

AOA Style Guide

Prepared by the
Communications and Marketing Group

This style guide is designed for use by staff who issue and/or proof written communications, including advertisements, brochures, letters, memos, newsletters, e-newsletters, pamphlets, reports, social media and other correspondence. Its purpose is to achieve a uniform style for AOA written correspondence, materials and publications. AOA style also strives to conform as much as possible to styles commonly used by publications and organizations outside the AOA.

This style manual takes precedence over all other style guides and dictionaries in the association. Writers who have questions about general style should first consult this guide. If the answer is not found in this manual, the *Associated Press Stylebook* should be consulted next, unless otherwise noted.

The main publication of the American Optometric Association, *AOA Focus*, follows a magazine format style.

AOA Focus uses the *Associated Press Stylebook* as its style reference. If a question is not covered there, consult a current dictionary. For style questions regarding clinical/scientific literature, writers should refer to the *American Medical Association Manual of Style: A Guide for Authors and Editors* (AMA), *Dictionary of Visual Science and Related Clinical Terms*, *Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary* and the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

If the style usage in the AOA Style Guide conflicts with the usage in another style guide, follow the style in the AOA guide.

(revised January 2016)

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A

abbreviations/acronyms/initialisms

Avoid abbreviations and acronyms the reader won't easily recognize. Use the organization's full name on first reference, followed by the acronym in parentheses:

The American Optometric Student Association (AOSA) issued the statement.

Use acronym only on all subsequent references.

In *AOA Focus*, the "AOA" is acceptable in all references.

If an abbreviation or acronym would not be clear on the second reference, don't use it. See the AOA directory for a list of allied organizations and their abbreviations.

Omit periods and capitalize all the letters in an acronym, but lowercase words when spelled out:

The patients all wore rigid gas-permeable (RGP) contact lenses.

Commonly used optometry-related abbreviations and acronyms:

ABO	American Board of Optometry
ACG	acute-angle closure glaucoma
AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
AION	anterior ischemic optic neuropathy
ANOVA	analysis of variance
AMD	age-related macular degeneration
ARN	acute retinal necrosis
BCC	basal cell carcinoma
b.i.d.	twice a day
BP	blood pressure
BRAO	branch retinal artery occlusion
BRVO	branch retinal vein occlusion
Bx	biopsy
CBC	complete blood count

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CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CE	continuing education
CME	cystoid macular edema
CMV	cytomegalovirus
CNS	central nervous system
COAG	chronic open-angle glaucoma
COPD	chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
CRVO	central retinal vein occlusion
CSF	cerebrospinal fluid
CSME	clinically significant macular edema
CSR	central serous retinopathy
CT	computed tomography
D	diopter
DFE	dilated fundus examination
Dk/I	oxygen transmissibility of a contact lens
DM	diabetes mellitus
DPA	diagnostic pharmaceutical agent (obsolete term, avoid.)
Dx	diagnosis
EBV	Epstein–Barr virus
ELISA	enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay
ENT	ear, nose and throat
ESR	erythrocyte sedimentation rate
ETDRS	early treatment diabetic retinopathy study
GCA	giant-cell arteritis
gtts	drops
HBV	hepatitis B virus
HCL	hard contact lens
HIPAA	Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
HLA	human leukocytic antigen
HMO	health maintenance organization
HRCT	high-resolution computed tomography
HSV	herpes simplex virus
HTN	hypertension
HVF	Humphrey Visual Field
ICU	intensive care unit

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IGF	insulin-like growth factor
IM	intramuscularly
IOL	intraocular lens
IOP	intraocular pressure
IP	intraperitoneally
IPA	independent practitioner association
IV	intravenously
LASIK	laser <i>in situ</i> keratomileusis/laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis
LogMAR	Logmar chart (acuity)
LP	light perception
LV	low vision
LVA	low vision aids
MRI	magnetic resonance imaging
NA, N/A	not applicable
NEI	National Eye Institute
NIH	National Institutes of Health (takes a plural when spelled out)
NLP	no light perception
NSAID	nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug
OCT	optical coherence tomography
O.D.	right eye
OPM	optometric practice management
O.S.	left eye
OU	both eyes
PD	prism diopter
PDR	proliferative diabetic retinopathy
PHNI	pinhole no improvement (visual acuity)
PPO	preferred provider organization
PRK	photorefractive keratectomy
PRN	as necessary/as needed
q.d.	daily
q.h.	every hour
q.i.d.	four times a day
RBC	red blood (cell) count
RGP	rigid gas-permeable
RPE	retinal pigment epithelium
Rx	prescription

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SCC	squamous cell carcinoma
SCL	soft contact lens
SD	standard deviation
SE	standard error
t.i.d.	three times daily
TPA	therapeutic pharmaceutical agent (obsolete term, avoid)
UV	ultraviolet
UVA	ultraviolet A
UVB	ultraviolet B
VA	visual acuity
VF	visual field
WBC	white blood (cell) count
WNL	within normal limits

To form the plural of all-cap abbreviations or acronyms, just add "s":

CODs, DFAs, EKGs, HMOs, MIAs, POWs, RSVPs, VIPs

An acronym is an initialism that is pronounced as a word and is treated as a name (NASA, ILAMO). You do not put "the" before it. An initialism still needs an article (the AOA, a CPU, an ATM).

Academic titles

Lowercase unless the title precedes a name.

CORRECT: Associate Clinical Professor Joe Jones won an award today.

CORRECT: Joe Jones is an associate professor at Pacific University.

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addresses

In numbered addresses, abbreviate all references to thoroughfare names, such as *Avenue (use Ave.)*, *Boulevard (use Blvd.)*, *Drive (use Dr.)*, *Road (use Rd.)*, and *Street (use St.)*: 243 N. Lindbergh Blvd., but the AOA is on Lindbergh Boulevard.

Always use *Avenue*, *Boulevard*, *Street*, etc. to avoid confusion among streets with the same name: The AOA's address is 243 N. Lindbergh Blvd., while the Richmond Heights Baptist Church is at 123 Lindbergh Dr.

adopt/approve/enact/pass

Amendments, ordinances, resolutions and rules are *adopted* or *approved*.
Bills are *passed*.
Laws are *enacted*.

The Maryland Legislature passed the DPA bill, so now the state will have to enact a DPA law.

adverse/averse

Adverse means unfavorable:

He expected an adverse response.

Averse means reluctant, opposed:

He is averse to change.

adviser

Use adviser, not advisor

affect/effect

Affect as a verb means to influence:

The condition will affect your vision.

Effect as a verb means to cause:

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The condition will effect changes in your vision.

Effect as a noun means result:

The condition's effect was noticeable.

age

Use the following guide for age distinctions:

Fetus:	From 7 or 8 weeks after fertilization until birth.
Neonate (newborn):	For the first 4 weeks after birth.
Infant:	From birth or from the newborn period (first four weeks) to 2 years.
Child:	From 2 to 13 years of age. (Note: Sometimes the term <i>children</i> may be used more broadly to encompass persons from birth to 13 years of age. They should be referred to as <i>boys</i> or <i>girls</i> .)
Adolescent (teenager):	From 13 to 17 years of age (may also be referred to as <i>boys</i> or <i>girls</i>).
Adult:	For persons 18 years of age and older (should be referred to as <i>men</i> and <i>women</i>).

Use numerals:

The boy was 7 years old.

Or

The boy was 7. (omit “years old”)

Hyphenate when used as an adjective before a noun:

The 7-year-old boy was ill.

Fine wine is *aged*; human beings are not.

When a range of ages is provided, use *ages* (not *aged*):

The study group consisted of children *ages* 8 to 14 years.

Patients *ages* 50 years and older were excluded from the testing procedure.

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age-related macular degeneration

Use the abbreviation AMD.

AIDS

Use acronym on first and succeeding references.

alphabetizing

Treat hyphenated and multiword terms as one word and alphabetize them accordingly:

air brake
air conditioning
airborne virus
air-cooled engine
aircraft

a.m./p.m.

Lowercase with periods.

Avoid redundancy: 10 a.m. this morning

American Eye-Q® survey

Use the registered trademark symbol when referring to the American Eye-Q® survey.

American Optometric Association

Abbreviate the AOA with no periods.

Use *the* before AOA:

The American Optometric Association promotes regular eye examinations for pre-school children.

The history of the AOA spans many breakthroughs in the field of clinical treatment of the eye.

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American Optometric Association membership

The word “member” is not capitalized in any circumstance.

CORRECT: The doctor who lives in Hawaii is an AOA member.

AOA Optometric Clinical Practice Guidelines

CPG acceptable on second reference.

among/between

Among introduces more than two items, while *between* introduces two items:

The cost was divided among the three doctors.

ampersand (&)

Use an ampersand if it is part of an official name (the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services).

and

(see **serial comma**)

annual

Annual means occurring every year (or once a year).

An event cannot be described as *annual* unless it has been held in at least two successive years.

anti

Refer to *AP Stylebook*. Hyphenate all, except words that have specific meaning of their own, i.e., “antibiotic” and “antidepressant.”

anti-reflective coating

Not *antireflection coating*.

antitrust

One word, no hyphen.

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anxious/eager

Anxious means uneasy, apprehensive;

Eager means enthusiastic desire.

Asian

Not *Oriental* when referring to members of this community.

assure/ensure/insure

Use *assure* when you mean to make someone sure of something; to convince.

Use *ensure* when you mean to make certain.

Use *insure* when you are talking about an insurance policy.

B

backward

Not *backwards*.

bill

Do not capitalize unless referring to official name (i.e., Senate Bill 270)

bimonthly (biweekly)

Avoid both terms. Use *twice-monthly* or *twice-weekly*.

blind

Use *partially sighted* when visual acuity with correction is still between 20/70 and 20/200. *Legal blindness* is visual acuity that cannot be corrected to better than 20/200 and/or a restricted field of vision less than 20 degrees.

board of trustees

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Capitalize in first reference and precede with AOA.

CORRECT: The AOA Board of Trustees had a meeting on Thursday.

Thereafter, drop the identification word, unless the meaning is unclear, and lowercase:

The board of trustees voted to adopt the resolution.

or

The board closed the discussion to the public.

If identifying a single member: AOA Board member Bob Smith, O.D.

boy

A young male up to and inclusive of 17 years of age.

branding

Registration and trademark symbols should be used in headlines and in the first citation of intellectual property owned by the American Optometric Association, then dropped in subsequent uses. The same rule applies to other registered trademark products or names. When abbreviating, do not use [™] or [®] (example: HEHP).

Healthy Eyes Healthy People[®]

InfantSEE[®]

Optometry's Meeting[®]

EyeLearn[™]

Optometry Cares[®]—The AOA Foundation

bulletin board services

Spell out on first reference; use BBS on succeeding references. Plural form: BBSs.

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C

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The *CDC* is acceptable after first reference.

Takes a plural when spelled out, singular as an abbreviation (same as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services).

Certified Paraoptometric (CPO)

A person who has attained national recognition via certification by demonstrating an *understanding* of the concepts used in optometric care.

Certified Paraoptometric Coder (CPOC)

A person who has attained national recognition via certification by demonstrating proficiency, and expertise, and validating superior knowledge in an optometric coding environment.

Certified Paraoptometric Assistant (CPOA)

A person who has attained national recognition via certification by demonstrating the ability to *apply* the concepts used in optometric care.

Certified Paraoptometric Technician (CPOT)

A person who has attained national recognition via certification by demonstrating the ability to *understand*, *apply* and *interrelate* the concepts used in optometric care.

check up (verb) check-up (noun)

co-

Refer to the *AP Stylebook*.

Hyphenate when there is a double 'o' spelling construction:

co-op, co-organized

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color deficiency

A person is not *colorblind*.

co-manage/co-management

Hyphenate.

comma

(see **serial comma**)

committees

Lowercase these words unless used as part of a title: center, commission, committee, council, group, project team, task force, and section:

Representatives of every AOA group participated, but the AOA Communications and Marketing Group will process the pamphlet orders.

There were several committees present, but the Public Affairs Committee was unable to attend.

Lowercase *center* and other groups if listing more than one:

The Finance and Meetings centers will tally the responses.

company names

Use name as company uses it, whether or not *incorporated*, *limited* and *brothers* are abbreviated after a name: Laclede Gas Company, Warner Brothers, Acme Widgets, Inc. Capitalize all letters only if the initials are used: CIBA Vision, Vistakon.

Use a period after abbreviating “Inc.”

compared with/compared to

Use *compared to* when the intent is to assert that two or more items are similar:

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He compared the effects of retinitis pigmentosa to looking through a tunnel.

Use *compared with* when illustrating differences:

He compared optometry with ophthalmology.

compass points

Capitalize North, South, East and West when designating regions of the world or the United States.

Lowercase when using as a direction:

Most of the optometrists in the South will travel north for the meeting.

The Sheraton Hotel was northeast of the convention center.

competence

Preferred form (not competency)

complement/compliment

Complement is a noun and verb denoting completeness or the process of supplementing something:

Sunglasses would complement your beach attire.

Compliment is a noun or verb denoting praise:

I complimented her on her stylish sunglasses.

compose/comprise/constitute

Compose means to create or put together:

She composed the speech.

Comprise means to contain, include all or embrace. Use only in present tense.

The committee comprises four optometrists and an ophthalmologist.

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Constitute may be the best word if neither *compose* nor *comprise* fits:

Fifty states constitute the United States.

composition/publication titles

Italicize the names of magazines, newspapers, newsletters and books that are primarily catalogs of reference material, including almanacs, dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks, etc.

Examples: *AOA Focus*, *The New York Times*, *Eye Care of the Patient With Diabetes Mellitus*

Put quotation marks around book titles, computer game titles, movie titles, opera titles, play titles, poem titles, album and song titles, radio and television program titles, and the titles of lectures, speeches and works of art.

Capitalize the principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters.

Capitalize an article or words of fewer than four letters if it is the first or last word in a title.

Do not use quotation marks around software titles such as Windows.

Examples: "The Star-Spangled Banner," "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," "Of Mice and Men"

computer

Computer monitor may be used as a noun or modifier interchangeably with *video display terminal* or *VDT*.

Congress

Capitalize when used to refer to the U.S. Congress or when used alone without *U.S.*

Lowercase "congressional" unless it is part of a proper name: Congressional Advocacy Conference

Note: *Optometry's Meeting*[®] is the proper name for the AOA annual meeting.

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contact lens

Do not abbreviate as CL. (exception: *AOA Focus* uses “CL” in headlines.)

Use *soft lenses*, not *flexible lenses*.

Use *rigid gas-permeable (RGP) lenses*, not *rigid oxygen-permeable lenses*.

contractions

Avoid the use of contractions except in reported conversations or quotations:

can't, didn't, doesn't, don't, haven't, must've, shouldn't, wasn't, etc.

co-op

Acceptable as second reference for health cooperative.

council, counsel

Council is a deliberative body and its members are councilors.

Counsel means to advise. A *counselor* is an adviser.

crossed-eyes

Use this term instead of *strabismus* when writing for consumers.

This noun takes a singular verb:

Crossed-eyes is a vision condition.

D

data/datum

The term *data* is a plural and requires a plural verb (are/were) and plural verb form:

The data indicate increased symptoms of dry eye.

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Datum is the singular form of the word (and is very seldom used).

dates

Abbreviate months (except March, April, May, June and July) in specific dates. Spell out if used with the year or alone.

Do not use a comma to separate a month and year: January 1994.

Spell out days of the week; do not abbreviate.

Set off the year of specific dates with commas:

The president was inaugurated Jan. 20, 1993, in Washington, D.C.

decades

To abbreviate decades, place the apostrophe before, not after, the numerals:

the '90s.

decimals

Use decimals instead of fractions when listing percentages:

10.5 percent (not 10 ½ percent)

degrees

List only doctoral-level degrees unless relevant to the story.

Use an apostrophe in bachelor's degree, a master's, etc., but there is no possessive in Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science.

Do not use "Dr." followed by credentials.

CORRECT: John Doe, O.D. *or* Dr. John Doe

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INCORRECT: Dr. John Doe, O.D.

Capitalize when referring to the specific degree.

CORRECT: Dr. John Doe received his Doctor of Optometry degree from The Ohio State University.

CORRECT: John Doe is studying to be a doctor of optometry.

When listing credentials after a name, list “O.D.” first, followed by other credentials.

CORRECT: John Doe, O.D., Ph.D.

“M.P.H.” may be used after doctoral-level degrees because of its relevance to optometry. Bylines and other exceptions may apply.

If it is relevant to the story, noting that someone is a fellow of the AAO or a diplomate of the ABO may be appropriate. Make it part of a sentence rather than listing it as a title (i.e., President Dori Carlson, O.D., is a diplomate of the ABO.).

detect/diagnose

Optometrists *diagnose* and *manage* eye disease.
They can also *detect* signs of a general health problem.

develop

Disease is active; patients do *not* spontaneously generate disease.
Disease and symptoms develop in a patient.
Unless you are referring to the processing of photographs, patients don't develop anything.

Incorrect: The patient developed cancerous sores on his left leg.

Correct: Cancerous sores developed on the patient's left leg.

different

Takes the preposition *from*, not *than*.

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The results of the second formal study were significantly different from those of the first investigation.

differ from/differ with

Differ from means to be unlike.

Differ with means to disagree.

dimensions

Use figures and spell out *inches*, *feet*, etc.

Use *by* instead of times sign ("×"): The rug is 5 feet by 7 feet.

disabled

Use this term instead of "*handicapped*."

disc/disk

Use the *disk* when referring to parts of the anatomy, such as the optic disk.

Use the *disc* in all other cases: music CDs, computer disk.

disinterested/uninterested

Disinterested means impartial.

Uninterested means lacks interest.

District of Columbia

Use periods when abbreviating:

Washington, D.C.

doctors of optometry

For internal and external communications, refer to AOA-member doctors as *doctors of optometry*; use *doctors* on second reference. Be mindful of using *doctors* on second reference when multiple practitioners are referenced in content (e.g., *optometrists* and *ophthalmologists*—see *optometrist*).

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CORRECT: Doctors of optometry can enroll staff as associate members at no cost. Doctors with certified staff have seen overall improved patient care.

Capitalize when referring to the specific degree.

CORRECT: Dr. Doe received his Doctor of Optometry degree from The Ohio State University.

CORRECT: John Doe is studying to be a doctor of optometry.

dollars

Use figures and the dollar sign (\$) in amounts with a figure:

She borrowed \$2 (not \$2.00).

For amounts of more than \$1 million, use the dollar sign (\$) and numerals up to two decimal places:

The eye care industry is worth \$6.35 billion annually.

double consonant construction (ll, rr, tt)

Use the following guide to word forms when confused about whether to double the final consonant when you add -ed, -ing, or other endings:

L constructions

cancel, canceled, canceling, cancellation
compel, compelled, compelling
control, controlled, controlling
counsel, counseled, counseling, counselor
label, labeled, labeling
rebel, rebelled, rebelling
total, totaled, totaling
travel, traveled, traveling, traveler

R constructions

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concur, concurred, concurring
confer, conferred, conferring, conference
deter, deterred, deterring, deterrence
infer, inferred, interring, inference
occur, occurred, occurring, occurrence
prefer, preferred, preferring, preference
recur, recurred, recurring, recurrence
refer, referred, referring, referral
transfer, transferred, transferring, transferral

T constructions

admit, admitted, admitting, admittance
allot, allotted, allotting, allotment
benefit, benefited, benefiting
combat, combated, combating
commit, committed, committing
fit, fitted, fitting
forget, forgot, forgetting
format, formatted, formatting
omit, omitted, omitting
permit, permitted, permitting
submit, submitted, submitting
transmit, transmitted, transmitting

down/up/through constructions

Use the following frequently confused (and confusing) word forms:

noun form

breakdown
breakthrough
breakup

buildup

checkup

adjective form

breakdown
breakthrough
breakup

buildup

checkup

verb form

break down
break through
break up

build up

check up

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checkoff	checkoff	check off
cutoff	cutoff	cut off
follow-up	follow-up	follow up
giveaway	giveaway	give away
makeup	makeup	make up
rundown runover	run-down runover	run down run over
setup	setup	set up
workup	workup	work up

drugs

Because the word has come to be used as a synonym for narcotics in recent years, *medicine* or *pharmaceuticals* may be better words to use.

In general, use the generic (nonproprietary) name of a drug throughout the text (unless, of course, special brands are being referred to or compared).

Check generic names in the American Drug Index, Merck Index or the Physicians' Desk Reference.

If a trade name is used, list the trade name in parentheses immediately after the first mention of the generic name:

diazepam (Valium)
cevatamic acid (Cevalin)

dyslexia

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This is a specific condition that is one of many learning disabilities.

E

elderly

Avoid this word and the phrase *senior citizen*. (see **older adult**)

email

No hyphen. Capitalize only at beginning of sentence.
Also, use hyphens for e-business, e-commerce, etc.

employ

Unless referring to a specifically salaried context, avoid using employ. Use *use*.

Wrong: The study employed optometric students to investigate the effect of different eyedrops.

(If the students *were paid* for their participation in this study, the sentence would be correct as is.)

Correct: The study used optometric students to investigate the effects of different eyedrops.

ensure/assure/insure

(see **assure/ensure/insure**)

entitled

Use it to mean a right to do or have something.
Do not use it to mean *titled*:

After years as an understudy, she believed she was entitled to play the lead in the play titled “Cat on a Hot Tin Roof.”

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ethnic terms

Use black (not African-American), white (not Caucasian), Hispanic, Asian (not Oriental), and Native American (not American Indian).

Be as specific as possible when country of origin is known.

etiology

Etiology encompasses all the possible causes of a disease; it is a branch of medicine dealing with the causation of disease.

Do not use *etiology* as a synonym for *cause*.

every day/everyday

The first is an adverb; the second an adjective:

Every day, she added another chore to her everyday routine.

eye care

Not *vision care*.

Use two words in all forms; no hyphen.

eye conditions

Lowercase vision conditions and eye diseases such as *cataract*, *glaucoma*, *myopia*, etc.

Exception: capitalize proper names of bacteria, such as *Acanthamoeba*, but lowercase keratitis.

eye examination

Not *refraction*, *vision analysis*, or *vision examination*.

Use *comprehensive* when describing an eye examination, not *thorough* or *complete*.

"eye" words

Use the following forms of *eye* words:

One-word terms

Two-word terms

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eyeball
eyebrow
eyedrop
eyedropper
eyeglass(es)
eyelash
eyelid
eyepiece
eyesight
eyesore
eyestrain
eyewash
eyewear
eyewitness

eye bank
eye care
eye chart
eye contact
eye doctor
eye shadow
eye socket
eye test

F

farsightedness

Use this term instead of *hyperopia* when writing for consumers.

farther/further

Farther refers to distance.

Further refers to extension of time.

She walked a little farther to look further into the matter.

fax

Acceptable as short version of *facsimile* or *facsimile machine*.

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federal

Do not capitalize unless at the beginning of a sentence or as part of an official title.

fellow

Capitalize when it refers to a member of a scientific society:

Dr. Smith is a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry.

fellow eye

Avoid this term; refer instead to the *opposite eye*.

fewer/less

Use *fewer* when referring to individual items.

Use *less* when referring to quantity or bulk:

The less time he had, the fewer questions he answered.

for

If the sentence makes sense without *for*, don't use it:

The backseat allowed ~~for~~ greater storage.

The backseat allowed greater storage.

fort

Do not abbreviate *fort* for cities or military installations:

Fort Apache, Fort Bragg, Fort Knox, Fort Worth

Exception: Ft. Lauderdale

fractions

In text, fractions should be spelled out if they do not precede units of measure.

Note that a hyphen is used:

One-third of the patients in the group showed marked improvement.

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A one-quarter response rate was anticipated.

full time

Hyphenate when used as an adjective:

He works full time while she is a full-time student.

fundraising

Do not hyphenate in any form:

fundraising, fundraiser

G

gender

Avoid sexist language such as *policeman* and *fireman*. Instead use *police officer* or *firefighter*. Also use *-person*:

Dr. Smith was the committee spokesperson.

Use *chair* instead of *chairman*, *chairwoman* or *chairperson*. Rewrite if necessary to make words gender-neutral.

Paul Ajamian, O.D., who chairs the ABO

Do not favor one sex over another when generically describing positions (receptionist = *she*; doctor = *he*).

Use corresponding terms: male/female or men/women, not men/females or males/women.

Use *he* or *she/him* or *her*, not “*he/she* or *him/her* as pronouns when the gender of the subject is unknown.

To avoid this dilemma, use plural terms when possible.

In medical context, whenever possible, patients should be identified as a man, woman, boy, girl, or infant, not as male or female. Occasionally, however, a study group may consist of children and adults of both sexes, or the ages of the subjects may be unknown. In such cases, the use of male or female (as an adjective form) is appropriate:

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The control group included 77 male and 83 female subjects.

geographic region

Capitalize East Coast, West Coast and Midwest.

girl

A young female up to and inclusive of 17 years of age.

good will

Two words as a noun; one word as an adjective:

She was filled with good will because of his goodwill gesture.

(Note: The term *goodwill* is often used in determining the value of a practice that is up for sale.)

grade, grader

Hyphenate both the noun forms and the adjectival forms:

The first-graders will follow the second-grade students.

H

handicapped

Use *disabled*.

health care

Two words (as noun and adjective); no hyphen.

Exceptions: There is currently a trend for many insurance providers, medical groups and social organizations to use the term *healthcare* as a single word in their titles, informational brochures, and promotional materials.

If an association or organization uses *healthcare* as a single word in its materials, we follow their style/usage of the term when quoting those materials.

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Healthy Eyes Healthy People®

Healthy Eyes Healthy People® is a program registered to the AOA. The registration symbol (®) should be used in headlines and on first reference. Abbreviate “HEHP.” Do not use the symbol when abbreviated.

Headlines/subheads

Capitalize the first word in the headline or subhead and use lowercase for the following words unless they are proper nouns.

Exception: *AOA Focus*
press releases

HIV

Acronym may be used on first and succeeding references.
When referring to HIV status, use *HIV-positive* or *HIV-negative*.

House of Delegates

Capitalize this phrase and *House* when referring to the AOA House of Delegates.

human beings

In medical context, refer to *human beings*, not *humans*.

hypertension

The term *high blood pressure* is interchangeable.

I

InfantSEE®

This is a program trademarked by the AOA. Use the registered trademark notation (®) in headlines and on first reference.

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initials

Use periods and no space when a person/business uses initials instead of a first name:

L.L. Bean, D.H. Lawrence, W.B. Saunders, J.R.R. Tolkien, E.B. White

initialisms

See acronym entry

insure

(see **assure/ensure/insure**)

italics

(see **composition/publication titles**)

Use italics for the following:

List foreign terms in italics:

a priori
faux pas
feng shui

List Latin terms (frequently used in legal and scientific publications) in italics:

bona fide
E pluribus unum
Echerichia coli (E. coli)
pro bono
quid pro quo
Staphylococcus aureus (S. aureus)
Fusarium keratitis

Use italics for words or phrases in copy that you wish to emphasize (keep in mind that the emphasizing effect is lost if too many words or phrases are emphasized):

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K

Keyperson

AOA legislative network member. Always capitalize.

L

LASIK

Acceptable on first reference for *laser in situ keratomileusis*.

Latin terms/phrases

Clinical articles frequently have reason to use Latin words or phrases in text. When this occurs, the term (or terms) are italicized.

This includes commonly used medical phrases:

in situ

in utero

in vitro

in vivo

Also included are references to genera or species of bacteria or staff infection:

Examples: *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*)
Pseudomonas aeruginosa (*P. aeruginosa*)
Staphylococcus aureus (*S. aureus*)

lazy eye

Use for consumer pieces. The term *amblyopia* should be used for materials designed for optometrists.

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learning-related vision problem

Do not use *vision-related learning problem*.

legislative terms

Use periods for legislative bills.

S. 117, H.R. 507

Capitalize legislative acts, but do not italicize.

the Taft-Hartley Act

Do not capitalize *act* when it stands alone.

The act was pending.

-like

Do not precede with a hyphen unless the letter “l” would be tripled:

businesslike, shell-like

Lions Club

No apostrophe

lists

Use a colon (:), not a period before a list.

If entries in the list are full sentences, put a period at the end of the entry.

If entries in the list are not full sentences (phrases or partial sentences), use no period at the end of the entry.

If entries are a mixture of sentences and phrases (non-sentences), try to adjust the list so that the entries are one or the other (for consistency).

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long term

Hyphenate when used as a compound modifier:

The effects of the chemotherapy were long term.
He became involved in a long-term project.

longtime

One word when used as a compound modifier:

He is a longtime member.

low vision

Use as a condition, but refer to people with low vision as *partially sighted*.

M

metric measurements

In general, use a zero (0) before the decimal point when listing metric measurements:

0.3 mm (not .3 mm)

Be sure to include a space between the number and the measurement.

mid-

No hyphen unless a capitalized word or figure follows:

midterm, midyear, mid-September, mid-40's

millions/billions

Use figures with *million* or *billion* in specific amounts:

There are 2 million contact lens wearers in the United States.

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modality

Manner or form can be used for consumer pieces.

multi-

In general, no hyphen:

multidisciplinary, multipurpose, multitalented

myopia

Use *nearsighted* for consumer pieces.

N

nanometer

Nano- means one-billionth of a unit.
Abbreviate as *nm* with no periods.
If it must be used, define it briefly.

nearsightedness

Use for consumer pieces. *Myopia* can be used for an optometric audience.

neuro-optometry

Do not capitalize optometry when capitalization is required for Neuro.

non-

Generally not hyphenated.

nonmember, nonpracticing, nonprescription

Hyphenate when there is a double 'n' spelling construction:

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non-necessary, non-negotiable, non-numerical

Refer to *AP Stylebook*.

Numbers

In general, spell out numbers one through nine and use figures for numbers 10 on up.

Exceptions include:

- Addresses: 8 Springfield Dr.
- Ages, but not for inanimate objects: The 5-year-old dog, the five-year-old car.
- Cents: 6 cents.
- Dollars: \$8. Do not include the zeros.
- Dates: April 10. Do not use “10th”
- Dimensions: 5 foot 2, 5-by-9 cell.
- Highways: Route 11.
- Medicine: 5 mg per day
- Percentages: 9 percent. Percent is one word.
- Speed: 5 mph.
- Temperatures: 4 degrees.
- Times: 4 p.m. Do not include the colon and zeros.

O

O.D.

Use the periods when it follows a name; do not refer to doctors of optometry as *ODs*.

INCORRECT: John Smith, O.D., recommended a fellow OD.

CORRECT: John Smith, O.D., recommended a fellow doctor of optometry.

However, it is not necessary to change *ODs* to *doctors of optometry* when it is part of an official title, such as a CE course or webinar.

EXAMPLE: “OD Talks,” “PQRS—What ODs Need to Know.”

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Do not use “Dr.” followed by credentials.

INCORRECT: Dr. John Doe, O.D.

CORRECT: John Doe, O.D. or Dr. Doe

older adult

Use this term instead of *elderly* or *senior citizen*.

On-site

Hyphenate.

optometry/optometric

Optometry is a noun.

Optometric is an adjective:

The optometric students study optometry.

When proofing, break syllables as follows:

op-to-met-ric
op-tom-e-trist
op-tom-e-try

optometry/optometrist

Do not refer to AOA-member doctors as *optometrists* in public-facing communications; *doctors of optometry* is preferred, unless confusion or awkwardness may result.

EXAMPLE: Doctor-of-optometry-approved gifts

PREFERRED: Optometrist-approved gifts

Use *optometrist* if multiple practitioners are referenced in content (e.g., optometrist, ophthalmologist).

Lowercase these and all other nouns when identifying a profession or professional, even if the profession precedes the name:

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The committee included optometrist John Smith, O.D., and teacher Ed Jones. His sister is attending an optometry school in Indianapolis.

The profession of optometry is not capitalized.

INCORRECT: The AOA represents the profession of Optometry.

Optometry Cares®

Use the registered trademark symbol (®) in headlines and on first reference with Optometry Cares®—the AOA Foundation.

Optometry’s Meeting®

The annual meeting title is trademarked by the AOA. The registered trademark symbol (®) is used only on first reference. No longer “AOA Congress.” “OM” is not acceptable for external communications.

The official title is the [113]th Annual AOA Congress & [40]th Annual AOSA Conference: Optometry’s Meeting®.

Orthokeratology

Ortho-K is acceptable on second reference.

P

page number(s)

Lowercase *page*.

In *AOA Focus*: (“see amendments, page 12”)

In references, page numbers are listed at the end of the reference, preceded by a colon and no space:

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Optometry 2004;75:84.

If a range of pages in a book or journal is listed, the span is indicated with a hyphen between the beginning and end number, listing only the sequence of number that changes (tens, hundreds, etc.)

N Engl J Med 1999;104:573-9 (not 573-579).

paraoptometric

Use this form for noun and adjective forms.
Do *not* shorten to *para* construction.

A person who works under the direct supervision of a licensed doctor of optometry, collects patient data, administers routine and technical tests of the patient's visual capabilities, and assists in office management. The paraoptometric may assist the optometrist in providing primary patient care, examination, and treatment services, including, but not limited to, contact lenses, low vision, vision therapy and ophthalmic dispensing, and office management. State laws may limit, restrict or otherwise affect the duties that may be performed by the paraoptometric.

Paraoptometric Resource Center

The Paraoptometric Resource Center (PRC) is capitalized.

Doctors who are members of the AOA can enroll their staff as associate members at no charge. Do not capitalize “associate” or “member.”

INCORRECT: John Doe is an Associate Member of the AOA.

INCORRECT: The doctor enrolled John Doe as an Associate member.

part time

Hyphenate when used as an adjective:

He works part time, while she is a part-time student.

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partially sighted

Refers to people who have low vision.

percent/percentages

Percent is written as one word, spelled out (not *per cent*).

In *AOA Focus*, do not use % except in tables, charts, or formulae.

Precede with numeral, unless it is the first word in a sentence.

In clinical articles, % is acceptable.

phone numbers

Place a period between the area code and the rest of the phone number:

314.991.4100

Extension is abbreviated “ext” and preceded by a comma.

314.991.4100, ext. 4000

phoropter

Do not use *Phoropter*® as it is a registered trademark.

photo captions

For *AOA Focus*, do not use descriptions such as *is pictured* or *pictured here*.

Use the present active tense to describe action obviously in progress:

Dr. Smith gestures... (NOT *is shown gesturing*)

Do not shift tenses in the same sentence, even if the event is past:

Dr. Smith gestures as the committee meets.

Everyone appearing prominently in the photograph should be identified.

Identify people from left to right and make it *from left*, not *left to right*.

When two people are pictured:

Dr. Smith, left, and Dr. Jones.

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Identify where the photograph was taken and explain any unusual objects or actions.

photorefractive keratectomy

PRK may be used on second reference.

plurals

To form plurals of acronyms, multiple letters, and figures, simply add "s" and no apostrophe:

All the local AAAs added driving classes for adults in their 70s.

To form plurals of single letters or numbers, use the apostrophe:

Mind your p's and q's.

He was hoping for few more 0's on his paycheck.

preschool

one word

presented (as in *the patient presented with...*)

Use *sought treatment for, came to our clinic for, came to us for*, etc., unless it's a clinical article.

president

Capitalize only as a formal title before a name.

preventive

Preferred form (not preventative).

product names/registration/trademarks

Avoid these whenever possible, so as not to imply that the association endorses any particular product or service.

AOA *Focus* and information sent to other optometric press will use generic equivalents, unless a product name or trademark is essential to the story. In that case, the product name or trademark

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will begin with a capital letter in each reference, followed by its common descriptive term (e.g., Paraperm EW contact lens).

Do not pluralize product names or trademarks. Instead, pluralize the common noun (e.g., Kleenex tissues). If appropriate, the notice of federal registration (® or ™) will appear in the headline and first article citation. Drop ® and ™ in subsequent references.

For pharmaceuticals, on first citation, the generic name should be used, and the product or trademark should follow it, along with name of manufacturer and (main) city of manufacture in parentheses.

Generic names are not capitalized.

To avoid any appearance of bias or endorsement, authors must notify the publication and acknowledge any corporate funding or other proprietary interest that supports an article involving use of a certain product or specific service.

Pamphlet example:

Be sure to ask about a contact lens care kit as well.

AOA Focus:

The FDA will conduct hearings regarding Paragon Optical's Paraperm EW contact lens, the first RGP extended-wear lens to be marketed in the United States. Paraperm EW will have the highest water content of any lens available.

CLCS Newsletter:

For routine dilation, we prefer to use tropicamide (Mycriacyl™). This is because tropicamide is less troublesome than adrenergic agents.

For specifics, check the Trademark Checklist on file in the Communications Center, or call the Trademark Hotline 212-986-5880.

pupil/student

Students is preferred, as the first term may cause confusion when writing about eye care.

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P-values

P-values should be uppercase and italicized.

R

race

Do not mention race unless it is pertinent to a specific case or treatment of a particular disease (e.g., sickle-cell anemia and the black population).

If race is mentioned, use *black* and *white* rather than *African American* and *Caucasian*.

Use *Hispanic* rather than *Latin* or *Spanish*.

radial keratotomy

RK is OK in second reference.

ranges

In listing a range of items or quantities, use the complete form with items in the range provided. Avoid dashes. Use *to*:

\$12 million to \$14 million; not \$12 to \$14 million

12 percent to 14 percent

ratios

AOA Focus: The ratio was 2-to-1; a 2-1 ratio. The word *to* is omitted when the numbers precede the word *ratio*.

Clinical: Because negative (minus) values are often used in optometric measurement ranges, the word *to* is used in the listing of ratios:

Testing indicated a ratio of 2 to -3.

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re-

Use a hyphen to avoid a double "e" construction:

re-elect, re-evaluate, re-examine

Check the *AP Stylebook*.

reflective

Not *retro-reflective* material.

registration (®)/trademark (™) notations

Include the registration mark (®) or trademark symbol (™) after the brand name of a device, product, or medication when a specific manufacturer or supplier is mentioned. It is not necessary to use these symbols in subsequent references to the product throughout the text.

Residency program

Capitalize "residency" only if indicating a specific program.

CORRECT: John Doe completed a residency in ocular disease.

CORRECT: John Doe completed a Cornea and Contact Lens Residency at The Ohio State University College of Optometry.

Rx

Avoid using this term for *prescription*. *AOA Focus* headlines allow "Rx."

S

Save Your Vision Month

SYVM is OK in second reference.

school

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Check to see whether word forms using this word are one or two words:

school bus
schoolchildren
school curriculum
schoolteacher

school-age

Do not use *school-aged*:

Eye examinations were provided free of charge for all school-age children in the community.

Seal of Acceptance/Certification

Seal acceptable on second reference.

seasons

Lowercase unless they are part of a formal name:

Her favorite time of year was autumn.
They graduated in the spring of 2001.
The 1988 Summer Olympics will be held next summer.

section

Capitalize in a proper name, but not in general use:

The classifieds section is a regular feature of *AOA Focus*.

The Contact Lens & Cornea Section is the largest section in the AOA.

serial comma

In a series of three or more elements, the elements do not need to be separated by commas unless necessary for clarification:

She added bread, milk, butter and potato chips to the list.

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You need to go north three blocks, turn left, go one more block, then turn left again (south) for a half block.

sex

(see **gender**)

sexual orientation

Use rather than *sexual preference*.

Gay, lesbian or bisexual may also be used.

semiannual

Occurring twice a year.

Biennial indicates occurring every two years.

Senate

Capitalize *Senate*, but not *senator* unless used as a title.

The Senate passed the bill. The senators passed the bill. Sen. Kit Bond sponsored the bill.

senile macular degeneration

(see **age-related macular degeneration**)

senior citizen

(see **older adult**)

shortened forms

AOA Focus may use shortened forms of certain words;

exam (examination)

lab (laboratory)

photo (photograph)

sign/symptom

These terms can be used interchangeably.

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social media

Facebook and Twitter: capitalize

staff

Staff takes a singular verb. Use *staffs* when referring to more than one staff and use a plural verb.

The doctor's staff is out of the office.

The doctors' staffs are at the conference.

states

Refer to *AP Stylebook*.

Spell out state names in the body of stories. Use abbreviations in datelines, photo captions, lists, etc.

Use the two-letter postal abbreviations when including the full address with ZIP code

AL Alabama

AK Alaska

AZ Arizona

AR Arkansas

CA California

CO Colorado

CT Connecticut

DE Delaware

District of Columbia DC

FL Florida

GA Georgia

HI Hawaii

ID Idaho

IL Illinois

IN Indiana

IA Iowa

KS Kansas

KY Kentucky

LA Louisiana

ME Maine

MD Maryland

MA Massachusetts

MI Michigan

MN Minnesota

MS Mississippi

MO Missouri

MT Montana

NE Nebraska

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NV Nevada
NH New Hampshire
NJ New Jersey
NM New Mexico
NY New York
NC North Carolina
ND North Dakota
OH Ohio
OK Oklahoma
OR Oregon
PA Pennsylvania
Puerto Rico PR
RI Rhode Island
SC South Carolina
SD South Dakota
TN Tennessee
TX Texas
UT Utah
VT Vermont
VA Virginia
WA Washington
WV West Virginia
WI Wisconsin
WY Wyoming

state-of-the-art

Hyphenate.

stationary/stationery

Stationary refers to motionless, standing still

Stationery refers paper and writing materials.

students

(see **pupils/students**)

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T

teen, teenager

Refers to boys and girls 13 to 17 years of age.

Use *man* or *woman* for persons 18 years of age and older.

telephone numbers

(see **phone numbers**)

television

Avoid the use of TV as a noun, unless it is used in a quote.

When referring to the title of a television program, use quotes:

“ABC News,” “Everybody Loves Raymond,” “Friends,” “Nightline,” “60 Minutes”

that/which

When necessary, use *that* in essential clauses and do not set off with commas (*which* is set off with commas):

He proposed that the two groups unite on this project.
If sentence makes sense without *that*, don't use it.

It was obvious ~~that~~ she was lost.
It was obvious she was lost.

The statistics indicated ~~that~~ there was a population increase.
The statistics indicated there was a population increase.

She told me ~~that~~ she'd be there at 8 o'clock.
She told me she'd be there at 8 o'clock.

Extra stamps were added to ensure ~~that~~ it had enough postage.

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Extra stamps were added to ensure it had enough postage.

Common misuses

appear(s) that	indicate(d/s) that
ascertain(ed/s) that	know(s)/knew that
assert(ed/s) that	maintain(ed/s) that
assume(d/s) that	mention(ed/s) that
believe(d/s) that	propose(d/s) that
conclude(d/s) that	report(ed/s) that
decide(d/s) that	said/says that
determine(d/s) that	suggest(ed/s) that
emphasize(d/s) that	theorize(d/s) that
ensure(d/s) that	think(s)/thought that

Use *which* in nonessential clauses and set off with commas:

The entire group, which has 200 members, will leave today.

that/who

If the referent is human, use *who*.

If the referent is nonhuman, use *that*.

Patients who have good medical coverage prefer hospitals *that* offer extra services and specialty care.

the

Capitalize when it is the first word of an official name or title:

The New England College of Optometry
The Ohio State University College of Optometry

thousands

Commas are used in numbers of four digits or more.

The formal study included 1,870 students.

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three-dimensional

Abbreviate “3-D” with hyphens. Only use “3D” without hyphens if it is part of an official name.

Example: 3D@Home Consortium

time

Use numerals. Place a space between the numeral and a.m. or p.m. Use *noon* or *midnight* to distinguish 12 o'clock. Example: 4 p.m. to midnight, 11 a.m. to noon.

titles

Initials following names and representing other than academic degrees are omitted in *AOA Focus*. For example, F.A.A.O and C.O.V.D. would not follow a name.

For external copy and *AOA Focus*, the use of titles is typically limited to the person's profession, M.D., and Ph.D.:

John Smith, O.D., Ph.D.
Earle L. Hunter, O.D.

List degrees in bylines.

Degrees earned in other countries may designate the profession there:

John Smith, M.Optom., got his degree in Australia.

Before the doctor of optometry degree was formally established, a bachelor's of optometry was given. Optometrists earning this degree are recognized as the equivalent of doctors of optometry now and, therefore, use the initials O.D. after their names.

Lowercase and spell out all titles not used with a name:

The AOA president was here yesterday.

Lowercase and spell out all titles set off from a name by commas:

The president-elect, John Smith, O.D., was the host, while Ed Jones, O.D., AOA vice president, attended.

Capitalize titles when used before a name:

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AOA President Ed Jones, O.D., was elected.

Capitalize AOA titles this way:

President (Chair)
President-elect (Chair-elect)
Vice President (Vice Chair)
Secretary-Treasurer
Immediate Past President
Trustee

Set off long titles with a comma and use lowercase:

Harry Jones, O.D., liaison trustee to the AOA Hospital Committee, was the featured speaker.

Do not use courtesy titles such as *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Miss*, and *Ms.* except when two people with the same last name could be confused:

Mrs. Smith made the appointment for Mr. Smith.

or

Drs. Smith and Jones met at last year's Congress.

Abbreviate military, legislative and religious titles before names:

U.S. Sen. John McCain
Gov. Bob Holden
the Rev. Billy Graham
Gen. Colin Powell

If an optometrist also has a military rank or legislative title, list it first:

Army Lt. John Smith, O.D.
Sen. John Boozman, O.D.

On second reference, use the military rank or legislative title before the name unless referring to the subject in optometric practice.

toll free/toll-free

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Do not hyphenate after the noun:

That number is toll free.

Hyphenate when used before the noun:

That toll-free number is 800-555-8000.

toward

Not *towards*.

trigger words

Trigger words are words that, because of their use in other contexts that is often negative, should be avoided in medical literature.

Examples of such words are:

"negative" term(s)

abort (to end a procedure)

complained of (in reference to patients)

retard (to delay a process)

were sacrificed (re: animals in a study)

suffer(ed/s) from

instead use

terminate, discontinue

reported, indicated a problem with,
expressed concern about

delay, slow

were killed
experience(d/s)

20/20 eyesight

Not 20/20 vision.

U

ultraviolet

UV is OK on second reference. Also *UV-A* and *UV-B*.

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underway

One word in all uses.

United States

Spell out as a noun, abbreviate *U.S.* as an adjective:

The U.S. Army is the largest military group in the United States.

upward

Not *upwards*.

use/utilize/utilization

Avoid *utilize* (as a verb) and *utilization* (as a noun).
Use is shorter and simpler and means the same thing.
Exception: *utilization review*. (*UR* on second reference)

V

versus

Abbreviate as *vs.* in all uses, except in legal articles (which often use *v.*).

video display terminal (VDT)

Still acceptable, but dated. Can be used interchangeably with computer monitor.

vision

Use this term instead of *visual* as an adjective:

vision skills, not visual skills

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Vision/PLUS

Stands for Vision/Project Literacy U.S.

vision therapy

Not vision *training*, *visual training* or *visual therapy*.

VISION USA

Stands for Volunteers In Service In Our Nation USA

W

website

One word, lowercase.

whether or not

Think twice about the *whether* or *not* construction. Is *or not* needed? If copy reads as clearly without it, delete the *or not*.

-wide

No hyphen:

industrywide, worldwide

-wise

No hyphen when it means the direction of or with regard to:

lengthwise, clockwise

X

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X-ray

Capitalize the 'X' for both the photographic process and the radiation particles themselves.

Y

youth

Use *adolescent*, *teen* or *teenager*.

Z

zero

Add zeroes before decimal points in metric measurements:

0.5 ml (not .5 ml)

ZIP codes

Do not put a comma between the state name and the ZIP code. Capitalize ZIP.

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SPELLING

A guide for the correct (or more accepted spelling) of certain words and phrases:

Acanthamoeba keratitis
acknowledgment
adviser (not *advisor*)
afterward (not *afterwards*)
autoperimetry
autorefraction
backward (not *backwards*)
best-corrected
Braille
cannot
catalog
check up/checkup (the first is a verb; the second a noun)
close up/close-up (the first is a verb form; the second is very near or a tight photograph)
closed-angle glaucoma
co-management
daily disposable contact lens
daily wear contact lens
daylight-saving time
daylong
downward (not *downwards*)
endpoint
extended wear contact lens
eye care
eyeglasses
eyesight
eyestrain
fluorescein, fluorescence, fluorescent
follow up/follow-up (the first is a verb; the second a noun and adjective)
full-thickness
gas-permeable

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gray (not *grey*)
grown-up
health care
high-index
hotline
infrared
interdisciplinary
intraocular
Internet (capital *I*)
judgment
liaison
lifestyle
make up/makeup (the first is a verb; the second a noun or adjective)
monthlong
multifocal
nationwide
nearpoint
Net (capitalize; short for Internet)
online
on-site
open-angle glaucoma
ophthalmology
posthumous
postoperative (for *AOA Focus*, post-op is fine on second reference)
postsurgical
preoperative
president-elect (only capitalize the *P* before a name)
presurgical
preventive
Q-and-A format
questionnaire
rigid gas-permeable contact lenses
school-age (not *school-aged*)
guide dog (Seeing Eye® dog has a registered symbol and should only be used when referring to that organization)
set up, setup (the first is a verb; the second a noun or adjective)

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slit lamp (do not hyphenate)
teen, teenager, teenage (not *teenaged*)
tenfold
underway (one word)
upward (not *upwards*)
vice president
videotape
visually at-risk
Web
website (one word)
weeklong
well-being
workday, workweek
workload
workplace, workstation
worldwide
yearlong

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PUNCTUATION

apostrophe

Indicates possession:

Those are Dave's glasses.

Also denotes contractions:

She's leaving in a few minutes. (See **plurals**)

colon

Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence:

He promised this: The association will grow 10 percent.

But not with lists:

He promised three things: prosperity, growth and recognition.

Colons go outside of quotation marks, unless they are part of the quotation.

comma

Use commas to separate items in a series, with a comma before the conjunction in a simple series:

The flag is red, white and blue.

Also 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 attitude.

Use commas to separate a series of adjectives if an *and* could be used between them:

a thoughtful, precise manner; a dark, dangerous street.

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Do not use a comma if *and* would not work:

a cheap fur coat.

Use a comma when a conjunction links two clauses that could stand alone as separate sentences:

She was glad she moved, but she missed the sunny weather.

Do not use a comma to set off a person's hometown if the word *of* is used:

Dr. John Smith of St. Louis cast the deciding vote.

Use a comma when writing figures in the thousands:

She had 3,234 toothpicks.

Commas should always be placed inside quotation marks.

"We're going to the Grand Canyon," she said, "whether you like it or not."

ellipsis

Constructed as three periods and a space on either side.

em dash

When a phrase that otherwise would be set off by commas contains a series of words separated by commas, use em dashes to set off the full phrase:

He listed the qualities—intelligence, humor, conservatism and independence—he liked in candidates.

No space(s) should be used before or after the em dash.

Shortcut: to create an em dash, hold down the "alt" key and type 0151 in the keyboard on your right-hand side.

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exclamation point

Place it inside quotes when it is part of the quote; outside when it is not part of the quoted material.

Optometry avoids the use of exclamation points, unless in quoting written material in which it is used.

hyphenation

Use hyphens to avoid ambiguity, to join two or more words that express a single concept, with some prefixes and suffixes, to avoid double vowels and triple consonants. Note the exceptions cited elsewhere in this guide and in other cases detailed in the dictionary.

Do not use a hyphen with *very* or words ending in *ly*:

The newly revised book is thorough.

parentheses

If parenthetical material is used at the end of a sentence, place the period outside the parenthesis if the material inside is not a complete sentence.

periods

Periods should always be placed inside quotation marks.

question mark

Place question marks inside or outside quotation marks, depending on the meaning:

Who wrote "Gone With the Wind"?

He asked, "How long will it take?"

quotation marks

If a full paragraph of quoted material is followed by a paragraph that continues the quotation, do not put close-quote marks at the end of the first paragraph; however, do put open-quote marks at the beginning of that second paragraph.

Use close-quote marks, however, if the quoted material does not constitute a full sentence.

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The period and comma should always be placed inside quotation marks. The em dash, semicolon, question mark, and exclamation point should be placed within the quotes when they apply to the quoted material only. They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence.

CORRECT: "I really like going to get ice cream," Katie said. "My mom asked me, 'What's your favorite flavor?' I said, 'Chocolate.'"

semicolon

Use a semicolon to avoid confusion when items being separated include commas:

The committee members were Dr. Smith, chair; Dr. Jones, vice chair; Dr. Brown, secretary; and Dr. Black, treasurer.

space

Use only one space between sentences in news and online writing.