



The Canadian Press Stylebook: NCM Cheat sheet

1. Spelling and Capitalization

CP Style uses the Canadian Oxford Dictionary, but exceptions are listed in CP's Caps and Spelling.

Pay attention to compound words, which can be written as separate words (health care, cheat sheet), with hyphens (know-how, home-based) or combined into a single word (filmmaker, homemade). Open compound adjectives used before a noun are sometimes hyphenated (health-care unit), but don't use hyphens with adverbs ending in -ly.

Table with 2 columns: Common mistake, Correct CP Style. Rows include healthcare vs health care, childcare vs child care, day care vs daycare, and critically-acclaimed writer vs critically acclaimed writer.

2. Professional titles

Capitalize formal titles and job titles when they directly precede the name (Prime Minister Justin Trudeau). When a job title stands alone or comes after the name, do not capitalize (the prime minister or Justin Trudeau, the prime minister).

Long titles (more than two words) should be set off from the name with commas and lowercased: Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's chief public health officer; Mike Bernier, the B.C. Liberal finance critic.

Lowercase occupational titles and job descriptions (including titles of officials of companies, unions, political organizations): general manager Art Simpson, Widget president Barbara Sansom.

Table with 2 columns: Common mistake, Correct CP Style. Rows include 'the Prime Minister said.' vs 'Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal government;' and 'Canada's Chief Public Health Officer said.' vs 'the country's chief public health officer said; Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's chief public health officer;'

Clean Energy Canada Policy Director Sarah Petrevan	Sarah Petrevan, a policy director at Clean Energy Canada
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### 3. Abbreviations

**Avoid abbreviations if possible**, unless very familiar to readers (CBC, NDP, MP, NATO, RCMP, CEO). In general, **do not** put a bracketed abbreviation after the name of an organization. On subsequent reference, use a generic name instead (e.g., the union instead of SGUE). **Omit periods** unless the abbreviation is geographical (e.g., B.C., U.K., U.S.) or refers to a person.

**Use abbreviations for Canadian provinces** (as follows): Alta., B.C., Sask., Man., Ont., Que., N.B., N.S., P.E.I., Nfld., and N.W.T. **Write out** Yukon and Nunavut.

**Spell out United Nations as a noun; use the UN abbreviation as an adjective** with well-known organizations (e.g., UN Security Council).

Common mistake	Correct CP Style
Royal Canadian Mounted Police;	RCMP, the Mounties;
World Health Organization (WHO)	World Health Organization officials are predicting
Vancouver, BC	Vancouver, B.C.; the B.C. legislature;

### 4. Dates

**Write out names of months when they are not part of a specific date. In precise dates, abbreviate the following months:** January (Jan.), February (Feb.), August (Aug.), September (Sept.), October (Oct.), November (Nov.) and December (Dec.). **March, April, May, June and July** are not abbreviated.

### 5. Numbers

**Spell out numbers one to nine** and use figures for 10 and above. **Exception:** for numbers at the beginning of a sentence, always spell out the number. For more exceptions, consult CP.

### 6. Punctuation

**Always place periods and commas inside quotation marks.**

**In direct quotes, use brackets to insert fuller identification:** “When you ask how (Finance Minister Chrystia) Freeland can survive, you are asking the wrong question.”

**Use spaces on both sides of the dash:** The government will discuss common problems — trade, immigration and defence — before going to the summit.

**Use spaces on both sides of the ellipsis mark** (which indicates omission): “The decision ... rests solely with your elected representatives.”

## 8. Titles of movies, books, podcasts, albums, TV shows etc.

Put these in italics. When impossible, place in quotation marks.

## 9. Politics and government

Capitalize full **names of political parties** and movements, but lowercase “party” in short forms: Liberal Party of Canada, Liberal party, the Liberals. **Exception:** New Democratic Party.

**Lowercase titles preceded by former, acting, and so on:** former mayor Joanne Lesniak, president-elect Joe Biden. **Lowercase titles of government officials below cabinet rank.**

### Examples:

- Green Leader Annamie Paul
- the Governor General; Gov. Gen. Julie Payette
- deputy finance minister Michael Sabia (*below cabinet rank*)
- Ontario Premier Doug Ford
- Senate; Sen. Nate Nurgitz; a senator; former senator Robert de Cotret
- Parliament Hill; the Hill; Parliament Buildings; East Block; Peace Tower
- lower chamber; upper chamber; lower house; upper house

## 10. Sensitive subjects (age, race, ethnicity, disability, sexism, gender identity)

### Examples:

- older adult (instead of senior or elderly)
- Black, white, brown, Asian, Latin, Jewish
- Indigenous Peoples (“Indigenous” is always capitalized), native, Aboriginal
- spokesperson (not spokesman)

You can use the gender neutral pronoun “they,” but try to refer to a person by their name to avoid reader confusion.

## 11. NCM article headlines (not CP style):

Capitalize the first and last word, all principal words, and all non-principal words (prepositions, conjunctions) of 4 letters or more.

**Example:** What History Can Tell Us About Working as an Immigrant Nurse in Canada

- First and last words: What, Canada (Canada would have been capitalized anyway)
- All principal words: History (noun), Can (verb), Tell (verb), Us (pronoun), Working (noun derived from a verb), Immigrant (noun acting as an adjective), Nurse (noun), Canada (noun)
- Preposition of 4 letters or more: About
- What’s left is lowercased: as (preposition), an (indefinite article), in (preposition)

**CP tips for writing headlines:** make it specific, concise and accurate. Use an active verb; include keywords from your story. Ask yourself if the headline could stand alone.