

UI CONTENT SYSTEM

Version 2.0

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About the UI Content System

Overview

We created the UI Content System to align in-product content at DocuSign. The UI Content System is part of the Ink Design System, though these guidelines apply to Olive too.

We need your help to create a cohesive, consistent information experience across our products. If you're creating or editing in-product content, you must follow the UI Content System.

- Content Designers
- Information architects
- Product Documentation
- Designers
- Engineers
- Product managers

Parts of this document diverge from guidance in other content guides at DocuSign. That's okay! Everything here only applies to in-product content.

How the Content System is organized

This document has three key sections: **Foundations**, **Components**, and **Mechanics**.

To find what you need, use **Ctrl+F (search)**

To make it easier to browse, go to **View > Show Outline**

Foundations	Components	Mechanics
Product content strategy and writing style at DocuSign.	Guidelines by component.	Grammar rules and guidelines. Applies to all in-product content.

Get help

To ask a question, suggest a change, or report a problem:

1. Go to **#content-design-requests** in Slack
2. Go to the workflows folder at the top
3. Choose the **Content System Updates** workflow, and fill out and **submit** the form

After you submit the form:

- Check for a Slackbot message. It'll have a link to a Jira ticket that's been created automatically.
- If we have any questions, we'll let you know as soon as we're able.

We make updates and improvements to this document as we're able, on a rolling basis.

Foundations

Writing Principles

1. [Use plain language](#)
2. [Write clear, concise copy](#)
3. [Make it scannable](#)
4. [Use the active voice](#)
5. [Avoid slang, jargon and idioms](#)
6. [Skip subjective language](#)
7. [Don't use Latin-based phrases](#)
8. [Please don't use "please"](#)
9. [Use an 8th grade reading level or less](#)

1. Use plain language

Write like you’re speaking *with* someone, not at them. If you wouldn’t say it out loud, don’t write it down.

Do 	Don't 
• Add the people who need to sign your documents.	• Add the individuals whom you require to execute your documents.

2. Write clear, concise copy

Keeping text short and simple makes content easy to scan, and helps with localization.

Do 	Don't 
• Use simple, everyday language • Use active voice; In the active voice, the sentence's subject (person, place or thing) performs the action on the action's target.	• Don't use exclamation points or ellipses • Avoid unnecessary adverbs, like “easily” or “quickly” • Don't use jargon and technical terms

3. Make it scannable

People tend to scan more than read word-for-word. It's our job to help them find what they're looking for quickly.

Do 	Don't 
• Every page needs a title and 1 main heading for content identification • Keep headings direct and relevant to the content that follows • Headings should be no more than six words	• Don't write lengthy descriptions • Don't jump heading levels (for example, jumping from H1 to H5)

Examples

Do 	Don't 
• Action required • Automate envelope routing • Get started with eSignature • See all products	• Let’s explore the many other ways to get more signatures for your envelopes, shall we? • Authorize your account, review your document, adopt your signature and sign your document.

4. Use an active voice

Write in an active voice, emphasizing the person or thing doing the action. Passive voice makes your sentences longer and dehumanizes the content.

Do 	Don't 
• Paul signed the document.	• The document was signed by Paul.

5.Avoid slang, jargon, and idioms

People use DocuSign for business. While we want to be human, we’re still professional. Jargon and slang, special words, or expressions used by a specific group, make it difficult for others to understand—especially new users. Slang and idioms don’t localize and can cause confusion for our global audience.

Examples

Do 		Don't 
- To continue, add at least one signer to your envelope. - Learn how to add a signer to your envelopes.		- Aw snap! Looks like you didn’t add a signer to your envelope. - Your Admin totally failed to update the identity provider. Try again.

6.Don’t use subjective language

Words like “quick,” “easy,” or “advanced” can seem harmless, but one person’s “easy” is another person’s “difficult.”

Examples

Do 		Don't 
- Add recipients to your envelope - Try our survey before continuing		- Easily add recipients to your envelope - Fill out the super simple fields in our survey

7.Don’t use Latin phrases

Not everyone understands these, nor do they translate well.

Examples

Do 	Don't 
For example	Per se Via e.g.
That is	i.e.
About	Ad hoc De facto Ergo Et cetera or etc. Re:
Against	Versus vs.
The other way around	Vice versa
Existing state	Status quo
And others	Et al

8.Please don’t use ‘please’

In most instances, remove the word “please” from your copy.

Caveat: “Please” is fine in the rare event the [error](#) is our fault. See [errors section](#) for more information.

Examples

Do 		Don't 
We can't load this page right now due to a server error. Please try again later.		Please add recipients to your envelope.
Fill out all required fields before continuing.		Please fill out all required fields before continuing.

9. Write at an 8th grade reading level or lower

Most in-product copy should be at or below an **8th grade reading level**.
Test readability with free tools like [Hemingway App](#).

Examples

Do 		Don't 
- Set up my account - Send to someone - Remove them from the envelope		Please refer to the Identity Provider documentation for details on attribute mapping and default attribute name values.

Instructional writing

Instructional copy guides users through the steps to reach a specific destination or goal.
Here are some best practices to follow:

Do 	Don't 
- Write steps in sequential order - Keep it simple: one directive per instruction - Use bullets or numbered steps for scannability - Include a CTA (Call-To-Action) link or button with next steps at endpoint	- Don't use multiple sentences - Don't describe entire processes or workflows.

Examples

Do 		Don't 
- To review your signatures: - Log in to DocuSign - Select your Profile - Select Manage Profile - Select Signatures to edit		Login to CLM. Go to Admin. Click the Parties tab. Upload party data in the Parties section of Admin. Note: You MUST use a CSV!

Legal writing

Words we write to comply with legal product requirements. It’s always a good idea to consult with your legal department representative to make sure you’re following the latest legal consent regulations.

Do 	Don't 
• Offer clear instructions for completing a task in compliance with the law • Work with legal team to understand what is legally required and what’s optional • Place legal confirmation to consent copy above CTA to ensure visibility • Link legal documents from text. Use inline text links with the proper name of the legal document or heading in Title Case.	• Don't include lengthy and/or irrelevant legal content that may confuse or overwhelm users • Don't use "DocuSign" or other brand names in the link copy • Don’t use buttons to link to legal documents

Example

Do 

Legal confirmation to consent

By selecting [Button-Copy], you agree to [\[Inline-Link\]](#) and [\[Inline-Link\]](#).

Name *

Email *

By selecting **Sign Up**, you agree to the [Terms and Conditions](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).

Sign Up

Components

Banners

Banners inform users on website, organization, or account occurrences. Only use these when the information is required to use DocuSign. One notable exception is the “Promo” configuration.

To provide feedback to users on actions they trigger, use [toast messages](#).

Do 	Don't 
• Be brief - header should be less than 40 characters; body text is a 100-character limit • Provide actions or next steps • If the information is essential, do not include a close button • If a warning, view Errors for guidance • For promos, check in-product guidelines	• Don't use end punctuation, especially exclamation points • Avoid using the word “success” or variations of it • If a warning, don’t use alarmist language • Also if a warning, avoid casual interjections like “Whoops” or “Uh Oh!”

Examples based on impact

Site-wide impact	Org-wide impact	Account-wide impact
Scenario: Site maintenance	Scenarios: - Free trial is ending - Payment method expired and subscription will lapse	Scenario: An administrator enabled two-factor auth for the org, and the user must set-up their account ASAP
Audience: Affected users	Audience: Administrators	Audience: Licensed users

Example: Account-wide impact

Do 

 Support for your version of DocuSign Apps Lo

- Make it a broad action, affecting many users

Don't 

You must add at least one recipient to ser

- Don't connect it to a specific action triggered by the user
- Don't include a close button if the user must resolve the issue before continuing

Blocks

There are three types of blocks: upsell, promotional, and adoptive. Blocks are used to group similar ideas that lack an inherent order. Usually, they do not require any next steps.

Do 

- State the block's purpose in the header. Lead with an actionable verb
- Limit to one call-to-action (CTA) per card
- Use blocks for presenting items with a flat hierarchy (e.g., alerts for new features, dashboards, reports)
- Use end punctuation for body text
- Use standalone links for CTAs

Don't 

- Don't replace lists with blocks
- Avoid using blocks to compare multiple options
- Don't use end punctuation for headers

Buttons

Buttons allow users to take action in our products.

Do 

Don't 

- Use Title Case for all buttons
- Keep it concise, 1-3 words
- Start with action verbs
- Use consistent language

- Do not capitalize articles, conjunctions, or prepositions
- No more than 20 characters
- No end punctuation
- Never say “Click Here”

Examples

Do 



Update

Don't 



Go Update The Documents

Do 

Add Recipients

Save a Copy

Save as Template

Save and Close

Send

Don't 

Form 17A

Callouts

Callouts are contextual visual cues highlighting information about a specific interactive, but not essential to completing a task.

Do 

- Use for extended informational messages not requiring action, such as launching new features or an alert
- Be conversational
- No more than 1 call-to-action

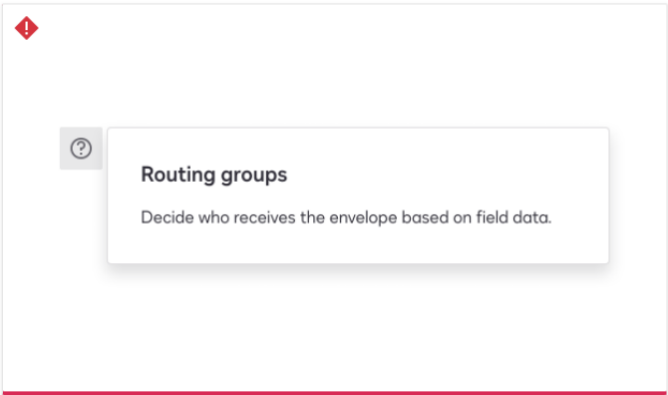
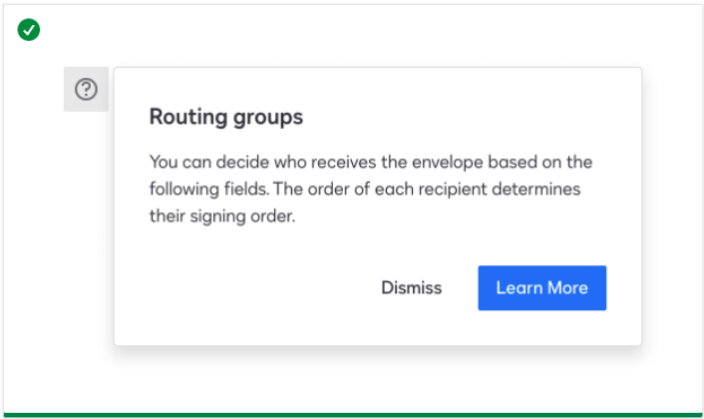
Don't 

- Don't use subjective terms referring to speed, ease of use or simplicity
- Don't use technical jargon
- Don't use a formal tone

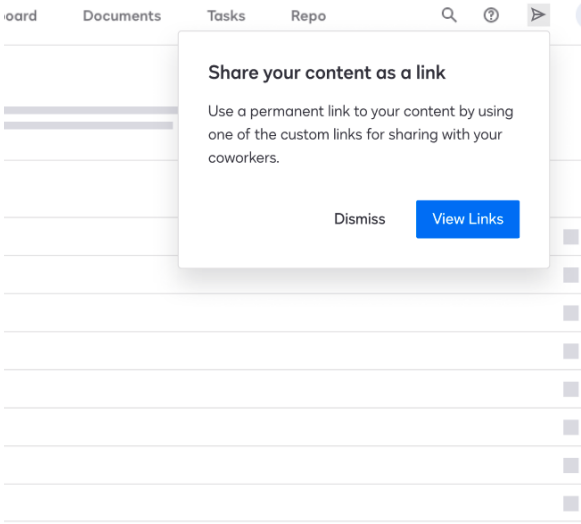
Examples

Do 

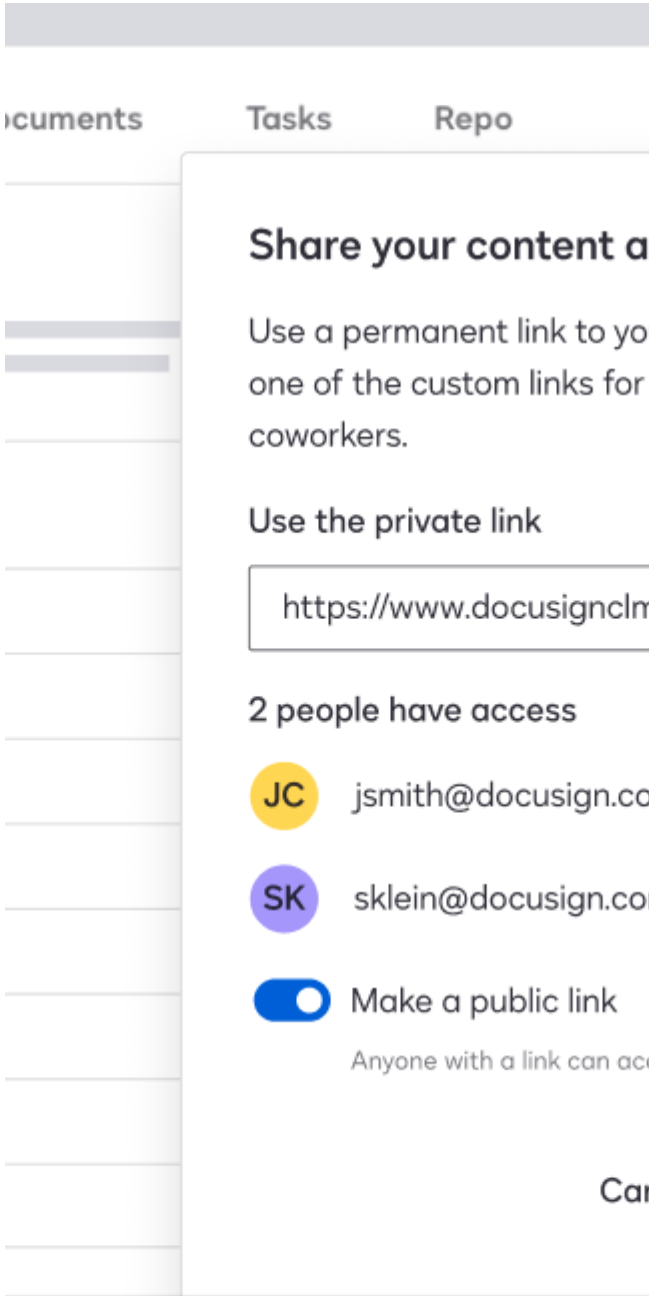
Don't 



Do 



Don't 



Empty states

Empty states are moments when there’s nothing to display on a page. Empty states can result from a lack of data due to first-time use, a user action (for example, no results when searching) or because of how a product is set up (such as permissions or configurations).

Do 

- Use headers to show value and the type lead with a verb
- Explain the empty state in body copy and guide users through next steps, if applicable
- Use the body copy to introduce other features
- Adopt a conversational tone and lean into marketing, if applicable

Don't 

- Don't use end punctuation for headers or CTAs
- Don't use end punctuation for body text unless it is a complete sentence
- Don't use a CTA if the user can't take any action on the empty state, like inboxes and assigned tasks

Do 

- Use a button as the primary CTA for action
- Optionally, use a link as a secondary CTA for documentation or other resources

Don't 

Examples with a CTA button

Do 



Add templates to favorites

When you add existing templates to your favorites, you can access them here.

Add to Favorites

Don't 



Add Templates to Favorites

When you add existing templates to your favorites, you can access them more easily.

Add to favorites

Examples without a CTA button

Do 



Act on all your envelopes here

Search for or filter anything that comes your way for even easier access.

Don't 



No envelopes

You haven't received any envelopes you need to act on

Errors

Best Practices

- Be clear, direct and instructional
- Do not blame the user. Respect the effort involved in resolving the issue.
- Don't be cute. No "Oops!" or "Uh Oh"
- Be conversational. No technical jargon.
- Avoid ambiguity
- Be solution-focused
- Use punctuation

Errors will happen. Let's help our users, not blame them. Error messages should be clear, direct and instructional. Be as conversational as you can and avoid using systematic language or back-end knowledge the user doesn't need to solve the issue.

At DocuSign, we organize errors into three general categories: **system errors**, **user errors** and **permission errors**.

System errors

System errors are failures in the system itself. The user cannot fix these errors, only DocuSign can.
For example:

- A requested page can't be found on the server
- Service outage
- Gateway timed out
- Network connection issues

It's our responsibility to guide our users through the issue and ideally, with solutions.

Do

- Write with a humble and empathetic tone
- Using please is fine in this instance only
- Passive voice is useful
- Show a clear path to success, ex. a link to support docs
- Refer to DocuSign in first person as "We"

Don't

- Do not blame the user. Ever.
- Do not say "sorry"
- Avoid the general catchall "Something went wrong." Users want details.
- Don't use technical jargon, if possible

Examples

Do

- Your signing session was interrupted. Reload the browser and try again.
- We couldn't save your document due to a server outage. Save your work and try again later.
- Search results timed out

Don't

- Document didn't save. Total bummer.
- You have failed to save your document and all your changes were lost.
- Something went wrong.

User errors

The user intended to enter an item and either by mistake or slip, the item is incorrect. They can be resolved by the user.

Do

- Provide clear requirements before the user reaches the error
- Focus on a specific solution
- Include clear instruction on how to successfully complete the action
- Use an empathetic, understanding tone

Don't

- Don't blame the user
- Avoid alarmist words or tone such as "Failure, Error," or "Forbidden"
- Don't only state the problem, state *why* it's a problem

Examples

Do

- We couldn't save your agreement template because of a duplicate name. Enter a different name.
- Address field is required.
- Use the English alphabet (A-Z) and digits (0-9).

Don't

- There's something wrong with your name.
- Empty fields are not allowed.
- Invalid entry

Permission errors

This type occurs when a user is unable to access a feature or complete an action because they don't have the proper permission. Administrators can usually resolve these errors.

Do

- Spell out “administrator” when referring to the administrator role
- Focus on specific permission issues and what administrators need to update
- Offer a direct action. Be clear.

Don’t

- Don’t use “Admin” when referring to the administrator role
- Don’t use alarmist words like “fail, error, and forbidden’
- Don’t blame the user

Examples

Do

- To use payments, a DocuSign administrator needs to set up a payment gateway.
- Your team’s administrator will need to grant you access to CLM.
- Your team requires a SSO login. Contact your DocuSign administrator for help with settings.

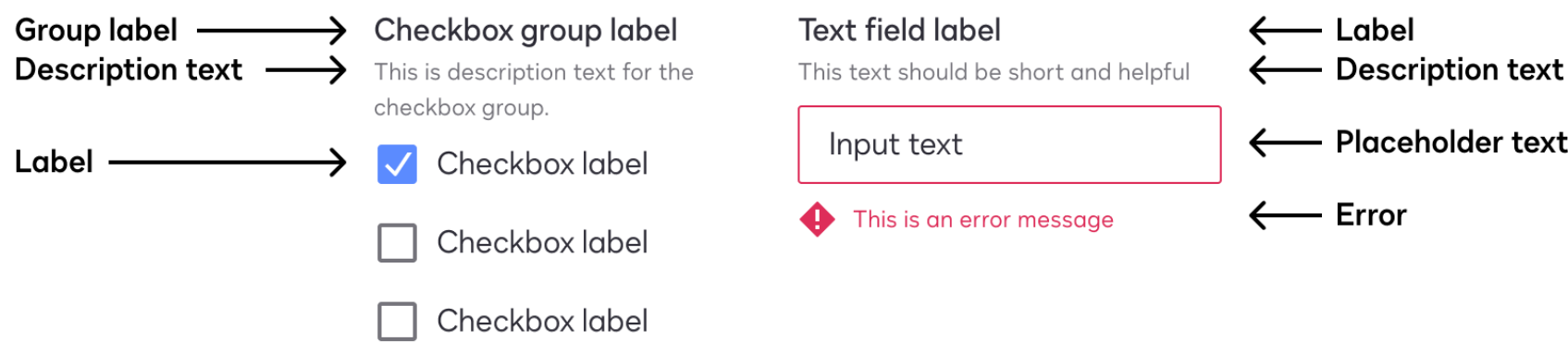
Don’t

- No payment gateways are available for payment requests. Contact a DocuSign Admin to add a payment gateway.
- You need CLM access to use this upload center feature.
- You’re not authorized to proceed.

Forms

Form Anatomy

Form components have similar anatomies. Here is guidance for each part of these components.



Type	Description
Checkboxes	Allow users to select multiple items from a list. By default, a checked checkbox is affirmative. An unchecked checkbox is negative.
Group label	Used to group components
Radio buttons	Use to select a single option from a list
Selects	Allow users to make a single selection from a dropdown list.
Switches	Allow users to toggle between two mutually exclusive options, “on” or “off.” A toggle always has a default value.
Text areas	Allow users to enter and edit multiple lines of text in the UI. Elements of a Text area include the label, helper text, placeholder text, and error. Always use a label for text areas.
Textbox input field	Allows users to enter just one line of text in the UI. Elements of a Text box input field include the label, helper text, placeholder text, and error. Always use a label for text areas.

Form Inputs

Form inputs come in different types depending on the kind of data being collected. They have similar anatomies and are often used together.

All Inputs

Do 

- Use approved terminology
- Make sure all elements work together.
- Use sentence case
- Use end punctuation for complete sentences

Don't 

- Never use form components as a replacement for words in sentences, like [Mad Libs](#)
- Avoid redundancy among the elements

Description Text

Do 

- Use to supplement the label when more context is critical for success.
- Use to provide formatting instructions (for example, if a date field requires specific formatting)

Don't 

- Use complete sentences
- Use end punctuation for complete sentences
- Labels should be clear, concise and describe the purpose of the input field

Errors

Do 

- State the problem
- Provide a clear resolution
- Use end punctuation

Don't 

- Please don't use "Please," unless the error is our fault
- Don't imply you know what the user is feeling
- Don't use negative words like "unfortunately"
- Don't use fun or silly words like "Whoops!"

Label/Group Label

Do 

- Checkboxes, radio buttons, and switches must make sense in both states
- For selects, lists should have 2 or more items
- Make sure all items work together

Don't 

- Don't use secondary "on" or "off" labels for switches
- Don't group unrelated items

Placeholder Text

Do 

- Use end punctuation for complete sentences.

Don't 

- Don't use placeholder text
- Don't restate labels
- Don't use for critical instruction or examples
- Don't assume screen readers can read the text

Links

Links connect a page with another site, page or resource. Links can also be used as anchors to jump between parts of the same page.

Inline links are part of a sentence; standalone links are not.

Inline links

Typically appear within a sentence used to share help articles, support pages, and resources.

Do

- Write in sentence case
- Use end punctuation
- Short, concise copy
- Describes the content of the linked page

Don't

- Don't use phrases like "here," "Click here," "learn more," and "see more"
- Don't include links inside tooltips or toast messages
- Avoid linking to content not managed by DocuSign

Examples

By making links specific, users should have a clear idea of what they'll see when selecting the link.

Do

- View the [DocuSign privacy policy](#)
- Learn [how to bulk add notaries](#).

For more on the signer's experience with drawi

Don't

- You can learn so much more about how your information is processed, [here](#).
- Click [here](#) to learn how to bulk add notaries.
- Learn to add notaries in bulk [here](#).

Standalone links

Usually separate from other text, they're used for calls-to-actions and are sometimes next to a button.

Do

- Use Title Case
- Use short, concise copy
- Briefly describe the content of linked page

Don't

- Do not use end punctuation
- Do not use links inside tooltips or toast messages
- Do not link out to content that isn't managed by DocuSign

Examples

With title case, short conjunctions, articles, and short prepositions are all lowercase for standalone links.

Do

- [Download the App](#)
- [View our Guide](#)

Don't

- [Download The App today or you will surely be sorry!](#)
- [view our guide](#)
- [View Our Guide](#)

Menus

Users rely on menus to find content and use features.

Dropdown menus

Dropdown menus display a list of actions or options to a user and are usually interactive, producing an action after selecting. Interactive menu items in a dropdown menu are Title Case.

Exception: Menus with read-only text items (non-interactive) can be written in sentence case.

Do

- Use Title Case unless it's non-clickable
- Must include 2 or more items
- Matches existing content patterns
- Use parallel construction

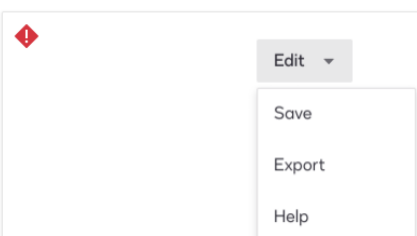
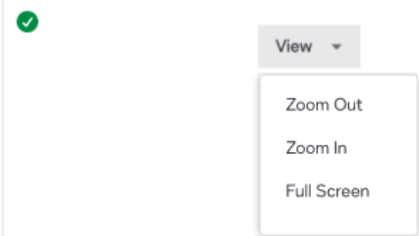
Don't

- No end punctuation
- Don't carry over a phrase across different UI elements
- Don't use articles and function words
- Avoid being redundant

Examples

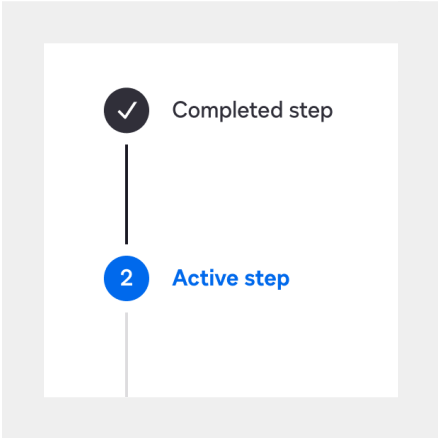
Do

Don't



Progress Stepper

Progress steppers help guide users through a set number of steps in order to complete a task.



Do

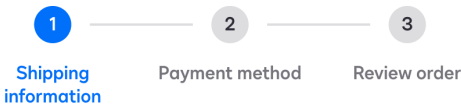
- Apply parallel construction for labels
- Use verbs describing user actions in each step
- Improve scannability by skipping repetitive verbs if possible
- Leads with directive verbs

Don't

- Don't use end punctuation in a step
- Avoid using articles (the, a, an)

Examples

Do



Don't



Modals

A temporary window or overlay that appears in front of a webpage, deactivating all other content. The user has to interact with it before continuing.

Note: Don't use modals for long, complex information, or for information they may need later.

Character limits:

Header: 25
Body: 95
Button: 12 (3 words max, verb first)

Do

- Be action-focused
- Write in sentence case
- Include most important information first
- Copy should mirror action user just taken or needs to take

Don't

- No end punctuation for the header
- Don't repeat the header word for word
- Don't say "Are you sure?" or variations
- Avoid unnecessary articles

Toast messages

Small pop-up messages that provide feedback to users on actions they take, ranging from informational, confirmation of tasks completed, or warnings. They appear briefly and aren't meant to persist.

Do

- Be action-focused
- Be brief, 1-2 sentences
- Past tense is fine if reporting an event
- Keep it simple and confirm what happened
- If it's a problem, include user expectations
- Use the same verb from the previous action
- See [Errors](#) for guidance on warnings

Don't

- No exclamation points
- Avoid using the word "success"
- Don't use threatening or alarmist words
- Don't use casual or nonchalant words

Examples

Do

 Your template is ready. From the table, select View to download it.

Don't

 We successfully generated your template. From the table, select View to download it.

Examples

Do

 We're having trouble saving your file right now. Try again in a few moments.

Don't

 Oops! You failed to save your file. Try again in 5 minutes.

Tooltips

Triggered by the user, tooltips are contextual help. They can provide more context on an element or recommend an action.

Do 

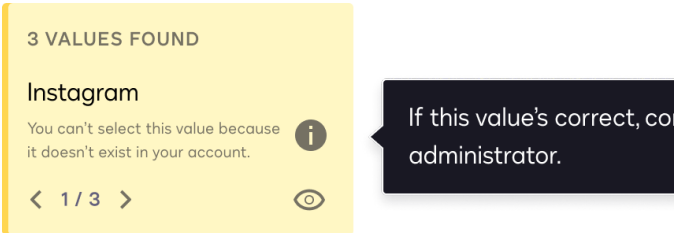
- Be brief. 100 characters or less. If you need to say more, use the Callout component.
- Do provide tooltips for all unlabeled icons
- Use end punctuation for complete sentences

Don't 

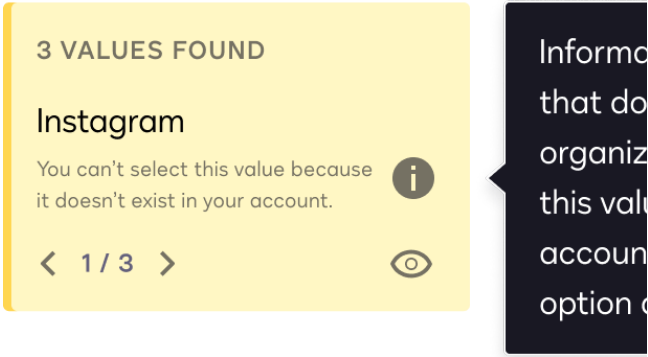
- Don't use tooltips to restate visible UI text
- Don't use tooltips for information that is necessary for users to complete a task.
- Make it visible without requiring interaction.

Examples

Do 



Don't 



Progress bars and circles

Progress bars show the amount of progress made or length of time a process may take. Progress circles highlight that an action or system operation is being processed.

Do 

- Use present tense, specific verbs describing system actions: "Scanning document"
- Communicate system actions with a progression of labels.
- Provide general time estimates
- Use ellipses only when progress or end state is unknown

Don't 

- Don't use labels suggesting user actions
- Don't provide exact time estimates. Avoid "4:54 remaining"
- Don't use end punctuation
- Avoid using articles

Examples

Do 

Loading page 5/30



Don't 

Loading 5 of 30



In-Product Email Standards

Best Practices

1. Keep it short

Make your emails short and attention-grabbing by being direct, simple, and clear about the action users should take. Aim for just one call-to-action.

2. Write for mobile

Prioritize concise content with key information at the top for mobile users—50% of emails are viewed on mobile.

3. Reduce cognitive load

- Focus on simplicity by providing only essential information for completing a task.
- Limit decision-making and avoid unnecessary inputs.
- By reducing cognitive load, you enhance usability

4. Use inclusive language

- Inclusive language promotes accessibility and user inclusivity
- Use words like "Select"—never "click"—to avoid desktop-specific references
- Replace gendered words like "he," "she," "his," and "hers" with gender-neutral pronouns like "they," "them," and "theirs"

Tone

Be encouraging, supportive and inclusive. The perspective of the email narrator should be direct, clear and conversational.

Convey warmth by speaking directly to the user

- When referring to the product or org known as DocuSign, use the plural, first-person pronoun of “we,” not “DocuSign” or “the system”
- Perspective should be written from first person addressing users in 2nd person, addressing users with “you”
- Focus on the actions the user needs to respond to as soon as possible

Examples

Do 	Don't 
• We're having trouble loading this page. Refresh to try again. • We need some information. We're having trouble loading this page.	• DocuSign cannot load right now. Refresh to try again. • DocuSign can't load your page. The system is unable to connect.

Be encouraging

- Using words like “can” and “do” creates an encouraging and supportive tone. Framing things as an option rather than a directive conveys a sense that the user has an element of control
- Avoid absolutes

Examples

Do 	Don't 
• You can upload any document type. • You can make changes to your settings here. • You can respond to this request by email.	• You have to choose a document type. • You must upload a document to continue. • Settings can't be changed here.

Use ‘any’ not ‘all’ in relation to a user’s options

Using “any” can offer options, opportunity, and a feeling that’s less like a requirement. Avoid absolutes.

Examples

Do 	Don't 

Email Sections:

Subject Lines

Subject lines are crucial for email engagement, serving as a preview that conveys urgency, curiosity, relevance, or value. They create the first impression and significantly impact open rates.

Do 

- Front load with the most important and easily scannable words
- Be clear if user needs to take action or not [\(1\)](#)
- Be clear about time limitations, if applicable
- Use sentence case
- Limit to 40-50 characters, but prioritize clarity over character limit.

Note: character limits only apply to emails in English. Localization will often increase the character count, so it's important to not exceed character limits

Don't 

- Don't include the recipient's name [\(2\)](#)
- Don't re-use the same copy from email header [\(3\)](#)

Examples

- Subject line ideas:
- Your signature is requested
 - Signature request
 - Please confirm your email

Preheaders

Write an enticing preheader to grab attention and encourage email opens. If no custom preheader is entered, the first copy block may be displayed.

Best practices

- Expand on the subject line, especially if all content won't fit in subject
- Summarize the body of the email
- Focus on value benefit of user opening the email and taking action

Do 

- Differ from subject lines
- Hard limit 40-50 characters, shorter if being localized
- Include CTA text if not included in subject line
- Use marketing tone if applicable

Don't 

- Don't use end punctuation unless there's more than one sentence

Examples

Do 



DocuSign via DocuSi.

Account verification required - Access all the benefits of DocuSign

Dec 15

Don't 



DocuSign via DocuSi.

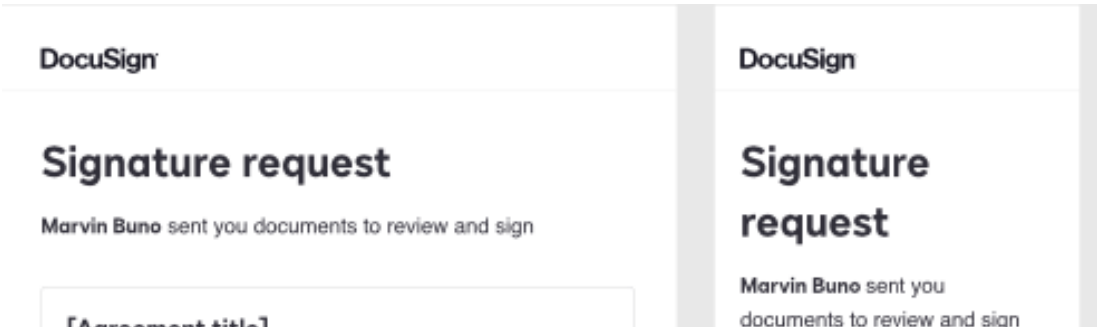
Account verification required - Verify your account to access all the benefits of...

Dec 15

Account verification

Headers

Headers in emails organize and introduce topics, conveying valuable information in a concise and scannable way. They should be stacked hierarchically, starting with <h1> and followed by <h2>, <h3>, and so on.



Do

- Lead with an action verb
- Include keywords
- Use sentence case
- Keep it short
- Make sure it's separate from preheader

Don't

- Don't use technical jargon and gimmicky language
- Don't re-use same copy from subject line or preheader ([3](#))
- Don't use end punctuation unless there's more than one sentence

Examples

Do

Review and update document data

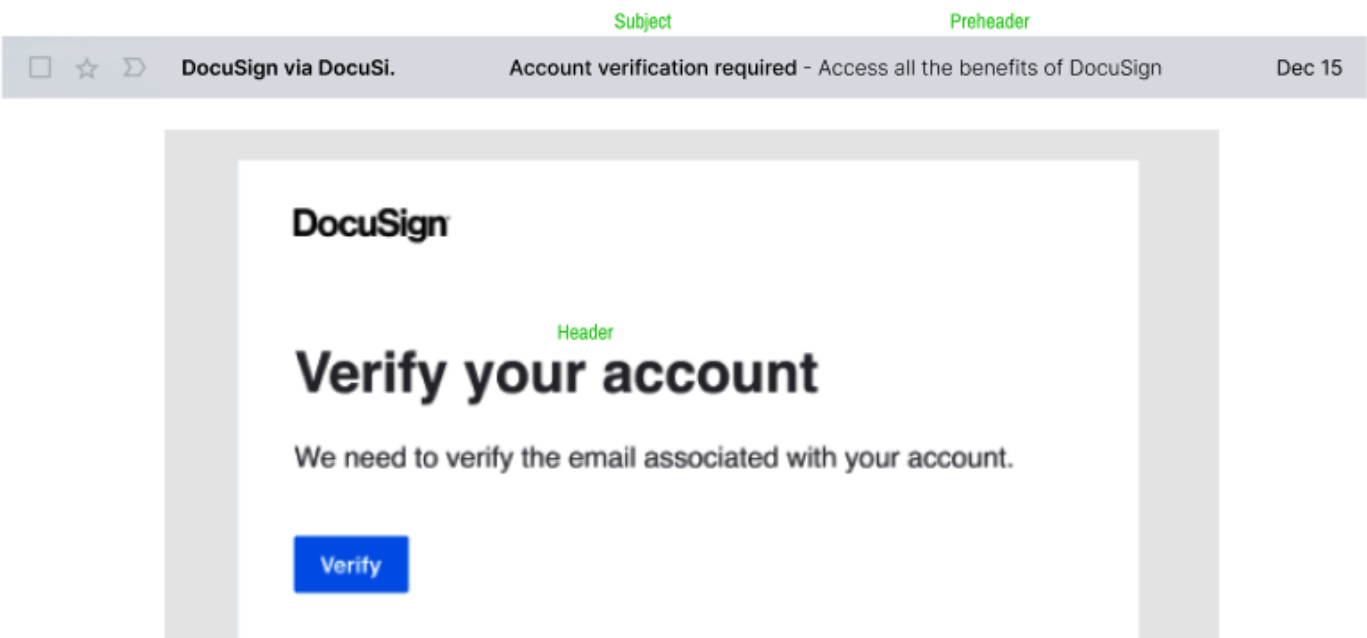
Don't

Larry.Legal@docusign.com sent you a document to review

Align to tell a cohesive story

Each section should have its own unique content, but they need to work together to tell the user the story:

- the subject of the email (subject)
- why should the user open the email (preheader)
- what the email is about (header)



Body

The email body holds the main message, including text and images. Keep it concise and scannable by placing important keywords upfront and removing unnecessary content. Provide text alternatives for meaningful images in case they can't be viewed in HTML.

Do

- Get to the point as quickly as possible
- Break up large chunks of text with bullets, subheaders, graphics, etc.
- Mirror text from CTA buttons

Don't

- Don't use personalized greetings (ex. Hello [Name]) and complimentary closes (ex. From the DocuSign team). Instead, address the person via their username

Examples

Do

B: **Update** your profile to finish setting up your account.

CTA: **Update**

(Bold for example emphasis only)

- or account name
- Don't use gimmicky, overly celebratory language (Ex: "Woohoo! Your envelope is completed.")
- Don't use the word "success" in success messages
- Don't use directional language or direct references to UI elements

Don't

B: **Finish** setting up your account by updating your profile.

CTA: **Update**

Lists or Steps

Best used when there's a series of steps to be followed or providing directions for a process, like how to use notary, signing in to one's account, and sending an envelope.

Do

- Limit lists to 5 items if possible
- Use bullets for items with no inherent order
- Use a numbered list for items with a specific order

Don't

- Don't list all the steps needed to fully complete a process. Guide the user to the next step.
- Don't put list items in alphabetical order because they will change when localized

Examples

Do

- From CLM Admin, go to the parties page to add a new party.

Don't

- From CLM, go to the parties page to add a new party. To add a party, download the parties template. Upload your filled template in the parties page when you're finished.

Links

Do

- For URLs to resources (support articles, PDFs), use inline or standalone links
- Use links sparingly
- Use localized URLs if translated content is available, unless it's a user guide in the Support Center
- For complicated flows, add links to a relevant help article from the DocuSign Support Center using [these guidelines](#).

Don't

- Don't link to non-DocuSign resources

Buttons

See button section for full descriptions, guidance, and examples for buttons.

Do

- Use buttons for the primary action user needs to take
- Write a clear CTA
- Short, concise copy
- Lead with actionable verbs

Don't

- Don't use multiple buttons, keep it simple
- Don't get wordy

Examples

Do

Verify your email to get started.

Verify

Sam.Sales@docusign.com sent you a document to review.

Review

Need to delegate this task to someone else? Learn how to [delegate a task](#).

Don't

Verify your email by following this [link](#).

Verify your email [here](#).

Sam.Sales@docusign.com sent you a document to review.

Review & Sign Document

Need to delegate this task to someone else? Learn more [here](#).

Footers

Email footers are the final block of content in an email template. They include important information that may not make sense to be in the main body of the email, such as legal disclaimers, contact information, and some product-specific content. Footers should not include information that’s required to successfully complete a process.

Footer Components

Required for all emails (included in baseline footer component)

- Contact information - Adds credibility and trust. Legally required.
- Company logo - Provides consistency for our users
- Website - Provides consistency and trust

Components legally required on most emails

GDPR	Required for Europe, depending on country
Unsubscribe link	Required for marketing emails, not for transactional

Mechanics

Abbreviations

Assume your reader does not know an abbreviation or acronym for an organization, especially international audiences, who may not know abbreviations considered obvious in your home country.

These rules apply to multi-step interactions such as user flows in which the user has already seen the acronym or abbreviation spelled out in full.

Rules	Examples
• Spell out an acronym in the initial reference and include the shortened version in parentheses immediately after it.	• Contact the National Association of Realtors© (NAR) for more information.

- Use the acronym for subsequent references in the same section or page.
 - If the abbreviation or acronym is better understood than the full text, use that
- Contact NAR directly with questions.

 - GIF, JPEG, HTML, URL, MB

Dates

If there’s space, spell it out. Don’t abbreviate unless necessary. See examples of exceptions below.

	Examples	Abbreviations
Months If there’s no space, abbreviate specific months with three letters and a period at the end.	January February March April May June July August September October November December	Jan. Feb. Don’t abbreviate Don’t abbreviate Don’t abbreviate Don’t abbreviate Don’t abbreviate Aug. Sep. Oct. Nov. Dec.
Days of the week If there’s no space, abbreviate with three letters and no period at the end.	Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday	Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat
Full date with year If there’s no space, abbreviate the day or month according to the guidance above.	August 23, 2022 Tuesday, August 23, 2022	Aug. 23, 2022 Tue, Aug. 23, 2022

Degrees and certifications

Use all caps and no periods to abbreviate degrees or certifications.

Examples	Abbreviations
Bachelor of Arts	BA
Bachelor of Science	BS
Master of Arts	MA
Master of Business Administration	MBA
Doctor of Philosophy	PhD
Doctor of Medicine	MD
Doctor of Dental Surgery	DDS
Registered Nurse	RN

File extensions

If there’s space, spell it out. Don’t abbreviate unless necessary.

Rule	Examples
Spell acronyms in ALL CAPS in a sentence.	Upload a PNG and MP3.
When referring to a file name with file type as an appendage, the abbreviation is preceded by a period, no space, and is lowercase.	- Download the file extreme.mpg. - Do you want to remove file.png?
When using a file acronym preceded by a number denoting size of the file, add a space between the number and the acronym, in ALL CAPS.	Get 25 GB storage each month with DocuSign Cloud.

Initialisms

Initialisms are a type of an abbreviation in which each individual letter is pronounced. These are spelled in all capital letters.

Term	Initialism
British Broadcasting System	BBC
United States of America	USA
Federal Bureau of Investigation	FBI
Frequently asked questions	FAQ
Chief executive officer	CEO

People

Abbreviate junior or senior after a person’s name with a period.

Do 	Incorrect
Tim Pratt Jr.	Tim Pratt Junior
Tim Pratt Sr.	Tim Pratt Jr
	Tim Pratt Senior
	Tim Pratt Sr

Places

If there’s space, spell it out. Don’t abbreviate unless it is absolutely necessary.

	Examples	Abbreviation
State names and territories for the U.S.	California	CA
For U.S. state and territory names, use postal code abbreviations (differs from AP Style) in most cases, no periods.	New York	NY
	Michigan	MI
	Iowa	IA
	South Dakota	SD
	Maine	ME
	New Hampshire	NH
Countries	United States	U.S.
Use the two-letter abbreviation for two-word (or more) country titles. Note: Use of periods varies depending on context.	United Kingdom	UK
	European Union	EU

Accessibility considerations

Abbreviations can cause accessibility issues.

Rule	Examples
For non-visible alt text, labels and hidden text, use spaces between the abbreviation letters so the screen reader announces them properly.	For example, an image of the UN building would have alt="U N building" or aria-label="U N building"

Capitalization and casing

Title Case	Sentence case
Capitalize the first letter of every word, except articles, conjunctions, and prepositions.	First letter of first word is capitalized; proper nouns are still capitalized
<i>This Is an Example of Title Case</i>	<i>This is an example of sentence case.</i>
Buttons	Everything else, including headers
Standalone links	
Menus	

FAQ

- What if I’m referencing a page in the body copy? This scenario can play out in 2 ways.

	Correct	Incorrect
Mentioning a page in general Use sentence case. Even though you’re referencing a specific page, you’re not explicitly instructing users to click on a specific, interactive element on the screen.	From CLM admin, go to the parties page to create a party.	From CLM Admin, go to the Parties page to create a party.
Instructing users to interact with a link or button Use title case. In this example, “select” is the differentiator. With this word, we’re instructing users to select or tap on an interactive component on the screen.	From the global banner, select Parties .	From the global banner, select parties.

- What if I’m referencing a button in body copy? To determine the casing, identify if you’re referencing a specific button or using a word that’s shared with a button.

Prepare your template by completing these steps. This will generate a CSV that'll govern which attribute groups to update and where to store your documents.

1. Select folders and documents

Select Folder

✔ 1,506 documents selected [Remove All](#)

2. Add attribute groups

Add the attribute groups you want to update.

Add

+

Generate

Correct	Incorrect
---------	-----------

Referencing a specific button or standalone link	Select Generate to create a CSV.	Select generate to create a CSV.
Use title case. In this example, “select” is the differentiator. With this word, we’re instructing users to directly select or tap on an interactive component on the screen.		
Using the same word as a button	This will generate a CSV...	This will Generate a CSV...
Use sentence case if the copy does not specifically reference an existing button.		

Contractions

Contractions are abbreviated words combined. They make the sentence shorter and easier to read.

Rule	Example
Use common contractions in most instances, especially if the text is conversational or informs the user.	you’re, it’s, I’m
Use negative contractions cautiously.	hasn’t, can’t, don’t, doesn’t, couldn’t
Don’t use conditional contractions	should’ve, would’ve and could’ve
Don’t use lesser known contractions that could confuse the user and messaging	mustn’t, who’ve, it’d, needn’t, this’ll

Note

It’s okay to begin sentences with contractions for short alerts and directives that are extremely serious in tone.

Formatting

Use **bold** sparingly. Do **not** use *italics* in UI copy.

Rule	Example
Use bold only where strong emphasis is needed	
Use bold to refer to UI elements when used in a sentence. Examples of UI elements are buttons, headers, menu items.	Do: Enter your details and then Submit .
Do not use bold for links, URLs or to emphasize proper nouns in a sentence.	Do: Connect your account to DocuSign Analyzer. Don’t: Connect your account to DocuSign Analyzer . Don’t: Visit docusign.com/privacy for more information.
Do not use italics	Don’t: You’ll receive a copy of the document after <i>everyone</i> signs.

Links and URLs

Consider whether the full URL needs to be shown in the UI. In many cases, it’s not needed.

Rule	Example
Link meaningful words instead.	Do: For more help, visit DocuSign Support . Don’t: For more help, visit docusign.com/support .
When you do need to include a URL, use lowercase (even on	Do: docusign.com

proper words) and omit http://www	Don't: http://www.DocuSign.com
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Punctuation

Ampersands

The ampersand symbol & is a stand-in for the word “and.”

Rule	Examples
In body copy, do not use the ampersand symbol. Use the word “and.”	Get more from your agreements with DocuSign Gen and Negotiate in your Salesforce app.
In general, don’t use the ampersand symbol unless it’s part of a brand name, trademark, proper noun or title.	Try DocuSign Gen & Negotiate

Note

Ampersands are sometimes acceptable for mobile app titles, never in body copy.

Apostrophes

Apostrophes are used in contractions and to make words possessive.

Rule	Examples
If a singular word ends with an s, apostrophe s (’s) is correct.	You’ll need to get the boss’s signature.
If a plural word ends with an s, use an apostrophe on the final s (s’).	To save time, ask for the recipients’ email addresses at the beginning.
Do not use apostrophes to indicate plurals for acronyms, even if the acronym ends in an S. In the unlikely scenario an acronym is possessive, an apostrophe may be needed.	Do: Your OPPs should be complete by January. Don’t: Your OPP’s should be complete by January.

Bulleted lists

Lists organize content and make it scannable.

Guidelines

Content	Style
- Only use a numbered list if the items are meant to be read in order. - Use bullets when the list order doesn’t matter.	- All items in a bulleted list should be about the same length, have consistent phrasing, and begin with the same part of speech. - The word or phrase immediately preceding the bullets should include a colon. - If a single bullet requires more than one sentence, closing punctuation should be used on each sentence. - Sentence fragments should not end with a period. - List items that are complete sentences should end with a period (or consistent punctuation). - Do not mix fragments and full sentences in the same list. It’s one or the other.

Examples

Do 
Notary statuses:
Pending

- Inactive
- Active
- Expired

Reasons to send more envelopes:

- Envelopes are the best way to send documents electronically.
- Documents are stored in envelopes securely.
- Recipients enjoy receiving electronic mail. They are excited.

Colons

Guidelines

Content

- Use sparingly, only when necessary
- Use a colon to precede a bulleted list
- Use at the end of a statement or list in a sentence
- Add a space after a colon in a sentence

Examples

Do 

The DocuSign Agreement Cloud has three key products: Click, CLM, and eSignature.

This eSignature release has three new features:

- Add advanced recipient routing
- Use notary groups with templates
- Upload contacts in bulk

Commas

Guidelines

Content

- Consider clarity when deciding whether to use a serial (or Oxford) comma. Though AP Style advises against using it, there may be instances when a serial comma is useful.
- Use a comma to separate three or more elements.
- In a date, add a comma after the date when it follows the month, but none if month and year.

Examples

Do 

Connect your citizens, employees, and agencies with new data.

Dashes and hyphens

Guidelines

Don't overuse hyphens and dashes.

	Hyphens (-)	En dash (–) Option + -	Em dash (—) Shift + Option + -
Guidelines	- Hyphenate two words that modify a noun to add clarity. - Don't use two hyphens in place of an em dash. - Never add spaces on either side of a hyphen.	- An en dash is a mid-sized dash that is used to show ranges in numbers and dates. - Use an en dash with no space for a fixed range of numbers.	- Em dashes are used to set off or emphasize parenthetical information. - Don't use em dashes in UI copy unless you can't make your message any clearer by splitting them into two sentences. - Use an em dash without spaces on either side.
Do 	Review user-interface copy during office hours.	2010–2015	DocuSign is the leader in eSignatures because you can sign electronically—anytime, from almost anywhere.
Don't 	DocuSign is the leader in eSignatures because you can sign electronically -- anytime, from almost anywhere.	2010 – 2015	DocuSign is the leader in eSignatures because you can sign electronically — anytime, from almost anywhere.

Ellipses

Guidelines

Content
- Don't use an ellipsis in body copy. - Ellipses can be used in an alert or toast message to indicate something is loading or a process is working. - They're sometimes used after a CTA link (ex. "Loading ...") but beware of the additional character. - Don't use them for emphasis or in titles or headers. - Ellipses can be used to indicate trailing off before the end of a sentence. There are few instances when that happens in UI.

End punctuation

Here, we'll cover periods and exclamation points. Check out the individual component guidelines to see which ones should have end punctuation.

Guidelines

Content
General Use end punctuation for complete sentences
Exclamation points - Use exclamation points sparingly. In most cases, they aren't necessary. - Use them for emphatic expression, interjections, surprise, or urgency. - Don't use them for commands. We don't yell. - One exclamation point at a time. - Use them to get attention or reward behavior.

Periods	• Use at the end of sentences in body copy. • Don't add periods to H1s, H2s, or H3s (headings), UI titles, UI text or bulleted lists of sentence fragments. • Periods go inside quotation marks. • Periods go outside parentheses when the parenthetical is part of a larger sentence, and inside parentheses when the parenthetical stands alone. • Leave a single space between sentences. Double space after periods is unnecessary.
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Parentheses

Guidelines

• Use sparingly • Use parentheses to introduce an acronym in a sentence

Examples

Do 	• DocuSign was recently featured on the United States of America (USA) Network. • DocuSign is a leader in contract lifecycle management (CLM).
---	--

Quotation Marks

Guidelines

• Use quotes to refer to words and letters, titles of short works (like articles or white papers), and direct quotations. • Don’t use quote marks to indicate places and features in the UI. Use bold instead. • Place closing quotation marks outside commas and periods, but inside other punctuation like question marks or exclamation points. In most instances, use double quotation marks, not single quotation marks.

Semicolons

Guidelines

• Don’t use semicolons. If your copy has a semicolon, simplify it using plain language strategies. For example, split the clauses into two separate sentences.
--

Slashes

Guidelines

• Use slashes as a date separator. • Don’t use slashes in labels for input components.
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Examples

Do 	12/07/2020
--	------------

Don't ✖

Apt/Suite/Other