

GUIDES FOR SPELLING AND STYLE

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Using Words and Numbers

Capitalization of Geologic Terms

- Precambrian (older reports spell this "pre-Cambrian")
- Early, Medial, and Late -- subdivisions for geologic periods of time, such as Early Ordovician
- Lower, Middle, and Upper -- subdivisions for geologic systems of rocks, such as Lower Ordovician.
- For example, the Danby Formation is Upper Cambrian and was deposited in Late Cambrian time.
- Note that the initial letters are capitalized where used to modify names of periods or systems.
- Stratigraphic names:
 - ⇒ Capitalize terms for formation but not for member.
 - ⇒ Examples: Stowe Formation (not Stowe formation); Middlebury Limestone; Barnard volcanic member of Moretown Formation.
 - ⇒ Refer to "Type Sections of Formations in Vermont" for presently accepted terminology and capitalization, and who first named the formation. The list represents formations in central, northwest, and west-central Vermont; other names have yet to be added for other parts of the state.

Commonly Misspelled Words

- occur, occurred, occurrence
- proceed, proceeding, procedure; precede, preceding; recede, receding
- i before "e" except in Pleistocene, gneiss, veins,
- gully, valley; gullies, valleys
- subaerial (above water); subaqueous (under water)
- aqua, aqueduct, aquifer
- lamina, laminae (singular, plural)
- facies (singular and plural)

Homonyms

- cite, sight, site: The surveyor sighted across the arroyo to the archeologic site. Rachel was cited in the article.
- terrain, terrane: The volcanic terrane (rock assemblage) in that area forms a mountainous terrain (topography).
- course, coarse: Coarse sand grains occur in the river's course.

Similar Words

- affect, effect: (both are transitive verbs; "effect" is also a noun)
- affect" means "to influence"; "effect" means "to achieve", "to bring about". The selectmen effected a change in policy that affected parking regulations.
- further (time, reason), farther (distance). He drove farther along the road to further his understanding of the location.

Hyphenating Compound Terms

- Hyphenate terms where the first is a noun or adjective that modifies the next term, both serving to modify another noun: e.g., west-trending ridge; west-central Vermont; fine-grained sandstone: but, the sandstone is fine grained. (If you don't like hyphens, at least review your writing to see if, by inserting a hyphen, you will avoid ambiguity for the reader.)

Strike and Dip

- The beds strike N. 37 W. and dip 30 N. in this outcrop;
Or, the beds strike N37W and dip 30N in this outcrop;
or, the attitude of the strata is N37W/30N.
Do not write "the beds strike 37 NW".
- The fold axis plunges at an angle of 30 in the direction N. 29 E.,
or, the fold axis plunges 30/N29E
- Omit the degree (°) symbol

Citing Figures in Text

This is shown in Figure 3. or, The field area is near Fair Haven (Fig. 3). Label all diagrams and maps as Figure 1, 2, 3, etc.

Citing References

- In the text, cite by author and year; where appropriate, cite page number only if referring to a specific sentence: e.g. Athy (1930) and Dickinson (1953) or (Shinn and Robbin, 1983, p. 598-599).
- For more than two authors, do not use *et alia*, or et al.; instead, use "and others": Doll and others (1961); (Doll and others, 1961)
- The citation is part of the sentence, so the period (.) goes after it: e.g. *a potpourri of facts, concepts, and techniques* (Miller and Feldmann, 1968).
- Listing the references at the end of the report:
⇒ for heading, use **References Cited**; "Bibliography" suggests an exhaustive list on the subject, beyond those used in the report.
⇒ For style, follow the format used in bulletins of the American Journal of Science:
Author, year, Title (capitalize only proper names): Name of Journal, v. XX, p. YY-ZZ. (for books, give publisher, place, total pages). Do not underline title nor name of journal; do not put title in quotation marks.

Abstract

- The abstract should be single-spaced and less than 1 page long.
- For senior theses, put in author, year, title: Middlebury College, unpublished senior thesis, _ _ _ p.