A Guide to Writing for

DOOK DOOK

FERRET MAGAZINE

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1. About this guide

Thank you for contributing to *Dook Dook Ferret Magazine*!

This guide provides some content guidelines and information about our readers to help you draft a piece that will fit the "voice" of the magazine. This document is not a grammar guide and assumes you are fluent in either American, Australian, or British English. If you need editorial help beyond what's offered in this guide, visit Purdue OWL or the Grammar Girl blog.

If you have any questions or concerns as you are writing your piece, reach out to managing editor Courtney Stoker at courtney@ferret-world.com.

2. Our audience

The *Dook Dook Ferret Magazine* audience is one of enthusiastic and engaged ferret lovers. Most of our readers own ferrets. Many are experienced ferret owners, but some are passionate beginners. Some of our readers work in a ferret-related field, such as rescue work and veterinary medicine, but most do not. You can assume that our readers care of about ferrets and either own one or want to own one; you cannot assume any particular level of expertise.

While our readers range from the beginner to the expert, they are all looking for educational content that is reliable and evidence-based. There is a lot of misinformation about ferrets in the world, so it is hard to know what sources to trust. We aim to be a responsible, reliable, and trustworthy source of information. This means we (and our readers) expect any pieces on ferret care, science, or history to be thoughtful and well-researched. (See the section on these article types below for more information.)

Our audience also appreciates lighter content, such as fun DIY projects, heartwarming stories, and interesting history or news related to ferrets.

3. Using writing evaluation software

We recommend you use the free version of Grammarly and the Hemingway Editor:

- Grammarly's free version is designed to catch errors and obvious inconsistencies (such as using British spelling). The paid version of Grammarly tries to do what the Hemingway app does for free, but it does not do as good a job.

- The Hemingway Editor is a user-friendly evaluation of how complex your writing is. It will not correct mistakes. Instead, it will note where you have used passive voice, adverbs, overly complex words or phrases, and complex sentence structures. It uses these measures to indicate a reading grade level; the higher the grade, the less understandable your writing is to a mainstream audience. You should aim for a grade level of 9 or lower.

This guide does NOT recommend using only the active voice in your writing. Much good writing, including the infamous Strunk & White, uses the passive voice. The key is to make sure your writing isn't dominated by sentences in the passive voice.

For our specific writing grammar and style guidelines, see the Style guide section below.

4. Research resources for our writers

4.1. DeepDyve for research articles

Our writers are free to use our DeepDyve account, which allows you to “check out” scholarly research articles without being charged for it. We recommend that you try to locate free articles as well, since those do not typically appear in DeepDyve.

🚫Please DO NOT use the **print function** in DeepDyve. We have a limited number of pages we can print per month and we want to keep those pages reserved for our editorial team.

To log in to DeepDyve:

1. Go to https://www.deepdyve.com/.
2. Click **Log in** in the top right corner.
3. Type `dookdookferretmag@gmail.com` in the **Email Address** field.
4. Type `ferreteds` in the **Password** field.

Feel free to create a list with your name as the title, to help keep your research organized.

4.2. PDFs of articles and books

We keep a folder of PDFs of research we have downloaded or scanned, both scholarly articles and book selections, in our Google Drive folder Ferret Research. You can use these resources to research for and write your piece.

4.3. Figures and illustrations

If your piece would be enhanced by a figure or illustration and you do not have permission to use any, please reach out to the managing editor. With enough lead time, we can create an illustration for you.

5. Style guide

5.1. American English

While Dook Dook Ferret Magazine is read by an international audience, the majority of that audience is located in the United States, as is most of the editing team. If your piece is written in another English dialect, it will be revised to match the spelling, punctuation, and vocabulary of mainstream American English, unless the editors believe that the vocabulary choice is integral to the article's character. Even in this case, American English punctuation and spelling will usually be used.

In other words, you are free to write in another English dialect, but there's a good chance it will be edited to align with mainstream American English before publication.

5.2. Jargon and specialized language

Our readers include many non-experts who are not part of the veterinary, scientific, or research fields related to ferrets. Therefore, you should try to use plain language and define any required specialized language or concepts to readers in your article. If you believe that a description of a biological process, disease, or other concept merits a separate "sidebar" article, reach out to Courtney at courtney@ferret-world.com. These sidebars may be something like "What is an obligate carnivore?," "When to break up ferret fighting," and "What is a DNA fingerprint?" We keep a repository of such articles and can write one for you if it does not yet exist.

Some ferret-community-specific language is allowed without explanation, including:

- Alternate terms for ferrets such as fuzzies, furbabies, etc.
- Ferrent(s), referring to ferret owners (portmanteau of *ferret* and *parent*)
- Kit(s), referring to baby ferrets
- Jill(s), referring to unspayed female ferrets
- Hob(s), referring to un-neutered male ferrets
- Ferret-proof, similar to child-proof

5.3. Gender

When talking about ferrets without a known sex, pick a pronoun and stick with it, i.e. don't say *Your ferret may prefer her food in kibble form* in one paragraph and then *Don't let your ferret chew on his bedding* in another. It's OK to use *they* as a singular pronoun.

Never use *his or her*, *he or she*, *he/she*, *(s)he,* or other similar constructions.

When discussing ferrets with a known sex, use the appropriate gendered pronouns.

When writing about a person, use their preferred pronouns. When it doubt, ask the person or just use their name.

When writing about people, avoid gendered terms and use gender-neutral alternatives, like server instead of waitress and congressperson instead of congressman.

Don't call groups of people *guys*. Don't call women *girls*.

5.4. Writing to and about people

Always write about people in a way that is compassionate, inclusive, and respectful. This means you should not make assumptions about who is reading your writing. Never assume a reader's age, race, nationality, physical ability, gender, or sexuality. (See the Gender section above.)

5.4.1. Person and audience

Person	Pronoun examples	Guidelines
First person, singular	I, me, my	Use only in pieces where your personal perspective is relevant and important.
First person, plural	we, us, our	Avoid using to include the reader.
Second person, singular	you, your	Use to refer to the reader.
Second person, plural	y'all, you guys	Don't use.
Second person, command form	--	In this form, the *you* is assumed but not stated. This is the best choice for

instructional writing, such as in a DIY article.

Example: *Then, tie a knot* (command form), rather than *You should then tie a knot* (imperative form).

5.4.2. Age

Do not refer to a person's age unless it's relevant to what you're writing. If it is relevant, include the person's specific age, offset by commas. Example: *The CEO, 16, just received her driver's license.*

Don't use inexact ages like *20s* or *40s*. When talking about people, don't use age-related descriptors like *young*, *old*, or *elderly*. (You can use these terms to refer to ferrets.)

5.4.3. Race, nationality, and heritage

Don't use hyphens when referring to someone with dual heritage or nationality. Example: Use *Asian American*, not *Asian-American*.

Use more specific terms for nationality and heritage when you can. For example, use *Cherokee* or *Lakota Sioux* instead of *Native American*.

Use the subject's preference when referring to their race, nationality, and heritage if possible.

5.4.4. Sexuality

Use the following as modifiers but never as nouns:

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Pansexual
- Intersex
- Transgender (never *transgendered*)
- Trans
- Queer
- LGBT+

Don't use these words when referencing LGBT+ people or communities:

- Homosexual
- Lifestyle
- Preference
- Transexual
- Hermaphrodite

Unless the distinction is relevant to what you're writing, don't distinguish between *same-sex marriage* and *marriage*. Never use *gay marriage*.

5.4.5. Disability and medical, mental, or cognitive conditions

Don't refer to a person's disability or medical, mental, or cognitive condition unless it's relevant to what you're writing. If it is relevant, use "person-first" language.

Examples of person-first language:

No	Yes
She is disabled.	She has a disability.
disabled person	person with a disability
arthritic person	person with arthritis
He is bipolar.	He has bipolar disorder.
a schizophrenic	a person with schizophrenia

When referring to someone with a disability, emphasize their abilities and not their limitations. Example:

No	Yes
wheelchair-bound	person who uses a wheelchair
confined to a wheelchair	

Do not describe a person as *mentally ill*.

When writing about a person with disabilities, medical conditions, or mental/cognitive conditions, don't use negative words like *suffer, victim*, *defect*, *damaged, afflicted,* or

handicapped. Don't use condescending euphemisms like *handi-capable, special, challenged*, or *differently abled*.

When referring to someone without disabilities, medical conditions, or mental/cognitive conditions do not use terms that position disabilities as unnatural like *normal, healthy, able-bodied*, or *whole*. Instead use phrases like *person without disabilities* or *she does not have a disability.*

When referring to facilities accessible to people with disabilities, use *accessible* instead of *handicapped*. Examples: *Accessible restroom, accessible parking*.

Use these guidelines when referring to specific physical disabilities:

- **Hearing**. Use *deaf, partially deaf*, or *hard of hearing* to refer to a person with significant hearing loss.
- **Vision**. Use *blind* to describe someone who cannot see. Use *low vision* to describe a person with limited vision.
- **Height**. Use *little person* to describe someone of very short stature. Do not use *dwarf* or *midget*.

5.5. Grammar mechanics

5.5.1. Acronyms and abbreviations

When using an acronym or abbreviation in a document, blog post, or email, introduce the term with the full name and the acronym/abbreviation in parentheses, even if you believe your audience likely knows the term.

> **Example:**
> The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is officially responsible for pet food safety. However, the FDA adopts the standards of the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) without any internal review. If AAFCO were to lower their standards, it is unlikely the FDA would not adopt the lower standards without question.

Because our audience is international, do not assume United States agencies with well-known acronyms (like the IRS or USPS) are familiar to your reader.

5.5.2. Capitalization

You should never capitalize a phrase after a colon, even if the phrase following the colon is a complete sentence. (Note that a colon should only ever follow a complete sentence.)

We use sentence case for article titles and subtitles, not title case.

No	Yes
Help! My Ferret Has Rat Tail! By Dr. Rose-Anne Meissner	Help! My ferret has rat tail! By Dr. Rose-Anne Meissner

Ferret-World, Ferret-World.com, and *Dook Dook Ferret Magazine* are proper nouns and should be capitalized as such..

Examples

- Ever since she created Ferret-World.com...
- ...the *Dook Dook Ferret Magazine* editing team…

5.5.3. Email addresses and URLs

When writing out an email address or website URL, use all lowercase. Only include www. if it is necessary to reach the website. Remove the hyperlink if one is automatically created.

Examples
Contact the editor at courtney@ferret-world.com.
Visit ferret-world.com.

5.5.4. File types

When referring generally to a file extension type, use all uppercase without a period. Add a lowercase *s* to make plural.

Examples

- Attach your GIF, JPG, or PNG file.
- Only PDFs can be scanned.

If a file type is specific to a piece of software, use the software name to refer to the file.

Examples

- You can attach Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files.
- You can attach Pages, Numbers, and Keynote files.

When referring to a specific file, the filename should be capitalized exactly as it is in the file and the extension should be lowercase.

Examples

- financialrecords2018.xlsx
- CompanyBenefits.pdf

5.5.5. Lists

There are two kinds of lists: embedded and vertical. For both kinds, list items should be parallel in construction. For example, if one item starts with a gerund (-ing verb) or an article (*a*, *an*, and *the*), so should all the other items.

Example

Before

You can perform these functions from the search dashboard: a search of the documents, adding a tag to all the documents, and search visualization. (Items begin with a noun preceded by an *a*, a gerund, and a noun not preceded by an *a*.)

After

From the search dashboard, you can search the documents, add a tag to the documents, or view search visualization. (All the items start with a present tense verb.)

Use lists to present steps, groups, or sets of information. Always give context for lists with a brief introduction, followed by a colon. Don't add extra space between the list and the introductory text.

When items are multiple lines or paragraphs, make sure the text aligns with the first line of text, NOT with the number or bullet point.

Guidelines for **embedded lists**:

- If the list is preceded by a complete sentence, it should be introduced with a colon (not a comma, dash, or ellipses).
- If it is preceded by a sentence fragment, do not separate with punctuation.
- If the list is preceded by a colon, capitalize the first item. (If it is not, do not capitalize the first item unless it is a proper noun.)
- Use the serial comma (also called the Oxford comma).

Guidelines for **vertical lists**:

- Always introduce the list with a colon (not a comma, dash, or ellipses).
- Use sentence case for all list items.
- If any of the list items is a complete sentence, use terminal punctuation for all items.

- If none of the list items is a complete sentence, do not use terminal punctuation for any of the items.
- Only number a list if the order of the items is important. Otherwise, the list should be bulleted.
- Try to avoid lists within lists.

Embedded example	Vertical example
There are three membership levels: Basic, extra, and super awesome.	There are three membership levels: ● Basic ● Extra ● Super awesome

6. Citation guide

Sources should be cited internally (e.g. “A study published by Dr. Rose-Anne Meissner et al. in 2016 found that….”).

Sources that are cited in a “Resources” list at the end of the article are included not to help the reader verify your information (the internal citations should do that), but to help the reader research further on their own. This list may include sources you don’t mention in your article. If ALL of your sources are not mentioned in the article, title the list “Further Reading” instead of “Resources.”

6.1. Citing a work with multiple authors

For all sources with multiple authors, use the base template with the following author formats:

Number of authors	Template	Example
2	First Name, Last Name, and First Name Last Name.	Gillespie, Paula, and Neal Lerner. *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*. Published by Allyn and Bacon in 2000. (Book)

3+	Last Name, First Name; First Name Last Name; and First Name Last Name. *or* Last Name, First Name et. al.	Greig, Anne D.; Jayne Taylor; and Tommy MacKay. *Doing Research with Children: A Practical Guide*, 3rd ed. Published by Sage Publishing in 2013. (Book) Wysocki, Anne Frances et al. *Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition.* Published by Utah State University Press in 2004. (Book)

6.2. Citing books, reports, pamphlets, & other non-periodical sources

While the examples below are for books and articles in print, you can put any appropriate medium at the end of the citation, e.g. (Pamphlet), (Handbook), and (Script). The basic template is as follows:

Author. Title. Title of container publication, nth edition, volume #. Edited by Editor. Translated by Translator. Published by Publisher in Publication Year. Page(s) #-#. (Medium)

Basic book	Example
Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book: Subtitle of Book*. Published by Publisher in Publication Year. (Book)	Gleick, James. *Chaos: Making a New Science.* Published by Penguin in 1987. (Book)

Book with a corporate author	
If the book has a corporate or organization author, don't separate the author name with the comma.	American Allergy Association. *Allergies in Children*. Published by Random House in 1998. (Book)

If the book is both authored and published by a corporation or organization, skip the author and start the citation with the title.	*Fair Housing, Fair Lending*. Published by Aspen Law & Business in 1985. (Book)
Book with no author	**Example**
If the book has no author and no editors, just skip that part of the template and start with the title.	*Encyclopedia of Indiana*. Published by Somerset in 1993. (Book)
Edited book	**Example**
Has an author and an editor: Add “Edited by First Name Last Name.” after the book title.	Bronte, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Edited by Margaret Smith. Published by Oxford University Press in 1998. (Book)
Has no author and has an editor: List editor’s name first, followed by (editor) or (editors).	John, Harry, and Stacy Hathaway (editors). *Peterson’s Annual Guides to Graduate Study*. Published by Peterson’s in 1999. (Book)
Translated book	**Example**
Translated: Add “Translated by First Name Last Name.” after the book title.	Foucault, Michel. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Translated by Richard Howard. Published by Vintage-Random House in 1988. (Book)

An edition or volume of a book	**Example**
Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*, ordinal number edition. Published by Publisher in Publication Year. (Book)	Crowley, Sharon, and Debra Hawhee. *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students,* 3rd edition. Published by Pearson in 2004. (Book)

Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*, volume number. Published by Publisher in Publication year. (Book)	Quintilian. *Institutio Oratoria*, volume 2. Translated by H. E. Butler. Published by Loeb-Harvard University Press in 1980. (Book)
Work in an anthology, reference, or collection	**Example**
Last Name, First Name. “Title of Essay.” *Title of Book*, edited by Editor Name(s). Published by Publisher in Publication Year. Pages ##-##. (Entry in a book)	Harris, Muriel. “Talk to Me: Engaging Reluctant Writers.” *A Tutor’s Guide: Helping Writers One to One*. Edited by Ben Rafoth. Published by Heinemann in 2000. Pages 24-34. (Essay in a book)
If there is no editor, e.g. the book is a collection of pieces all by the same author, skip the editor part of the template.	Burns, Robert. “Red, Red Rose.” *100 Best-Loved Poems.* Edited by Philip Smith. Published by Dover in 1995. Page 28. (Poem in a book)
Article in a reference book	**Example**
“Title of Entry.” *Title of Book*. Published by Publisher in Publication Year. (Type of book entry)	“Ideology.” *The American Heritage Dictionary,* 3rd edition. Published in 1997. (Dictionary entry)
Work published by the government	**Example**
Last Name, First Name. Government Agency. *Title of Book*. Published by Publisher in Publication Year. (Type of publication) U.S. government documents are usually published by the Government Printing Office.	United States Government Accountability Office. *Climate Change: EPA and DOE Should Do More to Encourage Progress under Two Voluntary Programs*. Published by the Government Printing Office in 2006. (Report)
For congressional documents, include the session and report number at the end of the citation.	United States Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. *Hearing on the Geopolitics of Oil*. Published by the Government Printing Office in 2007. 110th Congress, 1st session, Senate Report

	111-8. (Congressional report)

6.3. Citing periodical sources

The basic template is as follows:

Author. Title. Title of container publication, nth edition, volume #, issue #. Edited by Editor. Translated by Translator. Published by Publisher in Publication Year. Page(s) #-#. Second container title. Edited by Editor. Translated by Translator. Published by Publisher in Publication Year. (Piece type)

Article in a magazine	Example
Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Periodical*, Day Month Year, pages #-#. (Magazine article)	Buchman, Dana. "A Special Education." *Good Housekeeping,* March 2006, pages 143-48. (Magazine article)
Article in a newspaper	**Example**
Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Periodical*, Day Month Year (edition type), pages #-#. (Newspaper article)	Krugman, Andrew. "Fear of Eating." *New York Times* (late edition), 21 May 2007, pages A1+. (Newspaper article)
If the newspaper is less well-known, you can include the city name in brackets after the newspaper title.	Trembacki, Paul. "Brees Hopes to Win Heisman for Team." *Purdue Exponent* [West Lafayette, IN], 5 December 2000, page 20. (Newspaper article)
Article in scholarly journal	**Example**
Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Journal*, volume #, issue #. Published in/on Publication Date. Pages #-#. (Scholarly article) A scholarly article must be peer-reviewed. Otherwise, use *Article in a magazine*.	Bagchi, Alaknanda. "Conflicting Nationalisms: The Voice of the Subaltern in Mahasweta Devi's *Bashai Tudu*." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, volume 15, number 1. Published in 1996. Pages 41-50. (Scholarly article)

6.4. Citing electronic sources

Entire website	Example
Last Name, First Name. *Title of Site*. Published by Publisher/Sponsor on Date. URL is appropriate. Accessed Day Month Year. (Website)	*The Purdue OWL Family of Sites*. Published by the Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue University in 2008. owl.english.purdue.edu/owl. Accessed 23 April 2008.
Page on website	**Example**
Last Name, First Name. "Title of Page." *Title of Website*. Published on Date. URL as appropriate. Accessed Day Month Year. (Web page)	"Athlete's Foot - Topic Overview." *WebMD*. Published on 25 September 2014. www.webmd.com/skin-problems-and-treatments/tc/athletes-foot-topic-overview. Accessed 6 July 2015. (Web page)
Article in an online magazine	**Example**
Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Magazine*, Day Month Year. URL if appropriate. Accessed Day Month Year. (Online magazine article)	Bernstein, Mark. "10 Tips on Writing the Living Web." *A List Apart: For People Who Make Websites*, 16 August 2002. Accessed 4 May 2009. (Online magazine article)
Article in an online scholarly journal	**Example**
Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." Title of Journal, volume #, issue #. Published in/on Publication Date. URL or DOI. Accessed Day Month Year. (Online scholarly article) If the article was also published in print (usually if the article is a PDF, especially one with page numbers), cite as a print source. (See *Article in a scholarly journal* in the section above.)	Dolby, Nadine. "Research in Youth Culture and Policy." *Social Work and Society: The International Online-Only Journal*, volume 6, number 2. Published in 2008. www.socwork.net/sws/article/view/60/362. Accessed 20 May 2009. (Online scholarly article)
Blog post	**Example**

Author (may be an online handle). “Post Title.” *Name of Site*. Published by Publisher on/in Date. URL. Accessed Day Month Year. (Blog post)

If the name of the publisher is the same as the author and/or the name of the website, skip the publisher name.

“How to Read the World around You: Introduction to Rhetoric.” *Austin Writing Shop*. Published on 27 May 2016. austinwritingshop.com/how-to-read-the-world-around-you-introduction-to-rhetoric. Accessed 31 May 2017. (Blog post)

6.5. Citing other kinds of sources

Films or movies	Example
Title of Movie. Directed by Director, performances by Actor Name(s). Produced by Studio Name in Year. (Movie)	*The Usual Suspects.* Directed by Bryan Singer, performances by Kevin Spacey, Gabriel Byrne, Chazz Palminteri, Stephen Baldwin, and Benecio del Toro. Produced by Polygram in 1995. (Movie)
TV shows	**Example**
“Title of Episode.” *Title of TV Series*. Written by Writer(s), directed by Director. Produced by Studio Name in Year. (TV episode)	"The One Where Chandler Can't Cry." *Friends: The Complete Sixth Season*. Written by Andrew Reich and Ted Cohen, directed by Kevin Bright. Produced by Warner Brothers in 2004. (TV episode)
Podcast	**Example**
“Title.” *Title of Podcast* from Publisher/Organization. Published on/in Date. URL. (Podcast)	“Best of Not My Job Musicians.” *Wait Wait…Don’t Tell Me!* from NPR. Published on 4 June 2016. http://www.npr.org/podcasts/344098539/wait-wait-don-t-tell-me. (Podcast)