



# English Style Guide of the Canada School of Public Service

August 16, 2022

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## Introduction

The *English Style Guide of the Canada School of Public Service* applies to material written in English and is intended for those who write, edit and translate content on behalf of the School. It provides guidance on the School's preferred writing styles and conventions with the aim of ensuring the consistency and coherence of its communications. The guide addresses writing issues that are specific to the School and complements other reference materials and tools used within the federal public service, especially:

- The [Canada.ca Content Style Guide](#). Published by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, it presents clear and accessible rules for creating English web content for the Government of Canada.
- [Writing Tips Plus](#). Produced by the Translation Bureau, it contains articles taken from *The Canadian Style* and Termium's Writing Tips.

The guide will be continually updated and expanded over time. Please feel free to send your comments and suggestions to the School's [Linguistic Services team](#).

For material written in French, consult the *Guide de rédaction française de l'École de la fonction publique du Canada*.

# Canada School of Public Service Style Checklist

This checklist constitutes a quick reference to the preferred styles and conventions applicable to the School's communications and learning products and explained in greater detail in this style guide under the appropriate headings.

## Dates and times

- 1999 to 2010
- 2021–2022 (not 2021-2022 or 2021–22 or 2021/22)
- from January 1, 2022, to March 31, 2022
- from May 2 to June 1, 2022
- fall 2020
- 9:30 am to 2:00 pm (ET)
- 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm

## Numbers

- Use numerals for 10 and above
- Use numerals with units of measure (whether abbreviated or spelled out)
- 2 hours, 7 years, three 2-day sessions
- Tel.: 613-999-9900
- “Approximately 300 to 350 participants attended the event.”
- “Participants ranged in age from 18 to 24.”
- Prefer percent symbol (%)

## Punctuation

- Avoid using the slash “/”; use “and” or “or”
- Lists:
  - use bullet style
  - capitalize the first word in each item if the list of items are independent of each other
  - lowercase the first word if the items listed follow a lead-in sentence
  - no punctuation at the end of each bulleted item except in the case of a complete sentence
- Commas and periods are placed inside of quotation marks
- Use em dashes sparingly, with no spaces before or after. Reformulate sentence if possible

## Abbreviations and short forms

- For Canada School of Public Service:

- “the School” is the preferred short form
- use the acronym CSPA sparingly (in the President’s correspondence, for example) or where it forms part of an official name or title (for example, CSPA Digital Academy; CSPA Virtual Café Series)
- use the definite article (**the** Canada School of Public Service)
- Prefer the formulation “Madeleine Clark, Ph.D.” to “Dr. Madeleine Clark”
- Use acronyms sparingly and only after you have spelled out the name in full

## Typography

- One space following a period
- No all-caps
- Bold for emphasis (not underline, not italics): use judiciously
- Do not italicize titles of School events, courses, videos and all other learning products
- Do not italicize report titles, web page headings or titles of policies, directives and standards
- Italicize book titles, titles of newspapers, acts and regulations
- The *Emergencies Act*; the Act; **but** an act; this act
- Use quotation marks (or block style, for lengthy quotes), not italics
- Colon + en dash for titles (of events, for example: Leadership Series: Women in Power and Leadership Today Series: Performance at Work – Finding a Balance)

## Capitalization

- Title case: capitalize prepositions with five letters and up; capitalize both words in a hyphenated compound
- Exception: Gender-based Analysis Plus
- Title case for the titles of all School courses; Being an Effective Team Member (TRN138/D004); note course number placement in parentheses after name
- Capitalize the names of recognized communities (the GC Data Community; the National Managers’ Community)
- Course topics and sub-topics should use lower case (“Courses on human resources...”)
- Title case and no italics or quotation marks for School learning products: job aids, blogs, podcasts, learning series, events, videos
- Title case for course modules and other large sections; sentence case for headings, subheadings
- “The School’s learning catalogue...”
- “Our new learning platform offers...”

## Inclusive language

- Do not use binary expressions (he/she, him or her, etc.)
- Use of the singular, non-binary “they” is accepted, if unambiguous and clear
- Prefer pronouns “you” and “your” to “one” and “one’s”



- Change “see” or “hear” to “discover,” “learn,” etc.
- Replace “click” or “press” with “select” or “access,” etc.
- \*Capitalize “Black” and “Indigenous,” but lowercase “white” (never “Caucasian”)
- “Visible minority” is being replaced by “racialized communities/groups”; use BIPOC sparingly: prefer specifics
- In Canada: LGBTQ2+
- Prefer “Iranian Canadian” (no hyphen)

## Indigenous content

- Indigenous Peoples: First Nations, Inuit and Métis (without “Peoples/peoples”)
- Prefer “Indigenous” to “Aboriginal” except in particular legal or historic contexts and only as an adjective (“Aboriginal nations,” Aboriginal peoples,” Aboriginal and treaty rights”)
- Survivors, Two-Spirit, Elders (uppercase); **but** residential schools and comprehensive land claim agreements (lowercase); avoid “Two-Spirited” or “two-spirited”
- Indigenous People/Peoples (as umbrella term) but lower case “p” when referring to individuals of Indigenous ancestry (“Indigenous people run for political office and are elected at the provincial level.”)
- Do use “Indigenous Peoples in Canada”
- Do not use “Indigenous Peoples of Canada” or “Canada’s Indigenous People”
- Never “non-Indigenous Peoples”; replace with “non-Indigenous population in Canada,” for example

## Tweets

- Maximum number of characters available is 280. Punctuation, spaces, links and hashtags all count toward this limit
- Put a period at the end of a tweet

## Miscellaneous

- Formulation for emails: Contact us at XXX@csps-efpc.gc.ca (no colon after “at”)
- Use applied title for department names (replace “Department of Canadian Heritage” with “Canadian Heritage”)
- Use title case for slide titles in PowerPoint presentations
- Avoid “e.g.” and “i.e.”; replace with “for example,” “meaning,” “such as” or other, except in tables or other abbreviated formats
- Capitalize recognized communities of practice (like “GC Data Community”)
- Authority Delegation Training Program; the ADT program
- FAQ never FAQs
- Q&A, R&D, O&M

\*As per the Inclusive Writing Guidelines of the Library of Parliament. The capitalization of these terms is evolving and may be revisited in future.

## Source language editing: Reading for meaning

Our clients recognize that source language editors have an eagle-eyed ability to spot errors and inconsistencies in spelling, capitalization and punctuation. They also appreciate the fact-checking we do to verify dates, names and titles, and even hyperlinks and link text.

Clients can be less appreciative, however, when editors change or reorder the words in their texts, or dare to remove them from the text altogether. These types of changes are often viewed as a matter of personal preference. Sometimes they may even, inadvertently, alter the intended meaning of the text—which does not lead to greater client satisfaction.

It is important to remember that source language editors read texts for meaning. In fact, editors are typically the client's first opportunity to determine whether their text makes sense. When an editor changes the words in a text, it is usually because the meaning could be clearer. When an editor inadvertently alters the intended meaning of a text, it is because that meaning isn't coming through.

Texts can present a number of problems that interfere with the text's ability to convey meaning. Here is a list of objective actions that source language editors often perform to fix readability problems in a text:

- Remove unnecessary words (meaningless phrases, repetition or saying the same thing twice)
- Correct mistakes in word usage
- Ensure that the wording is inclusive (“they” rather than “he or she”) and meets accessibility standards (“select” rather than “click on” the link)
- Simplify complex language (rephrase to avoid jargon, replace abstract nouns with root verbs)
- Unpack noun strings by adding prepositions and verbs
- Correct Gallicisms (words and syntax)
- Remove or spell out unnecessary acronyms and abbreviations
- Correct errors in syntax including misplaced modifiers, dangling participles and ambiguous pronouns
- Stick to the magic of three in a series of parallel words, phrases or clauses
- Use bulleted lists to clarify complex series
- Convert equating verbs (is, seems, appears), expletives (there are), and needless passives into active transitive verbs
- Change negative constructions into positive statements
- Break up long, complex sentences
- Verify that the reading level of the text suits the target audience

## Terms for the School

EN long form	EN initialism	EN short form	FR long form	FR initialism	FR short form
Canada School of Public Service	CSPS	the School	École de la fonction publique du Canada	EFPC	l'École


### Overview

Use the short form, “the School,” in most texts, when it is clear from context that this refers to the School.

Example (School’s website)

[Canada.ca](#) > [Canada School of Public Service](#)

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 **Contact the School**

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Get support from our Client Contact Centre, find a campus or connect with the School in other ways.

Use the short form in internal communications (messages from the President of the School to staff, intranet pages, newsletter articles).

#### Example (News@theSchool article)

New date: Orientation session for new **School** employees

The English orientation session for new employees, which was scheduled for May 31, 2022, will now be held on June 7, 2022. Meet with some of the **School’s** senior management and staff, and become more familiar with our organizational practices and priorities. A French session will be offered in September 2022.

In official departmental and administrative documents, such as reports to Parliament, for the first occurrence, write the long form, “Canada School of Public Service,” followed by the short form, “the School,” in parentheses.

Example (departmental report)

As the Minister responsible for the **Canada School of Public Service (the School)**, I am pleased to present the School's Departmental Plan for 2022-23. As the Government of Canada's common learning provider, **the School** offers a wide variety of courses, events, programs, and learning tools that serve to establish a strong learning culture within the public service.

Do not leave out "Canada" in the long form.

When the long forms of other organizational names are used, use the long form of the School's name.

Example (event description)

The **Canada School of Public Service** will present this lecture in collaboration with the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, the Public Service Commission of Canada and the Federal Youth Network.

## Special cases

Although the short form (the School) tends to be the most common, some authors may prefer the initialism (CSPS), for example, in messages from the president of the School. This usage is accepted.

The initialism "CSPS" appears in the titles of some of the School's learning products and in the official name "CSPS Digital Academy," and the long form is never used.

Examples

Courses in the CSPS Excellence Series

CSPS Virtual Café Series

CSPS Digital Academy

## The School's main organizational units

Long form EN	EN initialism	EN short form	FR long form	FR initialism	FR short form	EN title of person in charge	FR title of person in charge	Name of person in charge
Canada School of Public Service	CSPS	the School	École de la fonction publique du Canada	EFPC	(l')École	President	président / présidente	Taki Sarantakis
President's Office	PO	N/A	Bureau du président	BP	S.O.	Chief of Staff	chef de cabinet	Ginny Sutcliffe
Business Enablement and Assurance Services Branch	BEASB	Business Enablement and Assurance Services	Direction générale des services d'affaires et d'appui aux organisations	DGSAAO	Services d'affaires et d'appui aux organisations	Vice-President  The incumbent is also Chief Financial Officer	vice-président / vice-présidente  Le / la titulaire est aussi dirigeant principal des finances / dirigeante principale des finances	Tom Roberts
Accommodations, Procurement and Integrated Security Directorate	APISD	Accommodations, Procurement and Integrated Security	Direction des installations, de l'approvisionnement et de la sécurité intégrée	DIASI	Installations, Approvisionnement et Sécurité intégrée	Executive Director  The incumbent is also Chief Security Officer	directeur exécutif / directrice exécutive  Le / la titulaire est aussi chef de la sécurité	Pierre Leduc
						Deputy Chief Financial Officer	sous-dirigeant principal des finances / sous-dirigeante	Renée Prud'homme

							principale des finances	
						Lead Faculty	enseignant en chef / enseignante en chef	John Medcof
Office of the Registrar and Performance Metrics Directorate	ORPMD	Office of the Registrar and Performance Metrics	Direction du bureau du registraire et des mesures du rendement	DBRMR	Bureau du registraire et Mesures du rendement	Director General	directeur général / directrice générale	Jodi Brouillard
Curriculum and Faculty Management Division	CFMD	Curriculum and Faculty Management	Division de la gestion du curriculum et des enseignants	DGCE	Gestion du curriculum et des enseignants	Director	directeur / directrice	Jean-Pierre Rousseau
Strategic Planning and Analysis Division	SPAD	Strategic Planning and Analysis	Division de la planification stratégique et de l'analyse	DPSA	Planification stratégique et Analyse	Director	directeur / directrice	Philippe Proulx
Client Service Delivery Division	CSDD	Client Service Delivery	Division de la prestation du service à la clientèle	DPSC	Prestation du service à la clientèle	Director	directeur / directrice	Melissa Marie-Cormier
Office of Information Management and Information Technology	IM/IT	Information Management and Information Technology	Bureau de la gestion de l'information et de la technologie de l'information	GI/TI	Gestion de l'information et Technologie de l'information	Chief Digital Officer	dirigeant principal du numérique / dirigeante principale du numérique	Francois Brunet

Learning Platforms and User Experience Division	LPUED	Learning Platforms and User Experience	Division des plateformes d'apprentissage et de l'expérience utilisateur	DPAEU	Plateformes d'apprentissage et Expérience utilisateur	Director	directeur / directrice	Michel Singh
<b>Public Sector Operations and Inclusion Branch</b>	<b>PSOIB</b>	<b>Public Sector Operations and Inclusion</b>	<b>Direction générale des opérations du secteur public et de l'inclusion</b>	<b>DGOSPI</b>	<b>Opérations du secteur public et Inclusion</b>	<b>Vice-President</b>	<b>vice-président / vice-présidente</b>	<b>Nathalie Laviades Jodouin</b>
Indigenous Learning Directorate	ILD	Indigenous Learning	Direction de l'apprentissage sur les questions autochtones	DAQA	Apprentissage sur les questions autochtones	Director General	directeur général / directrice générale	Nancy Harris
Indigenous Learning and Events Division	ILED	Indigenous Learning and Events	Division de l'apprentissage et des événements sur les questions autochtones	DAEQA	Apprentissage et Événements sur les questions autochtones	Director	directeur / directrice	Cara Vandale
Respectful and Inclusive Workplace Directorate	RIWD	Respectful and Inclusive Workplace	Direction du milieu de travail respectueux et inclusif	DMTRI	Milieu de travail respectueux et inclusif	Director General	directeur général / directrice générale	Kelly Folz
Portfolio Management, Outreach and Engagement Division	PMOED	Portfolio Management, Outreach and Engagement	Division de la gestion des portefeuilles, des relations externes et de la mobilisation	DGPREM	Gestion des portefeuilles, Relations externes et Mobilisation	Director	directeur / directrice	Julie Fairweather

Strategy and Services Division	SSD	Strategy and Services	Division des stratégies et des services	DSS	Stratégies et Services	Director	directeur / directrice	Charlene Janvier
Executive Learning Directorate	ELD	Executive Learning	Direction de l'apprentissage pour les cadres	DAC	Apprentissage pour les cadres	Director General	directeur général / directrice générale	Monique Ramdhan (Acting)
Executive Learning Support Division	ELSD	Executive Learning Support	Division du soutien à l'apprentissage des cadres	DSAC	Soutien à l'apprentissage des cadres	Director	directeur / directrice	James Chow (Acting)
Executive Learning Development Division	ELDD	Executive Learning Development	Division du perfectionnement de l'apprentissage pour les cadres	DPAC	Perfectionnement de l'apprentissage pour les cadres	Director	directeur / directrice	Julia Arnsby
Government of Canada and Public Sector Skills Directorate	GCPSSD	Government of Canada and Public Sector Skills	Direction des compétences du gouvernement du Canada et du secteur public	DCGCSP	Compétences du gouvernement du Canada et du secteur public	Director General	directeur général / directrice générale	Erik de Vries
Strategy and Services Division	SSD	Strategy and Services	Division des stratégies et des services	DSS	Stratégies et Services	Director	directeur / directrice	Martha Tropea
Outreach and Engagement Division	OED	Outreach and Engagement	Division de la sensibilisation et de la mobilisation	DSM	Sensibilisation et Mobilisation	Director	directeur / directrice	Marie-Josée Gosselin (Acting)



<b>Innovation and Skills Development Branch</b>	<b>ISDB</b>	<b>Innovation and Skills Development</b>	<b>Direction générale de l'innovation et du perfectionnement des compétences</b>	<b>DGIPC</b>	<b>Innovation et Perfectionnement des compétences</b>	<b>Vice-President</b>	<b>vice-président / vice-présidente</b>	<b>Neil Bower</b>
Transferable Skills Directorate	TSD	Transferable Skills	Direction des compétences transférables	DCT	Compétences transférables	Director General	directeur général / directrice générale	Laura Gorrie
Business Innovation Division	BID	Business Innovation	Division de l'innovation d'affaires	DIA	Innovation d'affaires	Director	directeur / directrice	Myra Latendresse-Drapeau
Leadership Fundamentals Division	LFD	Leadership Fundamentals	Division des éléments essentiels du leadership	DEEL	Éléments essentiels du leadership	Director	directeur / directrice	Michael Rutherford
Future Skills Division	FSD	Future Skills	Division des compétences de l'avenir	DCA	Compétences de l'avenir	Director	directeur / directrice	Alexandra Keys
Digital Academy Directorate	DAD	Digital Academy	Direction de l'académie du numérique	DAN	Académie du numérique	Director General	directeur général / directrice générale	Erica Vezeau (Acting)
Strategy and Engagement Division	SED	Strategy and Engagement	Division des stratégies et de la mobilisation	DSM	Stratégies et Mobilisation	Director	directeur / directrice	Vacant
Digital Learning Products Division	DLPD	Digital Learning Products	Division des produits d'apprentissage numériques	DPAN	Produits d'apprentissage numériques	Director	directeur / directrice	Kent Aitken (Acting)

Public Sector Innovation Directorate	PSID	Public Sector Innovation	Direction de l'innovation dans le secteur public	DISP	Innovation dans le secteur public	Director General	directeur général / directrice générale	Kyle Burns
Public Sector Analytics Division	PSAD	Public Sector Analytics	Division de l'analyse du secteur public	DASP	Analyse du secteur public	Director	directeur / directrice	Vacant
Public Sector Experimentation Division	PSED	Public Sector Experimentation	Division de l'expérimentation dans le secteur public	DESP	Expérimentation dans le secteur public	Director	directeur / directrice	Tereza Cundy
Technology Lab Division	TLD	Technology Lab	Division du laboratoire des technologies	DLT	Laboratoire des technologies	Director	directeur / directrice	Vacant
GC Data Community Division	GCDCD	GC Data Community	Division de la communauté des données du GC	DCDGC	Communauté des données du GC	Director	directeur / directrice	Christopher Valiquet
National Managers' Community Division	NMCD	National Managers' Community	Division de la communauté nationale des gestionnaires	DCNG	Communauté nationale des gestionnaires	Director	directeur / directrice	Isabelle Racine
<b>Policy, Priorities and Partnerships Directorate</b>	<b>PPPD</b>	<b>Policy, Priorities and Partnerships</b>	<b>Direction des politiques, des priorités et des partenariats</b>	<b>DPPP</b>	<b>Politiques, Priorités et Partenariats</b>	<b>Director General</b>	<b>directeur général / directrice générale</b>	<b>John Gorrie</b>
Priority Initiatives Division	PID	Priority Initiatives	Division des initiatives prioritaires	DIP	Initiatives prioritaires	Director	directeur / directrice	Paul Pileci (Acting)

Geopolitics and National Security Learning Program Division	GNSLPD	Geopolitics and National Security Learning Program	Division du programme d'apprentissage sur la géopolitique et la sécurité nationale	DPAGSN	Programme d'apprentissage sur la géopolitique et la sécurité nationale	Director	directeur / directrice	Alexander Dalziel
<b>Human Resources Directorate</b>	<b>HRD</b>	<b>Human Resources</b>	<b>Direction des ressources humaines</b>	<b>DRH</b>	<b>Ressources humaines</b>	<b>Director General</b>  <b>The incumbent is also Head of Human Resources</b>	<b>directeur général / directrice générale</b>  <b>Le / la titulaire est aussi chef des ressources humaines</b>	<b>Wendy Bullion-Winters</b>
Staffing, Labour Relations and HR Policy Division	SLRHRPD	Staffing, Labour Relations and HR Policy	Division de la dotation, des relations de travail et des politiques de RH	DDRTPRH	Dotation, Relations de travail et Politiques de RH	Executive Director	directeur exécutif / directrice exécutive	Céline Vachon
Classification and Organizational Design Division	CODD	Classification and Organizational Design	Division de la classification et de la conception organisationnelle	DCCO	Classification et Conception organisationnelle	Director	directeur / directrice	Joëlle Lamadeleine
Employee Experience Division	EED	Employee Experience	Division de l'expérience employé	DEE	Expérience employé	Director  The incumbent is also Ombud	directeur / directrice  Le ou la titulaire est aussi ombud	Vincent Houle

<b>Communications and Engagement Directorate</b>	<b>CED</b>	<b>Communications and Engagement</b>	<b>Direction des communications et de la mobilisation</b>	<b>DCM</b>	<b>Communications et Mobilisation</b>	<b>Director General</b>	<b>directeur général / directrice générale</b>	<b>Vanessa Vermette</b>
Marketing and Communications Services Division	MCS D	Marketing and Communications Services	Division des services de marketing et de communication	DSMC	Services de marketing et de communication	Director	directeur / directrice	Michael Dalrymple
Event Management and Multimedia Services Division	EMMSD	Event Management and Multimedia Services	Division des événements et des services multimédias	DESM	Événements et Services multimédias	Director	directeur / directrice	Jennifer Calegoure

## Indigenous content

The English editors of the School follow the guidance of the *Elements of Indigenous Style* by Gregory Younging in matters of style and consideration applicable to Indigenous content. In so doing, we are adhering to the foundational premise of this book: letting Indigenous People themselves tell us how to treat Indigenous material.

In case of conflict or uncertainty, wherever possible, we recommend applying Indigenous style.

### Characteristics of Indigenous style

- More **capitalization**: to demonstrate importance and emphasize respect
- Use of **present tense**: to demonstrate that First Nations Peoples are distinct and that their cultures, activities, languages, spiritual practices, etc. survive and continue to be relevant in the present day. Use past tense for events that took place exclusively in the past or to refer to historic events.
  - The Blood People hold a sacred Sundance ceremony on their territory every year in June.
  - Potlach ceremonies were once banned under the *Indian Act*.

### Principles of Indigenous style

- Respect for Elders
- **Respect** for the **cultural integrity** of Indigenous Peoples
- **Accurately** reflecting the realities of Indigenous Peoples
- Collaboration; asking for help and clarity when in doubt
- Cultural vibrancy and relevance
- Adherence to Indigenous Protocols

Younging defines the protocols as “appropriate ways of using cultural material and of interacting with Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous communities. They encourage ethical conduct and promote interaction based on good faith and mutual respect.” [They are] “...systems of knowledge...” and show respect for Elders and Oral Traditions.

→**Refer to Indigenous Peoples using the names that they themselves use. Be as specific as possible.**

Prefer Haudenosaunee to Iroquois; Mi'kmaq to Micmac; Kanien'keha:ka to Mohawk

When in doubt, ask the person or persons concerned themselves. These names are evolving, and may continue to do so, therefore always double check. Pay particular attention to spelling variants. Refer to the Linguistic Services TermBase for the most up-to-date names and preferred spellings.

### Always capitalize:

- Terms for Indigenous identities
- Indigenous governmental, social, spiritual and religious institutions
- Indigenous collective rights

**Avoid** possessives that infer ownership of Indigenous Peoples by Canada.

→ Not “**Canada’s** Indigenous Peoples” or “Indigenous Peoples **of** Canada” but Indigenous Peoples **in** Canada.

**Avoid** words that make Indigenous Peoples out to be powerless or passive parties to whom actions are done or taken. Give them agency.

- Prefer:
  - “assert” (a right or title) to “demand”
  - “Survivor” to “victim” (of residential school)
  - “self-determination” to “self-government” (which is associated with an outdated, lower-level governance model that has fallen out of favour)
  - “resistance” to “rebellion” (when referring to the Métis struggle for recognition out West)
  - First Nations “community” to “reserve” (and never “reservation,” which is an American term)

### Making a land or territorial acknowledgement

- **Land acknowledgements** are statements focused on physical land, land use, spiritual connection to the land. They often express thanks and/or a connectedness of the event, workplace, meeting, and/or ceremony to the land.
- **Territorial acknowledgements** recognize First Nations, Inuit, and Métis and their traditional and/or current geographical territories on which we live and work. They often include mention of the associated treaties.

Although the School encourages **land** (currently the preferred term) or territorial acknowledgements before the start of learning and other events, it has no officially sanctioned wording. Increasingly, especially in B.C., First Nations leaders are advising against the use of the word “acknowledge” as it conveys a position of authority over another group. **They have recommended the wording “I am honoured to be on your traditional territory...”**.

The choice of either term will depend on the situation and intention. Do not use them interchangeably. If unsure, ask.

## Terms at a glance

**Indigenous Peoples:** Collective term for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis

Standard formulation: **Indigenous Peoples: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis**

Prefer “Indigenous People/s” to “Aboriginal People/s,” which should be reserved for use in specific legal or historical contexts (esp. with reference to the *Constitution Act, 1982*)

- **First Nations:** Term for one of the three Indigenous Peoples in Canada

The term carries strong political overtones relating to pre-contact. It is also used to describe a group within a larger nation: “There are more than 630 First Nations communities in Canada, which represent more than 50 Nations and 50 Indigenous languages.”

- Adjectival form, add ‘s’: A First Nations person
- Noun form: Sturgeon Lake First Nation; Peter is First Nations

- **Inuit:** Term for an Indigenous People who traditionally live in Arctic regions

Inuit means “the people” in Inuktitut, so it would be redundant to say “Inuit people.”

Likewise, no definite article is needed: not “the Inuit in Greenland” but “Inuit in Greenland.”

- The singular noun form of the word is Inuk
- Inuit is also the adjectival form: “An Inuit throat singer”

- **Métis:** Term for an Indigenous People of mixed (European and Indigenous) ancestry and defined by the Métis National Council as “one who self-identifies as Métis, who is distinct from First Nation and Inuit, who is of historic Métis Nation ancestry and accepted by and belonging to a Métis community.”

**For the purposes of the School, include the ‘e accent aigu.’** However, note that the Manitoba Metis Federation, the Metis Council of Ontario and the Metis Association of the Northwest Territories do not use an accent.

- Use “Métis” as both a singular and plural noun

Métis architect Douglas Cardinal designed the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau.

The Métis are concentrated in the Western provinces in Canada.

- Métis is also an adjective

The Métis arrow sash is worn during culturally important events.

Prefer the formulation “Jean Meilleur is Métis” to “Jean Meilleur is a Métis person.”

**Indigenous People:** One of the distinct societies that make up the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. Inuit are an Indigenous People, as are the Haida, and the Mi’kmaq.

**Indigenous people/Indigenous person(s):** Individuals of Indigenous ancestry

## Terms to avoid

- Aboriginal person(s)/people(s)

except in legal or historical contexts. For example, the *Constitution Act, 1982*, refers to “Aboriginal people” as does the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which uses the lowercase form (i.e. “aboriginal”).

- American Indian or Native American
- Indian(s)

except in established groups (Indian Brotherhood) or community names (e.g. McLeod Lake Indian Band), legal or historical references (the *Indian Act*).

- Indian Residential School

Write “residential school,” always lower cased and omit “Indian.” Note the official name: Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement

- Native

Like “Indian,” unless you are one, avoid the word “Native.”

- Our Native People; Native Canadian; Indigenous Canadian
  - Problematic on two fronts. The possessive form is paternalistic and condescending. As well, many Indigenous persons in Canada do not consider themselves Canadian but members of their own Nations.
- Tribe, tribal (unless as part of a formal name. The Blood Tribe, for example).
- Avoid using the terms “discovery” or “findings.” Instead, use “the identification of unmarked graves,” where the presence of human remains has been validated.

## Capitalization

### Capitalize:

(94) Calls to Action (of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission [TRC]); Call to Action #88

Aboriginal **but** Aboriginal and treaty rights

Algonquin Anishinaabe

Anishinaabe; Anishinaabeg (pl. n.)

Chief

Elder

Indigenous Land

Indigenous Title

Indigenous Traditional Territory

Knowledge Keeper



(the) North (in geographic references to the three territories)  
Nation  
Northerner  
Oral Traditions  
Protocols  
Sacred Stories  
Status Indian, Non-Status Indian, Treaty Indian (as defined in the *Indian Act*)  
Survivor (of residential school)  
Traditional Knowledge  
Two-Spirit (avoid “Two-Spirited” and “two-spirited”)

**Lower case:**

land claim, land claims  
residential school  
(first) contact  
*modern treaties*, also known as *comprehensive land claim agreements* (CLCAs)  
modern treaty/CLCA  
modern treaties/CLCAs  
comprehensive land claim agreement, comprehensive land claim agreements  
reconciliation

**References**

*Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing By and About Indigenous Peoples*, by Gregory Younging, 2018.

Words Matter: [https://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/Words\\_Matter\\_2022](https://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/Words_Matter_2022)

Reporting in Indigenous Communities – Indigenous Customs and Protocols:  
<https://riic.ca/the-guide/in-the-field/indigenous-customs-and-protocols/>

Guide on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Terminology:  
<https://www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca/en/publications/equite-diversite-inclusion-equity-diversity-inclusion-eng>

Canadian Geographic magazine: <https://indigenouspeoplesatlasofcanada.ca/article/identity/>

## Typography

- One space following end punctuation
- No all-caps (except for acronyms)

### **Bold**

- Use bold for emphasis (not underline, not italics, not all-caps)
- Use judiciously

### **Underlining**

- Use underlining for links only
- Do not use for emphasis

### **Italics**

Do use italics for:

- book titles
- titles of newspapers
- full titles of acts and regulations
  - Do not italicize the short form, for example, the *Emergencies Act* but the Act

Do not use italics for:

- titles of School events, courses, videos and all other learning products
- report titles
- web page headings
- titles of policies, directives and standards
- quotes
  - Use quotation marks for shorter quotes and block style for longer quotes.
- emphasis

# Punctuation

## Quotation marks

Always use double quotation marks. Single quotation marks should be used for quotes within quotes.

Place periods and commas inside the quotation marks. Follow common practice for the other punctuation marks:

- Place colons, semi-colons and dashes outside the quotation marks
  - I thought he said “cucumber”; what he really said was “encumber.”
- Place question marks and exclamation marks inside or outside quotation marks, depending on the meaning

Examples:

- “What do you mean?” asked Rebecca.
- Why did she say, “Something is fishy here”?
- Who shouted, “Long live the King!”?

**Use** quotation marks to:

- quote text or spoken words
- refer to words as words
  - For example, the singular “they”
- refer to the titles of articles

**Don’t use** quotation marks to:

- emphasize text
- indicate a special meaning (scare quotes)

## Bulleted lists

Introduce bulleted lists with a colon, unless the bulleted list follows a heading.

If the bullet points are full sentences, they should start with a capital letter and end in a period.

If the bullet points are sentence fragments introduced by a heading, they should start with a capital letter and end without punctuation.

If the bullet points are sentence fragments introduced by a lead-in phrase, they should start with a lower-case letter and end without punctuation.

Examples:

1. Representatives can be:

- citizenship or immigration consultants
  - lawyers
  - other representatives
2. Users can add a filter as follows:
    - a. Select the box beside the filter.
    - b. Click the filter name link beside the box (optional).
    - c. Click **Filter**.
  3. **Most requested**
    - [Financing your new business](#)
    - [Financing for innovation](#)
    - [Find a loan for your small business](#)
    - [Canada job grants for employers](#)

In tables and graphic material, these guidelines are flexible to allow for visual consistency.

## Comma

Use the serial or Oxford comma when needed for clarity.

Use “which” and commas with non-restrictive clauses and “that” and no commas with restrictive causes. Examples:

- The English orientation session for new employees, which was scheduled for May 31, 2022, will now be held on June 7, 2022.
- News@theSchool provides you with timely and important information that affects your daily work.

## Semi-colon

Use semi-colons sparingly.

Avoid using a semi-colon in in-line lists. Convert an in-line list that needs semi-colons for clarity to a bulleted list instead.

## Colon

### In sentences

Use colons sparingly.

Capitalize the first word following a colon in a sentence if the colon introduces a question or multiple sentences. In all other cases, use a lower-case letter.

### In titles or headings

Use a colon first, then an en dash.

Example:

- Leadership Today Series: Performance at Work – Finding a Balance

## **Em dash**

Use em dashes sparingly; replace with commas where appropriate.

## **Period**

One space follows punctuation at the end of the sentence.

## **Question mark**

Avoid questions in headings and titles. Reformulate text instead.

## **Exclamation mark**

Use exclamation marks sparingly, even in tweets. Do not use them in titles.

## **Parentheses and square brackets**

Use sparingly.

For use in transcripts, consult Transcript and caption guidelines.

## **Slash**

Avoid using the slash “/”; use “and” or “or” instead.

“And/or,” while preferable to a slash on its own, should also be avoided. In almost all cases, either “and” or “or” alone will work.

## **Percent**

Use the symbol (%).

## **Ampersand**

Do not use the ampersand (&); use “and” instead.

Exceptions:

- R&D
- O&M

# Capitalization

Capitalization distinguishes particular persons, places and things and identifies official terms and titles. It also adds emphasis or importance to a word. This last function has a tendency to be overused in government texts (for example, the Department rather than the department), and the School's style aims to follow the general recommendation to reduce this tendency.

That said, capitalization questions keep us busy at the School and are a central concern for the Indigenous Learning business line.

## Title case

Title case style at the School:

- capitalizes all words of a title **except** for prepositions and conjunctions of **less than 5 letters** (unless they are the first or last word of the title)
- capitalizes both words in a hyphenated compound

Exception:

- Gender-based Analysis Plus

Use title case for the titles of:

- all School learning products: courses, events, learning and event series, job aids, blogs, podcasts, programs, seminars, forums, videos

Note:

- Do not use italics or quotation marks for the titles of learning products.

Examples:

- Building Readiness and Workplace Solutions During COVID-19 Restrictions (event)
- Gender Equality Around the World: A Canadian Perspective (video)
- Being an Effective Team Member (TRN138/D004) (course)
- course modules and other large sections in a course
- PowerPoint slides

Capitalize:

- official names of government-wide communities (the GC Data Community; the National Managers' Community)
  - but not, for example, the financial management community
- a person's official job title, but not the role

Examples:

- Michael Smith, Director, Marketing and Communications Services
- The director will see you now.
- the official titles of the School’s organizational units and business lines
- the names of the School’s regions (Atlantic Region, Prairies and Northwest Territories Region)
- “the President” in reference to the current president of the School
- Anglophone, Francophone (Termium)
- the Crown, Cabinet, anti-Black discrimination, Parliament (but not parliamentary)

## Indigenous capitalization

Indigenous style is characterized by more capitalization to demonstrate importance and emphasize respect. Always capitalize:

- terms for Indigenous identities
- Indigenous governmental, social, spiritual and religious institutions
- Indigenous collective rights

For example:

- Indigenous
- Aboriginal
- Potlatch
- Chief
- Traditional Knowledge
- Elder
- Protocol

Consult the section on Indigenous content for more detailed information.

## Lower case

Use lower case for:

- course topics and sub-topics (“Courses on human resources...”)
- the term “learning catalogue,” as in “The School’s learning catalogue...”
- the term “learning platform,” as in “Our new learning platform offers...”
- the words “job aid,” “blog,” “course,” “event” and other learning products

## Sentence case

Capitalize only the first word of:

- headings and subheadings
- the titles of articles in News@theSchool and School GC
- web page titles

Exception:

- when the titles of articles and web pages are learning product titles

## Resources

- [4 Capitalization - The Canadian Style - TERMIUM Plus® - Translation Bureau](#)
- Canadian Oxford Dictionary
- Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing By and About Indigenous Peoples, by Gregory Younging, 2018.



## Spelling preferences

In general, especially for words not on this list, the School uses the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* as a reference.

For words in this list that can be a noun or a verb, both are listed together if the spelling is different for the noun and the verb. If only one spelling is listed, the noun and the verb are spelled the same way.

360-degree feedback

advisor

Anishinaabe (adj., sing. n.), Anishinaabeg (pl. n.)

Black (as in Black people)

bylaw

Cabinet (for the government body)

catalogue

co-chair

co-champion

coordinator

co-sponsor, co-sponsored

cyber security

cybercrime

    decision-maker

    decision-making

dos and don'ts

e-learning (E-Learning in titles)

email

enrol, enrolment, enrolled, enrolling

evaluator

FAQ (not FAQs)

focused

Gender-based Analysis Plus

GCcampus

GCcollab

GCconnex

GCdocs  
GCLearning  
GCpedia  
GCTools  
HTML  
intranet  
judgment  
know-how  
lifelong  
log in (verb), login (adj.)  
materiel (different from material)  
multimedia  
News@theSchool  
offline  
onboarding  
online  
panellist  
    policy-maker  
    policy-making  
publicly  
Q&A  
Quebec (province), Québec (city)  
realign  
roundtable  
subcontract  
towards  
transferable  
vice-president  
web  
web developer  
web page

website

well-being

workplace (**but** work place in reference to certain legislation)

workforce

workshop

workstation

worldview

# Acronyms, initialisms and abbreviations

- With a few exceptions, use acronyms, initialisms and abbreviations sparingly.
- Introduce them by providing the long form; for example, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS)

Exceptions:

- “the School” for the Canada School of Public Service, as it is an intuitive abbreviation
- RCMP, Q&A and other familiar short forms
- social media hashtags and handles (#CSPS, @School\_GC)
- Only introduce short forms that will be used in the document.

Exception:

- certain marketing products such as course descriptions where the short form may increase searchability
- Introduce short forms in the same paragraph that you are using them. In a document consisting of many sections or web pages, reintroduce short forms on the next web page or section where they are used.

Exception:

- courses where introducing the short form is part of the course content
- Do not use or introduce acronyms, initialisms and abbreviations in titles.

Exceptions:

- A few learning products and departmental units favour certain short forms in their titles, for the sake of brevity:
  - CSPS Digital Academy
  - CSPS Virtual Café Series
  - Cyber Security in the GC and Online Exposure
  - Cyber Security in the GC for Non-IT Employees
- In such cases, the short form can be introduced afterwards in the body of the text
- Consult the [Federal Identity Program registry of applied titles \(canada.ca\)](https://www.canada.ca/en/government/department/federal-identity-program-registry-of-applied-titles) for the correct initialisms for government organizations. For example, these short forms are considered to be incorrect or outdated:
  - GoC (should be GC), but #GoC
  - DFAIT (now GAC for Global Affairs Canada)
  - PWGSC (now PSPC for Public Services and Procurement Canada)
  - AANDC or INAC (now two departments: CIRNAC for Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada and ISC for Indigenous Services Canada)

# On numbers: Style rationale

## Introduction: Primacy of readability

Numbers can appear in written material as words (six) or numerals (753). The main considerations that help writers and editors decide whether to spell out a number or use a numeral are readability, space and consistency.

Readability is always the primary consideration, and when it comes to numbers, many factors come into play. Most people find it easier to read and retain 753 than seven hundred and fifty-three. This was known even before usability testing and eye-tracking studies confirmed it. However, very large numbers like 2,500,000,000 and the single digits 0 and 1 are considerably less readable. Many web-based style guides recommend spelling out zero and one to avoid confusion with the letter O and the lower-case letter l. Such guides also recommend using a combination of words and numerals for numbers with multiple zeros like 2.5 billion.

Readability is also affected when there are many numbers in close proximity or when one number modifies another, as in 15 60-year-olds. The long-standing convention, in this case, is to add clarity by spelling out one of these numbers, usually the smaller of the two: fifteen 60-year-olds. To clarify a jumble of numbers in a given passage, it helps to treat numbers that modify the same or similar items in the same way.

Eye-tracking studies show that numerals draw attention to themselves and away from the words on the page. An emerging consideration in web writing is the recognition that the numerical information may not always be what is most important to convey. For example, in the sentence “There were 3 bears seen wandering near the school yard,” the number is less important than the information that bears were seen near a school yard. In this case, spelling out the number would probably help the reader grasp the important information, or at least not distract from it.

## Government number style and the School

The bias in styling numbers in government today is to use numerals, as reflected in the Canada.ca Content Style Guide. Generally speaking, numerals are easier to read in our current digital environment and take less space. In applying this style, however, there are two important points we need to keep in mind:

- The government’s digital style does not erase the readability conventions around numbers; rather, these conventions underpin the government style and can be called into play when the context requires them for clarity.
- The Canada.ca Content Style Guide is an evergreen document that is continually evolving based on usability testing and new findings related to accessibility.

This is the environment in which the School’s number style has been developed. Grounded in the primacy of readability, the style aims to establish consistency, where possible, for the types of numbers and numerical phrases that recur in the School’s learning and communications products.

# Number style

## Units of measure

**Use numerals for all numbers accompanied by a unit of measure.** The unit of measure can be abbreviated or written in full. For example:

- The high yesterday was 30°C.
- He ran 5 kilometres in less than 25 minutes.
- The average speed of the new prototype is 30 km/h.

## Statistics

**Use numerals for reporting statistical information.** For example:

- The survey indicated that 1 out of 5 adults dislikes snow.
- In Ottawa, almost 75% of eligible people are fully vaccinated.
- The final score was 4 to 0.

## Spelling out numbers

**Spell out all numbers in the following cases:**

- In titles of published works and proper names
  - One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel García Márquez
  - Seven Grandfather Teachings
  - Seeking a Decision from Executives in Two Minutes or Less (Z132)
- When one number modifies another
  - fifteen 60-year-olds
  - The three 2-hour sessions take place over 5 days.
- Figurative expressions
  - I can think of a hundred and one reasons.
  - Two's company; three's a crowd.
  - A picture is worth a thousand words.

## Numbers 10 and above

**Use numerals for numbers 10 and above.** For example:

- The event was well attended, with 745 participants joining the webcast.
- In just one week, over 50,000 learners have already logged in to our new learning platform.

Exceptions:

- Spelled-out numbers that fall under point 3.
- For numbers with multiple zeros, use a combination of words and numerals:
  - 2.5 million
- Do not start a sentence with a numeral. Since large spelled-out numbers are hard to read, find a way to avoid the situation. For example:
  - A total of 573 people attended the event.
  - The team submitted 105 pages of data. (Change verbs in the passive to active verbs.)
  - There will be 8 new players joining the team.

Exception: bulleted lists. For example:

- Of the participants who responded to the survey:
  - 75% found the event helpful
  - 20% did not find the event helpful
  - 5% were undecided

## Numbers under 10

**Spell out numbers under 10 that represent a simple count (rather than a statistic or measure).** For example:

- I found two pennies tucked away in a drawer.
- Keep in mind the following five steps.
- The course includes preparatory reading, three facilitated sessions, and an assignment.
- There is zero possibility that it will rain today.

Exceptions:

- Use a numeral for emphasizing a number. For example:
  - Participants must complete all 3 sessions.
  - Note these 2 exceptions.
  -

- Use numerals in tweets and tables, and any other situation where there are space limitations.
  - Sign up now for the 4th annual learning day for the Government of Canada’s project management community!
  -

Course	Times delivered	Total number of participants
M174	23	136
Z285	45	578

- Use a numeral for regional consistency with a larger number that modifies a similar item. For example:
  - The delivery included 2 packets of note pads, 15 boxes of markers, and 5 chairs.

## Other

### Other considerations

- Keep in mind that 0 and 1 can easily be misread. Use the spelled out forms zero and one where appropriate
- Apply the same number style to ordinal numbers. For example:
  - You are the 10th person to call today.
  - The first time I saw my grandson, I cried; the second time, I smiled.
  - Consult the 17th edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

Note: Do not use superscript for ordinal numbers (2<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 65<sup>th</sup>).

- Form the plural of a numeral by adding the letter “s.” No apostrophe is needed. (1960s; All of the 5s look like 6s.)

## Specific style points

### Dates

- Fiscal year: 2021–2022 [note en dash]
- December 31, 2021 (**not** December 31st, 2021)
- August 17 (**not** August 17th)
- between March 25 and May 9, 2022
- from September 22 to 27, 2021

### Time

- Use 12-hour clock
- 12:00 pm to 3:30 pm
- 5:00 am to 6:00 am (**not** 5 am to 6 am)



Note: Various time references are often in close proximity on the School's event pages. For this reason, the School needs a consistent time style.

- 12:00 am **or** midnight
- 12:00 pm **or** noon **not both**; "12:00 pm to 1:00 pm"
- Event or course duration: 1.5 hours, .5 hours, 2.5 hours, etc.

### Money

- \$60,000 (**not** 60K)
- \$2.5 million (**not** \$2.5M)
- \$0.66 or 66 cents

### Telephone numbers

- 613-722-1378
- (Toll free): 1-866-703-9598

### Addresses

- Block 5000
- Floor 12
- 373 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, ON K1N 6Z2

# Tweets

## Character counts

Maximum character count for a tweet **without** a link:

- English: 224 (20% or 56 characters less)
- French: 280

Maximum character count for a tweet **with** a link:

- English: 206 (20% or 51 characters less)
- French: 257 (257+23 for the link = 280)

The maximum number of characters available is 280.

Punctuation, spaces, links and hashtags all count toward the 280 character limit:

- Links use 22 characters.
- Secure links (https) use 23 characters.

## Style

Put a period at the end of a tweet.

Do not add the full name of the panellists when also using their Twitter handle in the tweet.

Federal departments and organizations often have a French and an English Twitter account. @PSCofCanada / @CFPduCanada

Use GC to abbreviate Government of Canada and PS to abbreviate public service.

Avoid exclamation marks, abbreviations and all caps to maintain a professional tone.

Capitalize each word in a hashtag to make it accessible to those using screen readers. e.g., #ThrowbackThursday

When a tweet starts with an @accountname, place a period before the @ symbol (no space) so that all followers can see it. Without the period, it will be sent as a direct message to only @accountname.

Avoid generic hashtags, such as #school or #education, as they will bring up irrelevant tweets.

Treat Twitter handles like proper names: Retain same capitalization as actual handle, add just an apostrophe for the possessive of handle names ending in "S," etc.

## Related vocabulary

- tweeted (never "tweeted out")
- tweeting, tweet (as verb and noun)
- Twitter user (not "tweeter")
- Twitterstorm, tweetstorm, live-tweet

## Hashtags

### English

#AccessibleCanada

#CanadaDotCa

#DYK

#Executives

#FlexGC

#GBAPlus

#GC

#GCComms

#GCDigital

#GC\_EX

#GCInclusion

#GCIndigenous

#GCLearning

#GCMentalHealth

#GreeningGov

#ICYMI

### Français

#CanadaAccessible

#CanadaPointCa

#SVQ

#Cadres

#FlexGC

#ACSPPlus

#GC

#GCComms

#GCNumérique

#GC\_EX

#InclusionGC

#GCAutochtones

#GCApprentissage

#SantéMentaleGC

#EcoGC

#EnRappel

#LeadersGC

#LGBTQ2

#LeadersGC

#LGBTQ2

# Transcript and caption guidelines

The following guidelines apply to English and French transcripts for both audio and video files, as well as to captions required for video files. The focus, however, should be on the transcript as the authoritative source document from which video captions can then be pulled.

## Readability

1. Ensure that the transcript is readable and understandable

Consider the transcript as a stand-alone document, as people who use it may not choose to consult the audio or video files for a variety of reasons.

- Add paragraphing. All text should be separated and blocked into readable sections; not line by line like in a screenplay or teleprompter. Text should be broken down by speaker and into small paragraphs to improve readability. A best practice for the Web is to limit each paragraph to 5 lines or less.
- Remove speaking tics and “fillers”:
  - um, uh, like, right?, sort of, you know, repeated text, etc.
- Remove false starts:
  - In a false start, the speaker starts one thought, but then switches to another thought without completing the first. Do not transcribe the words that the speaker starts with and has rephrased or abandoned since these words often do not connect well grammatically with the main part of what the speaker is saying.

**Example 1:** "Before I went to, a mega-corporation is where I spent the last 7 years of my life. I was in startups." **becomes** "A mega-corporation is where I spent the last 7 years of my life. I was in startups."

**Example 2:** "I liked how we went through project management as well as the elements of the School, the broader elements of the School, because all this training and culture change is really what the School is about." **becomes** "I liked how we went through project management as well as the broader elements of the School, because all this training and culture change is really what the School is about."

There may be times when you want to retain a false start though. This may be the case when a false start helps the reader to understand the train of thought or personality of the speaker or the mood or tone of the event. In these cases, it is appropriate to transcribe the full speech.

- Do not use suspension points (...) to transcribe a hesitation. While readers could interpret it as such, they could also interpret it as an incomplete statement or the omission of a word. In most cases, there is no need to call attention to deleted text.
- Avoid using round brackets in lieu of square brackets, especially in spoken language, as it could be misinterpreted. Use square brackets to indicate editorial comments or additional information, such as visual cues.
- Apply the following writing and formatting rules, as per the **Canada.ca Content Style Guide**:
  - Use underlining for links only (e.g. [www.canada.ca](http://www.canada.ca)).
  - Use bold, **sparingly**, for emphasis.
  - Use italics only for legislation (*Privacy Act*), books, (*The Canadian Style*), pamphlets, published reports and studies, French and foreign words, films, newspapers and periodicals, etc.
- Use punctuation correctly as in other types of writing.
- Correct glaring errors for readability, without rephrasing sentences. Make as few corrections as possible.

Audio as spoken	Expected correction
They has been	They have been
Ça, c'est le chose à lequel on veut vraiment arriver.	Ça, c'est la chose à laquelle on veut vraiment arriver.

## Non-dialogue content

2. Provide all the information contained in the less-accessible version
  - The transcript must convey not only the content of the spoken dialogue, but also all the meaningful text equivalents for non-dialogue audio information needed to understand the content, including sound effects, music, laughter, applause, etc.
  - Provide text equivalents for the visual content, including for text appearing on screen such as the names of the speakers and their titles.

- Indications outside of what is being said should appear in **square** brackets, not in italics or round brackets:
  - Congratulations Marie! [applause] [The song "We Are the Champions" plays]
  - [On-screen text: Canada School of Public Service]

### 3. Convey equivalent information from the less-accessible version

- It is important to accurately transcribe the spoken words without rephrasing sentences. Convey the tone (conversational, formal) of the audio both in the original transcript and, to the extent possible, in the translation. Also describe the scene, as shown below in square brackets:
  - [Two managers are in a café having an informal conversation about performance management]
- Where the sound is poor and a word or words are garbled, use the word "inaudible" inside square brackets to make this clear:
  - "Thank you for joining us today with our [inaudible] participants."

# Annex 1: Event description guidelines

How to write, format and structure an event description

**Updated:** May 25, 2022

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## Introduction

First impressions last. The title and description that are chosen for an event – or any other learning product – is its first impression. An **event title** should be clear, memorable, meaningful, and use impactful words within a short character count. An **event description** should be explanatory, helpful, accurate and specific, enough to help the reader decide if the event is of interest to them, and to help convert them into a registrant.

As of January 1, 2022, the School's Marketing team assumed responsibility for overseeing the creation, publishing and approvals of event descriptions posted to the School's website and promoted through School channels. This shift in responsibility ensures that event descriptions are written in a consistent way that will facilitate event promotions, will re-use the same content across our channels, will be understandable by all audiences, and will apply the same best practices as used for writing descriptions for our courses and other learning products.

## In this document

1. **Objectives**
2. **Best practices**
3. **Event description structure**
4. **Event titles**
5. **Event description template**
6. **Event description examples**



## 1. Objectives

Words matter. Today's audience scans content and is looking for a quick read with maximum impact and minimal effort, especially when scanning from mobile devices. Event descriptions should emphasize only the essential elements that will **help a learner with their decision to register or not register**, including information about the event topic(s), format, features, program/agenda, speakers and, of course, the benefits of attending.

Put another way, event descriptions should be written with the primary objective of providing the reader with the information they need to make the conversion from being a reader to becoming a registrant.

## 2. Best practices

It is important to capture the essence of the event in its description through carefully chosen context, concepts and keywords that make sense in both official languages. Securing the attention and engaging the interest of the learner is crucial. **Event descriptions should be informative, specific, clear and to the point.** This will allow learners to easily scan through the description to determine:

- a) **why** the event is important or relevant to them or to their jobs
- b) **what** the event is about, **what** will transpire or **what** it will cover or bring to light
- c) **how** they will benefit by attending, **what** they will learn or **what** they will take away with them afterwards

The 'what' and 'how' information should also be written with the intent that it can be re-used in other promotional channels, such as our weekly newsletter, social media messaging and other targeted emails. This will allow for consistent messaging across our channels that does not need additional translation or approvals, or at the very least, only minimal edits to adapt it to each channel.

## 3. Event description structure

An optimal event description should aim for a length of 5 to 6 sentences and be between 100 and 130 words in English (especially since the French text can often be up to 20% longer), not including speaker information, program information, series affiliation or optional bullet points. All descriptions, however, must include the following type of messages/sentences:

1. Positioning statement to provide context about why the event is relevant/important
2. Functional statement of event objectives, format or intent to set expectations (e.g. This event...)
3. Benefit statement about what participants will learn or take away from the event
4. Call to action/invitation to attend or recommend to others (e.g. Learn about...)
5. Event details (e.g. moderator, speakers, program/agenda)
6. Registration information (e.g. date, time, registration deadline, language, location, audience)

## 4. Event titles

Event titles are an event's first impression. An event title should be clear, meaningful, memorable and use impactful words within a short character count.

- Choose a unique title that clearly describes what the event is about
- Use informative keywords that capture the essence of what the event will cover
- Use plain language and avoid wordplay (e.g. puns, expressions) that doesn't work in both official languages
- Ensure that the title has the same or similar meaning in both languages; however the English and French titles do not always have to be identical
- Keep the title as short as possible in both languages (aim for less than 70 characters in English and 84 characters in French)
- Ensure the title is search engine friendly (search results will only display the first 65 characters of a page title)
- Start with an action verb or other task-based term like "How to", "Discovering", "Exploring", etc.
- Use title case and proper capitalization in English
- Avoid the use of colons, dashes, question marks, exclamation points and quotation marks which often only serve to make the title longer and overly complex
- Apply the writing principles found in **Canada.ca Content Style Guide**

## 5. Event description template

Structure	Instruction
<p><b>Paragraph 1:</b></p> <p><b>Positioning statement</b></p> <p>(1 to 2 sentences max)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sets the context and positions the event</li><li>• Defines a term, makes a statement of fact or presents an issue</li><li>• Answers why this event is important now, within Canadian society, within government, at work or to the learners as a benefactor</li><li>• Answers why we are talking about this topic now</li></ul>
<p><b>Paragraph 2:</b></p> <p><b>Functional statement</b></p> <p>(1 to 3 sentences max, aim for 2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describes what the event will explore or bring to light</li><li>• Sets expectations on what will happen at the event</li><li>• Explains the objective(s) of the event or who will do what</li><li>• Indicates host organizations other than the School (optional)</li></ul> <p>• One of the sentences in this paragraph must begin with or contain "This [adjective] event..." or "...this [adjective] event will..."</p>
<p><b>Paragraph 3:</b></p> <p><b>Participant benefit statement</b></p> <p>(1to 2 sentences max)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explains what participants will learn or gain insight about</li><li>• Explains what will participants walk away with afterwards</li><li>• Offers an invitation to join/register/participate (optional)</li></ul>

**Paragraph 4 (optional):**

**Additional information**

(1 to 2 sentences max)

- Offers additional info/context/details about the event
- Gives credit to host organizations when co-hosted by multiple organization (optional)
- Presents a disclaimer or registration instructions
- May explain how the event format will work or be delivered
- Adds information about special guests, hosts or speakers, or event series

**Program/Agenda**

(Optional only)

**Speaker/Moderator**

Only include known information. Do not publish "TBD" or "Coming soon."

**Registration**

Must include:

Date and time; Registration deadline (date/time); Language; Location; Audience; Registration link; Technical support contact info

Other optional items such as speaker bios, photos or links to online resources can be added after the description as needed.

**Teaser**

When adding event descriptions into the School's new learning catalogue (Course Merchant), a one-sentence teaser description for all events is now required to display in the "product card", and must be written consistently for all events. The "This event..." line (see Paragraph 2, Functional statement) should be used for this purpose, as well as for re-use in the GCLearning email and our social channels.

**Note:** The teaser text should **not be written as new text**. It should consist only of text copied from the official description, most commonly copied from the "This event..." functional statement. However, it may be shortened or edited slightly as needed to fit the new context.

## 6. Event description examples

Additional examples can be found on the [Past events](#) web page.

Example 1:

### **Indigenous Cultural Safety in Quebec Urban Settings**

Cultural safety is about addressing the power imbalances inherent in society to create an environment in which people feel safe when receiving services.

This timely event features a panel discussion on cultural safety in Quebec urban settings where panellists will share their views, experiences and realities faced by Indigenous individuals and communities in Quebec. The panel also includes a psychologist who works with Indigenous individuals and who will bring this area of expertise to the discussion.

Participants will learn more about the concept of cultural safety, its importance, and what public servants can do to increase cultural safety when interacting with Indigenous individuals.

**(Teaser:** This timely event features a panel discussion on cultural safety in Quebec urban settings where panellists will share their views, experiences and realities faced by Indigenous individuals and communities in Quebec.)

Example 2:

### **Understanding Aging in Place: Improving Quality of Life Through Innovation**

The Canadian population is aging, and in the next 20 years, the senior population is expected to grow by 68%. Now, for those of us who are thinking of retirement or for those who will be caring for loved ones, innovations that support aging in homes and communities of choice will be critical.

This insightful event explores what aging in place means and looks at the partnerships, innovations, and policies that empower citizens to live safe, healthy, and well-supported lives within their own homes as they age.

Learn from guest experts as they showcase the innovative technologies currently available and being developed to support aging in place today and into the future.

(**Teaser:** This insightful event explores what aging in place means and looks at the partnerships, innovations, and policies that empower citizens to live safe, healthy, and well-supported lives within their own homes as they age.)

Example 3:

### **Approaches to Innovation in Government**

Governments must innovate continuously to address the increasingly complex internal and external pressures to which they are expected to respond. Successful innovation in government requires a public service that understands, tests and embraces new ways of doing things.

This forward-looking event will explore the importance of innovation in government and the different approaches to innovation being taken by governments around the world. Participants will learn about three examples within the Government of Canada, drawing on the activities of the Innovation Hubs and Labs community to explore:

1. successful models of each innovation practice
2. structural barriers each had to overcome
3. how areas of collaboration lead to the greatest benefits

(**Teaser:** This forward-looking event will explore the importance of innovation in government and the different approaches to innovation being taken by governments around the world.)

## Annex 2: Event description templates

### Basic template for event descriptions

**Event cataloguing topics and sub-topics** (to be completed by the business lines)

**Topics:** click on:

**Sub-topics:** click on:

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**Event manager | Gestionnaire d'événement:**

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**Event title**

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**Event description**

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**Event short description (teaser)**

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**Speaker(s)**

## Moderator

**Date and time:** March 17, 2021 | 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm (ET)

**Registration deadline:** March 17, 2021, 10:00 am (ET)

**Language:** Bilingual, with interpretation in both official languages

Other options for language:

- English, with interpretation in French
- French, with interpretation in English
- Bilingual, with interpretation in both official languages. American Sign Language and langue des signes québécoise interpretation will be provided. Communication access real-time translation (CART) services will be provided.
- Bilingual, with interpretation in both official languages. American Sign Language and langue des signes québécoise interpretation will be provided.

**Location:** This event will be delivered virtually. A link to the live broadcast will be provided to registered participants.

**Audience:** All public servants at all levels

Register for webcast



For technical support or help registering for this event, please email:  
[learningevents-evenementsdapprentissage@csps-efpc.gc.ca](mailto:learningevents-evenementsdapprentissage@csps-efpc.gc.ca)

## Template for event descriptions: Separate English and French sessions

**Event cataloguing topics and sub-topics** (to be completed by the business lines)

**Topics:** click on:  (Choose an item.)

**Sub-topics:** click on:  (Choose an item.)

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**Event manager | Gestionnaire d'événement:**

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**Event title**

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**Event description**

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**Event short description (teaser)**

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**English session | French session**

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- Date and time:** April 20, 2021 | 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm (ET)
- Registration deadline:** **April 20, 2021, 10:00 am (ET)**
- Language:** English
- Location:** This event will be delivered virtually. A link to the live broadcast will be provided to registered participants.
- Audience:** All public servants at all levels

Register for webcast (English session)

For technical support or help registering for this event, please email:  
[learningevents-evenementsdapprentissage@cspc-efpc.gc.ca](mailto:learningevents-evenementsdapprentissage@cspc-efpc.gc.ca)

**Speaker(s):**

**Moderator:**

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- Date and time:** April 20, 2021 | 10:30 am to 12:00 pm (ET)
- Registration deadline:** **April 19, 2021, 4:00 pm (ET)**
- Language:** French

**Location:** This event will be delivered virtually. A link to the live broadcast will be provided to registered participants.

**Audience:** All public servants at all levels

Register for webcast (French session)

For technical support or help registering for this event, please email:  
[learningevents-evenementsdapprentissage@cspc-efpc.gc.ca](mailto:learningevents-evenementsdapprentissage@cspc-efpc.gc.ca)

**Speaker(s):**

**Moderator:**

# Annex 3: Course description guidelines

How to write, format and structure a course description

**Updated:** May 25, 2022

**Inquiries:** [descriptions@cspes-efpc.gc.ca](mailto:descriptions@cspes-efpc.gc.ca)

## Introduction

This document presents the optimal structure when writing course descriptions appearing in the School's learning catalogue. Course descriptions should follow a common format to provide consistency and to help make each description more engaging, meaningful and informative. In addition, by providing a consistent format, course descriptions can be more easily compared with one another when learners are browsing through our catalogue looking for the course that is best suited to respond to their unique learning needs.

Having a consistent course description format will also allow for better content re-use, specifically so that the content can be cut/paste into related promotional messaging, rather than having to re-write and re-translate the content each time that a course is promoted.

## In this document

1. **Objectives**
2. **Description format**
3. **Course description examples**

## 1. Objectives

Words matter. It is important to capture the essence of the course in its description through carefully chosen context, concepts and keywords. Securing the attention and engaging the interest of the learner is crucial. **Course descriptions should be simple, clear and to the point.** This will allow learners to easily scan through the description to determine why the course is relevant to them, what the course is about and how they will benefit by completing it.

- Course descriptions should include the optimal keywords that will help the course to be found by search engines or other keyword filters; but at the same time should not be too long as to create descriptions that are overly complex to understand.
- These days, we know that our audience scans content and is looking for a quick read with maximum impact despite minimal effort. Course descriptions should get to the point and emphasize only the essential elements that will help a learner with their decision to register or not register, often with only the description to guide them.
- Since it is not always the learner who is reading the course descriptions – it could be their manager or another colleague – the description should avoid the use of "you" and "your".

## 2. Description format

Each course description must consist of a minimum/maximum of three sentences, each with its own unique purpose, followed by a "Topics include" section and optional section for "Notes":

Structure	Instruction
<b>Sentence 1:</b> <b>Context/positioning statement</b>	The first sentence introduces a fact or statement that proposes the context for why this course is relevant or is important, and should be relatable to either a general audience or to a specific target audience. It could also be used to explain a term that may need defining, or else introduce a parent program or suite that offers helpful context to the rest of the course description.

**Note:** Sentence 1 should not make any unsupported statements on behalf of the School or the GC (e.g. "All public servants must take this course...").

**Note:** Sentence 1 should not introduce an unsupported ideas without also explaining the 'why' or 'how' of it, ideally within a government or workplace text (e.g. Learning about digital is important...but why?).

**Sentence 2:**

**Functional statement**

The second sentence describes the course intent and outlines what will be discussed/taught. This sentence should typically begin with "This course [explores] / [reviews] / [examines] / [etc]...".

**Note:** Sentence 2 should **not** indicate the course type to the reader (e.g. "This classroom course...") since the delivery type or location may change or be offered through multiple types. However for online-self paced courses, this sentence should begin with "This online self-paced course..." to properly set expectations about self-paced vs instructor-led courses.

**Sentence 3:**

**Participant benefit statement**

The third sentence defines what participants are likely to learn or will 'walk away with' after completing the course. This sentence should typically begin with "Participants will [learn about] / [learn how to] / [expand their knowledge of] / [have opportunities to] / [acquire the skills to] / [etc]...".

**Note:** Sentence 3 should not make any promises about what the participant will be able to do afterwards (e.g. "At the end of this course, participants will be able to...") and should instead focus on what they will learn about (e.g. "Participants will learn about..." or "Participants will learn how to...").

<p><b>Topics include:</b></p> <p>* This section is mandatory for all courses.</p>	<p>In point form style, this section lists the primary topics covered throughout the course. Points should include additional keywords or concepts that have not been integrated into the first three sentences. A minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 bullet points are required and should typically start with a gerund (e.g. exploring..., examining..., understanding..., reviewing....).</p> <p>The heading "<b>Topics include:</b>" must appear before the bullet list.</p>
<p><b>Notes:</b></p> <p>* This section is optional.</p>	<p>This section can contain whatever supplemental information is deemed important to assisting with the course selection process. It can include additional description elements, additional bullet points, prerequisites, links to similar or alternative courses, links to parent programs or learning paths, disclaimers, logistics information, archival notices or other items.</p> <p>This section should be divided into subsections to help with readability and to keep similar thoughts together (e.g. "Notes:", "Prerequisites:", "Registration:").</p>

### 3. Course description examples

Additional examples can be found by visiting the [learning catalogue](#).

Example 1:

#### **Security Awareness (COR310)**

All public servants are required to contribute actively to the protection of government personnel, information, assets and services. This online self-paced course provides federal employees with the foundational knowledge

and tools needed to help them meet their responsibilities in support of the protection of information, individuals and assets, as outlined in the Policy on Government Security. Participants will learn about their role in applying Government of Canada security principles and best practices in their organization.

**Topics include:**

- implementing physical security measures
- understanding information management security
- understanding information technology security
- ensuring the safety and security of employees
- safeguarding against common security threats and risks

**Example 2:**

**Sharing a Vision (TRN121)**

To communicate a sense of vision with success, leaders need to demonstrate integrity and build trust with their listeners. This online self-paced course explores the nature and purpose of vision, as well as what is involved in communicating vision effectively. Participants will be introduced to a number of communication methods and techniques for personalizing and multiplying a clear message, expressing enthusiasm authentically, and helping employees align with the vision of the organization.

**Topics include:**

- identifying the elements of a vision statement
- describing the characteristics of effective vision communication
- applying communication approaches that resonate with employees
- reviewing techniques and methods for creating an effective message

**Example 3:**

**Positive Space Initiative: Becoming an Ambassador for LGBTQ2+ Inclusion (INC112)**

While much progress has been made, the LGBTQ2+ communities still face challenges with heterosexism, genderism, transphobia and homophobia, which can lead to individuals feeling unsafe at work. This course explains what it means to be a Positive Space ambassador and prepares individuals to offer support to their



colleagues as a Positive Space ambassador in the workplace. Through scenarios and practical exercises, participants will learn behaviours that can help bring diversity and inclusion into the modern workplace.

**Topics include:**

- defining the role of a Positive Space ambassador
- outlining helpful behaviours of ambassadors
- reviewing different support methods

**Notes:**

To effectively take on the role of a Positive Space ambassador, learners are expected to have taken Positive Space awareness training prior to registering for this course, such as [Positive Space Initiative: LGBTQ+ Awareness \(INC111\)](#) or an equivalent.