

Writing for the Government of Yukon

Use this guide whenever you write for the Government of Yukon, whether you're writing internal documents or for the public.

Our role as a government is to serve the public, so we want our writing to be clear and easy to understand and have a friendly, inclusive and open tone. We also want to be consistent throughout the government.

Here's what you'll find in this guide.

- [A to Z of Government of Yukon style](#)
- [Writing clearly and inclusively](#)
- [Grammar and punctuation](#)
- [Tips and tools](#)

What to ask yourself whenever you write for the Government of Yukon.

- Am I following Government of Yukon style?
- Am I writing in plain language?
- Am I writing inclusively and respectfully?
- Have I made any grammatical or punctuation mistakes?

What is Government of Yukon style?

Start by reading the one-page [Government of Yukon style in a nutshell](#). You might not have to look any further for what you need.

Is this the same style guide I've already been using?

Yes, this is the same style guide but we've updated it and expanded it. We're also making it easier for you to use online by organizing the information better.

Here's a quick [overview](#) of the main changes we've made since we published the original version of the style guide.

Who is this guidance for?

It's for all Government of Yukon staff. Most of it is also available publicly so you can share it with contractors who do work for you. You can also share it with other governments and organizations.

Does this guide apply to online writing as well?

Yes, and you should also follow the advice at [writing for gov.ca](#).



Is there any training I can take?

Yes. If you'd like to take part in an information session or a longer workshop about how to write for the government, or would like a session tailored for your team, contact ecoinfo@gov.yk.ca.

Get in touch

If you have any comments about Government of Yukon style or have any queries, email the Communications team in the Executive Council Office at ecoinfo@gov.yk.ca.

A to Z of Government of Yukon style

There are three steps to Government of Yukon style.

1. Take a look at the one-page [government style in a nutshell](#) to see if what you need is there.
2. If it isn't, look for it in the [contents](#) on this site.
3. We base our style on existing reference books as much as possible, so if what you need isn't on this site, take a look at these books:

[Canadian Oxford Dictionary](#)

[The Canadian Style: A Guide to Writing and Editing](#)

[The Canadian Press Stylebook](#)

[The Canadian Press Caps and Spelling](#)

Just ask

If you can't find what you're looking for, just ask. Talk to your department's Communications staff or email the Executive Council Office Communications team at ecoinfo@gov.yk.ca. We're always happy to help.

Where can I get these books?

Your communications colleagues probably have copies you can use. You can buy the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* through Government of Yukon [Central Stores](#). Go to [The Canadian Press](#) site for online subscriptions to the *Stylebook* and *Caps and Spelling* or to buy hard copies.

What if I'm writing scientific and technical documents?

Go to [technical and scientific reports](#).

What if I'm working on legislation?

Legislation is drafted by the Government of Yukon's Legislative Counsel Office who follow a standardized style.



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Writing in Government of Yukon style
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Abbreviations and acronyms

Avoid using abbreviations and acronyms if you possibly can. Don't use them in public information materials. Your readers don't want to keep having to check what an acronym stands for, plus capital letters are always harder to read.

The exceptions are acronyms that have become part of the culture, such as the RCMP, CBC, MLA.

Write provinces and territories in full if you can. If you do use abbreviations, don't use periods.

Not: N.W.T., B.C., P.E.I.

But: the NWT, BC, PEI

Rather than use an acronym for a department or branch, use the name in full, such as "the Yukon Mineral Exploration Program" or "Health and Social Services" and then after that just write "the program" or "the department".

If you feel you must use an acronym, make sure you write the name in full first and then immediately write the acronym in brackets afterwards. For example, "the Communications Review Committee (CRC)..." If you find you need to use several acronyms, include them in a glossary and put the glossary at the beginning of your document, not at the end. Make it as easy as possible for your readers to understand what you have written.

Aboriginal Peoples

See Indigenous Peoples.

Acts and regulations

Once an act has been assented to or a regulation has been passed, write the name in full and put it in italics. If the act or regulation has been passed but not yet proclaimed, still use italics.

Not: the Motor Vehicles Regulation has been passed

But: the *Motor Vehicles Regulation* has been passed

Only put acts and regulations in italics once they have been passed.

Once you've used the full name of the act or regulation, you can just refer to it as "the Act" or "the Regulation."



Use uppercase when you're referring to a specific act ("Act") or regulation ("Regulation"). If you're referring to acts and regulations in a general way, use lowercase ("act", "regulation").

As new regulations are being drafted, our style is to use the singular, so when you're referring to a new regulation, use the singular, not the plural. However, if you are citing an existing regulation and it uses the plural, use the plural. The [Legislative Counsel Office](#) can help you if you need guidance.

Not: Regulations

But: Regulation

Until an act has been passed, it should be referred to as a bill.

Not: the Archives and Public Records Management Act

But: the Archives and Public Records Management Bill

If an act has yet to be passed but for some reason you need to refer to it as an act rather than a bill, don't write it in italics.

Not: The Government of Yukon is committed to creating a *Cupcake Act* soon.

But: The Government of Yukon is committed to creating a Cupcake Act soon.

Use uppercase, not lowercase, when you are referring to a specific act, regulation or bill, or a schedule in an act.

Not: act, regulation, bill, schedule

But: Act, Regulation, Bill, Schedule

Use lowercase, however, when you're writing about acts and regulations generally.

Whenever a minister's quotation, for example in a news release, refers to an act or to a regulation, write the name in full.

Don't italicize act acronyms. Only use an acronym for an act if your audience will know what it means.

Not: YESAA

But: YESAA

If you want to refer to a bill formally, write:

the Bill: *An Act to Amend the Cupcake Act*



Check you're using the correct name of the act you're referring to. Many act and regulation names, for example, don't have "Yukon" in them. If it does, it's because it relates to something that has Yukon in its name, such as Yukon College or Yukon Development Corporation. If you're unsure, check the [Government of Yukon Acts and Regulations](#) web page.

Not: *Yukon Agricultural Products Act*

But: *Yukon's Agricultural Products Act, the Yukon Agricultural Products Act*

Citations

In Yukon, when we refer to (or "cite") legislation in legal documents, we cite statutes as statutes of Yukon (SY) with the year, followed by the chapter number. For example, SY 2016, c.8. Statutes from the 2002 revision follow the same formula but with RSY 2002. Citations in acts do not include act names. When we cite a regulation, we use its Order-in-Council number. For more information about citations, talk to the [Legislative Counsel Office](#).

Addresses

Follow Canada Post's guidelines at:

www.canadapost.ca/tools/pg/manual/pgaddress-e.asp.

Government of Yukon
Main Administration Building
2071 Second Avenue
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 1B2

And (ampersand)

Not: &

But: and

Appendices

Use appendix sections (appendices) for more detailed information that may be needed by some readers but which would interrupt the flow for most readers.

Bills

See acts and regulations.

Boards and committees

We treat boards and committees as proper nouns so they should be capitalized.

Not: Accessibility Advisory committee, Mayo Housing Advisory board

But: Accessibility Advisory Committee, Mayo Housing Advisory Board

Once you have used the full name, avoid then referring to the board or committee by its acronym. Instead, just write “the board” or “the committee.”

Branch

See unit, branch, division.

Bullet point lists

We follow the [Plain English Campaign's guidance](#) when we format bullet point lists. There are two main types of list.

- A list that is a continuous sentence with several points picked out.
- A list of separate points with an introductory statement.

With a list that's part of a continuous sentence, put semicolons (;) after each point and start each point with a lowercase letter. Make sure each point follows logically and grammatically from the introduction.

Jean needed to take:

- a penknife;
- some string;
- a pad of paper; and
- a pen.

Here's an example of a list where each point is separate and not part of one continuous sentence.

Jean needed to take the following.

- A penknife.
- Some string.
- A pad of paper.
- A blue pen.

Here's an example of a longer list which is a continuous sentence (this example is based on [A Northern Vision: Building a Better North](#)).

The territories continue to work together on a number of fronts, including:

- monitoring our shared renewable resources, such as caribou and polar bears;
- researching the cumulative effects of development projects on the environment and wildlife species;
- researching the effects of climate change on permafrost;

- collaborating on social issues; and
- speaking with a common voice about the infrastructure needs of the North.

Here's an example of a longer list where the points are complete sentences (also based on wording in [A Northern Vision: Building a Better North](#)), which means there doesn't need to be a colon to introduce the list.

Recent changes in the North include the following.

- The Northwest Territories has negotiated a devolution agreement with the federal government to take on responsibilities related to land and water, similar to that in Yukon.
- Canada's term as Arctic Council chair has brought international partners and projects to the nation's northern regions, enhancing our relationships and profile across the circumpolar world, as well as with non-Arctic states.
- The federal government's Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy delineates many issues in common with the territories, including promoting economic and social development, protecting the Arctic environment and empowering the people of the North through devolution of political power.

It's often better to use bullet points rather than numbers or letters in a list, as bullet points draw your attention to each point without giving you extra information to take in.

Cabinet

Not: cabinet, cabinet submission, Cabinet Submission

But: Cabinet, Cabinet submission

Capital letters (case)

Put nouns in lowercase as much as possible because this makes text easier to read. Exceptions include proper nouns (that is, a specific person, place or thing).

Also see spellings and Indigenous Peoples.

Commas

When listing items in a series, don't put a comma before the "and."

Not: There were seniors, Elders, and committee members at the meeting.

But: There were seniors, Elders and committee members at the meeting.

Sometimes, however, we write lists where one of the items in the list has an "and" in it, such as "Health and Social Services" in this list:



The departments of Economic Development, Health and Social Services and Community Services

In such cases, it might be clearer for the reader if you add a comma before the final “and.” (This is called a serial comma or an Oxford comma. We do not follow this style as a rule, only when it’s necessary for clarity.)

Not: Economic Development, Health and Social Services and Community Services all took part in the project.

But: Economic Development, Health and Social Services, and Community Services all took part in the project.

Commitment

When you write about government commitments, don’t refer to them as platform commitments. Once the government is elected they are the government so their commitments then become government priorities.

Not: platform commitments

But: government priorities

Consultation

Use the Government of Yukon Public Engagement Toolkit for guidance on involving the public and stakeholders in your project. If you have a legal obligation to consult First Nations, email aboriginal.relations@gov.yk.ca for advice.

Crest (coat of arms)

There are restrictions on the ways you can use the Yukon Coat of Arms (crest). Email queens.printer@gov.yk.ca to find out about these standards.

Crown

When referring to public Yukon land, use “public land” rather than “Crown land” and “government corporations” rather than “Crown corporations”.

Not: Crown land, Crown Land, crown land

But: public land

Not: Crown corporation, Crown Corporation, crown corporation

But: government corporation

Dates

Use a dash (not a hyphen) for overlapping, two-year spans.

Not: 2016/17



But: 2016–17

Also use a dash for multiple-year spans.

Not: 2016/19

But: 2016–2019

See how to find dashes on your keyboard.

Write months in full wherever you can.

Monday, August 14, 2017

December 4 to 6 or December 4–6 (use a dash not a hyphen)

December 2011

When dates – including the month, day and year – appear in a sentence, put a comma after the year.

January 1, 2017, was the first day the agreement came into effect.

Departments

Also see department-specific spellings.

Always consider writing “the Government of Yukon” rather than your department’s name. From the public’s point of view, the name of the department isn’t really of interest. What’s important is the program or service we’re offering.

If you do need to refer to a specific department:

Not: Energy, Mines and Resources department

But: Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

Not: Yukon Health and Social Services, Yukon Department of Highways and Public Works,

But: Department of Health and Social Services, Department of Highways and Public Works

After the first full mention, just put “the department”.

Using just “the Government of Yukon” is particularly handy when you’d otherwise have to list several departments. But if for some reason you do need to refer to more than one department:

Not: the Departments of Energy, Mines and Resources, Environment and Justice

But: the departments of Energy, Mines and Resources, Environment and Justice



Because we have never had a government-wide visual identity (though we're now in the process of creating one), some departments have developed informal names for themselves, such as Environment Yukon and Yukon Education (rather than the Department of Environment and the Department of Education). If you're writing about these departments, use the same name consistently so your reader doesn't get confused and think there might be two different organizations.

In news releases, use only the formal name of the department, not the informal name.

If you're writing internal documents and can't use the full names of departments and corporations for any reason, or can't write "the department" or "the corporation," use the following acronyms. Never use these acronyms in public materials. (Avoid using any acronyms in public materials unless the acronym is very well-known by your readers.)

Community Services (CS)
Economic Development (EcD)
Education (EDU)
Energy, Mines and Resources (EMR)
Environment (ENV)
Executive Council Office (ECO)
Finance (FIN)
French Language Services Directorate (FLS)
Health and Social Services (HSS)
Highways and Public Works (HPW)
Justice (JUS)
Public Service Commission (PSC)
Tourism and Culture (TC)
Women's Directorate (WD)
Yukon Energy Corporation (YEC)
Yukon Development Corporation (YDC)
Yukon Housing Corporation (YHC – but avoid confusion with the Yukon Hospital Corporation)
Yukon Liquor Corporation (YLC)
Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board (YWCHSB)
Yukon Lottery Commission, Lotteries Yukon (LY)

Design

With any product going out to the public, you need to consider design. Government products need to be as clear and accessible as possible and must look professional. Design is a skill and requires training.



Always work with your Communications Branch. Together, you may decide that hiring a professional graphic designer is the best option. The Queen's Printer offers [graphic design services](#) for Government of Yukon advertisements and we have [standing offer agreements](#) with designers.

10 tips for effective design

1. Know who your audience is and design it for them. Be inclusive. Help your audiences find out what they need to know or do by organizing information clearly and using plain language.
2. Create templates for your department's or branch's products. This saves time, maintains standards and helps people recognize your materials.
3. Use a design grid (an underlying, consistent structure based on columns).
4. Align design elements such as boxes, images, captions and columns.
5. Use as few typefaces (fonts) as possible. One can be enough. Avoid Comic Sans as it never looks professional.
6. Don't use too many colours. Just one or two colours can be very effective as well as less costly to print.
7. If you use photographs, make sure they are high quality and cropped. (Make sure you follow copyright rules too – the Queen's Printer and the [Photography Unit](#) both provide guidance.)
8. Don't be afraid of white space. Less is more.
9. Always proofread. Get someone who hasn't seen it before to take a look. Or read it yourself backwards, from the end to the beginning.
10. Always include the Government of Yukon wordmark and follow the [wordmark standards](#). Contact queens.printer@gov.yk.ca for more information.

Division

See [unit, branch, division](#).

Engagement

Use the Government of Yukon Public Engagement Toolkit for guidance on involving the public and stakeholders in your project. If you have a legal obligation to consult First Nations, email aboriginal.relations@gov.yk.ca for advice.

First Nations

See [Indigenous Peoples](#).

Flag

There are restrictions on how you can use the Yukon flag. Email queens.printer@gov.yk.ca to find out about these [standards](#).



Font (typeface)

The font used in the Government of Yukon's wordmark is Helvetica so Helvetica and Helvetica Light are good fonts for designers to use in design products for consistency. Arial can work well with the wordmark too, from a design point of view.

Formal titles

For titles of office or rank, use capitals (uppercase) for someone's position as well as for their portfolio.

Not: premier Jane Doe, minister Jane Doe, Tourism and Culture Minister Jane Doe, minister responsible for the Women's Directorate Jane Doe

But: Premier Jane Doe, Minister Jane Doe, Minister of Tourism and Culture Jane Doe, Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate Jane Doe

Not: chief Jane Doe, mayor Jane Doe, dr. Jane Doe

But: Chief Jane Doe, Mayor Jane Doe, Dr. Jane Doe

If you're writing about Premiers and Ministers in a generic way without referring to specific individuals, use uppercase.

Not: The premiers, ministers and chiefs will meet tomorrow with the prime minister

But: The Premiers, Ministers and Chiefs will meet tomorrow with the Prime Minister

Not: A prime minister, premier and a commissioner have very different roles

But: A Prime Minister, Premier and a Commissioner have very different roles

Write "former" and "acting" and so on in lowercase.

Not: Acting Deputy Minister Jane Doe, former Mayor John Doe

But: acting Deputy Minister Jane Doe, former Mayor John Doe

When you're referring to a Minister's portfolio or a Chief's First Nation, put the portfolio or First Nation first and don't use a comma.

Not: Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, Jane Doe, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations chief, Jane Doe

But: Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources Jane Doe, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Chief Jane Doe



If you're referring to a Minister who has more than one department and one or more of the departments have "and" in their name, use a comma to separate the departments.

Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and Highways and Public Works Jane Doe.

The title "Honourable" isn't generally used in the Government of Yukon but may sometimes be used in [joint news releases](#), if it's another government's preference.

Not: Hon. Minister, honorable minister

But: the Honourable Jane Brown, Minister of Justice

When federal Ministers are referred to as "the Honourable," extend the same courtesy to territorial and provincial Ministers.

Minister of Education the Honourable Jane Doe said today...

If you'd like more guidance about formal titles than we've included here, refer to [The Canadian Style](#). (However, note that the guidance here takes priority over what you'll find in The Canadian Style so make sure you read this first.)

You might also find useful guidance under [job titles](#).

Forms

All Government of Yukon forms must be created, designed, coordinated, documented, printed, published and managed by the Queen's Printer. Email queens.printer@gov.yk.ca or view their [forms](#) information for guidance.

French

Contact the [French Language Services Directorate](#) for all your French translation needs.

There are some variations in style between English and French because the two languages have different rules and approaches.

Government of Canada

Not: the government of Canada, the Federal Government

But: the Government of Canada, the federal government

Government of Yukon



Our preferred, formal name is the Government of Yukon and our informal name is the Yukon government (with a small “g”). Use “the” when you are writing our name in a sentence. Use our formal name for public materials.

Not: the Yukon Government, Yukon Government, Yukon government, Yukon Territorial Government, the government of Yukon

But: the Government of Yukon, the Yukon government

Avoid using just “Yukon” when you mean the Yukon government. There are many governments in Yukon so you can’t assume your reader will know whether you’re talking about the Government of Yukon specifically or all governments in Yukon collectively. (Only write “Yukon” when you’re referring to the territory itself.)

When you’re referring to more than one government or organization, give each one its formal name so that they’re given parallel treatment.

The Government of Canada, the Government of Yukon and the City of Whitehorse signed the memorandum of understanding.

Never use an acronym for the Government of Yukon in public materials. Write the full name or, for example, just write “the government” or “we.” If you need to use an acronym internally, most staff use YG.

Not: YTG, Yg

But: YG (internally only)

Also see [territory](#).

Headings

Use lowercase for headings if you can, as this makes them easier to read. (This style is called sentence case.)

Not: Where to Buy an Emergency Kit

But: Where to buy an emergency kit

He/she

Not: he/she

But: they

Also see [how to write inclusively](#).

Hyphens

[See dashes and hyphens.](#)

Indigenous Peoples

Aboriginal Peoples and Indigenous Peoples

We use the words “Aboriginal” and “Indigenous” interchangeably and we always write them in uppercase. Nationally, the trend is to use “Indigenous” rather than “Aboriginal” so expect to find yourself to be using “Indigenous” more often.

First Nations spellings

Here’s how to spell Yukon First Nations’ names. While we list the acronyms here as well, don’t use them unless you have to. Use the full names or just write “the First Nation” once you have established which First Nation you’re referring to.

Note that some First Nations governments use a plural for “Nations” in their name and others don’t.

For terminology specific to consultation with First Nations, contact aboriginal.relations@gov.yk.ca.

Some First Nation government names contain umlauts. For example, the “u” in Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the “e” in Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in. To access these symbols either go to “insert” then “symbol” in Word or use the umlaut keyboard codes listed below. (Use the number pad rather than the numbers above the letters on your keyboard. To activate the numeric key pad press “num lock” on the upper right of the key pad.)

ä Alt+0228

ë Alt+137

ï Alt+139

ü Alt+129

Yukon First Nations

- Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN)
- Carcross/Tagish First Nation (C/TFN)
- Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN)
- Kluane First Nation (KFN)
- Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN)
- Liard First Nation (LFN)
- Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation (LSCFN)
- First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun (FNNND)
- Ross River Dena Council (RRDC)
- Selkirk First Nation (SFN)

- Ta'an Kwäch'än Council (TKC)
- Teslin Tlingit Council (TTC)
- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (TH)
- Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation (VGFN)
- White River First Nation (WRFN)

Spellings	Phonetics	Community
Carcross/Tagish First Nation (C/TFN)	CAR-cross TAG-ish	Carcross
Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN)	CHAM-pain and EH-she-ack	Haines Junction
Kluane First Nation (KFN)	clue-AH-nee	Burwash Landing
Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN)	QUAN-lin done	Whitehorse
Liard First Nation (LFN)	lee-ARD	Watson Lake
Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation (LSCFN)	little salmon CAR-max	Carmacks
First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun (FNNND)	NA-cho nye-ack DONE	Mayo
Ross River Dena Council (RRDC)	ross River DEN-a	Ross River
Selkirk First Nation (SFN)	SELL-kirk	Pelly Crossing
Ta'an Kwäch'än Council (TKC)	ta-on QUAA-chaan	Whitehorse
Teslin Tlingit Council (TTC)	tes-lin KLING-kit	Teslin
Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (TH)	tron-DEK WITCH-in	Dawson
Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation (VGFN)	vun-TUT GWITCH-in	Old Crow
White River First Nation (WRFN)	White River	Beaver Creek

Transboundary First Nations and Inuvialuit

- Dene/Métis of the Northwest Territories (includes Acho Dene Koe First Nation)
- Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC)
- Tetlit Gwich'in Council (TGC)
- Inuvialuit
- Kaska Dena Council (KDC) which represents Daylu Dena Council, Dease River First Nation, Kwadacha First Nation
- Taku River Tlingit First Nation (TRTFN)
- Tahltan Central Council (TCC)

How to write commonly-used Indigenous-related words and phrases:

- Aboriginal
- Aboriginal Peoples, Aboriginal people
- Aboriginal rights
- asserted traditional territory of non-settled Yukon and transboundary First Nations – for advice about how to refer to an asserted traditional territory in consultation letters, on maps, in speaking notes, etc., contact aboriginal.relations@gov.yk.ca.
- beneficiary
- Citizen (when referring to Citizens of a First Nation)
- Elder and Elders
- Final Agreement
- Final and Self-Government Agreements
- First Nation (when you're referring to one First Nation)
- First Nations (when you're referring to more than one First Nation)
- First Nation Citizen
- First Nations Citizen (when you're referring to Citizens from more than one First Nation)
- First Nation government
- First Nations governments (when you're referring to more than one First Nation)
- Gwitchin (when writing about people from Old Crow, Yukon)
- Gwich'in language
- Gwich'in, Gwich'in Peoples (when writing about the whole nation or Gwich'in peoples from Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Alaska)
- Indigenous, Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous people
- interim protected lands not Interim Protected Lands
- Inuk (singular), Inuit (plural)
- Inuvialuit Settlement Region
- Member (of a First Nation)
- Métis not Metis

- non-First Nations
- non-Indigenous people
- non-settled First Nation (not unsettled First Nation)
- Northern Tutchone
- Self-Government Agreement
- self-government, self-governing
- Settlement Land
- Southern Tutchone
- traditional knowledge
- Traditional Territory or Traditional Territories (when you're writing about the specific traditional territory of settled Yukon First Nations)
- traditional territory, traditional territories (when you're writing in general about traditional territories)
 - asserted traditional territory of non-settled Yukon and transboundary First Nations – for advice about how to refer to an asserted traditional territory in consultation letters, on maps, in speaking notes, etc., contact aboriginal.relations@gov.yk.ca.
- transboundary First Nation
- treaty right not Treaty right
- Umbrella Final Agreement
- Vuntut Gwitchin (also see Gwichin and Gwich'in)
- Yukon First Nations or First Nations, avoid “our First Nations” or “Yukon’s First Nations”

Are you writing speaking notes?

When you organize an event, you should always acknowledge the traditional territory on which an event is taking place. Make sure this acknowledgement is in the speaking notes.

Internet and digital terms

- cyberspace
- cyber-bullying
- e-commerce
- email
- e-waste
- Facebook
- hashtag
- home page
- Instagram
- internet
- intranet
- livestream

- selfie
- SharePoint
- the web
- tweet
- Twitter
- web
- web page
- website

ISBNs and ISSN

International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs) are used to identify one-off, text-based products such as books, DVDs and maps.

International Standard Serial Numbers (ISSNs) are used to identify text-based serial publications such as annual reports and newsletters.

At the Government of Yukon, you are more likely to need an ISSN than an ISBN. Sometimes a publication you are working on will already have an ISSN number from previous editions.

To obtain a number or for general advice, contact your [Queen's Printer](#) account manager.

On printed materials, the preferred place to put an ISSN is the upper right-hand corner of the cover. Always put the letters ISSN before the number.

Other good locations for the ISSN are the masthead area, the copyright page or in the publishing statement.

On non-printed materials, such as a DVD, try to put the ISSN on the packaging as well on an electronic page.

If a publication has both an ISSN and an ISBN, then print both numbers.

Find out more about ISSNs at www.issn.org and ISBNs at www.isbn-international.org.

Job titles

For job titles, use lowercase as much as possible, particularly in public materials as capital letters are harder to read. In reports or in business documents for internal government audiences, you may prefer to use uppercase. Whatever you decide, use a consistent style within one document and related documents.



You might also find useful guidance under [formal titles](#).

Key messages

Use [this guide](#) to writing key messages.

Latin names

Legislative Assembly, Legislature

Not: Yukon legislative assembly, legislative assembly

But: Yukon Legislative Assembly, Legislative Assembly

Not: legislature

But: Legislature

The Legislature is not another word for Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly comprises the elected MLAs, while the Legislature comprises the elected MLAs and the commissioner.

For more information about Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary procedures, visit [Yukon Legislative Assembly](#).

Not: members of the legislative assembly

But: Members of the Legislative Assembly, MLAs

Letterhead

[Download](#) your department's letter template. More detailed templates are on their way from Queen's Printer, including address, date and signature lines and spacings. The recommended font for letters is Helvetica Light as this complements the wordmark.

You can order your official letterhead through [central stores](#).

Logos

See [wordmark](#).

For guidance on using other organizations' logos, see page 10 of the [wordmark standards](#).

Management Board

Not: Management board, management board, Management Board Submission

But: Management Board, Management Board submission



Media advisories

Use the [template](#) when you write media advisories and view [news releases](#) for style and formatting guidance.

Members

Not: members of the legislative assembly, member of parliament, member of the senate

But: Members of the Legislative Assembly, MLAs, Member of Parliament, MP, Member of the Senate

Ministers

See [formal titles](#).

Ministerial Order

Not: ministerial order (except when you're referring to ministerial orders generally)

But: Ministerial Order (when you're referring to a specific Ministerial Order)

News releases

Use the [template and guidelines](#) on the Communications Community site.

Northwest Territories

Not: Northwest Territories, N.W.T.

But: the Northwest Territories, the NWT

Numbers

The Government of Yukon takes a flexible approach to the style for writing numbers. It depends what you're writing and who's reading it.

When you're writing for printed materials, write numbers one to nine in letters and 10 and above in digits.

When you're writing for the web, it's common practice to use digits for all numbers.

When you're writing for technical and scientific reports, write all numbers as digits so that they are visible, distinct, clear and precise. (There are some exceptions to this that you can see on page two of the Technical Writing Style Guide.)

Whatever approach you choose, make sure you're consistent.

Include a comma in numbers of 1,000 and above.



Not: 2000
But: 2,000

Not: 911
But: 9-1-1

If you can't rearrange a sentence to avoid starting with a number, write it in letters.

Not: 19 organizations responded to the survey.
But: Nineteen organizations responded to the survey.

Order-in-Council

Write in full and don't use the acronym (OIC) in any public materials.

Outside

Yukoners tend to use the word "outside" when referring to anywhere that's not within Yukon. This can come across as insular, depending on your reader.

Not: Outside
But: outside

Page numbers

Keep page numbers as simple as possible.

Not: p4, p.4
But: 4, page four, page 4

Consider helping your reader find their way around a document by including section or chapter headings in the footer.

Periods

Put one space after a period, not two.

Always put a period at the end of a sentence when it ends with an email or web address (but not when it isn't a sentence).

Not: Learn more at www.gov.yk.ca
But: Learn more at www.gov.yk.ca.

Not: For more information: www.gov.yk.ca.
But: For more information: www.gov.yk.ca

Photographs and videos

For detailed advice about acquiring, using and crediting photographs and videos, visit the [Photography unit resources page](#). This includes multimedia releases, templates for licensing and commissioning multimedia, and a list of local producers. Please see the contact information on the resource page if you have any questions.

News releases

Photographs and captions are part of a news release and need to conform to the same style rules as the rest of the news release.

Images should be supplied as high resolution jpegs (300 dpi and at least 2,000 pixels along the longest axis) and submitted either at the same time as your news release or as soon as possible afterwards.

Platform

See [commitment](#).

Precedence (table of precedence for Yukon)

Use this order when you are writing news releases or speaking notes or organizing events.

- Prime Minister of Canada
- Commissioner of Yukon
- Premier of Yukon
- federal Cabinet members
- Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Yukon
- Justice of the Supreme Court
- Government of Yukon Cabinet members
- Yukon Leader of the Opposition
- Yukon Members of the Legislative Assembly, listed by date elected
- Yukon Member of Parliament
- Yukon Senator
- Yukon First Nations Chiefs and Council of Yukon First Nations
- Bishops of Roman Catholic and Anglican faiths (in the order of their appointment)
- RCMP Divisional Commander
- Armed Forces Commander
- Territorial Court Judges
- Mayors

- Government of Yukon Deputy Ministers and officials with equivalent status, listed by the date they were appointed
- Presidents, Executive Directors of non-governmental organizations

Public participation

Use the Public Engagement Toolkit for guidance on involving the public and stakeholders in your project. If you have a legal obligation to consult First Nations, get in touch with [Aboriginal Relations](#) for advice.

Regulations

See [acts and regulations](#).

Scientific reports

See [technical and scientific reports](#).

Spacing

See [periods](#).

Spellings

Use Canadian spellings, based on [The Canadian Press Stylebook](#), [The Canadian Press Caps and Spelling](#) and the [Canadian Oxford Dictionary](#). Here are some examples, with several others below in the bullet point list.

Not: color, neighbor, favor, counselor, traveler, panelist, focussed

But: colour, neighbour, favour, counsellor, traveller, panellist, focused

Not: license (noun), defense, organise

But: licence (noun), license (verb), defence, organize

You can set your computer to Canadian spellings. If you're not sure how to do this you can get help from your ICT support team, email service.desk@gov.yk.ca.

Words we commonly use

- advisor (not adviser)
- barrier-free
- B&B
- campgrounds (campgrounds have individual campsites)
- can-can
- CBC Yukon
- *Colourful Five Percent* (use "percent" only when referring to Jim Robb's work otherwise use "per cent")
- communications strategy (not communication strategy)

- cooperate (not co-operate)
- decision making, decision makers, decision-making process, a decision-making body
- driver's licence
- follow up (verb) or follow-up (adjective), (not followup)
- gold rush (generic term), Klondike Gold Rush (specific)
- groundwater (not ground water)
- health care (noun) health-care (adjective), never healthcare
- Klondike, Klondikers
- Klondike Gold Rush
- licence (noun), motor vehicle licence
- license (verb), licensed to operate
- memorandum of understanding
- metre (meter, if referring to the machine)
- Métis
- mould not mold
- north (direction)
- North (region)
- northerner (not Northerner)
- north of 60
- outside not Outside (as in outside Yukon)
- practice (noun), doctor's practice
- practise (verb), licensed to practice
- request for proposal
- roundtable
- toll-free
- wastewater (not waste water)
- *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*
- Yukoner

Associations and non-government organizations

- Association franco-yukonnaise (l'AFY)
- Boys and Girls Club
- Empowering Youth Society (BYTE), formerly Bringing Youth Towards Equality
- Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS)
- Committee on Abuse in Residential Schools (CAIRS)
- Dawson City Arts Society
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon (FASSY)
- Gwaandak Theatre Society
- Kaushee's Place
- KIAC School of Visual Arts now Yukon School of Visual Arts



Government

- Klondike Institute of Art and Culture, KIAC
- Klondike Visitors Association (KVA) (note no apostrophe on the s)
- Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon (LDAY)
- Leaping Feats Creative Danceworks studio, Leaping Feats
- Les EssentiElles
- Liard Aboriginal Women's Society (LAWS)
- MacBride Museum
- Nakai Theatre
- Northern Lights School of Dance (NLSD)
- Society of Yukon Artists of Native Ancestry (SYANA)
- Teegatha'Oh Zeh
- TIA Yukon (Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon)
- Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre
- Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council
- Yukon Arts Fund
- Yukon Art Society (YAS), Yukon Art Society Gallery (Arts Underground)
- Yukon Artists @ Work (YAAW)
- Yukon International Storytelling Festival
- Yukon Historical & Museums Association
- Yukon Outfitters' Association
- Yukon Women's Transition Home Society (an entity of Kaushee's)
- Yukon Writers' Festival

Businesses

- dāna Näye Ventures (note lowercase d)
- Gray Line Yukon
- Greyhound Canada
- Hougén Centre, Hougén's Sports Lodge
- Jacob's Industries but Paul Jacobs
- Inkspirationz Graphix
- Klondyke Dental Clinic
- Klondyke Medical Clinic
- Integra Tire (formerly Yukon Tire)
- Integraphics Ltd.
- Lackowicz, Shier & Hoffman
- Mac's Fireweed Books
- McCrae Service
- Northwestel (not NorthwesTel)
- Pine Medical Center (American spelling)
- Super A Foods
- The Real Canadian Superstore (Just "Superstore" on subsequent references).

- ATCO Electric Yukon
- Triple J's Music

Events

- Kidz Kreate
- Spruce Bog
- Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous

Facilities and buildings

- Canada Games Centre
- Copper Ridge Place
- Da Ku Cultural Centre
- Dredge No. 4
- École Émilie-Tremblay
- École Whitehorse Elementary School
- Guild Hall
- Lion's Aquatic Centre
- Norman D. Macaulay Lodge
- Mae Bachur Animal Shelter
- Odd Gallery, Odd Fellows Hall
- S.S. Klondike
- Swan Haven Interpretation Centre
- Takhini Hot Springs
- The Old Fire Hall
- Thomson Centre
- Tombstone Interpretive Centre
- Yukon Arts Centre
- Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre
- Yukon College (Ayamdigut Campus in Whitehorse)

First Nations

See [First Nations spellings](#).

Municipalities

- City of Whitehorse (use uppercase when you're writing just "City" and referring to the municipality informally, for instance, "the Yukon government and the City agreed today...")
- City of Dawson (preferred by the City of Dawson)
- Town of Watson Lake
- Village of Carmacks

Place names

- ANWR (Arctic National Wildlife Refuge)
- Arctic Circle, the Arctic, but arctic wildflowers
- Bonnet Plume River (Tsaih TI'ak Njik)
- Dempster Highway
- Dawson (official geographical name, City of Dawson for the municipality)
- Dezadeash Lake
- Eagle Plain (basin for oil and gas development)
- Eagle Plains Hotel (on the Dempster Highway)
- Ethel Lake (Takwánt'ye)
- Frances Lake
- Canyon Mountain (locally known as Grey Mountain)
- Hot Springs Road
- Lake Laberge
- Macmillan River
- M'Clintock River
- MacRae Industrial Area (known locally as McCrae Industrial Area)
- Mount McIntyre
- Nałasìn River (Nisutlin River)
- Peel watershed
- Takhini Hot Springs
- Tetl'ámān (Tatlmain Lake)
- Wellesley Lake
- Whistle Bend subdivision

National and territorial parks and protected areas

(*awaiting designation)

- Agay Mene Territorial Park*
- Asi Keyi Territorial Park*
- Coal River Springs Territorial Park
- Ddhaw Ghro Habitat Protection Area*
- Devil's Elbow and Big Island Habitat Protection Areas
- Herschel Island - Qikiqtaruk Territorial Park
- Horseshoe Slough Habitat Protection Area
- Ivvavik National Park
- Kluane National Park and Reserve
- Kusawa Territorial Park*
- Lewes Marsh Habitat Protection Area
- Łútsāw Wetland Habitat Protection Area
- Ní'iinlii Njik (Fishing Branch) Habitat Protection Area
- Ní'iinlii Njik (Fishing Branch) Territorial Park
- Nisutlin River Delta National Wildlife Area
- Tsáwnjik Chu (Nordenskiöld) Habitat Protection Area

- Old Crow Flats Habitat Protection Area
- Pickhandle Lakes Habitat Protection Area*
- Ta'Tla Mun Habitat Protection Area
- Tagish Narrows Habitat Protection Area
- Tombstone Territorial Park
- Vuntut National Park
- Whitefish Wetland Habitat Protection Area*

Department-specific spellings

Departments sometimes have their own specialist language and phrases. If this is the case in your department, see if your department has an approved list of spellings or a style sheet. If it does, email this list to ecoinfo@gov.yk.ca and we'll add it to this guide as a resource for everyone.

Economic Development

Community Development Fund (CDF)

Film & Sound Commission (not Film and Sound Commission)

Energy, Mines and Resources

Not: EM and R, EM&R, E.M.R.

But: EMR

Not: Energy, Mines, and Resources

But: Energy, Mines and Resources

Environment

When you use Latin names, include both the genus and species name, such as *Ursus americanus* and italicize both words. Only put the first word (the genus name) in capitals.

When you write species' names, write them in lowercase, unless a proper noun forms part of their name, such as Dall's sheep.

For more detailed advice, talk to Environment's [Communications](#) Branch.

- black bear, black bears (plural)
- collared pika, collared pikas (plural)
- Dall's sheep
- grizzly bear, grizzly bears (plural)
- tundra swan, tundra swans (plural)
- lake trout (singular and plural)
- human-wildlife conflict



- Leave No Trace (but no-trace practices)
- Porcupine caribou herd but Porcupine Caribou Harvest Management Plan
- RV dump station
- *Ursus americanus*

Note that the Department of Environment may capitalize species' names in materials intended for educating people about wildlife. For example, the Wildlife Viewing Program capitalizes species' names in a number of their educational publications to help readers distinguish between species, such as Black Bear, so that it's clear that a Black Bear is a species of bear, not necessarily a bear that is black. These materials are published with a small note providing this explanation.

French Language Services Directorate
Not: Bureau of French Language Services
But: French Language Services Directorate

Health and Social Services
Not: Health & Social Services
But: Health and Social Services

Highways and Public Works
Not: Highways & Public Works
But: Highways and Public Works

Tourism and Culture
artists- and writers-in-residence
Cultural Industry Training Fund

Not: Department of Tourism & Culture
But: Department of Tourism and Culture

Telephone numbers

Use hyphens and no brackets.

Not: (867) 633-2949

But: 867-633-7949, call toll-free 1-800-661-0408, extension 7949

Territory

While Yukon is a territory constitutionally, our preference is to refer to simply "Yukon" rather than "the Yukon territory." This helps to reflect the devolution process that took place in 2003 when the Government of Yukon gained direct control over a much wider variety of provincial-type programs, responsibilities and powers.



Not: Yukon Territory, the Territory

But: Yukon, the territory

Also see [Yukon](#).

Technical and scientific reports

If you're writing a scientific report or working on some other type of technical document, follow the [Technical Writing Style Guide](#). Ask your contractors to follow this style. The Department of Environment produces the guide and they're planning to update it soon so in the meantime you may notice some inconsistencies.

If you're writing briefing notes, discussion papers and other day-to-day documents, use the rest of this style guide.

Numbers

When you're writing for technical and scientific reports, write all numbers as digits so that they are visible, distinct, clear and precise. (There are some exceptions to this that you can see on page two of the Technical Writing Style Guide.)

Time

Not: 10:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

But: 10 a.m., 10:15 a.m., 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Titles

Also see [job titles](#) and [formal titles](#).

Capitalize the titles of Government of Yukon reports, strategies and plans once they have been approved and published (whether publicly or internally). Only capitalize the nouns and verbs (this style is called title case). Don't use italics or quotation marks.

Climate Change Action Plan
Energy Strategy for Yukon

If "Government of Yukon" forms part of the title, remember to write the "Government of Yukon", not the "Yukon government" or the "Yukon Government."

Capitalize the nouns and verbs in titles of books, songs and theatre productions. Also put these titles in italics.



Gone with the Wind
The Taming of the Shrew

If the words in a title are hyphenated, capitalize both words.

The Well-Brought Up Child
The Six-Fingered Ape

Use title case for campaign titles and slogans but not italics or quotation marks.

Not: stop pushing or *Stop Pushing* or 'Stop Pushing' or "Stop Pushing"

But: Stop Pushing

If a publication is in the planning phase and hasn't yet been published or given a definite title, put it in lowercase. Once it is published, you can write it in title case.

Not: We will publish a Poverty Reduction Strategy in the spring

But: We will publish a poverty reduction strategy in the spring

Unit, branch, division

Use uppercase when you write the full name of a unit, branch or division.

Not: Communications unit, Land Management branch, Motor Vehicles division

But: Communications Unit, Land Management Branch, Motor Vehicles Division

Use lowercase when you are not using the full name of a unit, branch, division or department.

Not: the Unit, the Branch, the Division

But: the unit, the branch, the division

Try to refer to the Government of Yukon rather than your department or unit, branch or division. But if you need to refer to a department, write "Highways and Public Works' Motor Vehicles Division."

Yukon

While many of us say "*the Yukon*" in conversation and in informal correspondence, when writing for publication use only "Yukon."

Not: the Yukon

But: Yukon

Also see [territory](#).



Wordmark

You must use the Government of Yukon wordmark on all public communications and marketing materials and follow the [wordmark standards](#). The wordmark (which is also sometimes referred to as a logo) helps create our visual identity. Government employees can download the wordmark from the [library](#). Everyone else can email queens.printer@gov.yk.ca to access government wordmarks and find out about the guidelines for their use.

The minimum size you can use the wordmark is 3/4". The recommended maximum size on printed materials is 1.7" and no more than 2".

Hold down the shift key when resizing the wordmark to maintain the correct proportions.

When there's more than one logo in a design, the Government of Yukon wordmark should be positioned on the left. However, if the federal government mark is also displayed, the federal government logo goes on the left with the Government of Yukon wordmark on the right.

We don't put logos in online versions of news releases but if a news release is being issued jointly with another organization and you are giving out printed copies, then the lead organization's wordmark goes on the left and the other organization's wordmark goes on the right.

Wordmarks must appear to be of equal size and prominence visually.

Only use the French version of the wordmark for French materials and the bilingual wordmark only for bilingual materials.

(the) Yukon government

See [Government of Yukon](#).

Writing clearly and inclusively

When we write for the Government of Yukon we must make sure we're communicating clearly and accurately and that we're making information about our programs and services easily available. We must also of course make sure we don't inadvertently exclude or offend anyone. Here's some guidance to help you.

If you're writing key messages you might also find this [guidance](#) useful.

[How to write in plain language](#)

[How to write inclusively](#)

[Using accurate language about violence](#)

How to write in plain language

10 tips for writing clearly.

1. Think about who your readers are and organize the information you're giving them based on their needs, not yours.
2. Use ordinary, familiar words.
3. Use a friendly tone. Use "we" and "you."
4. Avoid acronyms. Write them in full.
5. Avoid jargon. If you must use technical words, include a glossary.
6. Use shorter sentences but also vary the length of your sentences. Aim to have one idea in each sentence then start a new sentence for a new idea.
7. Use an active voice to keep your writing more lively and make sure it's obvious who is doing an action.
8. Use headings to help your readers find what they want.
9. Get the punctuation right so you don't confuse your readers.
10. Test the readability of your writing using an online testing tool such as the [Hemingwayapp](#).

Book an information session or workshop

The Executive Council Office offers writing information sessions or workshops for government employees. Email joanna.lilley@gov.yk.ca to book your session.

What if I can't avoid using technical language?

If you find you need to use technical or specialized language, include a glossary in your document. This will help people who are new to the subject understand your terminology and ensure that everyone has the same understanding of the

terms you use. Put the glossary at the beginning of your document so your readers can easily find it.

How to write inclusively

There are no set rules for writing inclusively. It's more a matter of being aware that using a word can sometimes have unintended consequences and reduce the perceived value of individuals and groups or of people's experiences. The consequences of using certain words or phrases can have very real impacts on thoughts, behaviour, culture and organizational priorities.

However, when it comes to gender and other identities, we must also make sure we distinguish between "inclusive" and "neutral" language. For example, when we're gathering information from Yukoners, it's important that we include all gender and other identities. We mustn't avoid collecting information about diverse identities and we mustn't avoid complex discussions in favour of a more neutral approach. Email ecoinfo@gov.yk.ca for guidance on this.

Deaf

Capitalize Deaf when you're referring to people who are part of Deaf Culture. For example:

The American Sign Language Interpreting Program will benefit the Deaf community in Yukon.

Also capitalize "Sign language" and "Sign languages."

Find out more at Canadian Association of the Deaf:

- [Deaf Culture vs. medicalization](#)
- [Terminology](#)

First Nations

See [Indigenous Peoples](#).

Gender

LGBTQ2S (based on the Government of Canada's style)

The [Trans Pride Canada guide](#) is a helpful reference, as is the [GLAAD media guide](#), though bear in mind it's American rather than Canadian. (And [here's](#) why we're not writing the GLAAD acronym in full.)

He and she

Not: he/she, his or her

But: they, their

Names

Not: Christian name

But: first name

Not: surname

But: last name

Objects

Use “it” rather than “she” or “her” to describe ships, nature, nations, cars, engines, gas tanks and so on.

Parallel treatment

Avoid highlighting gender and ethnicity if it’s not relevant.

Have you avoided unnecessary descriptions?

Not: Aboriginal woman Minister of Justice Jane Doe tabled a bill.

But: Minister of Justice Jane Doe tabled a bill.

Use gender neutral words.

Not: actress, fireman, businessman, spokesman, chairman

But: actor, firefighter, businessperson, spokesperson, chair

Not: man a booth

But: staff a booth

The word “ombudsman” is an exception and is accepted by many people as being gender neutral.

The word “grandfathering” is also not a word that can be simply switched for a gender neutral term (“grandparenting”). It has a complicated story with roots in the history of voting rights for people in the US who were formerly slaves.

Here are some tips to help you avoid describing people differently because of their gender or ethnicity.

- When you don’t know who you’re addressing or don’t know someone’s preferred pronoun or self-identification, use “they” or their job title or role, such as manager, councillor, director, committee member, home owner, parent, reader, teacher, delegate, participant.

- If you're using a title (honorific), use Ms. when referring to a woman unless she has indicated a preference for Mrs. or Miss.
- To check for descriptions that may be sexist, try substituting a man for a woman in the situation or role.
- Avoid hidden sexism or words that have been traditionally used only to describe specific genders, such as the word "shrill" to describe a woman's voice rather a man's, or the phrase "working mom" rather than "working parent."
- Beware of stereotypes, such as assuming child care is only delivered by women. This applies to choosing images as well as words.

People with disabilities

Also see [Deaf](#).

Always put the person first, not someone's condition or whether they use a particular aid or tool. Stress people's abilities rather than their disabilities and only refer to someone's disability if it's relevant.

Avoid phrases such as "the disabled" and "the blind" because they lump people into a type. Also avoid "handicapped" as it is considered offensive by many people.

Use language that respects people with disabilities as active individuals who have control over their lives.

Not: handicapped, afflicted with a disability, confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound

But: an individual living with a disability, people with disabilities, disabled people, people with visual impairments, people with hearing impairments, people who are differently abled, people who are cognitively impaired

If you need specific information, for example if you are organizing an event, you can ask questions such as: "Do you need wheelchair access?" or "Do you have any audio or visual requirements?"

Not: handicapped parking

But: accessible parking

Pronouns

See [he and she](#).

Using accurate language about violence

The Government of Yukon has committed to using clear, accurate and respectful language that reflects the true nature of violence and its impact on people. Staff have worked on a government-wide project to develop vocabulary that will help us do this.

You may find some of the following language to be difficult to read. However, how we communicate about violence matters. When we describe violence in vague, misleading and inaccurate language, this obscures and conceals its criminal nature and severity and the responsibility of perpetrators. It also has a negative impact on the level of support a victim receives from service providers and the community, and influences what happens as someone goes through the justice system.

Violence has many forms – here are some:

- physical
- psychological
- sexualized
- emotional
- cultural
- gender-based
- workplace
- family
- Elder
- neglect
- domestic and intimate partner
- financial

Have you used clear, accurate and respectful vocabulary?

Avoid:

- Vague terms that conceal the specific nature and severity of violence. Words such as “incident” tell us nothing about the violence.
- Vocabulary that mutualizes violence. “Mutualizing” occurs when we use words or descriptions that shift responsibility or blame from the perpetrator to the victim. Violence is unilateral – done against another person – and should be described this way. For example, avoid saying “they fought” when one person hit or beat another person.

Do:

- Use clear language that accurately describes violence and assigns responsibility to the perpetrator.
- Respect gender identity and expression and write clearly, consistently and respectfully about lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans issues. Use terminology that is unambiguous, broadly accepted and neutral in tone, as recommended in the [Trans Pride Canada's Style Guide](#).

Have you avoided unnecessary descriptions?

Avoid:

- Inflammatory statements and descriptions with irrelevant information – such as lifestyle choices, clothing, sexual history, citizenship or profession – that perpetuate victim blaming and undermine the responsibility of the perpetrator.
- Statements that suggest a positive bias towards a perpetrator's innocence based on details such as their community standing, race, ethnicity, religion or profession.

Do:

- Ensure the victim's voice is present but leave out unnecessary information about both the victim and the perpetrator. Use the appropriate level of detail to show the victim's resistance to violence. Be balanced: too much detail can be gratuitous; too little can weaken the victim's position.

Have you concealed the violence?

Avoid:

- Passive voice and vocabulary that shift the responsibility for the violence from the perpetrator to the victim. For example, statements in passive voice such as "the victim alleged she was raped" fail to reflect that the perpetrator was responsible for the rape. A statement such as "the victim reported the man raped her" is more powerful and clear. Violence is committed against the victim; therefore a victim does not, for example, "engage in" or "perform" sexualized acts. "Sex" and "sexual" are terms that should only be used to describe truly sexual acts; that is, acts that are consensual (mutually agreed upon).

Do:

- Use active voice and language that focus attention on the person committing the crime. Make the perpetrator the subject of the sentence and assign verbs to them. For example, "the man kicked her in the head" is clearer than "the victim was kicked."

Have you implied racial or cultural reasons for violence?

Avoid:

- Statements implying that members of particular groups all behave the same way. It is important to use similar terms for similar actions regardless of a perpetrator’s “race” or ethnicity. For example, avoid describing perpetrators from the visible majority as “shooters” or “mentally ill” while calling people from visible minorities “killers,” “terrorists,” or “thugs.”

Do:

- Ensure that your writing does not perpetuate racism or stereotypical perspectives or imply that violence is normal in certain communities.

Have you diminished, exaggerated or rationalized violence?

Avoid:

- Inferences or statements that diminish or exaggerate the occurrence of violence. Violence can occur in all circumstances. For example, violence can occur day and night, with or without alcohol and in public or in the privacy of one’s home. Don’t describe circumstances as either “usual” or “uncommon” or suggest some forms of violence are more serious than others.

Do:

- Clearly and accurately describe violence. Use statistics and facts to support statements.

Some vocabulary to avoid

- sexual assault

Alternatives:

sexualized assault, sexualized violence, violence using sexualized actions, violent sexualized acts, rape.

Why?

“Sexual” is consensual and mutualizing. It places responsibility with both the perpetrator and victim. While the term “sexual assault” is often used, “sexualized assault” more accurately describes unilateral (one-sided), non-consensual actions by a perpetrator and should be used instead. It isn’t possible to consent to sexualized assault or violence.

- intercourse sex
Alternatives: rape
Why? The terms “intercourse” and “sex” describe consensual sexual activity. They imply mutual consent, which suggests the victim was a participant in the activity – that something was done “with” them rather than “against” them. Using these terms normalizes and reconstructs criminal behaviours and equates rape to everyday activity.
- kiss
Alternatives: forced oral contact, forced mouth on the victim’s mouth (or other body part)
Why? Kissing is a consensual act between two people; it is an act of intimacy or affection. The word “kiss” mutualizes the action and conceals the assault.
- alleged, admitted, confessed
Alternatives: reports, reported
Why? Avoid “alleged” because it reinforces the belief that a crime may not have actually occurred. Terms “admitted” and “confessed” imply the victim assumes some responsibility for the violence. “Reports” is more neutral and appropriate.

Be specific and indicate who said what: “Jane Doe reports that...” or “Police say...”

Do not declare a perpetrator’s guilt or innocence until it is proven in the Canadian criminal justice system. Use statements such as “John Doe is reported to be facing charges for...” or “Jane Doe has been charged with...”

- unharmed
Alternatives: witnessed, traumatized, harmed
Why? Those who experience violence are never “unharmed.” Physical injuries may not be present; however, violence causes varying levels of traumatic harm. Descriptions should accurately convey physical, mental, emotional and spiritual harm.

Avoid statements such as “children were upstairs and unharmed” because all children are harmed when they hear or see violence.

- domestic dispute
Alternatives: intimate partner violence, domestic violence
Why? A “dispute” is a disagreement or argument between two equal parties. “Domestic dispute” minimizes the seriousness of the violence and

- implies mutual responsibility. It also suggests an isolated incident and may hide patterns of abuse.
- incident
Alternatives: attack, sexualized assault, rape
Why? “Incident” is a vague term and does not allow for appropriate social responses. Use clear and accurate language to describe the criminal act.
 - sex with a minor, child sex tourism, child sex trade, child pornography, child prostitution
Alternatives: rape of a child, international child rape, sexualized violation of a child, rape for profit
Why? Children cannot consent to “sex.” Using the term “rape” is therefore critically important. Children lack the legal capacity to provide consent and therefore no blame or responsibility should be placed with the child.
 - sexual touching
Alternatives: grabbing body parts, forced touching, forcibly touched
Why? “Sexual” makes the acts seem sensual or pleasurable rather than criminal, harmful and forced upon the victim. Name the body parts to make statement more clear.
 - bullying, cyberbullying
Alternatives: racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, online sexualized exploitation, harassment
Why? Be careful using the term “bullying” because it is vague and imprecise. The term can minimize the severity and criminality of abuse, force, threat, intimidation or aggression. Be specific about the nature of the violent behaviour if you can.

Grammar and punctuation

There are plenty of resources online to help you check grammar and punctuation, such as [Grammar Girl](#) and the Plain English Campaign's [grammar guides](#). Here are a few areas we often need reminding about.

Apostrophes

Dashes and hyphens

e.g. and i.e.

Mispelled words

Misused words

Who

Apostrophes

For guidance on how to use apostrophes, see *The Canadian Press Stylebook* (page 378 in the 17th edition). If you don't have a copy, this from [The Oatmeal](#) might help or [Grammar Girl](#).

Apostrophes aren't needed for plural words or acronyms or for dates.

Not: PDF's, Q's and A's, First Nation's

But: PDFs, Qs and As, First Nations

Not: 1950's, 1960's, 1970's

But: '50s, '60s, '70s

Dashes and hyphens

Dashes and hyphens are easy to get mixed up. Dashes are longer than hyphens and have different uses. Hyphens are mostly used to connect two-part words.

Not: She worked for a non-profit organization.

But: She worked for a non-profit organization.

We use dashes instead of commas and parentheses when we want to provide more emphasis.

When the committee discovered the errors – all nine of them – they asked for a new draft.

We also use dashes to represent a span or range of numbers, dates or time.

Not: Please read pages 11-17 in the report.

But: Please read pages 11–17 in the report. Please read pages 11 to 17 in the report.

See [how to find dashes on your keyboard](#).

Using dashes in sentences

There are two types of dash: the em dash and the en dash. Our style is to use the en dash.

This is an en dash:

The office will re-open at Taylor House – with limited services – on the February 26.

This is an em dash:

The office will re-open at Taylor House—with limited services—on the February 26.

Using dashes with numbers

We also use the en dash when we give a span of numbers.

See pages 11–14.

You can also use words rather than a dash. This can often be easier and clearer.

See pages 11 to 14.

How to find dashes on your keyboard

How to find an en dash:

- Add a space after the word.
- Type two hyphens.
- Add a space.
- Type the next word.

Or:

Alt + 0150

How to find an em dash:

- Type a word.

- Press the hyphen key twice.
- Then carry on typing.

Or:

Alt + 0151

The federal government's [The Canadian Style](#) has helpful guidance on when to use hyphens and different types of dashes.

e.g. and i.e.

It's often better to avoid using abbreviations as not everyone understands them. If you do use them, include a comma.

Not: e.g.,

But: For example,

Not: i.e.,

But: that is, specifically

E.g. is short for *exempli gratia*, which means "for example" and i.e. is short for *id est*, which means "that is."

There are several communities in Yukon, e.g., Whitehorse, Mayo and Haines Junction.

There are three communities in Yukon with a population of more than 1,000, i.e., Whitehorse, Watson Lake and Dawson.

Misspelled words

Here some words we sometimes spell incorrectly.

- council (as in city, or the Executive Council Office) and counsel (as in Crown, or the Legislative Counsel Office)
- councillor (as in city)
- counsellor (a person who gives guidance)
- palette as in "colour palette" (not "pallet" unless you mean a platform for moving things, or a "palate" as in the roof of your mouth)
- publicly (not publically)

Misused words

Here are some words we sometimes use incorrectly. For more information about these common errors and other guidance, visit [Grammar Girl](#). (It's an American site but much of the guidance still applies.)

- among and between (generally speaking, use “between” for specific, one-to-one relationships and “among” for less defined, collective relationships)
- cement and concrete (concrete is the mixture; cement is an ingredient of concrete)
- comprised (don't add “of” to “comprised”, e.g., “the committee comprises six members”)
- fewer and less (use “fewer” for things you can count one by one, “less” for things you can't count individually)
- fulsome (“fulsome” means excessive and offensive to good taste; it doesn't have positive connotations)
- linkages and links (keep things simple and use “links” unless you specifically mean a system of links or linking different issues in political negotiations)
- podium and lectern (a podium is what you stand on and a lectern is what you stand behind)
- reactionary (“reactionary” means extremely conservative, resisting change; it doesn't mean “reactive”)
- unveil (only use “unveil” when something is literally going to be unveiled, for example, at an event)

Who

Use “who” not “that” when referring to people.

Not: Two people that didn't previously know about the services have now registered.

But: Two people who didn't previously know about the services have now registered.

Tips and tools

Here are some suggestions for tips and tools we've found online that you might find useful. If you come across any other sites you think would be useful, let us know by emailing ecoinfo@gov.yk.ca.

Government of Yukon style

[The Canadian Press online style guides](#)

[Canadian Oxford Dictionary](#)

[The Canadian Press Stylebook](#)

[The Canadian Press Caps and Spelling](#)

Grammar and punctuation

[Grammar Girl](#)

[Plain English Campaign](#)

Inclusive language

The [Trans Pride Canada guide](#) is a helpful reference and so is the [GLAAD media guide](#), although bear in mind it's American rather than Canadian. (And [here's](#) why we're not writing the acronym in full.)

[A way with words and images](#) – Employment and Social Development Canada

[Diversity at work](#) – HR Council

[Inclusive language: words to use and avoid when writing about disability](#) – gov.uk

Readability testing

[Test your document's readability in Word](#)

[Readability Test Tool](#)

[Flesch Kincaid readability calculator](#)

[Fog Index](#)

Plain language tips and guides

digitalgov.gov

plainenglish.co.uk

plainlanguage.gov

Plain language organizations

[PLAIN](#) (US)

[Plain English Campaign](#) (UK)

[Plain Language Association International](#) (Canada)

Other governments' style guides



[Government of Saskatchewan](#)
[Government of Nova Scotia](#)
[Public Service Commission of Canada](#)