

Purpose

The Society for Applied Microbiology Style Guide aims to provide a guide to writing and formatting documents written by persons on behalf of the Society. It is part of the Society's branding toolkit which enables the Society's formal documentation to be presented consistently across all communications.

The style guide is not intended for public or external use and does not purport to compete or replace the Wiley-Blackwell House Style Guide for use by contributors to the SfAM journals.

Other information on Society branding, including the use of the logo, can be found online at www.sfam.org.uk/about-us/contact-us.html.

Queries

If you have any queries about using this guide, please contact:

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Brand colours

There are three primary brand colours for the Society for Applied Microbiology:



Pantone **540C**
CMYK: C **100** M **57** Y **12** K **70**
RGB: R **0** G **51** B **89**

This colour is in the 's' and 'm' of the SfAM logo.



Pantone **5425C**
CMYK: C **45** M **16** Y **9** K **26**
RGB: R **125** G **154** B **170**

This colour is in the 'f' of the SfAM logo.

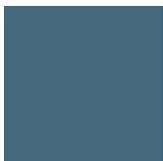


Pantone **032C**
CMYK: C **0** M **87** Y **60** K **0**
RGB: R **237** G **41** B **57**

This colour is in the 'a' of the SfAM logo.



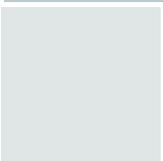
There are also three secondary brand colours for the Society for Applied Microbiology:



Pantone **5405c**
CMYK: C **68** M **35** Y **17** K **49**
RGB: R **68** G **105** B **125**



Pantone **5445C**
CMYK: C **21** M **5** Y **4** K **8**
RGB: R **185** G **201** B **208**



Pantone **7541C**
CMYK: C **5** M **1** Y **2** K **2**
RGB: R **224** G **230** B **230**

Abbreviations

Avoid abbreviations whenever possible. Don't use the abbreviation if it only appears once, unless it's more commonly used than the full term (see below for examples).

Define each abbreviation the first time you use it in a section (under one heading) and add the abbreviation in parentheses after it. For example, 'antimicrobial resistance (AMR)' and 'Public Health England (PHE)'. Capital initial letters are not necessary/desirable in the full term (unless a proper noun); for example, the 'r' of 'resistance'. If not at the beginning of a sentence, the 'a' of 'antimicrobial' should also be lower case for consistency. It is acceptable for an abbreviation to be defined on the second usage if the first usage is in a heading.

Don't use full stops in abbreviations (UK, NHS) or after contractions (Ms, Dr) or initials (Mr WH Pierce).

Many common abbreviations are better known than what they stand for, so they don't need to be defined. Therefore, don't define:

- UK
- US/USA (Use 'US' for the adjective and 'USA' for the noun)
- NHS
- GP
- BMI
- DNA
- RNA
- MRI
- CT
- PCR
- AIDS
- HIV
- USB
- UV
- UNICEF.

Where possible try to not use Latin abbreviations such as 'e.g.', 'i.e.' and 'etc.', but instead use phrases ('for example', 'such as', 'that is' and 'so on'). If necessary, however, punctuate with full stops.

- e.g.

Do not place an apostrophe between an abbreviation and 's' when using the plural form. For example, MPs not MP's and 1980s not 1980's.

Make sure the correct use of 'a' and 'an' are used before abbreviations/acronyms. It's how it's said that matters. Letters like 'M' and 'N' start with a vowel sound so need 'an' not 'a'.

- a methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* isolate but **an** MRSA isolate.

Ampersands

Always use 'and' instead of an ampersand (&) unless the ampersand is part of an official name, for example, 'Department of Communications & Marketing' or 'Marks & Spencer'.

Ampersands can be used in navigation menus if space is limited.

Books/films/songs/games

Titles should be written in title case. This means only using capital letters for all the principal words of the title except articles (a/an/the), prepositions (to/on/for) and conjunctions (but/and).

- *On the Origin of Species*
- *A Brief History of Time*
- 'Bohemian Rhapsody'
- *Blue Planet II*
- 'Freddie Starr Ate My Hamster'

Bullet points

Use bullet points when listing information that isn't in a specific order; otherwise use a numbered list. Stick to one idea per bullet point.

If the text that follows the bullet point is a complete sentence, or follows a heading, it should start with a capital letter and end with a full stop.

Priorities for SfAM in 2018

- Promote the application of microbiology in all relevant areas.
- Expand our early career scientist network.
- Project the Society's policy work nationally and internationally.

When using a bulleted list after an introduction you should start each bullet point with a lower case letter (unless it starts with a proper noun, such as 'Charles Darwin House', 'Lucy Harper' or 'GCSE level'). The text introducing the list of bullet points should end with a colon

and you should use a full stop after the final bullet point, if the bullet points are a continuation of the sentence starting with the introductory words.

In this example, a full stop after 'internationally' completes the sentence beginning 'Following the strategy review...'

Following the strategy review, the Society has defined its priorities for 2018 as:

- promoting the application of microbiology in all relevant areas
- expanding our early career scientist network
- projecting the Society's policy work nationally and internationally.

Capital letters

Use lower case as much as possible. Do not use a capital letter unless it is absolutely required. Company names such as SfAM and LinkedIn may feature unusual capitalisation (or lack of capitalisation); try to follow the company's convention, even if it looks unusual.

Use sentence case in headlines: 'University staff demand more applied microbiology courses' (not 'University Staff Demand More Applied Microbiology Courses'). Follow a colon in headlines with a lower case, not capital, letter.

Capital letters and Roman text are used for the titles of events and grants, such as the 'Environmental Microbiology Lecture' and the Don Whitley ECS Travel Grant.

The Society uses capital 'S' when referring to the Society for Applied Microbiology, but when society is used in a general way, e.g. 'working within a learned society can be enjoyable' (meaning any society), the 's' should remain lower case.

Capital letters are not generally used for positions/job titles such as chief executive, unless the term is serving as an actual title – just as you would on a business card or email signature.

- Lucy Harper is the chief executive of SfAM.
- Chief Executive Lucy Harper produced a three-year strategic plan for the Society for Applied Microbiology.
- We will be advertising for the position of membership coordinator in the *Guardian* newspaper.

Qualifications and degree titles should also be capitalised e.g. GCSEs in Mathematics, Chemistry and History and a BA Honours in History.

Specific words

Fellow/Member – capitalise fellow/member only when used as part of a formal title or when referring to a specific individual, not when referring to fellows or members in general. When a person is generically referred to as having received an SfAM fellowship, use lower case fellow; when the fellowship is specifically named, capitalise the word:

- For you to qualify to be an SfAM Fellow, your work must have significantly impacted scientific research and advanced the field of microbiology.
- SfAM members continue to engage with the government on several policy issues.

Government – never capitalise, whether referring to a specific country's government or the concept of a government.

- The British government is the government of the UK.
- We will decide a course of action when the government states its policy on food safety.

Copyright

Permission must be obtained to use any material (for example, charts, illustrations and photos) that has not been originated by the author. Once permission has been confirmed then identify the source as an image caption or footnote text: Reproduced by permission of xx or © Photographer name.

Always source quotations: Mark Fielder, Professor of Medical Microbiology.

Commas

It is advised not using the comma before a conjunction unless needed to avoid ambiguity:

- The jumper is available in green, yellow and white.
- The jumper is available in green, yellow, and black and white.
- I would like to thank my parents, Mark Fielder, and Lucy Harper.

The other main example of using them for clarity is where a pair of commas are used parenthetically. Frequently authors insert one of a pair of commas that are being used like brackets but miss the second comma out. For example, 'Mark has been a microbiologist for over 25 years, and a scientist for even longer giving him the necessary experience to become the President of the Society for Applied Microbiology'. The 'and a scientist for even longer' is an aside that would be spoken as if in brackets so it needs a comma either side, even though that means a comma following the 'and'.

Commas after 'however' are a similar stumbling block as 'however' has two uses and a comma clarifies how to read the sentence. For example:

- However you look at it, we have different perspectives.
- However, you look at it from a different perspective.

More and more people seem to want to use 'however' as a conjunction, comparable to "but" or "yet." So they will write something like:

- The results were unexpected, however we observed some interesting trends.

This needs to be one of the following:

- The results were unexpected; however, we observed some interesting trends
- The results were unexpected. However, we observed some interesting trends.
- The results were unexpected but we observed some interesting trends.

Date format

Use the format 17 February 2018. Do not use ordinal numbers in dates (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th etc) or precede dates with 'the'. If days of the week need to be used, this is the only time a comma in a date is allowed, e.g. Tuesday, 9 June 2015.

Email and web addresses

Email addresses and URLs should appear in lower case, not underlined (unless they are links), for example, name@sfam.org.uk and www.sfam.org.uk. End with a full stop if the address appears at the end of a sentence.

Format

Articles to SfAM should be submitted in MS Word and spacing should be 1.5 lines, and written in Arial font, size 11 point. First-level and second-level headings: 11 pt Arial, Roman, bold, sentence case. Two spaces after a full stop are no longer needed.

Figures and captions

Reports should reference Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3 etc. Use sentence case for captions.

File naming

For files made downloadable online, use lower case letters and substitute spaces with dashes: chart-showing-migration-of-birds.pdf.

Gender neutral language

SfAM recommends using gender neutral language by avoiding the problem by changing sentences to the plural or eliminating the pronoun altogether. For example, sentence (1) can be revised to (2):

Each participant returned his portfolio.

The participants returned their portfolios. (plural)

Each participant returned a portfolio. (elimination)

Headings

Headings, headlines and subheadings take an initial capital only.

Homophones

Homophones are words that sound alike but are spelled differently. Below are some commonly confused and misused words.

Affect/effect – the verb ‘to affect’ means ‘to have an influence on’; ‘to effect’ means ‘to cause, accomplish’. In most cases ‘affect’ will be the verb, ‘effect’ the noun (e.g. the placebo effect).

Complement/compliment – to complement means to ‘make complete’ or ‘supply what is lacking’. Whether as a noun or verb, compliment means (to) praise.

Defuse/diffuse – first is to make an explosive safe; second is something that’s widespread.

Discreet/discrete – first means ‘careful’ or ‘tactful’; second means ‘distinct and separate’.

Formerly/formally – first means ‘previously’; second means ‘according to convention’.

Gate/gait – first is an entry; second is a manner of walking.

Hangar/hanger – a hangar is where aircraft are kept; a hanger is for putting clothes on.

Hyperthermia/hypothermia – first is where the body temperature is greatly above normal; second is where the body temperature is markedly below normal.

Illicit/elicit – first means ‘illegal’; second is to extract something, usually information.

Licence/license – the noun is always licence with a ‘c’ (driving licence); the verb and adjective can be either ‘c’ or ‘s’. (Licence to Kill, the licensing authority must license the use of the vaccine). SfAM will use ‘s’ for consistency for the verb and adjective.

Practice/practise – the noun has a ‘c’; the verb has an ‘s’. He’s a practising dentist running his own dental practice.

Principal/principle – first means ‘first in order of importance’ (e.g. a school head); second means ‘a rule or belief governing one’s personal behaviour’.

Rein/reign – first is used on horses; second is what monarchs do.

Hyphens (-) and en dashes (–)

When an adverb is used to qualify an adjective, if the adverb is not readily identifiable as an adverb, it should be hyphenated. For instance, in the phrase 'deep blue sea', 'deep' could be an adverb to indicate the depth of the colour (deep blue) or that the blue sea contains deep water. To demonstrate that 'deep' is being used to qualify the adjective 'blue', the phrase is hyphenated: 'deep-blue sea'.

Adverbs that end in 'ly' do not use hyphens, e.g. slowly moving train, finely tuned spectrometer.

The general rule for words that begin with a prefix is not to hyphenate except to avoid a double e or double i: antidepressant, anti-inflammatory, antiterrorism, autoimmune, autopilot, coeducation, coexist, cooperate, coordinate, intergalactic, minibreak, minibus, miniseries, mishandle, mishit, multi-instrumentalist, multimillionaire, neonatal, overambitious, overreact, overripe, polytheism, postnatal, preassemble, pre-empt, preindustrial, preorder, reappearance, re-entry, reinvent, reoccupy, semibreve, semicolon, semiconductor, superefficient, transatlantic, uncooperative. Another general rule is to consider whether the lack of a hyphen leads to confusion e.g. un-ionised rather than unionised or non-ionised rather than nonionised as ionisation not related to unions or onions!

Prefixes present special problems. We do tend to use hyphens after the prefix to avoid the possibility of mispronouncing words or creating new ones. It is also correct usage to include a hyphen if the word following the prefix begins with a number or capital letter.

- non-English, not nonEnglish
- non-native, not nonnative
- non-stop, not nonstop
- re-living, not reliving
- mis-sell, not missell.

Use your judgement and put a hyphen in if you can see a problem without it, but otherwise leave it out.

Ages are also hyphenated as nouns (a class of five-year-olds) and adjectives (a 15-year-old boy), and a hyphen marks an abbreviated expression like 60- and 70-year-olds.

En dashes

The en dash mainly joins inclusive numerals, between which the word 'to' is intended. If an en dash is used in ranges of numbers, do not precede with 'from' or 'between' etc. ('4–6' but 'from 4 to 6' or 'between 4 and 6'). To insert the en dash on a windows keyboard with a number pad: hold down the [Alt] key and type 0150 on the numeric keypad. Alternatively, choose 'Symbol' from the Insert menu, click the 'Special Characters' tab, highlight the en dash, and click 'Insert'.

- chapters 13–24
- 25–50 MP3 players
- pages 3–8
- the 1986–1987 term

The en dash also joins the names of any pair of equal things such as Mueller–Hinton, Sigma–Aldrich, host–parasite relationship, blood–brain barrier and North–South divide.

Italics

Use italics for non-English words, book/journal titles, films and talks (e.g. Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*), but not for song titles. Most foreign words (including unassimilated Latin words) in English should be in italics, and any accent shown: *cause célèbre*, *in situ*, *in vitro*, *in vivo*, *raison d'être*, *mañana*.

Foreign and Latin words which have become accepted English words should not be put in italics, though they should preserve any accent necessary to indicate their pronunciation in English:

- post-mortem
- vice versa
- café
- cliché.

For readability, avoid using italics for emphasis in running text as much as possible. Do not use italics in headlines. Do not italicise hyperlinked text, even when the text is a title or word that is normally italicised in running text.

Binomial microbe names, consisting of a generic name and specific identifier, such as *Escherichia coli*, should be used for most microorganisms. A specific identifier must be preceded by a generic name, written out in full the first time it is used. Thereafter, the generic name should be abbreviated to the initial capital letter, (*E. coli* using the example given above) provided there can be no confusion with other genera used in the paper.

Genus used alone may be used in the plural (not italicized) if it refers to all species within that genus.

- the streptococci are ubiquitous...

Use Roman font for bacterial taxonomy higher than genus/species/subspecies.

For *Salmonella*, genus, species and subspecies names should be rendered in standard form: *Salmonella enterica* at first use, *S. enterica* thereafter; *Salmonella enterica* subsp. *arizonae* at first use, *S. enterica* subsp. *arizonae* thereafter. Names of serovars should not be italicised and the first letter should be capitalised: *Salmonella enterica* serovar Typhimurium. After the first use, the serovar may also be given without a species name: *Salmonella* Typhimurium, *S. Typhimurium*, or *Salmonella* serovar Typhimurium.

Common names of viruses are written differently as a virus is not a species, it belongs to a species. There may be occasions when the taxonomy of a virus needs to be communicated, but generally we refer to viruses by name and not species.

Do not italicise a virus name and capitals should only be used at the start of a sentence, for proper nouns and for single letters in virus names (including alphanumerical strain designations).

For example, Ebola virus (species *Zaire ebolavirus*; genus *Ebolavirus*; family *Filoviridae*; order *Mononegavirales*) can cause disease in humans.

Measurements

Use SI units except for mmHg (for blood pressure) and other situations in which non-SI units are standard (for example, mL for millilitres). For some audiences you might want to use imperial measurements, for instance to describe weight. In these cases, always include the metric equivalent in brackets. Spell out imperial units rather than abbreviating them (inches not "). Always use numerals with unit symbols (9 g, not nine g).

Leave a space between a number and unit of measurement (110 km, not 110km) apart from non-alphabetic units such as %, °C and ° (when not used for temperature, e.g. angles).

Use 'L' instead of 'l' for litre (even though 'l' strictly correct) to avoid confusion with the numeral '1'.

Numbers

Write one to nine as words, 10 upwards as numbers. Commas mark off thousands, other than in years, (1,500 cm, £100,000). Use numbers throughout for ranges of numbers which

would otherwise mix words and numbers (members aged 8–40; anywhere between 5 and 500 miles from the event).

Large numbers that are approximate should be styled three million, 11 billion.

Paragraphs

Use one line space between paragraphs and do not indent the first line of a paragraph.

Parentheses

Please use this order for multiple parentheses:

{{(…)}}.

Percentages

Always use figures and symbols for percentages, (78% of microbiologists, not seventy-eight percent).

References/Further reading

Books, papers or electronic journal articles, for example, are written in the Vancouver format. The style was developed by the US National Library of Medicine (NLM). The NLM has a website page (https://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html) which gives sample references for different circumstances and should be considered as the authoritative style.

Variations

- Further reading lists for SfAM magazines, blogs and articles should be in alphabetical order by author/editor and if more than one piece of work is by the same author, the works should be listed in date order, beginning with the most recently published work.
- When using references directly within text then a number series must be used.
- Superscript numbers¹ should not be used as an alternative to brackets (1).
- Full journal titles are required.
- Do not to use the 'Footnotes' function in Word (This adds superscript numbers in the text and then puts the references in a footnote at the bottom of each page.)

Author names

Authors should be listed by surname then initials.

- Sainsbury PD, Harper L, Sellwood CG.

Note the absence of commas and full stops except to separate individuals or end the list.

If there are more than six authors, list the first six followed by *et al.*

- Sainsbury PD, Hardiman EM, Ahmad M, Otani H, Seghezzi N, Eltis LD *et al.*

Book (order)

- Author/Editor(s) – if editor put (editor.) after the name
- Title – in italics and title case
- Edition – if not the first edition
- (Place of publication: Publisher, Year of publication) – note the use of round brackets, colon and comma.
- Page number – use p. before a single page number and pp. where there are multiple pages. Use a space after p. or pp.
- No final full stop

Petroski H. *The Essential Engineer: Why Science Alone Will Not Solve Our Global Problems*. 2nd Edition. (New York, USA: Penguin Random House, 2011) pp. 32–35

Journal article:

- Author(s) – see above for multiple authors
- Title of journal article – in sentence case, followed by full stop
- Full title of journal – in italics
- Year of publication – followed by semicolon
- Volume number (issue number) – followed by comma
- Page number(s) – separated by en dash – do not use ‘p.’ or ‘pp.’ before the page numbers
- No final full stop

Sainsbury PD, Hardiman EM, Ahmad M, Otani H, Seghezzi N, Eltis LD *et al.* Breaking down lignin to high-value chemicals: the conversion of lignocellulose to vanillin in a gene deletion mutant of *Rhodococcus jostii* RHA1. *ACS Chemical Biology* 2013; 8(10), 2151–2156

If electronic version:

- URL – full web address
- (date accessed) – [Accessed...]

Sainsbury PD, Hardiman EM, Ahmad M, Otani H, Seghezzi N, Eltis LD *et al.* Breaking down lignin to high-value chemicals: the conversion of lignocellulose to vanillin in a gene deletion mutant of *Rhodococcus jostii* RHA1. *ACS Chemical Biology* 2013; 8(10), 2151–2156
<https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/cb400505a> [Accessed 20th January 2019]

Web page/website

- Author/Editor – use the corporate author if no individual author or editor is named
- Title of internet site/page –in italics, sentence case, followed by full stop
- URL – full web address
- (date accessed) – [Accessed...]
- No final full stop

Cartwright A. *Overcoming challenges*. <https://sfam.org.uk/resources/overcoming-challenges.html> [Accessed 20th January 2019]

Scientific and medical terms

Use phase I, II, III or IV (that is, Roman numerals and a lower case p) when describing phases in clinical trials.

Use UK English spellings from the Oxford Dictionary (for example, colour, tumour, authorise, optimise and leukaemia).

Use the plural phages or bacteriophages when describing more than one type of phage.

See list for some important examples and exceptions:

- adviser, not advisor
- among, not amongst
- dietitian, not dietician
- foetus, not fetus
- faeces, not feces
- focused/focusing, not focussed/focussing
- formulas, not formulae
- gonorrhoea not gonorrhea
- leukocyte, not leucocyte
- sulfur/sulfate, not sulphur/sulphate
- naive, not naïve
- homeopathy, not homœopathy
- recurring, not reoccurring
- targeted, not targetted
- while, not whilst.

Showing respect

Use:

- deaf/blind people, not the deaf/blind
- people with disabilities, not disabled people
- wheelchair users, not people in wheelchairs
- people with AIDS, not AIDS victims
- elderly people, not the elderly or old people
- ethnic minority group/community or minority ethnic group/community, not ethnic group/community or ethnics
- developed (or industrialised) and developing countries/nations (not underdeveloped or Third World).

Spelling

Always use British spelling rather than American spelling.

Take particular care to use -ise (and -isation) rather than -ize (and -ization) at the end of words. The main practical reason is that this simplifies spelling, leaving only one word – capsize – as an exception. For example:

- recognise, not recognize
- organisation, not organization
- standardise, not standardize.

Ensure that your spellchecker is set to check UK English. Always spellcheck your work before publishing it.

Only follow US spellings when proper nouns, such as Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Defense and World Health Organization, and when referring to titles of books and journals, such as ‘Optimization and Applicability of Bioprocesses’ and ‘Journal of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology’. Spellings should all be as used in the original publication.

Society for Applied Microbiology or SfAM?

These terms are interchangeable and can either be alternated for variety or kept the same for consistency. However, when abbreviated the ‘f’ is to be lower case and not italicised.

Telephone numbers

Use the format:

Tel: +44 (0)1223 333308.

Times

Use the 24-hour clock. The 24-hour clock uses a colon and omits am/pm (the lecture starts at 09:30 and ends at 13:00). When using en dashes to separate a 24-hour clock time range, use spaced en dashes as an exception to the general rule (09:45 – 10:15).

When writing about an event that people can access online across the world, add GMT after the time (the live tweet chat session will start at 14:30 GMT).