Editorial Checklist for Instructors Writing Courses at BCIT

This brief checklist will help you avoid the most common editorial errors and inconsistencies that can distract or confuse readers and undermine your message. This checklist is not meant to be exhaustive; rather, it covers only the most common pitfalls in writing for print or online. While we encourage a standard approach to these editorial matters, we recognize there will be cases where exceptions must be made.

Before you begin

Did you know that the LTC offers free editing services to all BCIT instructors? Call us at 604 432 8406 to find out how you can get your course materials professionally edited.

In general

- When writing course materials destined to be published online, the less MS Word formatting you use, the better. Only bold and italics are maintained when Word files are converted to HTML. Don't underline anything, as students will perceive this text as a dead link. Indicate heading levels using tags such as <H1>, <H2>, and <H3>.
- Use Canadian spelling, *e.g.*, *colour* not *color*, *theatre* not *theater*, *analyze* not *analyse*. When in doubt, refer to the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*.

Abbreviations and acronyms

Spell out the term the first time it appears, with the abbreviation or acronym in parentheses; abbreviate thereafter. Abbreviations (BCIT, BC, or LTC) should not have periods between the letters *e.g.*, B.C.I.T. Two exceptions to this last rule are *i.e.* and *e.g.*

WHEN TO USE *I.E.* AND WHEN TO USE *E.G.*

The abbreviation *i.e.* means *that is* whereas *e.g.* means *for example*. While both are Latin terms (*id est* and *exempli gratia*), it is correct, but not necessary, to italicize them. They are followed by a comma.

Capitalization

In general, only proper nouns are capitalized. Proper nouns include – but are not restricted to – personal names (John, Sue), geographical place names (Toronto, Burnaby), proprietary names (Microsoft, Apple), and publications (*The Vancouver Sun*, *The DaVinci Code*).

Citations

Whichever citation style you use (*e.g.*, APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.), use it consistently.

Headings in online courses

CAPITALIZATION OF HEADINGS

H1 headings: set in title case, *e.g.*, Mineral Resources and Reserves
H2 headings: set in title case
H3 headings: set in sentence case, *e.g.*, Types of mining operations

PUNCTUATION IN HEADINGS

When a heading has two parts, separate the parts with a colon:

Module One: The Modern Mining Environment

Do not place a period or colon at the end of a heading.

HEADING STRUCTURE

Ensure the structure of your headings is consistent across your modules, *e.g.*, all module pages should start with an H1 heading.

Numbers in running text

A good rule of thumb is to spell out numbers under ten, and set numbers ten and above in Arabic numerals (10, 11, 12…). Some writers prefer to spell out numbers from one to ninety-nine and set in Arabic numerals thereafter (100, 101, 102…). Whatever approach you use, apply it consistently throughout your document.

Vertical lists

INTRODUCING VERTICAL LISTS

In general, use a colon to introduce a vertical list:

> There are three metals used in computer circuits:
> * mercury
> * manganese
> * copper.

Do not introduce the list with a colon if the list is the complement or object of the introductory statement:

> The foreman requested
> * tools
> * protective clothing
> * food supplies.

CAPITALIZATION IN LISTS

In general, if the list item forms a complete sentence, set it in sentence case and end with a period:

> There are three reasons to like dogs:
> * Dogs repay kindness with kindness.
> * Dogs need the care of their masters.
> * Showing affection to dogs has been shown to increase hormone production associated with happiness. You can never have enough happy hormones!

This style of capitalization will serve you well if your list item runs longer than a single sentence, as in the third bullet, above.

PARALLELISM IN LISTS

All items in a list need to have the same construction. Here's an example of non-parallel list:

> By the end of this course, you will be able to:
> * Fix an automobile engine.
> * Drive a forklift.
> * Analysis of carburetors.

The last item should be recast as *Analyze carburetors* to make it parallel with the other items.

Titles of books and other publications

In general, titles of books, magazines, and journals are always set in italics. Chapters of books or articles are set in quotation marks:

> Read "Environmental Considerations" in *Mineral Exploration and Mining Essentials*.