References

The full Style Guide lives in the Editorial folder of the Intranet. If you still have questions:

1. For detailed grammar advice, go to
   http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/index.html
2. For a quick and dirty – and British – grammar guide, go to
   http://www.le.ac.uk/bl/gat/writing/basics.html
3. For usage issues (passive voice, etc.), go to http://www.bartleby.com/141/
4. For discussions on British grammar and usage, go to http://www.lydbury.co.uk/grammar/
5. For UK/US spelling issues, look in the Oxford Dictionary for Writers & Editors

Project-specific style guides

Each project needs its own style guide, even if it's just a short list of how to spell a handful of proprietary terms. Use the template in the Editorial folder of the Intranet.

Basic style guide for Instructional Designers

This is the law of the land! Cut out the ones you need most and stick them to your monitor!

Basic, Absolute Rules	Use More White Space Than Ideas
Write storyboards in 10 pt Arial with no special formatting except in situations as described below. Avoid commas and semicolons unless they're needed for comprehension. Try to keep the content of most textboxes down to 500 characters maximum.	Break up ideas into small component parts. White space is critical for comprehension and satisfaction. Reading on screen can be 30% slower than reading on the page. Where possible, create a new paragraph for every new idea and every new instruction.

Formatting Text

Be Clear	Keep a Smooth Flow
Anticipate problems with clarity. Aim to reach the least prepared person in your audience. Trim extraneous words. Then trim again.	Eliminate extra phrases to avoid interrupting the flow of your ideas. **Avoid:** When thinking of options, it is best, in most instances, to blather on with, at most, one interruption, not to mention starting with an unnecessary phrase, ending with choppy gerunds. **Aim for:** Blather on with no more than one interruption and keep the extra phrases to a minimum.

Underline, Italics	Bold
Never underline except for hyperlinks. Use italics if desired but only to indicate the result of a user action (or a title): Click **Go** to watch *Casablanca*. *The Start Movie screen appears.* If you do this, be consistent.	Always bold the item that a user needs to interact with. Don't bold nearby punctuation. Don't bold for emphasis. Button names: Click the **Cancel** button. Tickboxes: Check the **On** tickbox. Hyperlinks: Click the **Home** link. Icons: Click the **Word** icon. Keys: Press **Delete** or **[Alt]** + **[Esc]**. Menu items: Select the **File** menu. Menu options: Then choose **Save As**. Radio buttons: Click the **Off** radio button. Tabs: Click the **Hints** tab.

Bulleting	Capitalisation
1. Use lists judiciously. 2. Keep lists flush left when practical to make the most of a small space. 3. Use caps and full stops for numbered lists. When bulleting items that are not complete sentences • avoid the leading colon when practical • don't bother skipping lines • don't capitalise • don't punctuate the ends of lines	Use capitals sparingly and all caps rarely if at all. Good uses include: DO NOT click the Self-destruct button. NOTE: Complete erasure of your hard drive will follow. On first use, spell out acronyms like Instructional Designer (ID). Then refer simply to IDs – no apostrophe for plurals! eLearning – one cap, no hyphen

More Formatting	Yet More Formatting
Use 'single' rather than "double" quotes. Use '&' in titles only, not in text: • Click the **Tools & Templates** button. • This lesson explains the tools and templates you will use. Use 'i.e.' before you restate an idea, i.e. before you explain yourself. Use 'e.g.' for a list, e.g. items, elements or examples. Never use etc. with e.g.!	Spell out percent (not %), by (not x), numbers from one to ten (not 1-10). Decide early on how to refer to users and their company (we, you, the learner, etc.) Be careful with jargon, cultural references, US/UK users, etc. Look for recurring terms and rephrase whenever possible.

Storyboard Quirks	More Storyboard Quirks
Each lesson must be its own document beginning with a 'New Module' table. In modules with more than one lesson, you will need to create a new document and enter the correct lesson number by hand. If there is no page break between tables (screens), they will not show up in the course. Insert hard breaks as necessary. For a graphics-only page, use layout 5 and leave the 'Main Text' area blank.	Every part of a multi-part scenario or walkthrough must reference the same asset. You must do this by hand. Do not alter the top of the table except to enter a screen title and change the asset number, if necessary (see above). If your text looks bad, check that your paragraph formatting is set to 0 pt indentation, 0 pt spacing and single line spacing. Then select all text and click **B** twice to remove any bolded spaces.

Content

Follow the journalism model of the inverted pyramid with important information at the top of the page.

Anything that detracts from quick, clear understanding of the material at hand is wrong.

Don't get so bogged down in details that you forget to give the user an overview and purpose of your instructions.

Start with Subject, Use Direct Verb

Sentences should virtually always start with the subject and move immediately on to an active verb.

Avoid: In the overall process, *success* through to the Continuous Improvement phase *is linked back to* the completeness and effectiveness of implementation planning and execution.

Aim for: The *completeness and effectiveness* of your implementation planning and execution *lead directly to* success through the Continuous Improvement phase.

Revise for Active Voice

Search your text for passive voice (The ball was thrown by me) and rewrite to active (I threw the ball).

Avoid: The ball was thrown by me.

Results can be seen after entering data.

Aim for: I threw the ball.

Entering data produces visible results.

Revise for Dynamic Language

Search your text for any forms of the verb 'to be' – especially 'there is' or 'there are' – and rewrite using active verbs.

Avoid: There are a variety of approaches to use.

Aim for: You can use a variety of approaches.

Give Specific, Thorough Instructions

Instructions must be specific and tell the user what will be accomplished by performing a requested action.

Avoid: Click **Open**.

Aim for: Click **File**. Then in the drop-down menu that appears, click **Open** to create your new document.

Exception: You must keep text within its box, so sacrifice detail when necessary.

Can Can Can

Be positive and direct.

Avoid: It is possible to open the document from here. The user could then progress to editing.

Aim for: You can open the document from here. The user can then progress to editing.