AVA style guide

These are the approved style conventions for all communications produced by the Australian Veterinary Association and are consistent with the AVJ style guidelines. Please check with the National Communications Manager before making any changes. The relevant references are available in the AVJ Editorial Office.


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Letters and emails

Letters

Letters, reports and submissions should be in 11-point Arial font. Letters should be single-spaced. All documents should be left justified with paragraphs indicated by a spare line rather than indenting.

Letters from the AVA should be on the appropriate AVA letterhead and signed by the author. Letterhead and signatures may be hard or electronic. A bold subject line may be included, centred on the first line of the letter after the salutation. It should not include ‘Re:’.

Submissions and other business documents have different templates and should not be placed on letterhead.

Emails

Font and backgrounds
AVA email communication is in 10-point Arial font with no background. The font colour should be one of the standard outlook ones – black for new emails or blue for replies and forwarding.

**Email signatures**

- 10-point Arial font in black
- You can choose one of the styles below depending on whether you prefer a long or short signature. The long signature follows the style of our business cards
- On the organisation line, you should spell out the full name of your Division eg. Victorian Division, The Australian Veterinary Association. For PetPEP, it just add ‘AVA PetPEP’ in front of the division name if your position title doesn’t include ‘AVA PetPEP’.

**Long version:**

Name  
Position  
Organisation  
Address 1  
Address 2  
Address 3  
Ph: XX XXXX XXXX  
Fax: XX XXXX XXXX  
Mob: XXXX XXX XXX  
Web address

**Short version:**

Name  
Position  
Organisation  
Ph: XX XXXX XXXX

- If you’re part of a SIG, you should spell out the full name of your SIG/s in the organisation line and add a line underneath saying ‘A special interest group of the Australian Veterinary Association’. You can add an acronym in parentheses after the full name if you like, but it’s not necessary.
- You can make your name and/or position not bold if you prefer.
- Logos and other graphics should not be included.

**Disclaimers**

You don’t need to include a disclaimer after your signature. It looks messy, and doesn’t affect any liability. Unencrypted email is not a secure form of communication,
so you should be careful of what you send rather than rely on a disclaimer. If you still feel the need to include one, keep it simple and use the following in black Arial 8 pt:

This message may contain confidential or legally privileged information. If you think it was sent to you by mistake, please delete all copies and advise the sender.

**Emails on behalf of others**
If you are sending out emails on behalf of an AVA office holder, you should also maintain the same standards.

**Spelling**
All spelling conforms to the *Australian Oxford dictionary or The Macquarie dictionary*, unless there is a preferred form. All punctuation conforms to the *Style manual for authors, editors and printers*.

**Preferred spellings**

- acknowledgment (not acknowledgement)
- afterhours
- and (not &)
- biosecurity
- body weight (not bodyweight or liveweight)
- carcase (not carcass)
- caseload
- check up
- childcare
- cooperate
- coordinate
- dingo/dingoes
- e.g., i.e.
- et al.
- euthanased (not euthanised or euthanatised; ‘humanely killed’ is better)
- fetus (not foetus)
- forelimb, forelegs (not fore limb or fore leg)
- full-time
- hindlimb, hindlegs, hindquarters
- in-depth (adjective eg in-depth workshop, but ‘He explained himself in depth’)
- -ise (not -ize)
livestock
long-term (adjective; but ‘In the long term, these spellings may change.’)

meter (instrument)

metre (length)

on-call

onsite

part-time

postgraduate

preclinical

program (not -mme)

short-term (adjective; but ‘In the short term, these spellings are preferred’.)

sp., spp.

spay (not spey)

state-of-the-art

time: seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years

Prefixes

Common word-forming prefixes (e.g. anti-, co-, hypo-, inter-, neo-, non-, post-, pre- and sub-) are hyphenated only when there is a doubling of a vowel (re-enter), when the second element is a proper noun (pre-Christian) or a date (post-1968), or to distinguish the separate meanings of root words with the same prefix (re-form instead of reform). ‘Cooperation’ and ‘coordinate’ are written without a hyphen.

Compound words

- Compound adverbs are set solid (e.g. downwind).
- Compound verb/adverbs are set solid (e.g. to bypass).
- Compound adjectives (noun plus adjective or double adjective) are hyphenated (e.g. dung-coloured beetle, the beetle is dung-coloured; icy-cold solution, until the solution becomes icy-cold).
- Compound adjective/adverbs are set solid (e.g. overproof).
- Compound adjectives with a cardinal or ordinal number or a fraction are hyphenated (three-part trial, 21-gun salute, third-series study, one-third share, 3-day interval, 20-mL dose).
- Compound adjectives ending with ‘-ly’ (e.g. experimentally induced fever) are always separate words and unhyphenated. If such compounds have no ‘-ly’ ending, they are hyphenated when used as an attribute (well-known
• Compound adjectives containing capital letters, italics or quotation marks are not hyphenated (E. coli infection, Salmonella Dublin infected calves). However, those containing a short abbreviation are hyphenated (PAS-negative samples).

Capitals

• Use capitals for proper nouns e.g. Teflon, X-ray (adjective), X ray (noun), State (when referring to States of a Federation), recognised breeds (e.g. German Shepherd Dog; Thoroughbred).
• Do not use capitals when identifying specific subjects (e.g. group 5; isolate p13; paddock 2) or when referring to a nation or abstract entity (i.e. a state), am, pm.
• Common names of native fauna and flora do not have capitals unless they contain a proper noun (e.g. hairy-nosed wombat; Mallee fowl).
• Scientific names are written in italics (e.g. Escherichia coli).
• Common nouns do not have capitals unless they are part of a name of something, eg. members, membership, association, Australian Veterinary Association.

Which and That

• ‘Which’, preceded by comma, is used to introduce a descriptive phrase or clause e.g. ‘The houses, which had green tile roofs, were built by Jennings’.
• ‘That’, not separated by comma from the related noun, is used to introduce a defining or limiting phrase or clause. e.g. ‘The houses that had green tile roofs were built by Jennings’.

While, Whereas, Because

• ‘While’ indicates a time relationship. ‘Whereas’ is better for highlighting a contrast.
• ‘Because’ is preferred when the causal relationship is clear. ‘We ended the experiment after the third dose, because the side-effects were too severe.’

Collective nouns
• All collective nouns are singular, eg ‘The group wants to know’, ‘The Rolling Stones plays well’, ‘The board decides’, ‘The AVA plans ahead’.

• Components of a collective are plural, eg ‘The members of the group want to know’, ‘The Rolling Stones musicians play well’, ‘The board members decide’, ‘AVA members plan ahead’.

Acronyms
• Avoid acronyms as much as possible.
• Be aware that many acronyms stand for multiple terms, so use them only sparingly and spell out in full during the first use followed by the acronym in parentheses eg. Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF).

Punctuation and formatting
Punctuation
• Abbreviated titles and forms of address are always without full-stops, eg Dr, Mr, Capt, Rev
• For direct speech, use double quotation marks.
• To indicate terms with special or colloquial meanings in prose, use single quotation marks.
• For quotes within quotes, use single quotation marks.
• Long quotations can be indented and quotation marks omitted altogether.

Apostrophes
• Apostrophes indicate either ownership (Jason’s book) or an abbreviation (eg. don’t, won’t, he’s)
• For ownership, plurals ending with an s have the apostrophe after the s eg. the members’ wishes (the wish of all the members).
• For all other plurals, the apostrophe goes before the s eg. the people’s choice, the women’s room, the men’s section
• If you’re talking about a single thing or person, the apostrophe goes before the s eg. the member’s renewal (the renewal of a single member), Jason’s car.
• Do not use an apostrophe for anything else such as a straight plural such as ‘trollies’, or words like yours, ours, theirs, 1980s.
• If ‘it’ owns something, the exception is that there’s no apostrophe eg. it flexed its muscles.
• It’s is only used as an abbreviation for ‘it is’ or ‘it has’.
Lists

- Bullet-point lists of words or sentence fragments are in lower case and without full stops (except for the final bullet point in the list which should have a full stop).
- Bullet-point lists of complete sentences are in sentence case with a full stop at the end of each sentence.
- Unless required for legal reasons, or to be precise about meaning, colons, semi-colons, ‘and’ and ‘or’ should be omitted from lists.

Layout

- Paragraphs should be left aligned with a blank line separating them from each other, not indented.
- Headings should be in sentence case.

Numbers

- Use Arabic numerals, with comma as thousands markers (e.g. 2,439,001; 45,014,326,55).
- If a number has only four digits, omit the thousands marker (e.g. 4286; 5.3478).
- Spell out any number that starts a sentence and one-digit numbers (one to nine) if they are used for counting, but not when they are used in measurements or as an attribute (including to indicate a time such as 9 am), e.g. ‘An average of three sheep was treated on farms 7 and 9’ or ‘Next, 5 mL of the solution was pipetted’.
- If a sentence contains a series of numbers, including larger than nine, use numerals for them all e.g ‘Of all 50 sheep treated, 9 recovered within 1 week, 8 recovered within 1 month and 33 died.’
- Insert a space between a number and its unit symbol: 25 m (not 25m) except for °C (25°C).
- Australian dollar amounts shown as A$10 million or A$10m (no space)

Bibliographic references

Journals


Books


Conference proceedings


Others
• Newspaper or magazine article: Scanlon P. Outbreaks highlight importance of government vets. AVA News, August 1995:2.