

Comma Style, Spelling, Grammar, and Reference Guidelines for Authors

General Information

[*Comma, International Journal on Archives*](#) is the official journal of the International Council on Archives (ICA). As a multilingual and multicultural journal, *Comma* seeks to be an inclusive forum for discussion and exploration of scholarly and practical developments in the global archives profession. Published bi-annually, the journal includes research articles and case studies as well as reviews of publications and resources that are created by archivists or affect archives and the archives profession. The journal publishes contributions on a wide variety of subjects, including the cultural, social, legal, and international contexts in which archivists, records managers, and cultural heritage stewards work, as well as the history, development, and establishment of archives and archival programs. *Comma* especially seeks to be a welcoming space for new authors and new professionals and encourages new voices and perspectives. Contributions may be submitted in any of the following languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Russian, and Spanish. All articles are accompanied by an abstract which is translated into these seven languages.

The journal frequently publishes special topic issues, such as “Archives and Intergovernmental Organizations” and “Archives and Climate Change.” The Editor-in-Chief welcomes inquiries and proposals for special issues and guest editors.

In addition to an Editor-in-Chief, *Comma* is supported by an international Editorial Board. The Editorial Board includes a number of volunteers who translate abstracts for the journal, in addition to reviewing contributions and copyediting content. Submissions are reviewed by one or more referees and evaluated by the Editor-in-Chief.

Submission Instructions

Submissions: Articles should be submitted to *Comma*’s Editor-in-Chief at comma@ica.org. Articles and supporting materials (short abstract, biography for each author, figures/images) should be sent as email attachments. For large files and attachments that cannot be emailed, please email the Editor-in-Chief to make arrangements for submission. Please submit all materials (except images - see below) as Microsoft Word documents (DOCX or DOC files). **All materials (article, author biography, abstract, and any images used) MUST be submitted to *Comma* at the same time.**

Article Text: Articles should be composed in 12-point type. Titles should be bolded and in 16-point type, author names also bolded but in 14-point type. Footnotes should be in 10-point type, and captions for images in 11-point type and bolded. Headings and

subheadings should all be in 12-point type, bolded in the first level, normal text in the second level, and italicized in the third level. All text should be in Times New Roman font.

Text should be double-spaced with one-inch (1”) margins on all sides. The text should be aligned to the left side of the page. Please only use a single space after a period (not a double space) and use the serial (aka “Oxford”) comma. Submissions should be a minimum of 4500 words and a maximum of 6000 words. Articles should be paginated.

Citations: Please use footnotes and consult the [Chicago Manual of Style’s \(17th Edition\) Notes and Bibliography system](#) for standard style and footnote citation formats, especially [chapter 14](#). The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) is commonly used in academia, particularly in humanities disciplines. Authors are responsible for the accuracy of citations. Please do not include a bibliography or list of references at the end of the article.

Figures, Images, and Illustrations: Any figure or photograph that appears in the text should also be sent as a separate file. Authors are responsible for obtaining any and all permissions for reproducing photographs, illustrations, etc., prior to the publication of any accepted article, and for any associated fees. Images must be 300 dpi and in JPG or TIFF format

Abstract and Author Biography: Every article must be accompanied by an abstract of no more than 250 words and a biography for each author of no more than 75 words. The abstract should be brief and include a brief summary of the topic, methods, and

findings/conclusions, or a brief summary of a case study. The author biography should include a brief description of the author’s background and any relevant research interests or publications. For co-authored articles, a separate biography will be needed for each author. Please do not include footnotes or citations in either the abstract or the biography.

Preferred Spellings and Word Use

In general, follow the [ICA’s Multilingual Archival Terminology](#) resource for preferred spellings and word use. In all other cases, please follow conventions for word spellings for specific vernaculars, languages, dialects, and cultural contexts.

Possessives

Add an “s” to words/names ending in “s”: Andreas’s

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Postal abbreviations: DE, NY, UK, US etc.

Academic abbreviations: PhD, MD, BA, MA etc.

Spell out “&” except when used formally in title: AT&T, Texas A&M

Spell out acronyms in the first instance they are used, followed by the acronym in parentheses: International Council on Archives (ICA), Expert Group on Archival Description (EGAD)

File formats: PDF, JPG, TIFF etc. (not .pdf, .jpg, or. tiff)

Capitalization

Do not capitalize official titles, unless they precede the name (she served as head archivist; Head Archivist Margaret Anderson gave the talk.).

Department and official names should be capped: Department of History, Archives and Manuscripts Department, University of Strathclyde Archives and Special Collections; but, the university archives.

Dates

In a date range, repeat the century if appropriate: 1995–1998

Use the date format: year-day-month

Spell out name of century: i.e., twentieth century NOT 20th century

Epigraphs

Epigraphs appear in italics. Only the attribute's name is needed, followed by a superscript with more citation info in the footnote. Name should appear flush right, preceded by an em (—) dash.

Writing in an International Context

As an international and multilingual journal, *Comma* has a global readership. It is thus important to consider this global audience when writing. Authors should avoid using jargon in writing, and make sure that they provide sufficient context for institutions, practices, theories, records schemes, etc., which are specific to their region, country, city, and repository. Acronyms should always be spelled out in the first instance and described if necessary. In order to foster international understanding, it is very important to provide this context, whether in the text itself or in a footnote that provides further information.

Please also note that word usage matters for a global readership and to be intentional about what words to use, and what may or may not translate well. For an example of the complexities of translating archival terminology from French to English, see: Pauline Soum-Paris, “‘La Tour de Babel,’ 35 years later: challenges and tools relating to the translation of archival terminology from English to French,” *Archives & Manuscripts* 49, no. 1-2 (2020): 8–36, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01576895.2020.1833226>.

Language Editing

For authors who are writing in a language in which they are not fluent and/or would like to refine their use of language in their articles, we encourage them to consider using a

professional editing service or to ask a colleague fluent in the language to review the article before submission. *Comma* has limited resources for language editing.

Inclusive Language and Avoiding Bias

It is important to think critically about bias in writing and about word usage pertaining to ethnicity and race, gender, sexual orientation, and disability. Please consult chapter 5 of the CMOS for a [Glossary of Problematic Words and Phrases](#) and a section on [Bias-Free Language](#). Authors should use words which focus on a person’s agency. For example, instead of using the word “slave,” use a phrase like “enslaved person.” (See [Writing about Slavery? Teaching about Slavery](#) by P. Gabrielle Foreman, et al., for further guidance on writing about slavery).

Use person-first language (i.e., person with a disability) or identify-first language (i.e., disabled person) for writing about disabilities. (See the [Disability Language Style Guide](#) or [APA’s style guide](#) for further guidance on language and disability).

For writing about Indigenous peoples, use spellings and names that Tribes, communities, and peoples use themselves. One resource to consult is [Native Land Digital](#) for preferred spellings, but we strongly encourage authors to consult with communities themselves (such as their websites). Capitalize all terms that pertain to Indigenous titles and identities,

such as the adjectives “Indigenous,” “Native,” “Aboriginal,” and “Tribal” (as well as the noun “Tribe”).

Unless someone self-identifies their gender, use gender neutral pronouns and language.

Consult section 5.255 of the CMOS on [Techniques for Achieving Gender Neutrality](#) for further guidance on inclusive and gender-neutral language.

Publication Ethics

Authors should consult the Committee on Publication Ethics on [Responsible Research Publication: International Standards for Authors](#). Authors should present original research that is not published elsewhere and is not under consideration by another journal. Authors should also disclose any financial support received and ensure that they accurately cite and acknowledge ideas from others that are not their own. It is the responsibility of authors to obtain permissions for images, etc., prior to submission. All research should be conducted in an ethical manner, and authors should ensure they have secured the appropriate approvals for human-subject research or research on animals (such as through an Institutional Review Board).

Publication and Editorial Process

Once articles are submitted to *Comma*, they are first reviewed by the Editor-in-Chief, and then reviewed by at least one Editorial Board member. The author may have their article

accepted; accepted with revisions; requested to be revised and resubmitted; or rejected.

Any feedback or requests for revisions resulting from the review process will be sent to the author. Once the author submits the revised article, it is reviewed by the Editor-in-Chief and the original Editorial Board member(s) who reviewed it. Once an article is accepted for publication, it is copyedited and sent to *Comma*'s publisher for page proof creation.

Authors will have the opportunity to look over copyedits and page proofs prior to publication. The entire publication and editorial process can take 9-12 months.

Contact

For questions or to discuss a Special Issue idea, contact *Comma* Editor-in-Chief Dr Forget Chaterera-Zambuko at: comma@ica.org