

Kansas Chronic Disease Risk Reduction (CDRR) Program Style Guide

These guidelines should be applied to all materials in direct conjunction with CDRR grant activities. This includes legislative updates, printed publications, promotional items, websites and correspondence. Examples are provided in italics. These guidelines are taken from the Associated Press Stylebook, Merriam-Webster Dictionary and appropriate program-specific resources.

Academic degrees: When used after a name, an academic degree abbreviation is set off by commas: *John Snow, Ph.D., spoke.* Do not precede a name with a courtesy title for an academic degree and follow it with the abbreviation for the degree in the same reference (i.e., use Dr. or Ph.D, not both). Common degree abbreviations: *B.A., M.D. M.P.H., M.S., R.D., R.N. and Ph.D.*

Acronyms: An acronym is a word or abbreviation formed from initial letters: *FBI.* Acronyms should always be written in all caps. When using an acronym (*CDRR*) always define it the first time it is used in copy. After the first use the acronym can stand alone. *The Kansas Chronic Disease Risk Reduction Program (CDRR) ... I manage a CDRR grant for...* However, it is best to avoid using many different acronyms in the same document.

Affect, Effect: **Affect**, as a verb, means in influence: *The game will affect the standings.*

Affect, as a noun, is best avoided.

Effect, as a verb, means to bring about: *He is attempting to effect a settlement of the dispute.*

Effect, as a noun, means result: *The effect was overwhelming. He miscalculated the effect of his actions. It was a law of little effect.*

Capital, Capitol: **Capital** is the city that is the seat of state government: *Topeka is the capital of Kansas.* When used in the financial sense, **capital** describes money, equipment or property.

Capitol is the statehouse building. *The Governor's office is located in the capitol.*

Commas in a series: Use commas to separate elements in a series, but do not put a comma before the conjunction in a simple series: *The flag is red, white and blue. He would nominate Tom, Dick or Harry.*

Put a comma before the concluding conjunction in a series, however, if an integral element of the series requires a conjunction: *I had orange juice, toast, and ham and eggs for breakfast.*

Use a comma before the concluding conjunction in a complex series of phrases: *The main points to consider are whether the athletes are skillful enough to compete, whether they have the stamina to endure the training, and whether they have the proper mental attitude.*

Compound modifiers: When a compound modifier – two or more words that express a single concept – precedes a noun, use hyphens to link all the words in the compound except the adverb *very* and all adverbs that end in *-ly*: *evidence-based strategy, a first-quarter touchdown, a bluish-green dress, a full-time job, a well-known man, a better-qualified woman, a know-it-all attitude, a very good time, an easily remembered rule.*

Many combinations that are hyphenated before a noun are not hyphenated when they occur after a noun: *The team scored in the first quarter. The dress, a bluish green, was attractive on her. She works full time. His attitude suggested that he knew it all.*

(TIP: If you can insert the word “and” between the modifiers and the sentence makes sense, it is not a compound modifier and you do not need a hyphen.)

Dates: Always use figures, without *st, nd, rd* or *th*. Also see **Months**.

Email: lowercase without a hyphen: *email*

Ensure, Insure, Assure: Use **ensure** to mean guarantee: *Steps were taken to ensure accuracy.*

Insure is used for references to insurance: *The policy insures his car.*

Assure is used to mean to make sure or give confidence: *She assured us the statement was accurate.*

Evidence-based: hyphenate. Also see **Compound modifiers.**

Gender-specific terms: Avoid using gender-specific terms regarding a group of people. Replace these terms with gender-neutral terms. *Avoid using businessmen; use business people.*

Health, Wellness: **Health** is the overall condition of a person's body or mind and to the presence or absence of illness or injury. Health—or some aspects of it—can be determined or influenced by factors beyond your control, such as your genes, age and family history.

Wellness is optimal health and vitality; to living life to its fullest. Wellness is determined largely by the decisions you make about how you live.

Health care: two words

Healthful, Healthy: **Healthful** means conducive of health; wholesome or salutary: *a healthful diet.*

Healthy means possessing or enjoying good health or a sound and vigorous mentality: *a healthy body; a healthy mind.*

Correct: *Eat a healthful breakfast.*

Incorrect: *Eat a healthy breakfast.*

Impact: When referring to **impact** youth trainings **impact** should be all lowercase and italicized. **Impact** stands for informing my peers about tobacco use.

In order to: Avoid this unnecessary phrase.

Correct: *I must work all night to complete this project.*

Incorrect: *I must work all night in order to complete this project.*

Internet, Intranet: **Internet** is a decentralized, worldwide network of computers that can communicate with each other and the word should be uppercase: *Internet.*

Intranet is a private network inside a company or organization, only for internal use and the word should be lowercase: *intranet.*

Its, it's: **Its** is the possessive form of it. *The company and its investors...*

It's is the conjunction for it is or it has. *It's his turn. It's been a long time.*

Legislator: Always lowercase **legislator**. When referring to a specific legislator capitalize and abbreviate their appropriate title: *Sen. Allen; Rep. Morrison.* To avoid confusion, it is often appropriate to precede a state legislator's title with the word state: *Kansas state Sen. Allen; state Rep. Morrison.* U.S. legislators' titles are preceded by U.S.: *U.S. Sen. Nancy Kassebaum.* Do not use legislative titles before a name on second reference unless they are part of a direct quotation.

Legislature: Capitalize when preceded by the name of a state: *the Kansas Legislature.* Retain capitalization when the state name is dropped but the reference is specifically to the state's legislature. *TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) – Both houses of the Legislature adjourned today.*

Lowercase **legislature** when used generically. *No legislature has approved the amendment.*

Use **legislature** in lowercase for all plural references. *The Arkansas and Colorado legislatures are considering the amendment.*

Listserv: A trademark for a software program for setting up and maintaining discussion groups through email. When referring to a general email list of people in formal writing use the term **email group** or **distribution list.**

If the person or group you are speaking with or emailing is more comfortable with the term Listserv, it is acceptable to use it in conversation, but not in formal documents.

(TIP: Think of this like the word Kleenex. This is a trademarked brand name. In formal writing we would use the term tissue, but in general conversation we may say Kleenex.)

Months: Capitalize the names of months in all uses. When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only *Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov.* and *Dec.* Spell out when using alone or with a year alone.

When a phrase lists only a month and a year, do not separate the year with commas. When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, set off the year with commas.

July 2011 was a very hot month. Jan. 2 was the coldest day of the month. His birthday is May 8. Feb. 14, 1987, was the target date. She testified that it was Friday, Dec. 3, when the accident occurred.

In tabular material, use these three-letter forms without a period: *Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec.*

More than, over: Use the phrase **more than** instead of over when referring to numbers. *More than 3,800 Kansans die from cigarette smoking every year.*

Over is a physical action or spatial relationship. *He jumped over the desk. The plane flew over the city.*

News release: Use the term **news release** instead of press release. Press implies a printed publication. Also **news conference** is preferred to press conference.

Nonsmoker: no hyphen

Numerals: A numeral is a figure, letter, word or group of words expressing a number.

SENTENCE START: Spell out a numeral at the beginning of a sentence. If necessary, recast the sentence. There is one exception – a numeral that identifies a calendar year.

Incorrect: *993 freshmen entered the college last year.*

Correct: *Last year 993 freshmen entered the college.*

Correct: *1976 was a very good year.*

Spell out whole numbers below 10, use figures for 10 and above. *They had three sons and two daughters. They had a fleet of 10 station wagons and two buses. She ran four miles and he walked 11.*

IN A SERIES: Apply the appropriate guidelines: *They had 10 dogs, six cats and 97 hamsters. They had four four-room houses, 10 three-room houses and 12 10-room houses.*

AGES: Always use figures. Use hyphens for ages expressed as adjectives before a noun or as substitutes for a noun. Examples: *A 5-year-old boy, but the boy is 5 years old. The boy, 7, has a sister, 10. The woman, 26, has a daughter 2 months old. The race is for 3-year-olds. The woman is in her 30s (no apostrophe).*

MONEY: Always use figures, *5 cents, \$1.05, \$650,000, \$2.45 million*

PERCENTAGES: Always use figures for percentages (see **percent**). Also use numbers when percents are simplified, *1 in 5; 9 out of 10.*

Percent: In text use the word **percent** with the figure. *Currently 17 percent of Kansas adults smoke (2010 KS BRFSS).* For a range: *12 to 15 percent, or between 12 and 15 percent.* For amounts less than 1 percent, precede the decimal with a zero: *The cost of living rose 0.6 percent.* It is acceptable to use the percent symbol (%) in parenthetical information, bulleted lists, charts, graphs, PowerPoint presentations and tables.

Physical Activity, Exercise: **Physical activity** is any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. Physical fitness is a set of attributes that are either health or skill-related.

Exercise is a subset of physical activity that is planned, structured, repetitive and has as a final or an intermediate objective to improve or maintain physical fitness. **Press:** When referring to news organizations use the more general term **media**.

Quitline: **Quitline** is always one word and is always capitalized. In the first reference use the entire title **Kansas Tobacco Quitline**. In future references you may use just **Quitline**.

Quitline logo: Use of the **Kansas Tobacco Quitline logo** must be approved by KDHE staff.

Quotation marks: The **period** and the **comma** always belong within the quotation marks. *She called the party a "calamity."* *"The website is amazing," said Franklin.*

The **dash**, **semicolon**, **question mark** and **exclamation point** belong within the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted matter only. *When Frank saw the mess he said, "Holy cow!"* These marks belong outside the quotations when they apply to the whole sentence. *Can you believe she said, "read my lips"?*

Secondhand smoke: Secondhand is one word without a hyphen.

Smoke-free: See tobacco-free.

Spacing: Use a single space after punctuation at the end of a sentence.

State: Lowercase **state** when used as an adjective: *state employees, state flag.* Capitalize **State** when used referring to Kansas government as a whole: *the State allows...*

Statehouse: Capitalize all references to a specific statehouse, with or without the name of the state. *The Kansas Statehouse is in Topeka. The Governor will visit the Statehouse today.* Lowercase plural uses: *the Kansas and Missouri statehouses.*

That, which (pronouns): Use **that** and **which** in referring to inanimate objects and to animals without a name.

Use **that** for essential clauses, important to the meaning of a sentence, and do not use commas: *I remember the day that we met.*

Use **which** for nonessential clauses, where the pronoun is less necessary, and use commas: *The Bank of America building, which is beige, has an attached parking garage.*

(TIP: If you can drop the clause and not lose the meaning of the sentence, use **which**; otherwise, use **that**. A **which** clause is surrounded by commas; no commas are used with **that** clauses.)

That, who (pronouns): Use **who** in referring to individual people or groups of people. *The staff members who are wearing blue name tags can give you directions.*

Use **that** for organizations: *The coalition that had the highest score won the prize.*

Titles: Capitalize professional titles when used with an individual's name: *Program Manager Carol Cramer.*

Lowercase professional titles when used without a name: *the program manager said...* State cabinet level titles (Governor, agency Secretaries, etc.) should always be capitalized.

Tobacco-free: Tobacco-free is hyphenated because it is a compound modifier that describes a noun. *The tobacco-free policy only covers the zoo. This building is tobacco-free.* This also applies to **smoke-free**.

Toward: Not *towards*.

Web: always capitalized

Website: one word lowercase, website

Whom: The use of **whom**, the objective case of who, shows the reader that the pronoun receives the action of the verb rather than initiates it. *Whom did the president name to his cabinet.*