

Learning Guild Style Guide

January 2026

An admin on our account can add style rules and branded spellings that will be used with all people on the license. For example DevLearn, DemoFest. Group leaders, e.g., Mark for Content and Steven for Marketing, can make group-specific tweaks, such as choosing a different “tone” for marketing materials or de-emphasizing some punctuation rules.

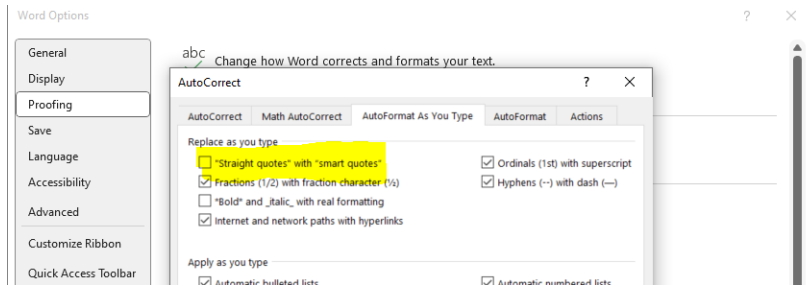
General Rules

- Use American spelling and syntax
- Use eLearning, not e-learning or other variations
- Use microlearning not micro-learning or other variations
- We prefer to link resources to meaningful anchor text (vs. using footnotes, endnotes, or in-text citations or listing the url)
- We do not link to any web page that requires readers to enter personal info, such as an email address, or pay for access
- We do not publish articles that promote a specific product, platform, or service
- **Except** in titles and headings, spell out numbers one through nine; use numerals for 10 and above; the same rule applies for ordinal numbers (e.g., first, 10th)
- **Do not** add blank lines (extra return / paragraph break) between paragraphs or use "soft" returns (manual line breaks)

Punctuation

- Use the serial (Oxford) comma
- Use em dashes (—), not hyphens, to separate ideas. No spaces around the dashes:
Use dashes—not hyphens—to set off a thought
- Do not use periods at the end of bullet points (there are some exceptions, but this is a good general rule)

- Use straight, not curly or "smart", quotation marks and apostrophes (File→Options→proofing→AutoCorrect):



Headings & Sub-Headings

- In titles and section headings, capitalize every word except articles and prepositions that have fewer than 5 letters: E.g., *a, an, the, with, Above, Through, to*
- In all headings and sub-headings, use an & instead of 'and'
- In all headings and sub-headings, use numerals instead of writing out the number, e.g., 3 Tips for ... not *Three Tips for...*)
- Use only one level of bullets or numbering; to indicate a deeper hierarchy, use heading 3. E.g.:

Example

- Don't do this
 - To indicate
 - Multiple levels

Do this instead (Heading 3)

To indicate

- Multiple
- Levels

Learning-Guild-specific style

3-D, 2-D

Use as above.

4G, 5G

Use as above.

70:20:10

Use colons, not slashes or hyphens, to separate numbers when referring to this L&D model.

a, an

Use “a” before words beginning with consonant sounds and “an” before words beginning with vowel sounds: *a* learning management system; *an* LMS.

and, &

In conference names, session titles, and article titles and sub-heads, use & instead of *and*.

Artificial Intelligence, AI

Lowercase artificial intelligence. AI is acceptable in titles and on second reference, when introduced as an initialism: *Artificial intelligence (AI) plays an increasingly transformative role in L&D ...*

Best of ... Webinars

Use title case.

bios

Bios are often entered, updated, and maintained by the speakers via Session Board and/or Swap Card. In cases where we are creating or editing them, please follow this general approach:

- Bios should start with the speaker’s first and last name and include the subject’s job title and employer in the first sentence
- Job titles, areas of study, and degrees (if spelled out) should not be capitalized
- After the first reference, the subject should be referred to by first name
- These are professional bios and should not include personal information like hobbies, family life, or where the person lives
- Remove PR-type flattery such as “Mike uses his exceptional insight and unique ability to [blah blah blah]”
- Remove links to subject’s website, blog, etc.
- Bios should be about 100 words

BYOD

Acronym for “bring your own device.” No periods.

Cellphone or smartphone

One word, lowercase.

colons—capitalization after

In **text**: Capitalize the first word after a colon what follows the colon constitutes a complete sentence.

Example: Video clips are documents, but with an important difference: Most documents contain searchable content; video content itself isn't searchable. If the text after the colon isn't a complete sentence, use lowercase: There's one other problem with YouTube: advertising.

In titles or headers, the first word after a colon is always capitalized, e.g., *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*.

comma

We use the serial comma (aka Harvard comma and Oxford comma)—that is, we use a comma to separate the next-to-last and last elements in a series: *She likes oranges, apples, and plums*.

company names and symbols

Remove "LLC," "Inc.," etc., from company names **except in conference guides**.

Do not use copyright or trademark symbols in text other than expo guide vendor descriptions. Symbols should be in superscript.

conference documents

When naming conference documents, add the internal conference reference to title: *DL26 concurrent sessions_v01*.

conference references

Italicize all forms of conference names in print. Do not italicize the names online. See individual conference entries for naming specifics.

conference sessions

Session titles should be concise; about seven to 10 words. They should be clear and share the key element of the session. Avoid cutesy titles.

The descriptions should be in second person, addressing attendees.

Descriptions should focus on a problem, the resolution, and what participants will get out of the session. Do not refer to the speaker(s) in the descriptions.

The exception to this is keynote descriptions, which are speaker-centric.

Countdown to ... Webinars

Use title case.

dashes

Em dashes are used in text—no spaces before or after.

En dashes are used as separators between numbers and in time ranges with no spaces before or after: *Nov. 4–6, 2026.*

Do not use em dashes in headlines; replace with colons.

degrees

Bachelor's and master's degrees should be written out, e.g., master's degree in ... not MA in ... ; majors should be lowercase: *master's degree in sociology*. PhD does not include periods.

DemoFest

A science-fair-like event held at DevLearn

department/division names

Lowercase except in reference to federal government agencies (Department of Defense, etc.).

DevLearn 2026 Conference & Expo

Capitalize all words. Use ampersand. Date should reflect year of conference (note placement of date). Alternate names: DevLearn, DevLearn 2026.

Italicize name when used in print.

Internal reference *only*: DL26.

eBook

Lowercase "e," uppercase second letter. Maintain this style even if the first word in a sentence or title. But: *email*.

eLearning

Lowercase "e," uppercase second letter. Maintain this style even if the first word in a sentence or title. But: *email*.

ellipsis

Three dots, whether in middle of text or ending a sentence.

When used mid-sentence, leave a space on either side: *The upshot of the meeting was ... we have to make sure the store is sufficiently staffed at lunchtime.*

In a quote, an ellipsis may be used to indicate that some words have been deleted: *"Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation ... can long endure."*

When ending a sentence, there is no space between last word and the ellipsis: *And in the end, the only sound he heard was silence...*

email

One word, no hyphen, all lowercase.

English—standardization of

Standardize spelling to American English. If an author includes phrases that aren't common in American English, consult the author for the meaning and then include the definition parenthetically. Example: *Everyone who heard the plan assumed the director of strategic initiatives had lost the plot (was irrational).*

Expo, expo

Uppercase if referring to a larger title, lowercase otherwise. Example: *The DevLearn Expo is the most extensive expo in the L&D community.*

Expo+ pass

Note capitalization.

file extensions

When referred to in text, use all caps, no period: *Please upload the PDF file you created.*

HR

Acceptable in text and titles for *human resources*.

hyphenation

Avoid unnecessary hyphenation.

While adjectives are often hyphenated to provide clarity, don't use a hyphen if the two or more words used before the noun as a single adjective are commonly used together—so, *low-cost alternative* but *mobile learning development*.

Job Board

Use this when referring to this section of the Guild website. Capitalize both words.

job titles

Lowercase in running text.

knowledge base

Two words.

learning and development, L&D

Lowercase; spell out first use in copy and introduce the initialism: *Learning and development (L&D) professionals might find common ground with their HR colleagues ...*

Use L&D in titles and headlines. L&D has no spaces. **Do not use LandD or LnD.**

Avoid heavy use of L&D and seek alternatives; our content should be inclusive of all professionals in the learning function, including talent development, customer education, and higher-ed learning professionals.

Learning Guild, the Guild, the Learning Guild, Guild members

log in, log in to, log out; log on, log on to, log off

One word for a noun or adjective; two words as a verb. No hyphen: *I forgot my login. Wait until I log on.*

Article headings

Use title case.

For sub-headings, use heading 2 and heading 3 only.

Do not use em dashes in titles.

microlearning

One word, no hyphen.

Millennial

Capitalize in reference to generation.

Avoid content that alludes to generational stereotypes.

nonprofit

One word, no hyphen.

numbers

Spell out numbers one through nine. Use numerals for number 10 and above.

If a number starts a sentence or is the first word after a colon, either write out the number or rewrite the sentence to embed the number.

For whole numbers used with “million,” “billion,” etc., use numerals.

For number ranges, make sure the new range is at least one higher than last number of previous range: *101–500, 501–699.*

offline

One word, lowercase.

online

One word, lowercase.

Online Conference

Any of six two-day online events the Guild hosts each year.

Internal reference *only*: OLC

percentages

Use a numeral and percent sign when dealing with scientific work or other work that leans heavily on percentages, such as survey results in a research report; no space between the number and the percent sign: 45%. Percent sign is also acceptable in email copy.

phone numbers

Use hyphens between the sets of numbers, including the area code.

Preface US numbers with the number 1 and a plus sign: +1-555-867-5309; preface other numbers with the plus sign and their country code: +44-20-7348-5250.

podcast

One word, lowercase.

publications

Monthly themed publications are free to members: These include research reports, eBooks, checklists, white paper, tips books, and more

quotations—freestanding, prefacing copy

In eBooks and research reports: Quotations are in quotation marks, italicized, and bolded. Name of author is on the next line, preceded by an em dash. If a work is referenced, add a comma after the source, then add the title, appropriately styled. Source should be right justified:

“The populace think that your rejection of popular standards is a rejection of all standard, and mere antinomianism; and the bold sensualist will use the name of philosophy to gild his crimes.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Self-Reliance”

quotes

All quoted material must be in quotation marks or block indentation and must be accompanied by correct attribution to the original author(s).

slash

No space on either side of a slash. *It's an either/or proposition.*

Smartphone or cellphone

One word, lowercase.

spaces after punctuation

There should never be more than one space after any form of punctuation, including periods and colons.

states—names of

Should always be spelled out in running text.

time of day

Use hour-colon-minutes format. List the hour, colon, minutes followed by space, then lower case a.m. or p.m. A time range uses an en dash **not a hyphen**: 9:00–9:45 a.m., 10:00 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

title case

The following words should always be capitalized in a title, **regardless of length**:

- Nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, and subordinating conjunctions.
- Prepositions five characters and longer
- The first and last words in a title
- The first word after a colon
- All major words in a hyphenated word/phrase: *Not Just for Superheroes: An Exploration of Learning Through Non-Professional Comics*

titles of blog entries, articles, and other works that are published in/on larger works

Use quotation marks. Follow capitalization of original work.

titles of books, publications, papers and reports, and other stand-alone works, such as movies

Always italicized, including online. Follow capitalization of original work.

titles of articles

Do not use italics in the titles.

Do not use em dashes in the titles of articles; use colons instead.

URLs

Use meaningful anchor text for links rather than the URL whenever possible.

In bibliographies, start URLs on a new line below citation.

US, USA, UK, etc.

Do not use periods for multi-word national name abbreviations.

web, webinar, website, web-based, web-whatever; the World Wide Web

Capitalize if entire phrase “World Wide Web” is used; lowercase otherwise.

white paper

Two words.

Wi-Fi

Use as above.

www.LearningGuild.com

Capitalize the L and the G.

xAPI, the Experience API

Not Tin Can or the Tin Can API, unless in a company press release or sponsor description; if so, leave as is.

Do not use article before abbreviation: This was created using xAPI.

But: I've never before used the Experience API.

Bibliographies and Resources

Title of bibliography section in an article or publication is “Resources.”

In research reports, eBooks, and other publications, all resources should appear alphabetically by author’s last name. If there are multiple works by the same author(s), list those works alphabetically by title. If there is no author, use the business or website name.

Works by more than one author should list the first author in last name, first name format, followed by the remaining author(s) listed first name, last name; authors should be listed in same order they’re listed on work. Use the word “and,” not an ampersand, before the final author’s name.

Don’t list page numbers.

Don’t list access dates for online resources.

When listing titles of works use title case.

For publications that appeared in periodicals with volumes and/or numbers, abbreviate both terms:
Vol.17, No. 1

For online resources, provide the full date if known; otherwise provide the year.

Learning Guild resources should be listed first, **divided into the following categories:**

- Articles
- Events
- Reports and other publications

Credit the author of all Learning Guild resources.

Non-Guild resources should be listed under “Additional Resources” and **divided into the following categories:**

- Articles (whether print or online)
- Books
- Events
- Reports and Papers
- Websites (including blogs and blog articles)

Following the resources section in reports, tools referred to in the report should be listed, accompanied by a link to the product’s website. See example below.

Items should be checked to make sure they are in the correct categories and checked for accuracy of title, author’s name, publication date, etc., and links should be checked to make sure they work.

Sample Bibliography

Resources

Learning Guild

Articles

Clark, Ruth. "Why Games Don't Teach." *Learning Solutions Magazine*. 19 February 2013.
<http://www.learningsolutionsmag.com/articles/1106/>

Books

Forni, Karen (ed.). *61 Tips on mLearning: Making Learning Mobile*. Santa Rosa, CA: The eLearning Guild, 2012.
<http://www.elearningguild.com/publications/index.cfm?id=22>

Events

Anderson, David. "Interactive Video for eLearning Designers." *DevLearn 2015 Conference & Expo*.
1 October 2015.
<http://www.elearningguild.com/conference-archive/index.cfm?id=6833>

Reports and Papers

Casebourne, Imogen. *How Mobile Learning Is Done: Nine Case Studies from Around the World*. The eLearning Guild, 2013.
<http://www.elearningguild.com/research/archives/index.cfm?id=166>

Additional Resources

Articles

Carr, David F. "Gamification In Play At Enterprise 2.0." *InformationWeek*. 3 November 2011.
<http://www.informationweek.com/gamification-in-play-at-enterprise-20/d/d-id/1101122>

Dorn, Dean S. "Simulation Games: One More Tool on the Pedagogical Shelf." *Teaching Sociology*, Vol. 17, No. 1. January 1989.

Ryan, Richard M., and Edward L. Deci. "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions." *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, Vol. 25, No. 1. January 2000.
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0361476X99910202>

Books

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1990.

Events

Deterding, Sebastian, Dan Dixon, Rilla Khaled, and Lennar Nacke. “From Game Design Elements to Gamefulness: Defining ‘Gamification.’” *The Proceedings of the 15th International Academic MindTrek Conference: Envisioning Future Media Environments*. 2011.

<http://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/220532/p9-deterding.pdf>

Deterding, Sebastian, Staffan Björk, Lennart E. Nacke, Dan Dixon, and Elizabeth Lawley. “Designing Gamification: Creating Gameful and Playful Experiences.” *CHI 2013*. 27 April – 2 May 2013.

http://gamification-research.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/20.Gamification_Extended_Abstract.pdf

Meloni, Wanda. “Gamification in 2012: Trends in Consumer and Enterprise Markets.” *Gamification Summit*. 20 June 2012.

<http://www.slideshare.net/wandameloni/gamification-in-2012-trends-in-consumer-and-enterprise-markets-13453048>

Reports and Papers

Burke, Brian. *Gamification 2020: What Is the Future of Gamification?* Gartner, 2012.

http://www.gartner.com/resources/237400/237457/gamification_2020_what_is_th_237457.pdf

Gee, James Paul. *Good Video Games and Good Learning*. University of Wisconsin–Madison.

http://www.academicolab.org/resources/documents/Good_Learning.pdf

Smith, Aaron. *U.S. Smartphone Use in 2015*. Pew Research Center, 2015.

<http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/04/01/us-smartphone-use-in-2015/>

Websites

Notes: If no author is named, list the website name first. If no publication date is available, leave it out.

Badge Alliance. “About the Badge Alliance.”

<http://www.badgealliance.org/about/>

Gartner. “Gartner Hype Cycle.”

<http://www.gartner.com/technology/research/methodologies/hype-cycle.jsp>

Jacobsen, Darcy. “5 Myths About Gamification Everyone Should Know.” *Globoforce Blog*. 22 January 2013.

<http://www.globoforce.com/gfblog/2013/5-myths-about-gamification-everyone-shouldknow/>

Kapp, Karl. “Research to Practice: Games and Simulations.” *Kapp Notes*. 17 November 2010.

<http://karlkapp.com/research-to-practice-games-and-simulations/>

Tools

Adobe Captivate

<http://www.adobe.com/products/captivate.html>

VideoScribe

<http://www.videoscribe.co/>