

# STYLE GUIDE

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to detail how to write appropriately for *Old School Quarterly* (**OSQ**) in general, for specific columns and feature articles, and for specific game products that are to be included in the publication. When reading this document and attempting to follow directions, go from the general first to the specific in the following order:

1. General publication
2. Publication Segments
3. Product-specific

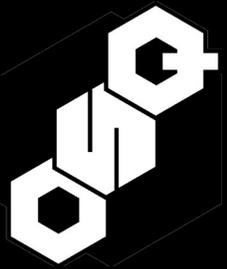
Doing so will ensure that you follow the appropriate rules for providing submissions that help the editorial team quickly and easily process, proof, edit, and approve your submission. Some of the decisions made for style elements go against recommendations traditionally used in standard publishing; this is due to wanting to provide improved readability within copy as well as meeting certain expectations already established by the readership.

As **OSQ** grows and additional products and titles are added to those supported, this document will be updated to include those.

## GENERAL PUBLICATION

The following rules apply to the entire publication:

- ✦ Manuscripts should be submitted in accordance with the *Chicago Manual of Style, 16th Edition*. There are a number of specific details for formatting of specific elements below.
- ✦ The *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 11th Edition* is to be used as the reference source for all for dictionary words. All non-US originated submissions should correct to spellings used in this when appropriate when there is a conflict between two words such as color/colour etc.
- ✦ Manuscripts should be double-spaced, justified left, and use 12 point Arial as the default typeface. All text should be colored black.
- ✦ Publisher names and proper titles of products should be italicized.
- ✦ Attempt to include diversity in writing at all opportunities with regard to ethnicity, gender, and other areas.



## GRAMMAR

- ✦ Use the active voice rather than the passive voice.
- ✦ Use parallel language structure at all times.
- ✦ Make nouns and pronouns agree.
- ✦ Ensure modifiers are acting on the appropriate objects.
- ✦ Use “nor” only when “neither” is in a sentence.

## PUNCTUATION

### COMMAS

- ✦ Use the Oxford/serial comma before any conjunction in the final element of any series.
- ✦ Use commas to separate dates within sentences.

### ELLIPSES

- ✦ Ellipsis points are made up of three single periods in a row.
- ✦ They may be used to indicate an omission within quotes.
- ✦ They can also be used to complete a sentence that includes an omission where the reader is expected to make a supposition upon potential endings of the sentence.
- ✦ There should be a space after and/or a space before if text continues.

### APOSTROPHES

- ✦ Know and use the possessive versus the plural form of nouns correctly.
- ✦ Do not add an additional S after common nouns that end in S and that require the possessive.
- ✦ Add an additional S after proper nouns that end in S and that require the possessive, unless the S is unpronounced.
- ✦ Add an apostrophe at the beginning of decades such as ‘70s, ‘80s, ‘90s etc.
- ✦ Do not use a possessive apostrophe in abbreviations with plurals such as *DMs for Dungeon Masters*, *GMs for Game Masters*, or *RPGs for Role Playing Games* etc.

## PROPER NOUN AND PROPER NAMES

- ✦ A proper noun is a single word noun that refers to a unique entity.
- ✦ A proper name is may be made up of a common noun and a proper noun.
- ✦ Single word proper nouns may also be proper names.
- ✦ Proper nouns/names should be capitalized, although modifier articles should not be.
- ✦ CamelCase/camelCase, where compound words are created with multiple words using a combination of capitalized letters and start with either an upper case or lower case letter is acceptable for certain proper names.
- ✦ Place names, people names, spell names, unique monster names, game system attributes, and other proper nouns/names should be capitalized.
- ✦ Races such as human, elven, dwarven, orcish, etc. should not be capitalized as they are broad categories.
- ✦ Languages such as *Common*, *Goblinoid*, *Elven*, *Dwarven* etc. should be capitalized, as they are specific proper names for specific languages.

## DATES, TIMES, MEASUREMENTS, AND NUMBERS

- ✦ Numbers starting a sentence should be spelled out.
- ✦ Use a comma before the year, and a comma after if a sentence does not end after the date. (e.g. “January 1, 2015, is the first day of the new year in the Gregorian calendar...”).

- ✦ Numbers between one and a hundred should be spelled out.
- ✦ Round numbers greater than one hundred should be spelled out in general text in most cases.
- ✦ Hyphenate between the “tens” and “ones” places in combination numbers.
- ✦ Use precision numbers if needed, otherwise round to the nearest whole number.
- ✦ Centuries should be spelled lower-case.
- ✦ Number ranges should include an en dash (i.e. *100-200*, *1st-3rd*, *5-9*) and the plural form of any noun such as *levels*, *bandits*, *spaceships* etc.
- ✦ Telephone numbers should use hyphens to separate elements rather than use parenthesis. International calling codes can be placed at the beginning using a plus symbol, the international dialing code, and a space before the remainder of the number.
- ✦ User roman numerals for currency amounts. Use whole numbers only without trailing values if the value is equal to zero.
- ✦ Use the appropriate currency delimiter for regions. (i.e. “.” for US, “,” for EU etc.)
- ✦ Percentages can be listed as the numeral with a following percentage without a space within general text.
- ✦ When referring to character, spell, monster, or item levels for RPGs, use roman numerals. Examples are *3rd-level* and *8th to 12th level*. Ranges may be used as well and indicated with hyphens. Examples are *levels 1-3*, *levels 10-12* etc.
- ✦ Tables should use roman numerals for their index values.
- ✦ Measurements should be spelled out fully in general text and not use abbreviations.

## QUOTATIONS AND CITATIONS

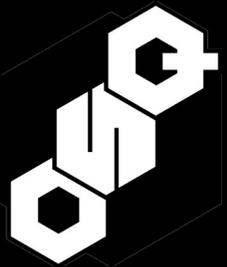
- ✦ All quotations should include a citation including author, publication, and year if applicable.
- ✦ Do not include specific page numbers unless necessary. Chapters may be used.
- ✦ In-line quotations should include the citation in parenthesis after the quotation. Endnotes, if used, should be included within the parenthesis within square brackets using the corresponding number.
- ✦ Block quotations should be single spaced, indented 0.5”, without quotation marks, and include the citation on a line after. A single line space should separate blocked quotations above and below from other text.
- ✦ Citations should also include a reference in a Bibliography section.

## SUBHEADINGS

- ✦ Subheadings should be consistent.
- ✦ Subheadings should not end in a period.
- ✦ There should be an extra line space above and below a subheading.
- ✦ Subheadings should be nested, using the following sizes in descending order of importance and nesting: 20pt, 18pt, 16pt, 14pt, 12pt. This allows for 5 levels of nesting.
- ✦ Subheadings may alternate **bold** and *italic* text.
- ✦ Subheadings may be all capitalized, and this is the preferred format, even with **bold** or *italic* text.

## LISTS

- ✦ A colon should precede the introduction of all lists.
- ✦ In-line list entries should use commas to separate individual items.
- ✦ Vertical list entries should use either bullets or standard roman numerals.
- ✦ Vertical list entries should end in a period if items in the list form complete sentences.
- ✦ Vertical list items should begin with a capital letter if items in the list form complete sentences.
- ✦ Do not use semi-colons at the end of list items, or use a conjunction such as “before” or “as” before the last list item. Use “or” or “and” if necessary for in-line lists.
- ✦ List items should all be fragments or complete sentences, not mixed.



## ABBREVIATIONS, INITIALISMS, AND ACRONYMS

- ✦ An abbreviation is “a shortened form of a word or name that is used in place of the full word or name” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, [1])
- ✦ Initialisms are abbreviations pronounced one word at a time. They should not include any periods between the letters.
- ✦ Acronyms are abbreviations pronounced as proper words. They should not include any periods between the letters.
- ✦ Use two letter country or regional codes as adjectives only (i.e. US, UK, EU, etc.). The preference is to spell out entire country names.
- ✦ Post-meridiem and ante-meridiem times should be abbreviated as a.m. or p.m.
- ✦ All other abbreviations should include periods at the end of element sections.
- ✦ The first time an initialism or acronym should be used is after the first time the proper term is used. The initialism/acronym should be placed in parenthesis directly after this. The exception to this is if the initialism/acronym is what is used more commonly than the full proper title and is what most people would expect or understand. An example of this would be using “NATO” instead of “North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)”.
- ✦ The preference is for initialisms and acronyms to be used for all further uses of proper titles after the first within text to aid reading comprehension.
- ✦ New abbreviations may be created for articles as necessary, but should not overload the reader.

## INTERNET

There is some standardization in the use of terms relating to the Internet:

- ✦ World Wide Web should be used instead of world wide web.
- ✦ Use Internet instead of internet.
- ✦ web, website, and web page are all preferred instead of Web, Website, Web page etc.
- ✦ URLs should include the full “http://” or “https://” protocol designation at the beginning of any Internet addresses. If a URL must be broken over multiple lines, break it before the slash (/) and continue starting with the slash on the next line. The preference is to start it on the next line.

## TRADEMARKS, PRODUCT TITLES, BRAND NAMES

- ✦ Brand names and trademarks should be capitalized, unless if the name itself starts with a lower-case-letter. Follow the naming convention of the brand-name/trademark for the case of other letters in the name. (i.e. *eBay*, *TIME Magazine*)
- ✦ Do not expect readers to know all trademarks. Include explanatory or expositional context such as product type.
- ✦ Do not include the trademark or registered trademark symbols within general text.
- ✦ Convert special formatting and characters in names that are not pronounced to standard English.

## SPECIAL SYMBOLS

- ✦ Avoid using special symbols such as Emoji or Dingbats within general text. If there is a special case where this is needed, contact the editor.
- ✦ Use appropriate currency format symbols if discussing non-US currencies.

## FOOTNOTES/ENDNOTES

- ✦ Endnotes should begin after a “ENDNOTES” subheading.
- ✦ The preference is to use endnotes over footnotes because of the manuscript submission process.
- ✦ Endnotes should use a numbered vertical list to detail them.
- ✦ Endnotes should be single-spaced and include a single line between each individual endnote entry.
- ✦ Endnotes can refer to a more complete bibliographic entry, as long as a bibliography is included.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIES

- ✦ Bibliographies should begin after a “BIBLIOGRAPHIES” subheading.
- ✦ Bibliographies should use the author-date format for the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

## OPEN CONTENT

All Publication Sections using Open Content must include the following:

- ✦ Open Content information should begin after “OPEN CONTENT” subheading.
- ✦ OGL copyright information from Section 15 should be copied verbatim from original sources.
- ✦ Ensure there are no duplicate entries. Only one entry per publication.
- ✦ Only Section 15 and content relating to Open Content and Product Identity needs to be provided.
- ✦ Trademark licenses from publishers do not need to be included. These will be added by **OSQ**.
- ✦ All Open Content repeated verbatim should be underlined within your copy. All Open Content that is reused but not repeated verbatim should be underlined when first used and the marker text “(Open Content)” placed after its use in copy.

## PUBLICATION SEGMENTS

This section describes specific elements of style that sit atop the general rules for the entire publication that are listed before. These rules are for specific Publication Sections within each issue of **OSQ**.

## ADVENTURES AND SCENARIOS

- ✦ Provide in-line Statistic Blocks for each encountered creature (ally or enemy). See Product-Specific section for details on block format, if any.
- ✦ New creatures, items, or other that have been created for specifically should be either explained fully within the content or in a section at the end dedicated to new and additional content.
- ✦ Adventures and scenarios should come with draft sketches at least to detail the creator’s vision of the map. This sketch will be used to generate a final publication-quality map unless publication-quality artwork is submitted.
- ✦ When providing a map, provide a version of the map with rooms keyed with numbers or letters to distinguish individual rooms. There is no set format for these, but it should remain consistent throughout. Adventure and scenario text key locations should match.
- ✦ Player handouts should be submitted as appendix items to the manuscript or as individual images that can be recreated in the same way as maps.
- ✦ Abbreviations such as those for measurements such as pounds, feet etc. do not use a period at the end in Statistic Blocks or descriptive text and have a space between the number and the measurement . Instead use *100 lbs, 50 ft* etc.

## GENERAL ARTICLES

- ✦ Abbreviations such as those for measurements such as pounds, feet etc. do not use a period at the end in Statistic Blocks or descriptive text and have a space between the number and the measurement . Instead use *100 lbs, 50 ft* etc.

## NUMBER APPEARING

- ✦ Complete Statistic Blocks should be provided for all entries that require or benefit from them.
- ✦ Abbreviations such as those for pounds, feet etc. do not use a period at the end in Statistic Blocks or descriptive text. Instead use *100 lbs, 50 ft* etc.

## ONE PAGE DUNGEONS

- ✦ One Page Dungeons should come with draft sketches at least to detail the creator's vision of the map. This sketch will be used to generate a final publication-quality map unless publication-quality artwork is submitted.
- ✦ Key the map to the appropriate entries given in the text for the submission.
- ✦ Abbreviations such as those for measurements such as pounds, feet etc. do not use a period at the end in Statistic Blocks or descriptive text and have a space between the number and the measurement . Instead use *100 lbs, 50 ft* etc.

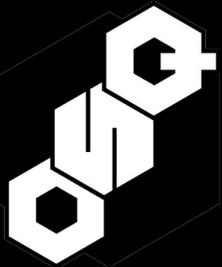
## TABLES

- ✦ Use the Table functions in Microsoft Word to generate an original table.
- ✦ Do not format the tables beyond the standard black-ruled table that is created.
- ✦ Cell text color should remain black, and cell background color should remain blank or white.
- ✦ Cell text font should be Arial 10pt.
- ✦ Header and footer rows may be used.
- ✦ Abbreviations such as those for measurements such as pounds, feet etc. do not use a period at the end in Statistic Blocks or descriptive text and have a space between the number and the measurement . Instead use *100 lbs, 50 ft* etc.

## PRODUCT-SPECIFIC

This section details how to format specific elements in articles for particular products, including elements as in-line statistic blocks.

[COMING SOON]



## ENDNOTES

1. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/abbreviation>

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