for Web Content [Level 2]**.
- Insert one space after periods and colons.
- Italicize titles of books, websites, journals, videos, plays, paintings, sculptures and legislative acts. Otherwise, do not use italics.
- Use boldface sparingly to emphasize key words.
- Avoid use of shading.
- Use single spacing in text.
- Do not indent paragraphs.
- Leave a double space between paragraphs.
- Use bullets, rather than numbers or letters in lists, unless step-by-step order is important.
- Number the pages in the document.
- Avoid the use of icons.
- Use straight quotes for quotation marks (" ") and apostrophes (') rather than smart (or curly) quotes (“ ” and ’). To do this in Word 2007, click on the **Microsoft Office Button** and then click **Word Options**. Click **Proofing** and then click **AutoCorrect Options**. In the **AutoCorrect** dialog box, click the **AutoFormat As You Type** tab, and under **Replace as you type**, deselect the “**Straight quotes**” with “**smart quotes**” check box. Then under the **AutoFormat** tab, deselect the “**Straight quotes**” with “**smart quotes**” check box and then click OK.
- Do not use footnotes for documents that will be converted to HTML. Resources alluded to in the body of a text should be cited in a separate References section at the end of a component; credit information for source material should be included in a separate Credits section at the end of a component. (See examples below.)

Body of text:

To develop a common understanding of the idea of cooperation, read Michele Benoit Slawson's book *It's Apple Picking Time* or Paulette Bourgeois' book *Franklin's Neighbourhood*.

References section at end of the component:

References

Paulette Bourgeois, *Franklin's Neighbourhood* (Toronto, ON: Kids Can Press, 1999).
Michele Benoit Slawson, *It's Apple Picking Time* (New York, NY: Crown Publishers, 1994).

Credit statement for the entire lesson:

Credits

This lesson is adapted from Maureen McDermid, Mary Abbott and Roland Case (eds.), *Rights, Roles and Responsibilities* (Richmond, BC: The Critical Thinking Consortium, 2003), pp. 47–52.

Note: Refer to the Reference Guidelines section of this document (see Footnotes/Endnotes) for the preferred citation style for various types of resources. No numbering of citations is necessary in the References and Credits sections of digital resources.

- Documents intended to be used as student worksheets or assessment rubrics, or that teachers may wish to change in any way, will be published online in Word format. Add the following footer to those documents (using the current year):

[Title of digital document Word file is part of]
© 2011 Alberta Education (www.learnalberta.ca)

Page # of total number of pages

- Avoid the use of underscoring, except to indicate a link to a website or a link to another document.
- When including a chart to indicate which outcomes are addressed, include the words "general outcome" or "specific outcome" within the chart.

For example:

Use:

Outcomes

Specific Outcome 4.1.1.1	appreciate the diversity of elements pertaining to geography, climate, geology and paleontology in Alberta (LPP)
Specific Outcome 4.1.2.4	What are the significant natural resources in Alberta, and where are they located (e.g., mineral deposits, coal, natural gas and oil, forests)? (ER, LPP)

Rather than:

Outcomes

4.1.1.1	appreciate the diversity of elements pertaining to geography, climate, geology and paleontology in Alberta (LPP)
4.1.2.4	What are the significant natural resources in Alberta, and where are they located (e.g., mineral deposits, coal, natural gas and oil, forests)? (ER, LPP)

Acknowledgements Guidelines

Note: The following guidelines are intended for writers/editors of print resources.

An acknowledgements page serves to inform readers of the individuals or groups involved in the production of a resource and to recognize their efforts. There is no one standard format for acknowledging contributors to a resource as each resource is unique and goes through its own development process. Both external and internal contributors are acknowledged in Alberta Education resources.

Generally, acknowledge contributors in this order:

- primary contributors, whether internal or external
- teacher contributors
- contributors from Alberta Education, including administrative support staff.

When writing an acknowledgements page:

- include the job titles of Alberta Education contributors, for clarity
- ensure all names are spelled correctly and that no one has been inadvertently omitted
- list external contributors alphabetically
- include the names of school jurisdictions to illustrate Alberta Education's commitment to working collaboratively with partners in education across the province.

Titles

Generally, titles (Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.) are omitted.

Sample

A sample acknowledgements page follows.

Sample Acknowledgements Page from *The Heart of the Matter: Character and Citizenship Education in Alberta Schools*, 2005

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the many individuals and groups who contributed to the development of this resource, including those jurisdictions that presented to the Learning Commission on the importance of character and citizenship education in Alberta schools.

The following groups and school jurisdictions participated in the review of this resource:

Alberta Home and School Councils' Association
Aurora School Ltd.
Battle River School Division No 31
Black Gold Regional Division No. 18
Canadian Rockies Public Schools
Christ the Redeemer Catholic Schools
Edmonton Public Schools
Edmonton Regional Learning Consortia
Elk Island Catholic School Board
Elk Island Public Schools
Foothills School Division No. 38
Golden Hills School Division No.75
Grasslands Regional Division No. 6
Greater North Central Francophone
Hope Foundation, University of Alberta
Lakeland Roman Catholic School District No. 150
Northern Gateway School Division
Parkland School Division No. 70
Pembina Hills Regional School Division No. 7
Red Deer Public School District
St. Albert Protestant Separate School District No. 6
Sturgeon School Division No. 24

Advisory Committee

Alberta Home and School Councils' Association
Alberta School Boards Association

Alberta Teachers' Association
Association of Independent Schools and Colleges in Alberta
Battle River Regional Division No. 31
Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School District No. 1
Calgary School District No. 19
College of Alberta School Superintendents

Edmonton Public Schools
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Special Programs Branch
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Reference Guidelines

Reference Guidelines for Writers/Editors of Print Resource Content

Note: Writers/editors of web content should refer to the Format Guidelines for Writers/Editors of Web Content (see pages 23–24) for information regarding referencing.

In-text References

While footnotes or endnotes are generally preferred to indicate source material, as they are less likely to interfere with a document's readability, in-text references may be appropriate in certain situations. These references may be placed in the text in this format:

(Last Name[s] of Author[s] Year of Publication, Page Number[s]); e.g., (Treffinger and Feldhusen 1996, p. 26)

The complete reference should then be listed in the bibliography.

Quotations

Last Name(s) of Author(s) Year of Publication, Page Number(s)

- Place this information in a new line after the end of the quotation in smaller letters.
- Again, list the complete reference in the bibliography.

Example:

If the gates to excellence are opened and closed only as a function of the abilities typically considered, we run the risk of opening them to people who will not be particularly outstanding in their chosen career, and of closing these gates on some of the most able children, who will be blocked from making contributions that they potentially could make.

Sternberg and Clinkenbeard 1995, pp. 255–256

Footnotes/Endnotes

The preferred alternative to referencing author and date in text is to use a superscripted numeral at the end of the referenced material. Then, in a footnote or endnote, source information is included according to the following guidelines.

Note: In footnotes/endnotes, the name(s) of author(s)/editor(s) should not be inverted.

➤ Book References

Author(s), *Title of Book* (Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication), Page Number(s).

Example:

1. John F. Feldhusen, *Talent Identification and Development in Education (TIDE)* (West Lafayette, IN: Star Educational Services, 1999), p. 14.

Footnotes/Endnotes (continued)

➤ Article References

Author(s), "Title of Article," *Title of Journal* Volume No., Issue No. (Year of Publication), Page Number(s).

Example:

1. Joseph S. Renzulli, "Teachers as Talent Scouts," *Educational Leadership* 52, 4 (1994/95), p. 76.

➤ Chapters in Compilation Books

Author(s), "Title of Chapter," in Editor(s) (ed(s).), *Title of Compilation* (Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication), Page Number(s).

Example:

1. A. Harry Passow, "Educational Programs for Minority/Disadvantaged Gifted Students," in Lannie Kanevsky (ed.), *Issues in Gifted Education: A Collection of Readings* (San Diego, CA: San Diego City Schools, 1986), pp. 152–154.

➤ Website References

Author(s), "Title of Document or File," *Title of Complete Work or Site*, Version or File Number (if relevant), Date of Document or Date of Last Revision, Web Address (Date of Access).

Note: Include as much of this citation information as can be determined from the website.

Examples:

1. Alberta Education, "Connection: Information for Teachers," October 2005, <http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/connection> (Accessed November 1, 2005).
2. David Ridley, "Teaching the Tangible: Student Learning through Local Heritage Studies," *ATA Magazine* 81, 3 (June 2001), <http://www.teachers.ab.ca/ata.magazine/index.cfm?Volume=81&Issue=3> (Accessed October 1, 2001).

➤ Publication on CD-ROM, Diskette or Magnetic Tape

Author(s)/Editor(s)/Compiler(s)/Translator(s), *Title*, Publication Medium, Edition/Release/Version (if relevant) (Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication).

Example:

1. Alberta Learning, *Researching and Making Presentations: Grades 5 to 12*, CD-ROM (Edmonton, AB: Alberta Learning, Learning and Teaching Resources Branch, 2001).

➤ Film Reference

Title, Director, Writer/Performers/Producer (if relevant) (Distributor, Year of Release).

Example:

1. *It's a Wonderful Life*, Dir. Frank Capra, Perf. James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore and Thomas Mitchell (RKO, 1946).

Footnotes/Endnotes (continued)

- Video/DVD/Laser Disc
Title, Director, Writer/Performers/Producer (if relevant), Original Release Date (if relevant), Publication Medium (Distributor, Year of Release).

Example:

1. *It's a Wonderful Life*, Dir. Frank Capra, Perf. James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore and Thomas Mitchell, 1946, DVD (Republic, 1998).

- Interview
Person Interviewed, Interview Format or Method, Date of Interview.
(Optional: After the person's name, add title, position or experience of the person interviewed.)

Examples:

1. Frank Simard, telephone interview, October 20, 2000.
2. Judith Kohn, personal interview, March 15, 2001.

Note: If consecutive references in footnotes are to the same source, use the abbreviation "Ibid." in the second and any subsequent references. If the page number in the subsequent reference is also the same as in the preceding reference, only "Ibid." is required. If the page number of the reference is different but the source is the same, use "Ibid." and the page number.

Examples:

1. John F. Feldhusen, *Talent Identification and Development in Education (TIDE)* (West Lafayette, IN: Star Educational Services, 1999), p. 14.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., pp. 20–21.

(In the examples above, reference 2 is to the same source and the same page number as reference 1. Reference 3 is to different pages of the same source.)

Bibliography

The bibliography is a list of all sources used in the research and writing of a document.

Note: Only the first author's name is inverted. All subsequent authors' names should not be inverted. If there are four or more authors, the first author's name is inverted and is followed by a space and "et al." Authors' names should be written as they appear in the source—if first name(s) are written out in full in the source, they should be written out in full in the bibliography.

- Book References
Author(s). *Title*. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication.

Examples:

Baum, Susan M., Joseph S. Renzulli and Thomas Hébert. *The Prism Metaphor: A New Paradigm for Reversing Underachievement*. Storrs, CT: The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, 1995.

Butterfield, Sherri M. et al. *Developing IEPs for the Gifted/Talented*. Los Angeles, CA: National/State Leadership Training Institute on the Gifted and the Talented, 1979.

Bibliography (continued)

➤ Article References

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Journal* Volume No., Issue No. (Year of Publication), Page Number(s).

Example:

Nelson, C. Michael et al. "Do Public Schools Have an Obligation to Serve Troubled Children and Youth?" *Exceptional Children* 57, 5 (1991), pp. 406–415.

➤ Chapters in Compilation Books

Author(s). "Title of Chapter." In Editor(s) (ed(s).), *Title of Compilation* (Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication), Page Number(s).

Example:

Fox, Lynn H., Camilla Persson Benbow and Susan Perkins. "An Accelerated Mathematics Program for Girls: A Longitudinal Evaluation." In Camilla Persson Benbow and Julian C. Stanley (eds.), *Academic Precocity: Aspects of Its Development* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1983), pp. 113–138.

➤ Website References

Author(s). "Title of Document or File." *Title of Complete Work or Site*. Version or File Number (if relevant). Date of Document or Date of Last Revision. Web Address (Date of Access).

Note: Include as much of this citation information as can be determined from the website.

Examples:

Alberta Education. "Connection: Information for Teachers." October 2005.
<http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/connection> (Accessed November 1, 2005).

Ridley, David. "Teaching the Tangible: Student Learning through Local Heritage Studies." *ATA Magazine* 81, 3 (June 2001).
<http://www.teachers.ab.ca/ata.magazine/index.cfm?Volume=81&Issue=3> (Accessed October 1, 2001).

➤ Publication on CD-ROM, Diskette or Magnetic Tape

Author(s)/Editor(s)/Compiler(s)/Translator(s). *Title*. Publication Medium. Edition/Release/Version (if relevant). Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication.

Example:

Alberta Learning. *Researching and Making Presentations: Grades 5 to 12*. CD-ROM. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Learning, Learning and Teaching Resources Branch, 2001.

➤ Film Reference

Title. Director. Writer/Performers/Producer (if relevant). Distributor, Year of Release.

Example:

It's a Wonderful Life. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore and Thomas Mitchell. RKO, 1946.

Bibliography (continued)

- Video/DVD/Laser Disc
Title. Director. Writer/Performers/Producer (if relevant). Original Release Date (if relevant).
Publication Medium. Distributor, Year of Release.

Example:

It's a Wonderful Life. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore and Thomas Mitchell. 1946. DVD. Republic, 1998.

- Interview
Person Interviewed. Interview Format or Method. Date of Interview.
(Optional: After the person's name, add title, position or experience of the person interviewed.)

Examples:

Simard, Frank. Telephone interview. October 20, 2000.

Kohn, Judith. Personal interview. March 15, 2001.

Note: If there are multiple entries by the same author, the second and any subsequent entries should begin with an inch-long underscore and a period. These entries should be presented in chronological order.

Example:

Alberta Learning. *Room for Five*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Learning, 1999.

_____. *Researching and Making Presentations: Grades 5 to 12*. CD-ROM.
Edmonton, AB: Alberta Learning, Learning and Teaching Resources Branch, 2001.

_____. *English as a Second Language: Senior High School Guide to Implementation*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Learning, 2002.

Sources

- *The Canadian Style: A Guide to Writing and Editing*. Revised and Expanded Edition. Toronto, ON: Dundurn Press Limited in Cooperation with Public Works and Government Services Canada, Translation Bureau, 1997.
- Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 5th edition. New York, NY: The Modern Language Association of America, 1999.
- Walker, Janice R. and Todd Taylor. *The Columbia Guide to Online Style*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1998.

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