

The Chicago Manual of Style

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE
FOR WRITERS, EDITORS,
AND PUBLISHERS

18

The Chicago Manual of Style

EIGHTEENTH
EDITION

The University of Chicago Press
Chicago and London

The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 60637
The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London

© 2024 by The University of Chicago

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission, except in the case of brief quotations in critical articles and reviews. For more information, contact the University of Chicago Press, 1427 E. 60th St., Chicago, IL 60637.

First edition published 1906. Eighteenth edition 2024.

Printed in the United States of America

33 32 31 30 29 28 27 26 25 24 1 2 3 4 5

ISBN-13: 978-0-226-81797-2 (cloth)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7208/cmos18>

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Title: The Chicago manual of style.

Description: Eighteenth edition. | Chicago ; London : The University of Chicago Press, 2024. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2024009783 | ISBN 9780226817972 (cloth)

Subjects: LCSH: Printing—Style manuals. | Authorship—Style manuals. | Authorship—Handbooks, manuals, etc. | Publishers and publishing—United States—Handbooks, manuals, etc. | Authorship. | Writing.

Classification: LCC Z253 .U69 2024 | DDC 808.02/70973—dc23/eng/20240305

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2024009783>

© This paper meets the requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (Permanence of Paper).

The Chicago Manual of Style is a registered trademark of The University of Chicago.

used more sparingly. Editors should be prepared to account for these differences in register, context, and authorial style. Whatever choices are made should ultimately aim to serve the reader.

- 6.17 **Commas in pairs.** Whenever a comma is placed before an element to set it off from the surrounding text (such as “1920” or “Minnesota” in the first two examples below), a second comma is required if the phrase or sentence continues beyond the element being set off. This principle applies to many of the uses for commas described in this section. An exception is made for commas within the title of a work (third example); such commas are considered to be independent of the surrounding sentence.

August 18, 1920, was a good day for American women.

Sledding in Duluth, Minnesota, is facilitated by that city’s hills and frigid winters.

but

The title story in Bambara’s *Gorilla, My Love* had been published in *Redbook* magazine under a different title.

- 6.18 **Commas relative to parentheses and brackets.** When the context calls for a comma at the end of material in parentheses or brackets, the comma should follow the closing parenthesis or bracket. A comma never precedes a closing parenthesis. (For its rare appearance before an opening parenthesis, see the examples in 6.140.) Rarely, a comma may appear inside and immediately before a closing bracket as part of an editorial interpolation (as in the last example below; see also 12.70).

After several drummers had tried out for the part (the last having destroyed the kit), the band decided that a drum machine was their steadiest option. Her delivery, especially when she would turn to address the audience (almost as if to spot a long-lost friend), was universally praised.

“Conrad told his assistant [Martin], who was clearly exhausted, to rest.”

“The contents of the vault included fennel seeds, tweezers, [straight-edged razors,] and empty Coca-Cola cans.”

Series and the Serial Comma

- 6.19 **Serial commas.** Items in a series are normally separated by commas (but see 6.64). When a conjunction joins the last two elements in a series of three or more, a comma—known as the serial or series comma or the Oxford comma—should appear before the conjunction. Chicago

strongly recommends this widely practiced usage, blessed by Fowler and other authorities (see bibliog. 1.2), since it prevents ambiguity. If the last element consists of a pair joined by *and*, the pair should still be preceded by a serial comma and the first *and* (as in the last two examples below).

She posted pictures of her parents, the president, and the vice president.
Before heading out the door, he took note of the typical outlines of sweet gum,
ginkgo, and elm leaves.

I want no ifs, ands, or buts.

Paul put the kettle on, Don fetched the teapot, and I made tea.

Their wartime rations included cabbage, turnips, and bread and butter.

Ahmed was configuring updates, Jean was installing new hardware, and Alan
was running errands and furnishing food.

If the sentence continues beyond the series, add a comma only if one is required by the syntax of the surrounding sentence.

Apples, plums, and grapes can all be used to make wine.

but

Apples, plums, and grapes, available at most large grocery stores, can all be
used to make wine.

In the rare case where the serial comma does not prevent ambiguity, it may be necessary to reword. In the first example below, the repetition of *and* makes it clear that Madonna is not the writer's mother (and see the examples at the end of this paragraph). In the second example, "Madonna" might be read as an appositive (see 6.30).

I thanked my mother and Madonna and Lady Gaga.

not

I thanked my mother, Madonna, and Lady Gaga.

Note that the phrase *as well as* cannot substitute for *and* in a series of items.

The team fielded one Mazda, two Corvettes, and three Bugattis, as well as a
battered Plymouth Belvedere.

not

The team fielded one Mazda, two Corvettes, three Bugattis, as well as a battered
Plymouth Belvedere.

In a series whose elements are all joined by conjunctions, no commas are needed unless the elements are long and delimiters would be helpful.

Would you prefer Mendelssohn or Schumann or Liszt?

You can turn left at the second fountain and right when you reach the temple, or left at the third fountain and left again at the statue of Venus, or in whatever direction Google sends you.

- 6.20 **Commas with “etc.” and “et al.”** When used as the final element in a series, the abbreviation *etc.* (*et cetera*, literally “and others of the same kind”) and such equivalents as *and so forth* and *and the like* are preceded by a comma; they are followed by a comma only if required by the surrounding text. (According to a more traditional usage, such terms would be considered parenthetical and therefore set off by two commas.) In formal prose, Chicago prefers to limit the abbreviation *etc.* to parentheses, notes, and tabular matter. See also 5.254, under *etc.*

The map was far from complete (lacking many of the streets, alleys, etc. seen in earlier iterations).

The philosopher’s population studies, classic textbooks, stray notes, and so forth were found in the attic.

but

For a discussion of periods, commas, and the like, see chapter 6.

The abbreviation *et al.* (*et alia* [neut.], *et alii* [masc.], or *et aliae* [fem.], literally “and others”), whether used in regular text or (more often) in bibliographic references, should be treated like *etc.* When *et al.* follows a single item (e.g., “Jones et al.”), it requires no preceding comma. (Nor is a preceding comma required in the rare case that *etc.* follows a single item.) Note that neither *etc.* nor *et al.* is italicized in normal prose (see the first example above).

- 6.21 **Omitting serial commas before ampersands.** When an ampersand is used instead of the word *and* (as in company names), the serial comma is omitted.

Winken, Blinken & Nod is a purveyor of nightwear.

See also 13.90, 14.34.

Commas with Independent Clauses

- 6.22 **Commas with independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction.** When independent clauses are joined by *and*, *but*, *or*, *so*, *yet*, or any other coordinating conjunction, a comma usually precedes the conjunction. If the clauses are very short and closely connected, the comma may