

ILA STYLE GUIDE

The main purpose of the ILA Style Guide is to ensure that the style used in ILA's in-house publications and communications (e.g. newsletters, conference program books, association emails) is clear and consistent. Due to our global, multidisciplinary membership, the ILA follows, in general, the style of the Associated Press (AP) with the UNESCO manual for English language publications also being used as a reference. These professional style manuals are international in nature and they value clarity. For formatting of references, we usually follow APA. The ILA Style Guide is not a comprehensive manual, but rather a handy sheet for resolving common confusions in ILA communication. It is also a living document and will be revised as new style questions arise and are agreed upon.

Spelling, Foreign, & Special Words

- American English should be used (not British English).
- Geographical names should be spelled according to the official usage of the country concerned
- Names of departments and organizations that are used in people's affiliations should be spelled according to the official usage of the organization. In program books, the word "Department" should not be used.
- Foreign words and phrases that a) are not proper nouns and b) have not become anglicized (e.g., perestroika) should be italicized and, with the exception of Arabic transliterations, should include any appropriate diacritical marks.
- Specialized or otherwise emphasized words should be italicized.
- Use double quotes around a word or phrase for direct quotation or to indicate irony.
- Spell out numbers up to ten. 11 and above should be numerals.

Capitalization

- Capitalize the first word of the title, the last word of the title, all principal words (i.e. nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, subordinating conjunctions, and prepositions that are used adjectivally or adverbially), and all words that are longer than three letters.
- If the first letter of a hyphenated, compound word is capitalized, the first letter after the hyphen should also be capitalized unless the only reason for capitalization is that it started a sentence.
- Do not capitalize models and theories (if someone's name is part of the model or theory, capitalize only their name), but do capitalize test names as they are considered titles/proper nouns.
- Capitalize acronyms but note that when an acronym is spelled out the words within it may not be capitalized according to the rules already noted.

Punctuation & Other Marks

- Serial (Oxford) commas should be used. For example: We bought apples, bananas, and grapes.
- Punctuation is used inside of quotation marks and outside of parentheses.

- **Em Dash:** Em dashes can be used in place of commas, parentheses, or colons. In the place of commas, they enhance readability. Em dashes are less formal than parenthesis and draw more attention to the parenthetical content. Em dashes can be used in place of a colon to emphasize the conclusion of the sentence. While most style guides do not insert a space before and after the em dash, AP style does and so does ILA.
- **En Dash:** En dashes are usually used to represent a span or range of numbers, dates, or times. It can replace the words “to” or “through.” En dashes can also be used between words that are connected in some way. For example, “the Baltimore-Detroit flight.”
- **Hyphens:** Hyphens are usually only used for compound words. ILA does not hyphenate words for the purposes of line breaks. Instead, the full word is used on the next line.
- **Semicolons:** Avoid the use of semicolons. Instead, write one sentence with a connector (e.g., a conjunction) or write two sentences. If a presenter in a concurrent session guide has more than one affiliation, use a semicolon in between the affiliations.
- **Spacing:** Use one space in between sentences, not two.
- **Italics:** Italicize titles of books, art, movies, etc. that are mentioned in the body of a text or title. If needed, italics can be used for emphasis or specialized language, but use these sparingly!

Avoiding Bias and Stereotypes

- Use “older people” not elderly, etc.
- Use “people with autism” not autistics, “people with a disability” not the disabled, etc.
- Do not use language that victimizes. For example, use “wheelchair user” not “confined to a wheelchair.”
- Avoid gender-specific words. For example, use “chairperson” not chairman, “executive” not businessman/woman, or “non-specialist” instead of layman.
- Avoid using first and second person (singular or plural) personal pronouns like I, we, our, me, mine, you, your, and us.
- Avoid using America. Instead use U.S. as a descriptor and U.S.A. for the country. Use United Kingdom or U.K. unless there is a reason to specify England or Great Britain (England, Scotland, and Wales).

Additional Style Notes for ILA Conference Programs

- Watch tense in concurrent session guides. Use future tense when talking about presentations or workshops (e.g., this presentation will link or this workshop will provide). Use present tense when talking about papers (e.g., this paper argues). In general, use past tense when talking about studies or research (e.g., this study explored, research indicated, the project shed light on). There can be exceptions, but there needs to be a logical reason for them. For example, if the study is ongoing, present tense is appropriate: this study explores.
- Watch starting every description in the session guide with “This session” or “This presentation” etc. This gets repetitious.